



Holmer C of E Academy – Monthly Newsletter

Value of the month: **Forgiveness**

March 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we welcome the blue skies and slightly warmer days of spring, there is a real sense of hope and energy around the school. It is wonderful to see our pupils making the most of the opportunities available to them, both in and out of the classroom. Their enthusiasm and dedication to learning are truly inspiring, and we are so proud of their hard work and achievements. This month has been filled with exciting extra-curricular activities, and it has been fantastic to see so many pupils getting involved. From the teamwork and skill shown on the football and netball pitches to the confidence and critical thinking displayed in debating, our pupils continue to impress. Our Bikeability sessions have also been a great success, helping children to build important cycling skills in a safe and supportive environment. A huge well done to everyone taking part!

Polite Parking Reminder

We kindly remind all parents and carers to park safely when dropping children off in the morning. Please refrain from stopping at the curb-side or using the staff car park for drop-offs, as this can pose a safety risk. Additionally, we ask that the staff car park is not used at the end of the school day or after clubs, as many pupils walk through this area. Your cooperation in keeping our school environment safe for everyone is greatly appreciated.



Each week, we share a new big question for pupils to think about and discuss with others. This week, our big question has been: **How do I look after my friends and family?** Take a moment to discuss how this might look different to different people. We would love to hear their thoughts!



Inspiring us all to create a better world

Year 3 - We are thoroughly enjoying our topic on 'Roman Britain'. So far we have learnt about why the Romans decided to invade Britain, Boudicca, Roman soldiers and most excitingly Roman army formations. The children made their own Roman shields and practised some of the formations that they used so successfully! The pictures show 3J making the 'testudo' formation. Named after an animal, and a very good defensive formation. Can you guess which animal? We are looking forward to learning about Hadrian's Wall, their beliefs and legacies. We also have a trip to Caerleon on Thursday 5th June to look forward to!



Computing and All Things Digital @ Holmer

With the warmer weather seemingly upon us, it seems a prudent time to talk about the Children's Commissioner's initiative called the **Digital 5 a Day**. This document has been designed to reflect the concerns of parents as well as the voices of our children along with the needs today's Digital Society. One way in which this document can be used is to establish positive family agreements with regards to a healthy digital life for yourselves and your children. What is powerful about it is the fact it is based on the NHS' 5 steps to better mental wellbeing' something which is truly important for anyone. For more information, and to download your own copy, just scan the QR code below.

This month, we have met with our partner school only a handful of times due to Ramadan. This religious period is of vital importance within the Islamic faith, where the adherence to consuming food and drink only occurring within the hours of darkness. Small children, elderly or ill individuals are permitted to consume small quantities of food and drink during daylight hours. It has been very enlightening for our pupils to ask questions and gain a deeper understanding of this practice with some of our students comparing Ramadan with the Christian period of Lent.

If you have any questions about Computing at Holmer, then please do not hesitate to contact us.

Children's
COMMISSIONER



What Parents & Educators Need to Know about BLUESKY SOCIAL APP

AGE RESTRICTION
13+

With an App Store rating of 17+ & Google Play rating Mature

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

While Bluesky has been around since 2019, it's suddenly taken off in a big way thanks to a significant exodus from X (formerly Twitter). Indeed, it looks and behaves a lot like Twitter before Elon Musk bought the platform. Bluesky has been touted in recent months as a safer, more open-minded alternative to X – but like any social media site, it still has its share of risks.

NO PRIVATE ACCOUNTS

While most social networks allow accounts to be private, at the time of writing, all Bluesky accounts must be public. The development team has indicated this might change in the future, but the app is built on a public-first protocol. If private accounts are ever introduced, it may only be in a limited way – such as through the implementation of group chats.

INTERACTIONS WITH STRANGERS

Every account being public means that anyone can be contacted by anyone else. While users don't have to respond and can easily block people and move on, it does mean that youngsters are at particular risk of being conned by scammers, messaged by predatory adults or exposed to others with ill intentions. These hazards are compounded by the fact that Bluesky doesn't require its users to provide their real name.

TROLLING AND BULLYING

While Bluesky currently feels a lot friendlier than X seems to have become, its lack of private accounts means that there's nothing to stop users from trolling and cyberbullying younger people. While accounts can be blocked and reported, a persistent bully could simply create a new profile, potentially making their victims feel unsafe in continuing to use the app.

DANGEROUS MISINFORMATION

Established news organisations have fact-checking and editing processes, but social networks have no such controls and can often serve as breeding grounds for misinformation and disinformation. Bluesky will possibly be no different once it reaches a certain size, and children may not have the critical thinking skills to tell fact from fiction – or to discern an informative, honest user from a malicious one.

ADULT TARGET AUDIENCE

Bluesky isn't designed with children in mind, and there aren't many parental controls on the platform. In an interview with the BBC, Bluesky's CEO originally said that the app would only allow users aged 13 and above to sign up, but a spokesperson later clarified its age restriction as 17+. This could imply the app was originally meant for an adult audience and suggests that making the platform more child-friendly might not currently be a priority.

RAPID GROWTH

At the time of writing, Bluesky seems calm in comparison with other social networks where moderation is lax and the atmosphere toxic – but that's due at least in part to its smaller community. The app has recently been adding as many as a million users per day, and if that continues, there'll be more unpleasant users to handle, and moderators could struggle to maintain the pleasant environment Bluesky is currently known for.

Advice for Parents & Educators

USE THE ADULT CONTENT FILTER

Bluesky doesn't have much in the way of parental controls, but there are content filters which can hide sexual and graphic imagery. These are enabled by default for underage accounts but can be manually turned on in the 'Moderation' section of the app's settings. The 'advanced' Bluesky Moderation Service lets you restrict content even further, hiding – for example – self-harm content, extremist rhetoric, and even rude posts.

ENCOURAGE BLOCKING AND REPORTING

Another tool that Bluesky uses to ensure a decent experience is muting and blocking accounts. The former prevents you from seeing a specific user's content, while the latter stops them from seeing yours. If a child is encountering trolls or bullies on the platform, encourage them to use this function, while also reporting the offenders to help make the platform a nicer place for everyone.

LOOK OUT FOR FAKES

Impersonation is a problem on all social networks. While the consequences are usually benign, imposters sometimes attempt to scam or groom children by pretending to be a popular influencer or online personality. Bluesky is unique in that it can be connected to official domains, with users' handles linking to other sites; while this isn't widely used right now, it could be a reliable way to verify celebrities and public figures in future.

KEEP AN OPEN DIALOGUE

As with all social media platforms, moderation and content filters can only do so much; it's highly likely that a child will eventually face something unadvisory. For that reason, it's important to make sure that young people are aware of the risks and know how to handle the technology if anything they see on the app makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, TechRadar, Tom's Guide, The Evening Standard, The Guardian and The New Statesman.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

Source: See full reference list on guide page at <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/bluesky-app>

X @wake_up_weds

f /www.thenationalcollege

@wake.up.wednesday

@wake.up.weds

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 26.03.2025

Year R

In EYFS this month we have been embracing the change of seasons with observational walks, on our walks we have noticed the changes to our outdoor environment. We have combined our Geography and science units to create journey sticks where the children pick up natural items they have encountered on their walk and tie them to their 'journey stick'. We will be creating these each month to observe the changes through the seasons using our 'journey sticks' to orally discuss and compare the similarities and differences each month.



Year 4

Year 4 have enjoyed their learning this term. They have been incredibly enthusiastic about their literacy linked to the book *Varjak Paw*, they have tackled decimals with great perseverance and have loved working with different mediums in their art lessons. We have been looking at 3D art and sculptures, which has given us the opportunity to work with clay, paint and wire. It was wonderful to see them develop their skills of using different tools to shape their creations.



Website:
www.holmeracademy.co.uk



Contact:
01432 273301



Email:
Admin@holmer.hereford.sch.uk

Exciting News for Our EYFS Outdoor Area!

We are delighted to share that our EYFS outdoor area refurbishment has been made possible through funding from Herefordshire Community Foundation. Thanks to their generous support, we have been able to purchase fantastic new equipment to enhance our children's learning and play experiences.

Our youngest learners will now enjoy a brand-new wooden building station, a sturdy wheelbarrow, and a well-equipped workbench, encouraging creativity, teamwork, and hands-on exploration. These additions will help develop essential early skills in a fun and engaging way. We are incredibly grateful for this funding and look forward to seeing the children make the most of their new resources!



Herefordshire
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION



Website:
www.holmeracademy.co.uk



Contact:
01432 273301



Email:
Admin@holmer.hereford.sch.uk

Year 2

Year 2 have thoroughly enjoyed their science topic on "Animals, including Humans: Life Cycles and Health." One of the highlights was learning about the spread of germs through a fun and interactive glitter experiment. The children eagerly spread glitter on their hands, then observed how easily germs can transfer to different surfaces, which helped them understand the importance of good hygiene, handwashing, and surface cleaning.

The children have also been highly motivated by the opportunity to participate in the "Daily Mile" challenge, where they ran each day for a week to test their fitness levels. They were excited to track their progress and were determined to get quicker as the week went on, demonstrating a noticeable increase in their stamina. Additionally, the topic of food groups and what makes a balanced diet was explored in depth, and the children were eager to apply their learning by making healthier choices. They enthusiastically discussed their favourite foods and became more mindful of the importance of eating a variety of nutrients to keep their bodies strong and healthy. It has been fun to see science come alive in their everyday lives.



Year 1

March has been a super busy one for us in Y1. We flew threw our book *Mini Rabbit Not Lost* by John Bond and are now onto *Anna Hibiscus* by Antinuke. We are so excited to hear about all the adventures she is going on and learning a little but about African culture. We celebrated World Book day with some fantastic costumes, it was such a fun day. With the warmer weather, we have been making the most of our outdoor area, exploring the capacity of different containers, building carious creations and measuring the lengths of different objects. Just this week, we had Science Day where we looked at Climate Change. The children made wonderful posters reminding us of the dangers of heating up our world. We tested what would happen if the ice caps melted and we realised that it is time to take action and use renewable energy. We finished the day with three exciting experiments looking at change, it was such fun.



Website:
www.holmeracademy.co.uk



Contact:
01432 273301



Email:
Admin@holmer.hereford.sch.uk

Year 5 Take on Bikeability!

This month, Year 5 had an exciting opportunity to take part in Bikeability, developing their cycling skills and road safety awareness. The children started by building their confidence in the school playground, mastering balance, control, and essential riding techniques. As they progressed, they took their skills onto the roads, learning how to navigate safely and responsibly in real-life cycling situations. There were some challenging moments along the way, but every pupil showed incredible resilience and perseverance—nobody gave up! By the end of the sessions, all children proudly achieved their Level 1 or Level 2 Bikeability award. Not only have they improved their cycling abilities, but they have also gained an important life skill that will help them stay safe and active for years to come. Well done, Year 5—what a fantastic achievement!



Year 6 – Shakespeare Spectacle

Recently, Year 6 embarked on an extraordinary adventure into the wonderful world of Shakespeare. The morning began with an engaging workshop centered around *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, where the rich language of his work came alive right before our eyes. The children were not merely spectators; instead, they became vibrant characters, acting out hilarious scenes filled with love triangles, mischievous fairies, and even a bit of slow-motion running!

Laughter echoed through the hall as pupils recited their lines with an energy and enthusiasm that we have never witnessed before. The talented actors from the theatre company mesmerised everyone with their brilliant performances, delivering Shakespeare's words in a way that was as entertaining as it was enlightening. Each comedic moment left the audience in stitches—from the rapid slapstick antics of Puck to the heartfelt blunders of the lovers lost in the forest.

The atmosphere was alive with joy, proving that Shakespeare isn't just for the old—it can be thrilling for young minds, too!

By the end of the morning, it was clear that this experience was not just about understanding the text but embracing the humour and fun woven into every line. The workshop left Year 6 buzzing with excitement, their imaginations ignited, and their appreciation for Shakespeare transformed forever. What a sensational hit the morning was!



Website:
www.holmeracademy.co.uk



Contact:
01432 273301



Email:
Admin@holmer.hereford.sch.uk

This month our Christian values have been **Forgiveness**. Please discuss how your child can show these values in their day-to-day lives.

FORGIVENESS

HOME SCHOOL VALUES

This term we will be focussing in school on the value FORGIVENESS. We hope your family will find these ideas helpful as you explore the value and have fun together.

TALK ABOUT FORGIVENESS TOGETHER...

Everyone makes mistakes, it's part of being human. Sometimes our mistakes hurt others and then we need to say sorry. Sometimes mistakes made by other people hurt us. When this happens we need to be able to **forgive**. **Forgiveness** can be difficult and costly but without it a new start is impossible.

Talk together about:

- A time when you needed to say sorry
- A time you didn't say sorry but wish you had
- A time when you had to **forgive** someone who had hurt or upset you
- How it feels when you are given a new start because someone has **forgiven** you

THINK TOGETHER ABOUT WORDS OF WISDOM

"Without **forgiveness** there is no future.... If you can **forgive**, then you can move on and even help the person you are forgiving to become a better person"

Desmond Tutu



HOME-SCHOOL CHALLENGE

Maze

Design your own version of the maze tree in the story of Zacchaeus.

You can either draw it on paper or use other materials to create it. It's up to you! Take it to school to display in the Challenge Gallery.



READ TOGETHER...

Zacchaeus the Tax Collector

Zacchaeus was a little man. He was a tax collector and had become rich by making others pay lots of money in taxes to the Romans and to him. He didn't have many friends.

When Zacchaeus heard Jesus was in town, he wanted to see him. But Zacchaeus was short and Jesus was always surrounded by a crowd. So Zacchaeus decided to run ahead of the crowd and climb a sycamore tree. From there he could watch for Jesus. As Jesus drew closer, he held his breath excitedly until Jesus stopped right beneath his tree. Jesus looked straight up at him! "Zacchaeus," said Jesus with a smile, "come on down. I want to stay at your house today!"

Zacchaeus hopped down. "You are welcome at my house, Jesus," he said with a huge grin.

But others grumbled, muttering to each other. "Why does Jesus want to go home with the rich, cheating tax collector? He isn't good enough for Jesus to come and stay at his house."

Zacchaeus heard what the people were saying about him and he wanted to put things right. He turned to Jesus and said, "Master, here and now, I promise to give half of my money to the poor. If I have cheated anyone in taxes, I will pay them back four times that amount."

Zacchaeus wanted to turn over a new leaf because Jesus believed that everyone deserved a new start and now Zacchaeus believed it too!

Bible story based on Luke 19:2-10



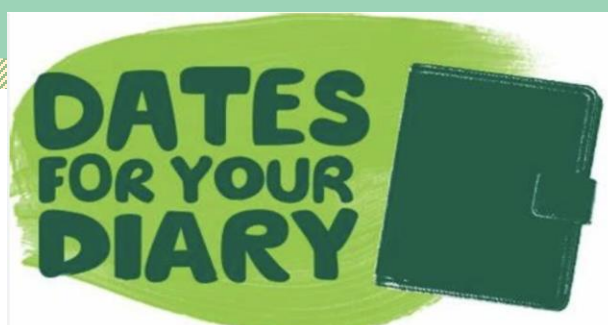
QUIZ

Tree Maze

Help Zacchaeus find his way down from the top of the tree, to meet Jesus.



| April 2025 | Event |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| Tuesday 1st | PTFA Bingo |
| Thursday 3rd | Boys' Football at Wyeside |
| Friday 4th | 4P Assembly |
| Tuesday 8th | Y3 Roald Dahl Project in school |
| Thursday 10th | Y5 Racing to School |
| Friday 11th | School Closes for Easter |
| Monday 28th | School Reopens for Summer Term |
| Tuesday 29th | Y3 Roald Dahl Project in school |
| | |
| | |
| | |



| May 2025 | Events |
|-----------------------|---|
| Monday 5th | School Closed – Bank Holiday |
| Tuesday 6th | Y3 Roald Dahl Project in School |
| Tuesday 6th | Y5 Mappa Mundi workshop at Hereford Cathedral |
| Friday 9th | 3S Class Worship |
| Mon 12th – Thurs 15th | Year 6 KS2 SATs Week |
| Friday 16th | 5EH Class Worship |
| Wednesday 21st | Y4 Walk Away Project |
| Thursday 22nd | Y5 Hay Festival |
| Thursday 22nd | PTFA School Disco |
| Friday 23rd | 3J Class Worship |
| Friday 23rd | School closes for Half Term |

“You are the salt of the earth; you are the light of the world.”