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Message from Andy Hartley

Headteacher

As we continue to live through the pandemic and you read another lockdown edition of 'MECEmatters' it never ceases to amaze how resilient our young people have been despite, what has been, another turbulent few weeks.

When we returned to school on January 4th we expected Year 11 to attend for two weeks and all other students to be study remotely until January 18th. Within hours Boris Johnson had shifted remote learning instructions to all students indefinitely. The staff then worked incredibly hard to set all this up in a very short time. However, it has been hugely worthwhile and our levels of engagement have been excellent, made all the better by a good number of laptops being given to the school, both from the community and the Department for Education.

Our surveys of staff, students and parents in the second week of term gave us some very positive feedback on our provision, but also some sound constructive comments for us to act upon. The SLT has also been dipping into online lessons in the last two weeks to ensure our quality is high and ascertain how we could improve things still further.

Through all this it has been a real pleasure to witness the students engaging in online lessons, adapting to the new normal, uploading work, using chat functions, employing new software like Whiteboard FI and listening to verbal feedback notes through Mote. The last few months will change some things in education forever, however what it will not alter and what we're all really looking forward to from March 8th, is the sound of classrooms full of students listening, laughing and enjoying being at school again. Fingers crossed!

CALENDAR

2 March 2021	KS4 Intervention Evening
4 March 2021	World Book Day
11 March 2021	Year 7 Parents' Evening (virtual)
23 March 2021	HPV Immunisation
1 April 2021	Last Day of Term

HOT CHOCOLATE WITH THE HEAD

During this term I have endeavoured to spend some time each week with our students in the vulnerable and key worker provision having a hot chocolate and a chat. These meetings provide me with an excellent source of feedback on what is working well, which lessons are enjoyable and engaging and what we could do better. It is always one of my weekly highlights and it also helps me to keep my ear to the ground on how the students are feeling.



YEAR GROUPS—HEAD OF YEAR ROUND UP

Year 7

Year 7 made such a brilliant start to online learning and continue to work productively, proving themselves to be resilient and adaptable! Engagement levels have been fantastic and I've no doubt this will continue. During this term, my highlights have been; seeing some amazing castle projects for History, hearing about the creative ways Year 7 have been keeping active, looking through some beautiful family trees in PSE and finally the virtual school trips happening in tutor time on a Friday! I am also enjoying delivering practical PE lessons to the students who are attending school and have particularly enjoyed the badminton tournaments that have taken place.

Despite the current uncertainty and difficulty, Year 7 continue to focus and apply themselves. In spite of the distance, they remain a strong team, making me proud every day!

My key message to the Year 7 team:

Don't hesitate to reach out if you need support or just want to check in. Keep engaged, keep active, keep being kind, keep talking to each other and keep being amazing! *Miss Cheeseman, Head of Year*

Year 8 & Year 9

I continue to be very impressed by the quality and quantity of work produced by years 8 and 9. As we all get more used to live lessons online, I sense increased confidence levels from both staff and students!

Last week I 'dropped in' to each tutor group during morning registration and was privileged to see the variety of activities in action - from the very moving Holocaust Memorial Day assembly to a virtual trip to Edinburgh. I listened to Mr Reskalla tell his group about 'painting the Forth Bridge' and Mr Hunter extolling the virtues of the penguins at Edinburgh Zoo!

Last Tuesday year 9 attended a workshop on career pathways, delivered by Mrs Hills. I was monitoring the chat and questions during the session, and I have to say that the maturity shown by the students was a credit to them. They were asking really pertinent and thoughtful questions, showing that they are taking the options process seriously, and know the importance of their next steps.

Y8 are doing some amazing work in PSHE and are currently doing a mini-project on multiculturalism in Britain - already there have been some lovely submissions and I look forward to seeing the work produced over the next week or so.

Well done Y8+9 and keep up the good work! *Ms Biddiss, Head of Year*

Year 10 & Year 11

Year 10 & 11 continue to impress me with their resilience and the quality of work produced during these challenging times.

I want to recognise these stars of home learning so have asked Heads of Years and tutors to nominate students from all years for a token of recognition, that should be arriving through the post mid February. We will be nominating another round of students in March.

Year 11 received an online talk from Reading College this week, and the opportunity to access one to one sessions. We also invited student feedback on the support offered by MECE so we can continue to improve our Post 16 provisions. Please continue to check tutor notices on Google Classroom for post 16 events and opportunities.

We also want Year 10 to start thinking about their future options so will be sharing a recording of the Reading College talk shortly, as well as information on apprenticeships and other local colleges and sixth forms.

HOUSE COMPETITIONS

ReadiFood Reading's Food Bank

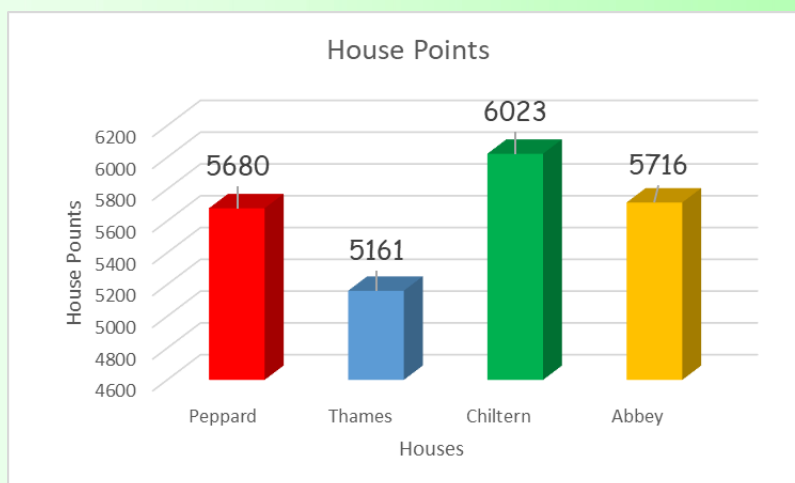
On the run up to the Christmas holidays as a school we are collected for Reading Foodbank. This was running as a house competition with every item of food donated worth 1 house point. Since the start of pandemic, the foodbank has seen a significant increase in the demand for food parcels so this was a great charity to support.

As a school we donated over 500 items of food to ReadiFood who were extremely grateful for our contributions and this will go to help a lot of people within our community during this difficult time.

Well done Mr Watterson and all those in Peppard House who donated the greatest amount of food. The house standings were:



HOUSE POINTS AS OF 1 FEBRUARY 2021



HOUSE MEMBERS OF THE TERM (SO FAR)

Peppard



Sicily (7C)
31 House Points

Thames



Lianna (7C)
35 House Points

Chiltern



Eleanor (7C)
49 House Points

Abbey



Lola (7D)
35 House Points

GOLD AND SILVER CLUB

Our Gold (years 9 and 10) and Silver (years 7 and 8) Clubs kicked off early January, with a few sessions already underway. Both Clubs have started participating in a series of discussions following pre-recorded talks by experts in their field. The Silver Club started with an intro to Economics, followed by a discussion about the loss of homes due to sea-level rise. The Gold Club started with sea-level rise and then explored 'The Coming of Age on Film'.

Both Clubs have had some fascinating science opportunities advertised, plus some recommendations for thought-provoking documentaries.

All opportunities are voluntary but students should check-in regularly to see if anything takes their fancy!

CAREERS

We've had a busy few weeks for Careers. Year 11 have had more guidance on post-16 options and Year 9 have had 'Thinking about your Future' workshop, ready for their GCSE Options process to begin.

The week commencing 8th February not only is National Apprenticeship week, but also part of LGBTQ+ month. Students will have a tutor time session around apprenticeships and during the week they will also be introduced to some famous people whose jobs have fallen in their different subject areas who happen to also be part of the LGBTQ+ community. After all, we are proud to celebrate diversity and inclusion!

The Parents' Apprenticeship evening turned virtual, with lots of opportunities to explore further. The links have been shared via a school letter (still available on the school website). The Trust Careers Fair on the 2nd of February also turned virtual and the information can still be found on the school's Careers page. We encourage students of all ages to explore and start thinking about their futures.

SEND NEWS

The Teaching Assistants are working diligently to continue to support our students on the SEND register. Working remotely has its challenges for everyone, especially Teaching Assistants who have found that some students are reluctant to ask for help on Google Classroom. A Teaching and Learning staff briefing was held recently to discuss this and upskill teaching staff in how best to delegate Teaching Assistants in their classes. This may involve a mixture of phone calls home, using breakout rooms on Google Meets or the class teacher helping a small group of students whilst the TA monitors the rest of class. Initial feedback from this session has been positive and it has been fantastic to see class teachers and teaching assistants working collaboratively to ensure our students on the SEND register continue to make progress.

At the recent Maiden Erlegh Trust Conference on 27 January, the SEND team were extremely proud of one of the teaching assistants, Mr Warley, who delivered a session entitled, "Dyslexia-friendly classrooms: what they look like and why they matter". Mr Warley's session was extremely well received and attended by more than 50 delegates – a great accomplishment for one of our youngest members of the team. This session complemented the staff training delivered by Mrs Benham in October, as well as the resources Mr Warley has made previously for MECE staff, as we work towards our goal of becoming a "dyslexia-friendly" school.

ENGLISH

This term in English we have continued to work hard on different skills and progress with our writing. The different year groups are following their own topics based upon the skill of writing and during their virtual lessons they are improving their previous knowledge and engaging well. Students have been enjoying reading aloud to the class and interacting with live lessons with their teachers.



BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Despite the current situation we find ourselves in, at MECE we are excited to continue to develop and promote reading within our school community.

A summary of some of the key initiatives taking place can be found below:

BOOK DRIVE

In mid-January we launched a Community book drive with the aim to try and be able to provide a reading book for students who may not have access to them at home or through a library whilst we are in lockdown. The scheme used Amazon's Wish-list service and was received so well within the school community that we are almost now at the point whereby all of our students will be receiving a book before Half Term.

Firstly, a **huge thank you** if you have donated to the scheme – it has been humbling to receive the books and lovely to read the messages so many of you have included. A second **huge thank you** must go to the wonderful people behind the **Chiltern Edge Community Association** – a local group who offer grants to support projects to support school aged children in the local area. Their generous donation has brought us so close to the final goal!

If you would like to contribute then the Wish-list is still [here](#)



BOOK CLUB

To complement the book drive we have launched an online Bookclub that all students are invited to join. The idea being there is a place for students to discuss and recommend books to each other as well as leave book reviews for us to publish in the school library. Students can get the access code from Mrs Bullivant or their tutor.

TUTOR READING

Tutors of Years 7- 9 have continued with the tutor reading book over the first 4 weeks of Lockdown – reading to their groups in morning registration at least once a week. After Half Term groups will be moving to their second book. We will bring you some student written reviews of the first term's books in the next MECE matters.

PARENT BITES

You may well have already heard the first of our regular Parent Bites which was shared earlier this month. This first full episode was focused around the importance of reading to help set up future success: greater likelihood of academic success, widened vocabulary, improved ability to articulate point of view and a better and broader understanding of the world around us. **You can catch it [here](#)**

WEEKLY READING CHALLENGE—100 MINUTES

Every week you must read 100 minutes (15 minutes of this can be from your weekly Tutor reading). You must complete a reading log to show what you have read and for how long. A link will be sent out for this.

Every week, those that take part are entered into a termly draw and awarded house points.

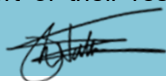
The winning prize is a reading book of your choice.

For more information, please speak to your English teacher.



ART, DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

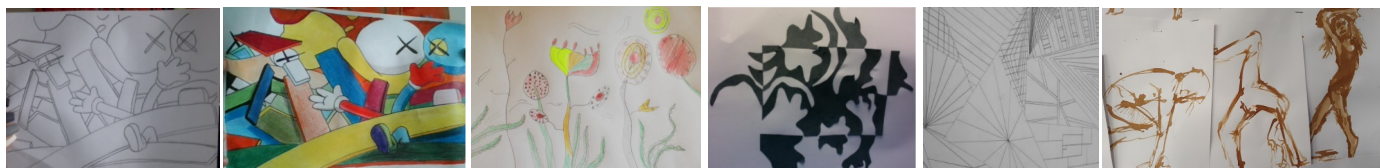
Well as I'm sure you understand practical subjects can be difficult to deliver remotely. Firstly I want to thank all our students for their amazing effort which is visible in the brilliant work showcased below, and I also realise this would not be possible without the fantastic support of their responsible adults! So in difficult times its been another amazing term here in the ADT Department.



Mr Watterson, Head of ADT

Art, Craft & Design

The Home Art studios have been a buzz with activity this term and we have successfully completed some amazing work: In Year 7 we have been studying Pattern in Art creating Notan work and looking at Ian MacArthur; Year 8 have been being to look at Nature in art and Year 9 have been exploring the work of KAWS. GCSE students have had a series of workshops and been working on their sketchbook work as their coursework deadline looms.



Photography

Year 10 have been finishing creating their photo adventures, while Year 11 have been developing and finishing their GCSE portfolios.



Food & Nutrition

This term it has been fantastic to see such amazing home cooking with Mrs Ashley encouraging students to cook at home and thank you for the parental support in making this possible. Some of the results have been amazing! Year 7 have been putting into practice their knowledge of the Eatwell guide and designing and making colourful and nutritious salads in a jar. Year 8 have been working with world foods and crafting some dishes at home based on their chosen, creating everything from English scones to Italian calzone's. Year 9 have been delving deep into food science and the provenance of the food we eat. Year 10 have been looking at special diets, focusing on Veganuary as well as religious and medical diets designing dishes based on dietary needs. They have also created Choux Pastry as well as entering a national competition to present a Tunnocks teacake in the best way possible! This was also entered by some students in Year 8. Year 11 have been hard at work creating trial NEA dishes with some fantastic results.



In their Home workshops students have been creating a wide range of products and design ideas. Year 7 have been creating Rube Goldberg Machines using everyday household objects to create over engineered devices. Using tools such as dominoes as well as glue sticks and rolls of tape. Year 8 have been focusing on designing; looking at two-point perspectives as well as logos and branding focusing on some of the world's best brands and how they capture your attention. Year 9 have begun their Architecture project focusing on iconic architects such as Zaha Hadid and Daniel Libeskind. Drawing and investigating what makes good architecture and have began to create their own models based on Libeskind's stunning buildings. GCSE students have been researching and learning about mechanisms and looking at man-made and natural materials. Year 10 they have been combining science and design and technology; focusing on motions and mechanics. Year 11 have been brushing up on their material knowledge and even looking at designing their own material.



HUMANITIES

Holocaust Memorial Day 2021 - Be the Light in the Darkness

This year, to mark Holocaust Memorial Day, Year 9-11 students were invited to hear the testimony of Eve Kugler BEM. Her live webcast enabled students to put a human face to the histories they learn, and engage with one survivor's personal experiences during the Holocaust. Students were also asked to complete a reflections activity afterwards. There has been a fantastic response and I am so proud of MECE students. I have found reading their reflections both moving and uplifting at the same time. I feel Eve's story will be passed on to future generations so that the Holocaust and the victims of the Holocaust are never forgotten.



House photograph competition – Be the Light in the Darkness

Here is an opportunity for **all** students to take part in a House photograph competition based on this year's theme. I have had some stunning and thought provoking entries submitted so far. Here are a few reminders about how to enter:

The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2021 encourages everyone to reflect on the dark depths humanity can sink to, but also the ways individuals and communities resisted that darkness to 'be the light' before, during and after genocide.

The photographs you enter into the competition should celebrate the people, groups, places and objects which bring us and others light in times of darkness.

Simply take a photo on your phone or digital camera and upload it to the HMD2021 google classroom (access code – **zxp6luy**). Maximum of **3** entries per student



The competition closes on Monday 22nd February 2021.

Good luck and thanks for your continued support! - Mr Yarwood, Curriculum Leader for Humanities

The British Transatlantic Slave Trade

Last term, Year 9 studied the British Transatlantic Slave Trade as well as the Abolition of Slavery. In order to highlight the fact that slavery is not a detached and abstract notion that is irrelevant to us, we then finished off the topic by considering Reading's involvement in the Transatlantic Slave Trade. We studied Reading's involvement in aiding the slave trade, focusing on key individuals and families of Reading who were slave owners. We then weighed this up by exploring Reading's links to the abolition movement, particularly focusing on Broad Street Church (now Waterstones in the High Street) which was the centre for Reading's campaign to end slavery. We then looked at Reading's links with people of African descent more recently, focusing on the thriving Barbadian community in Reading. To

What is slavery and the transatlantic slave trade?

Slavery is taking away someone's rights as a human and making them do something that benefits you, against their will, whilst not paying them at all. The transatlantic slave trade was when African people were being taken against their will on ships across the Atlantic Ocean to the Caribbean to work on sugar plantations.



consolidate our understanding, the students were given the task of creating a museum exhibition for Reading Museum explaining how Reading was involved in the slave trade as well as the abolition of slavery. The exhibitions produced were amazing and hugely informative and reflective. One student wrote the very poignant words, 'We fail to address this important information in museums and books. We can't just glaze over history and let it fade away. We need to preserve history so that it is not repeated.'

PERFORMING ARTS



@MECE_PA

DANCE

Year 7: This term Year 7 pupils have been exploring Street Dance and in particular, the style of Locking. They have been GREAT at learning stylised positions and movements through online tutorials and are starting to compile this information into their own solo choreography. The attendance and commitment from this year group has been amazing, and I am very proud of them all!

Year 8: Year 8 pupils have been remotely exploring High School Musical - GO WILDCATS!

I delivered this topic to a cohort last year and decided due to the positive reviews to revive this for our year 8s, as it is designed especially for online learning - complete with tutorials on the dance steps from the original cast members themselves! Pupils will begin to create their own choreography and combine this with steps they have already learnt. I hope that this topic if anything will bring a bit of joy and remember 'we are all in this together!'

Year 9: This term Year 9 pupils are looking at Popping and Locking and in particular the choreography from the 'Thriller' music video. They are learning the routine online via a teacher and are designing a costume and make-up/face paint to accompany their dance!

Year 9s are adding to their extensive knowledge. This year alone they have explored the styles of Capoeira, Kung Fu and Contemporary and linking this with Buddhism. They also studied the Roaring 20s in America, looking at dance styles such as the Charleston and Lindy Hop. Regardless of option choices that are being made, all students will have a broad understanding of different dance cultures, styles, genres and dance history that will add to and cater to their future careers.

Year 10: Year 10 have been exploring Brazilian dance this term! A fun, vibrant and expressive topic which intends to keep pupils engaged and develop knowledge at the same time. The styles include Capoeira and Samba, and they have also been taught motifs from Rambert Dance company which combines the two styles. This links with their theory; exploring the work *A Linha Curva* by Rambert. I aim to complete this topic by February half term, before moving onto another very different style of dance - Ballet and appreciating the work 'Infra' by the Royal Ballet Company.

Year 11: The year 11s have just finished their trios for their Performance Module, with videos of the movement uploaded for pupils to learn each week. Their upcoming assessment was planned for February, and although this will not go ahead at that date, we are still aiming to prepare to perform once back onsite.

Alongside this, year 11s have been continuing to choreograph a dance for their Choreography component. Pupils should now be at the point of creating movement relating to their dance ideas.

DRAMA

Year 7 students have been putting themselves in the shoes of an evacuee from World War 2. In this unit, we are looking at how we can use moments from history as a starting point for drama whilst also developing our understanding of empathy. In addition to this, we have been studying the features of script writing to encourage any budding playwrights!

Year 8 have been becoming experts in the film adaptation process! They will be able to tell you all about different types of camera angles and the quirky features of a screen play and might well have some strong opinions on the long-argued debate: which is better: a book or the film of that book!?

Year 9 have been developing their understanding of Willy Russell's *Blood Brothers*. This is a play that they studied in English when in year 8. In drama, we consider this play from the perspective of a performer, a director and a designer.

Year 10 GCSE Drama students have begun to prepare in earnest for the written exam they will sit at the end of year 11. The play text they are studying is *Blood Brothers* and I have been really enjoying our read-through of the play as they have been some excellent (and some very questionable!) scouse accents!

Year 11 students have been studying the fast-paced and physically exhausting style of John Godber as they prepare for their performance of a monologue from one of Godber's plays, either *Bouncers* or *Shakers*. These plays hold a mirror up to the audience asking them what are the costs of 'living for the weekend'?

MUSIC

Year 7 have been understanding the origins of Blues music. Where it came from, how music has evolved using the 12-bar blues and the students have been using their music technology skills to create this.

Year 8 have been learning about Baroque, Classical and Romantic music. They have been listening to various different pieces of famous music from composers such as Beethoven, Mozart Vivaldi and Bach.

Year 9 have been planning a music event taking a unit from the BTEC Music Technology scheme of work.

Year 10 have started their Killer Queen set work whilst working on their compositions and performances.

Year 11 are working towards their NEA performance and composition. They are also working on their set work Bach's 'Brandenburg concerto.'



MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Vocabulary learning – is your child learning regularly? This will help build their confidence. Please make sure they have a login to Quizlet and use it little but often. They can also use paper and post-it notes to recap vocab if they want/need time off the computer!



KS3

Year 7 have been learning about how to describe people – appearance and personality. They will also be describing some art in the coming weeks – and hopefully they'll create some too!

In years 8 and 9 we've been covering description of celebrities, TV programmes and activities online which we thought was relevant to life right now in lockdown. They have been learning/re-capping different tenses to be able to talk about these activities.

Year 9 have Options coming up –please see the information on why it's important
Post options we will be continuing to motivate students and consolidate tenses, work on sentence structure and vocabulary which will set them up for KS4.

KS3 photo competition launch!

All KS3 students are invited to enter the photo competition based on 2 categories:

Different perspectives on languages

Nature

They can upload a photo (using effects/collage etc) and give a description if they can. Useful language has been given to students.

Deadline: 22 February (after half-term).

We'd love to encourage getting students out and about!



KS4

Year 10 students have been working hard and learning about the home and region topic and are about to describe their ideal house – there's always time to dream!

Y11 continue to work hard and are currently working on the topic of Free Time. So far they have completed tasks on Extreme Sports (it appears we have some aspiring extreme skiers and parachutists in the class!) and ordering food and drink in a restaurant. I am looking forward to reading their accounts of a disastrous meal out!

Well done to year 11 who are continuing to try their best with their online work. We want them to feel a sense of achievement by continuing the course and receiving well-deserved grades by the end of the year.

FOLLOW US ON MFLMECEI



WORLD BOOK DAY

4 MARCH 2021

We are delighted to have made a successful application to the Woodland Trust and will be in receipt of 105 native saplings to plant on the school grounds this Spring!



We are lucky to have been selected as one of the Co-op's Community Charities, which means that every time you shop at any Co-op, you can raise money for our school. All you need to do is register for a membership and name MECE as your chosen cause, either by installing the app [here](#) or signing up for a card [here](#). We will be using the money raised to improve the school canteen dining area, something that everyone can enjoy. Keep an eye on how much we have raised by visiting our cause page <https://membership.coop.co.uk/causes/50537>

Remember the more people who signs up, the more money the school makes.

Did you know... there is a parent-run private Facebook group for each year of students? Join to ask questions and take part in discussions related to your child's year group. Search for the following on Facebook groups

- * New Starter 2020 Year 7 Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge
- * July 2023 Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge Leavers
- * Chiltern Edge - class of September 2017
- * July 2021 Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge Leavers

PE Department

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act about mental health**



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