



# THE MESSENGER



## Dear Parents & Carers

It is fantastic to be able to share some of the highlights of very busy half term in this newsletter. I was truly inspired by the way our students engaged with the Community Clean-up to mark the Coronation of King Charles III. We will be arranging some more regular litter picks after half term.

Years 11, 12 and 13 have been working hard towards the start of the exam season and we have a few weeks of public examinations still to come. As we look forward to the next half term, the conclusion of the examination season will mark the beginning of an exciting schedule which includes Work Experience and a Futures Week for Year 12, careers events, induction days for students joining both Year 7 and Year 12 in September, Diversity Day and of course the Year 11 Prom.

## UPCOMING DATES

- Start of term - 5th June
- Diversity day - 23rd June
- Induction Evening for Parents & Carers - 3rd July
- Induction Days for Y6 - 4th-5th July
- Sixth Form Induction Days - 10th-12th July
- End of term - 25th July



## PRAYER CORNER

Lord God, Thank you for this opportunity to learn new skills and stretch my understanding. Thank you for guiding me through this time of study into the final exams. I lay before you all the hopes and fears I have about the outcome. May you place a peace within me now as I rest and await the results. Thank you that I am safely held in your love. Thank you that whatever happens in the future I will live in your goodness and walk with you always. Amen.

## SMITH'S MYTHS

A: The Great Wall of China is over 13000 miles long.

B: Gummy bears were originally called laughing bears.

C: A moonbow is a rainbow produced by moonlight rather than direct sunlight.

# SCHOOL EVENTS



bonjour



## France Trip

This year's French and History visit to Normandy was another fantastic experience for our students. We visited places of historical significance, including Mont St Michel and the town of Bayeux.

Students visited and learned about the Bayeux tapestry which shows the Norman invasion of England in 1066. We also visited a market and students were able to use their French to buy food and souvenirs.

The activities at the chateau were great fun, with our students getting very muddy on the assault course, learning the sport of fencing and singing around the campfire in the evening.

All activities at the chateau were conducted in French and we were incredibly proud of our students for their excellent French skills and enthusiastic participation!

# SCHOOL EVENTS

## Year 11 vs Staff Indoor Cricket

A hotly anticipated cricket match took place earlier this term with the best of Year 11 (with a little help from the Sixth Form) squaring up to the experience (a lot of experience) of the staff. I would love to report a frantic and closely contested match, in truth Year 11 absolutely slaughtered the staff. All round excellence with the bat, ball and in the field meant the contest was over before the final over. A massive congratulations to Year 11, while the staff need to go back to the drawing board (or find some less 'experienced' players).



## Leicester Field Trip

Year 11 and 13 Geographers visited Leicester earlier this term. Year 11 were there to investigate how quality of life changes as you move through a city such as Leicester. They undertook important primary fieldwork which will be used in their upcoming exams. Year 13 investigated the sense of place within Leicester. As usual our students displayed exemplary behaviour and were a credit to the Blue Coat Family.

# SCHOOL EVENTS

## LRC Literacy Review

In the LRC there is currently a “Literacy Review” competition where students are awarded 1 achievement point for each book they read and 5 achievement points for each review they submit. The top 3, most detailed reviews receive a £5 book token each.

We have only had one round of this competition so far but have had great responses from students. We are excited to continue encouraging students to write the most positive or critical reviews of their books!

Review sheets can be found in the LRC and we are looking to display the students’ reviews in the Library soon.

**CONGRATULATIONS**  
reviewers

You are each awarded 5 achievement points and a book token for your fantastic reviews!

The literacy review is still open in the LRC for book reviews!

Greater Rosa

Evie-May

Sumaia

Reviewed

Reviewed

Reviewed

**THE MADMAN OF VENICE**  
SOPHIE MASSON

**RUNNING ON ENEMY**  
S. EDWARDS

**MICHAEL MORPURGO**  
MY FRIEND WALTER

# SCHOOL EVENTS

## Walsall Fire Station Trip

As part of the Princes Trust Mosaic project a group of year 7s visited Walsall fire station.

We spent the day there looking around the station and exploring all the different roles that can be done within the fire service. We got to see new recruits during their training and ask them questions about their roles and why they joined the fire service.

The students also took part in team building activities and learnt how the equipment they use works. It was a great day enjoyed by all.



## Inflatables Day

On Thursday 11th May our winning form groups and top performing students with the most achievement points got to take place in our Rewards Inflatables day at our Delves Green Road site. Our successful form groups were:

- Year 7 TLL
- Year 8 RAA
- Year 9 CDH and EAL
- Year 10 SKA and EAL
- Year 12 DLT

The Students got to take part in a range of activities including a bungee run, gladiator dual, an army themed inflatable assault course and a blow-up football target game. Students were highly competitive throughout the day and had a thoroughly enjoyable time.

Our winning form group and top students with the most achievement points at the end of next term will win the opportunity to go to Alton Towers as part of our Reward Trip in September!!



# CORONATION EVENTS

## Coronation Bells

Following the announcement of King Charles' Coronation, the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers initiated an appeal to recruit more ringers to be trained in time to Ring for the King.

On Saturday 6th May St Matthew's Church took part in the Coronation bell ringing. Antoni K was amongst the ringers, a pupil from the school who is one of the first students to learn how to bell-ring as part of an organised school club.

All bell ringers from the church were very proud of being a part of the national record of ringing for the Coronation and part of Walsall's history.

## Coronation Clean Up with Blue Coat Juniors

As part of the Coronation's 'Big Help Out' 5 Sixth Formers and 2 Year 9s went over to Blue Coat Juniors to escort a group of very excited Year 6s on a litter pick. The team were hugely kind and supportive towards the children from the Junior school and 10 bags of litter were picked in an hour.

Additionally, students from our other year groups cleaned up the local area and were joined by a member of the Walsall police team. The students were very excited to get involved and were thanked by members of the community for their hard work.

We'd also like to thank Allsopp Smile for their generous donations towards the event, plus St Matthew's Church, Walsall College and Walsall Council for their support on the day.



## Y10 Oxford University Trip

On Thursday 11th May, we took 10 Year 10 students to Oxford University as part of the Oxbridge Outreach Project. We made our way to one of the lecture halls at Oriel College where two ex-students delivered a very inspiring session all about applying to University, how to make your university application stand out and how to be 'super-curricular'.



# SCHOOL EVENTS

The students were assigned a task to think about 5 of the big worldwide topics and apply them to a subject they enjoy. The 5 societal topics were:

1. Climate Change
2. Artificial Intelligence
3. Mental Health
4. Cost of living Crisis
5. War in Ukraine

Our students came up with some fantastic ideas; linking the Cost of Living Crisis to childhood development in Health and Social care, linking the effects of WWI to the effects of the War in Ukraine, and Business to Artificial Intelligence. Both Holly and Aaron said how impressed they were with their ideas!

The students also had the opportunity to have a Q&A session with student ambassadors, take a tour of the Oriel College, and explore the famous landmarks in Oxford: like the Radcliffe Camera, the 'Bridge of Sighs' and 'Christ Church'.

It was a great day out, the students left feeling inspired and motivated to push themselves and achieve their goals and excited at the prospects of being able to attend such a prestigious university in the future.



# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

# SPOTIFY

Spotify is a digital music, podcast and video service which gives users access to millions of songs and other content from creators all over the world. Since launching in 2008, Spotify has revolutionised the way music is listened to: it now offers the ability to manage and share more than 100 million tracks and five million podcast series, plus personalised recommendations, new release updates and the option to create collaborative playlists. As of February 2023, it is the world's most popular audio streaming subscription service with 489 million users globally.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### EXPLICIT LYRICS

As per Spotify's terms and conditions, people need to be at least 13 to use it. That said, the platform doesn't censor lyrics unless instructed to do so in the settings – so it's worth noting that young teenagers could still be exposed to age-inappropriate songs which contain explicit references to sexual behaviour, violence, discriminatory language and swearing.

### GROOMING TACTICS

Although Spotify doesn't come with dedicated chat functionality, concerns were raised in January 2023 after reports of an 11-year-old girl being coerced into sharing explicit pictures of herself on the platform. The case highlighted predators' tactics of sharing empty playlists with other users: their messages were being exchanged undetected through edited song titles and descriptions, bypassing security measures.

### OVERSHARING

Spotify provides a perfect way to play music, with the ability to connect to another device, such as a Bluetooth speaker or an in-car stereo. While this is a useful feature, it's also easy to forget your surroundings and inadvertently play content which isn't appropriate for all listeners (especially those under the age of 18), potentially causing alarm or distress.

### AGE-INAPPROPRIATE PODCASTS

Spotify's podcast community has grown exponentially and it's become a popular base for millions of users to listen to shows, stories, interviews and more – with content covering an array of topics. This includes some material which isn't suitable for minors, including audio which is obviously adult-themed, but can be just as easily accessed as everything else.

### ACCESS TO SPOTIFY LIVE

If your child has a Spotify account, they'll also be able to access the platform's audio-only chat service: Spotify Live. While it's a separate stand-alone app, Spotify Live allows people to listen to live discussions on the main Spotify platform and, more notably, lets users enter virtual rooms to chat with other users, opening up direct conversations with strangers and individuals who might not necessarily be there for the right reasons.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### SWAP TO SPOTIFY KIDS

If you're concerned about what your child might hear while streaming music, Spotify Kids is a separate, ad-free service specifically designed for children aged 12 and under. It allows younger users to enjoy human-curated, child-friendly content (such as music and audiobooks) and is available to users with a Spotify Premium Family subscription – meaning that parents can view and manage the content their child listens to.

### CENSOR EXPLICIT CONTENT

Regardless of what type of account your child uses to access Spotify, there is an option to turn off explicit content in the settings – greying out all songs marked with an 'E' tag. If your child has their own individual account, it's easier for them to turn it back on – whereas with a family plan, you're in control and your child can't alter the setting without knowing the password.

### TALK ABOUT THE RISKS

As with any platform, it's good practice to talk to your child about what they should be aware of when using Spotify. For instance, it's important they're aware never to share any personal information with strangers, and what they should do if they're exposed to inappropriate content. Encourage them to think critically about what they see and hear so that they feel comfortable raising any concerns with you.

### KEEP AN EYE OUT

If you're concerned that your child is spending too much time on Spotify or you've noticed they're being particularly secretive about how they're using it, encourage them to talk about what they're listening to. It's always prudent to show an interest in their online habits from the outset – so you're confident they're using apps and services in the right way, for the right reasons, and they're not being drawn into anything they shouldn't be.

## Meet Our Expert

Carly Page is an experienced technology journalist with a track record of more than 10 years in the industry. Previously the editor of tech tabloid *The Inquirer*, Carly is now a freelance technology journalist, editor and consultant.



#WakeUpWednesday

Source: <https://newsroom.spotify.com/company-info/> | [https://www.spotify.com/privacy/files/Parental\\_Guide.pdf](https://www.spotify.com/privacy/files/Parental_Guide.pdf) | <https://www.spotify.com/us/live/> | <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/police-confirm-investigation-launched-after-26916035>

# FOLLOW US!

## Social Media

Follow us on social media to get school updates, information on local events, careers information, revision tips, updates on newsletters and much more!



Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BlueCoatWalsall>



Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/bluecoatacademywalsall>



Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BlueCoatWalsall>



LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/11207595>

LinkedIn Alumni Group:

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12823364/>