

Parent Bulletin

1st May 2026

It has been a positive and purposeful end to the week across the school, marked by the success of today's Year 11 Aim Higher Conference. The conference provided a focused and supportive environment for students as they begin their GCSE examination season, with subject-specific revision sessions, personalised timetables and valuable time with specialist staff. We were extremely pleased with the maturity, engagement and determination shown by our Year 11 students throughout the day, and we hope they leave feeling confident and well prepared for the weeks ahead.

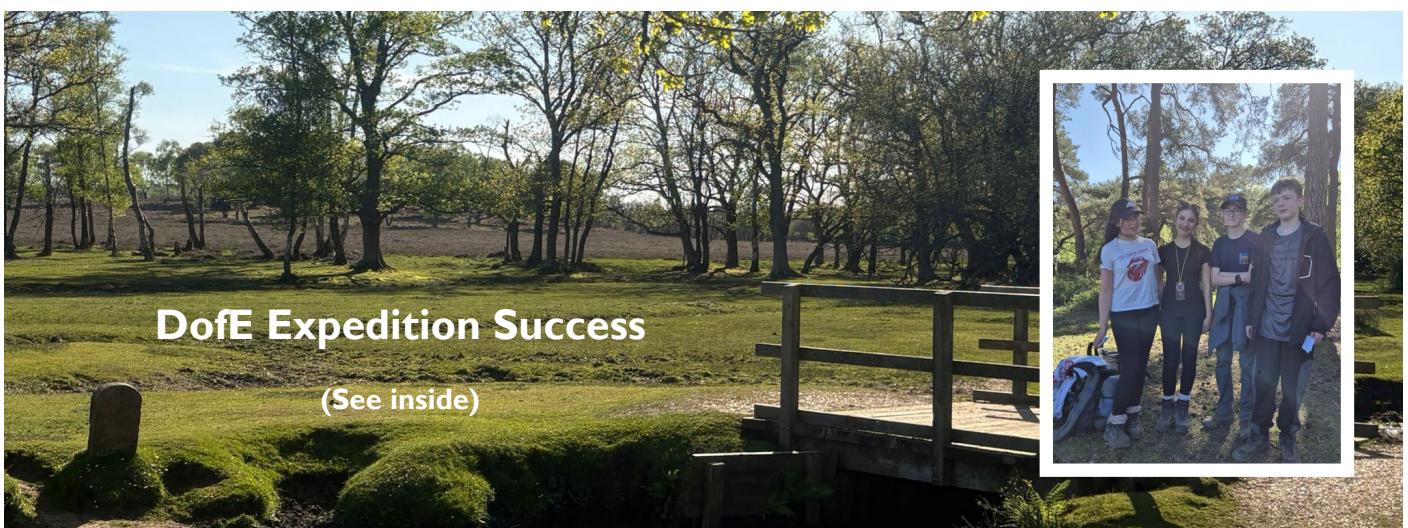
We are also pleased to be sharing photos in this bulletin from our Duke of Edinburgh expeditions, which took place in the New Forest last weekend. Our Bronze Award students successfully completed their qualifying expedition, while Silver Award students took part in a highly successful practice expedition. These experiences are a real highlight of the programme, and we are proud of the resilience, teamwork and independence demonstrated by all students involved.

As the Year 11 GCSE exam season begins, we would like to wish all our students every success in the weeks ahead. We also kindly ask parents of students in lower year groups to remind their children to move calmly and considerately around the school during exam periods. This support is greatly appreciated and helps create the focused environment our Year 11s need at this important time, while also reinforcing that this milestone will one day be theirs, too.

Finally, with the Bank Holiday on Monday, we wish all families a restful and enjoyable long weekend. We look forward to welcoming students back to school on Tuesday.

Until next week,

Team Trafalgar



Key Dates

- Monday 4th May** - May Bank Holiday (School closed)
- Monday 11th - Friday 22nd May** - Y10 Work Experience
- Monday 25th - Friday 29th May** - Half Term
- Monday 1st June** - Students back in school

Uniform & Equipment

Please ensure your children have the correct uniform & equipment with them each day. If you require any support, contact your child's form tutor. Please ensure students have a bag. You can find full details of what they need [here](#).



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Duke of Edinburgh Expeditions – A Weekend of Success

We are extremely proud of our Duke of Edinburgh Award students following a highly successful expedition weekend in the New Forest.

Our Bronze Award students demonstrated resilience, teamwork and determination as they successfully completed and passed their qualifying expedition. This is a fantastic achievement and a testament to the effort they have put into their preparation.

At the same time, our Silver Award students took part in a practice expedition, gaining valuable experience and developing the skills needed ahead of their qualifying assessment. They approached the challenge with maturity and enthusiasm, making it a very successful weekend.

We would also like to extend our sincere thanks to the staff who volunteered their time to support the expeditions. Their commitment and dedication played a vital role in ensuring the weekend ran smoothly and safely, helping to make it such a positive experience for all involved.

Well done to all students and staff — we are incredibly proud of your achievements.



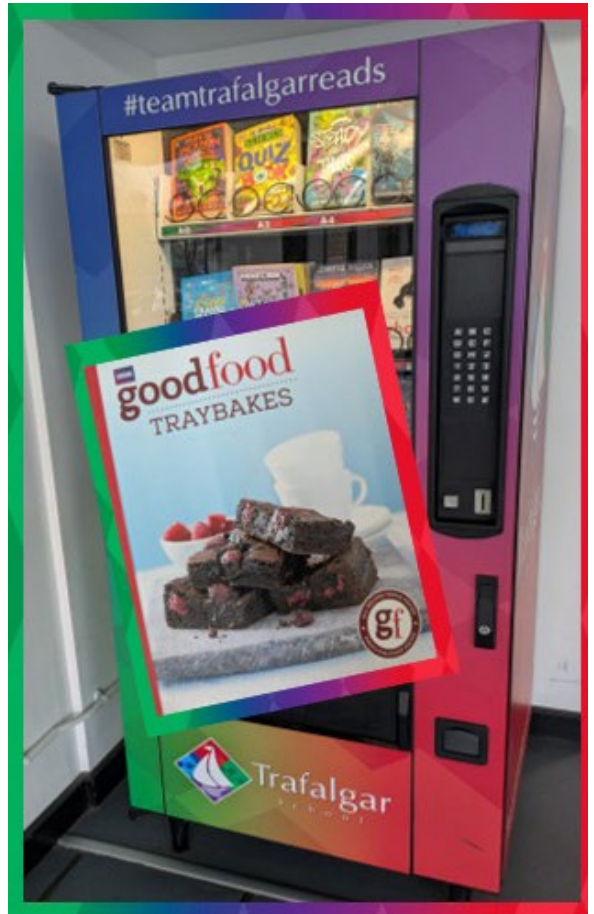
Reading Plus Winner

Congratulations Brandon in Year 9 - our Reading Plus winner of the week!

Brandon chose BBC Good Food's Traybakes recipe book. He enjoys cooking and is looking forward to trying some of the recipes.

By keeping up with your Reading Plus, you stand the chance to win one of our new books from the book vending machine! Which book would you choose?

Also, well done 7G3 for topping our reading leaderboard! Don't forget to help your class climb the table by keeping up with your English home learning.



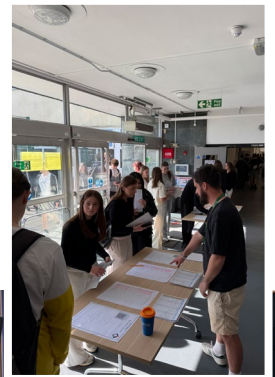
Leaderboard	
Top Classes - Total Avg. Reading Lessons (SR)	
1. 7G3/En 25/26	82.2
2. 7G1/En 25/26	61.5
3. 8R1 25/26	60.8
4. 7R2/En 25/26	59.0
5. 7R1/En 25/26	52.0

Aim Higher 2026

Today's Aim Higher Conference marked a valuable moment of calm and connection for our Year 11 students as they prepare for the start of their exams next week. Working from personalised timetables, students focused on becoming exam-ready, supported by targeted booster sessions led by subject specialists that addressed individual needs and built confidence.

The non-uniform day helped create a relaxed, almost college-like atmosphere, encouraging independence while reducing pressure. One of the highlights was staff and students coming together to enjoy lunch, offering a welcome opportunity to reflect and connect before the demanding weeks ahead.

As this is the third year running of Aim Higher Day, it continues to prove its worth — a positive, purposeful pause as a community, bringing us together before the hard work truly begins.



Writing Competition

The Portsmouth Multilingual Writing Competition, proudly run and sponsored by HSDC, celebrates linguistic diversity and creativity among young writers across the city.

The competition invites students to express their ideas and stories in more than one language, recognising the richness of multilingual identities and voices.

Full details on how to enter, deadlines, and eligibility can be found on the accompanying posters.



2026

PORTSMOUTH MULTILINGUAL WRITING COMPETITION

THOUGHTS OF FAMILY, THOUGHTS OF HOME

SPEAK TO YOUR TEACHER/SCHOOL TO TAKE PART
SUBMISSION DEADLINE:
22nd May 2026

CELEBRATING SHARING, BELONGING & THE LANGUAGES OF OUR CITY

RUN AND SPONSORED BY:

2026

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YOU MAY SUBMIT:

- A poem (any form)
- A short story (maximum recommended length: 250 words in the original language - but can be far shorter)

YOUR ENTRY MUST INCLUDE:

- Original text written in a language other than English.
- English translation (can be supported by a teacher, family member, or bilingual assistant).
- Title in both languages (optional but encouraged).
- Author name, school, and year group.

YOUR WORK WILL BE JUDGED ON:

- Creativity and imagination
- Effective expression of the theme
- Quality of writing (in either/both languages)
- Cultural richness and authenticity

PRIZES

HSDC proudly sponsors the following prize book tokens:

- 1st Prize - **£50**
- 2nd Prizes x2 - **£25**
- 3rd Prizes x3 - **£15**
- Highly commended

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Waterstones are offering an opportunity for learners aged 16-18 to participate in a paid internship programme, working in one of our bookshops this summer. This forms part of our desire to develop stronger partnerships with local communities, regenerate high streets and create more opportunities for those from ethnically diverse or socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

About our internship

- Paid at our Bookseller rate of pay
- Flexible working pattern based on 135 hours/ 22.5 hours per week, over six-weeks
 - Limited spaces, with a maximum of two interns per shop
- Tailored six-week induction programme, supported by experienced booksellers
 - Publisher & Head Office team talks
 - Organised area trips to local bookshops

We are looking for someone who is open to learning in a fast-paced environment, comfortable in a customer-facing role and shares the same love for books as we do. Interns will have an opportunity to become acquainted with a breadth of responsibilities, including an introduction to what we love, bookselling!



Learn more about what it's like to be a bookseller by scanning the QR code.

How to apply

We don't have an application form although we do ask that each application is endorsed by the school/ college. Applications can be submitted to the email below and we encourage them to be as creative as you wish. Successful applications will be invited for an interview before a decision is made.

Your Waterstones contact is

Emma Prince, Bookshop Manager in Portsmouth

Emma.Prince@waterstones.com

Waterstones Internship Project Leads
Mary Kennedy – Learning & Development
Tanpreet Singh Bhachu – HR Business Partner



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10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators MANAGING EXAM STRESS

At some point in their education, most young people will encounter exam stress, which can affect their mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing. Mental health charity YoungMinds estimates that 87% of pupils experience exam-related stress. This highlights the importance of supporting young people to manage exam pressure effectively, maintain perspective, and protect their overall wellbeing during these periods.

1 PRACTISE WORKLOAD WISDOM



The build-up to exams can feel overwhelming, with competing demands on time and energy. Encourage young people to reflect on whether their workload is realistic and allows them time to rest and recharge. Support them in creating a manageable revision timetable that includes regular breaks and occasional days off. Remind them that plans can be adjusted if they feel overwhelmed, helping to reduce the pressure and prevent burnout.

2 CLEAR UP THE CLUTTER



A cluttered workspace can reduce focus and increase stress levels. Encourage young people to keep their study area tidy and organised, with clearly arranged notes and materials. A calm, dedicated space can support concentration and create a more relaxed mindset. Adding colour, mind maps, or creative elements can also make revision feel less daunting and more manageable.

3 MASTER THE MATERIALS



Revision can feel particularly stressful if young people are unsure where to begin. Help them confirm key study topics and materials, ensuring they're using accurate and relevant resources. Reducing uncertainty can help them feel more in control of their learning. Reassure them that they don't need to know everything perfectly, as building their understanding over time is what matters most.

4 GET CREATIVE WITH NOTES



Writing out detailed notes, rather than relying only on bullet points, can strengthen their understanding and retention. Encourage young people to turn these notes into flashcards for regular review and repetition. Feeling familiar with their material can boost their confidence and reduce anxiety during exams. This approach can help them feel more prepared and less likely to panic under pressure.

5 USE VISUAL MEMORY AIDS



Visual resources can make learning more effective and reduce their frustration when information feels difficult to grasp. Encourage the use of diagrams, videos, sticky notes, and colour coding to reinforce key ideas. Creating simple mnemonics can also make information easier to remember. Using a variety of methods can help prevent mental fatigue and keep revision feeling fresh and manageable.

6 BUILD A TECH TOOLKIT



Technology can be a valuable supporting tool during exam preparation when used in a balanced way. Educational websites, revision platforms, and subject-specific videos can help explain complicated topics clearly, reducing the risk of confusion or stress. Encourage young people to use these tools to support – rather than overwhelm – their learning, and to take regular breaks from their screens to protect their wellbeing.

7 KEEP REVISION ENJOYABLE



Revision is often more effective when it feels engaging and varied. Encourage young people to incorporate humour, real-life examples, or creative approaches into their learning. Mixing study methods, including light physical activity such as short walks, can also improve their mood and focus. Enjoyable revision experiences can help reduce stress and make the process feel more positive and sustainable.

8 USE ACTIVE STUDY METHODS



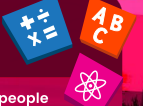
Active revision techniques can help young people feel more confident and in control of their learning. Strategies such as spaced repetition and active recall, including self-testing or explaining concepts aloud, can highlight both their strengths and areas for improvement. This clarity can reduce last-minute panic and support a calmer, more prepared approach to exams.

9 USE AI THOUGHTFULLY



AI tools can support revision by making learning more personalised and manageable. Young people can use them to generate practice questions, summarise information, or break down topics into simpler steps. Used carefully, these tools can reduce overwhelm and save time. Remind young people to check AI information with trusted sources to ensure its accuracy and build confidence in their understanding.

10 PRACTISE WITH ONLINE TOOLS



Online revision platforms can help young people test their knowledge and track their progress. Many offer quizzes, flashcards, and practice papers aligned with exam boards. Encourage regular self-testing – including timed activities – to build up familiarity with exam conditions. Becoming more comfortable with the format of exams can reduce anxiety and help young people approach them with greater confidence.

Meet Our Expert

Minds Ahead design and deliver the UK's only specialist postgraduate mental health qualifications. Winner of Social Enterprise UK's 'One to Watch' award, the charity provides training and support to education organisations and local authorities. This guide has been written by Adam Gillett – a learning and development specialist who is also Associate Vice-Principal for Personal Development at a large secondary school.



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See full reference list on our website

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