



*It has been lovely to have quite a bit of sunshine this week! Students have been able to enjoy being outside at break and lunch and it has been great to see much more extensive use of the picnic tables, along with many students walking and playing sports at these times; students are still staying off the field areas and we will look to reassess this as the term continues. Breaks and lunchtimes are great opportunities for students to spend social time with their friends, and these are such important parts of the school day and contribute so much towards student well-being.*

*Year 10 and 11 students observed a fabulous live performance of Macbeth in school; both year groups study Macbeth as part of their English Literature GCSE and the timing of this performance has been carefully planned to support the upcoming exams – Y10 with their internal mock exams at the end of this term and Y11s with their GCSE in the summer – to enable students to have a stronger understanding of the text. If you have a daughter and/or son in these year groups, please discuss this with them.*

*RSA-8 began this week at Waseley Hills for some of our Year 8 students as part of Careers' Week, and a group of students also took part in a Dodgeball competition at the University of Wolverhampton. All of our Year 11 geographers visiting Carding Mill Valley in Shropshire to support their preparations for their GCSE exams. Again, these opportunities are such an important part of learning.*

*I hope you have an enjoyable weekend, and do please get in touch via [Gospel Oak School - Contact Us](#) if we can help in any way.*

#### **Upcoming Dates**

Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> March – British Science Week Quiz,  
Holyhead School

Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> March – Year 9 Guided Choices & Core  
Evening

Friday 14<sup>th</sup> March – Drop Down Day

Friday 14<sup>th</sup> March – Year 8 Empower Poetry Workshop

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> March – Year 13 Psychology Trip - Star  
City

Friday 21<sup>st</sup> March – Year 7 Morgan Stanley Event

#### **Assembly Themes**

Assembly focus this week was World Book Day &  
Importance of Reading

w/c 10/03 – National Careers Week

w/c 17/03 – International Day of Happiness

Please take the time to talk to your child about  
what they have learnt in Assembly.

Year Team Updates – w/e 07.03.25

**Year 7:**

Year 7 had a busy and productive week last week! In our morning meetings, we explored the topic of misogyny, reinforcing the message that this has no place at Gospel Oak School. Our assembly also provided a timely reminder of our year group expectations, encouraging students to reflect on "What is our why?"—why we come to school each day to build knowledge and skills that will shape our future. A huge well done to all students for their improvement in punctuality; it was fantastic to see so many arriving on time and following the B in BASICS. Now, let's focus on boosting our attendance to hit our 95% target for this half-term!

This week, students took part in exciting activities during tutor time for World Book Day 2025. On Thursday, they saw their teachers like never before—as book characters! Who were Mr. Bowser, Miss Barlow, and Miss Hampton?!

Key Dates to Remember:

- ✦ Brilliant Club Launch (Selected Students): 11th March, 13:00 – 15:00
- ✦ Morgan Stanley Launch (Selected Students): 21st March, 9:00 – 12:30

Let's keep up the hard work, Year 7! 🙌

**Year 8:**

In the world of year 8 there has been plenty to celebrate! Last week saw a positive parents evening with an attendance record of 71%. Mr Johnson, Mr Marrs and Miss Smith all commented how pleased they were with the turn out and the brilliant atmosphere within the room seeing students receive some excellent feedback.

**Year 9:**

Lots of exciting experiences and opportunities opening up for the Y9 family starting this week with the business visit to A.F Blakemore for the Envision Cohort 2 12 students happening on Wednesday! As well as this, students took part in numerous activities over the course of tutor time this week for World Book Day 2025 and they saw their teachers in an unusually creative way on Thursday when they dressed up as a book character! Who were Miss Ralph, Mrs Kler and Mr Bhatti?!

**Year 10:**

Year 10: This week we were excited to invite an external provider that have been organised by English on Tuesday to support with the teaching and understanding of Macbeth. Our attitude to learning is increasing each week for the Friday Prize Draw 'wheel'; let's keep this up to win some amazing prizes!

**Year 11:**

Lots happening after school for Y11 with intervention and Master Classes taking place at lunch time and after school every evening.

English - Tuesday after school intervention, is now invite only

Maths - There are Masterclasses on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

Science - Seneca homework weekly reminder.

Lunchtime intervention in F20 on Wednesday – bring your revision materials.

GCSE PE - Miss Thacker F2

Thursday 3:00pm – 4:00pm. NEA Coursework support.

History - Revision classes are running on a Tuesday and Thursday (3:00-3:45pm) in G5, this is to give you maximum opportunity to attend.

Health and social care - Revision classes are running on a Tuesday and Thursday in F7 for those doing Component 1 PSA

**Sixth Form**

On Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> 50 Year 12 and 13 Students went to Bath University – on the trip they had a tour of the campus and did a day in the life of a student. During the day the students had the opportunity to speak to the university student ambassadors and ask them questions regarding university life. It was a real experience and allowed students to get an insight into other areas they can potentially apply to university.

New York letters are now available for students to apply – please pick up a letter from 6<sup>th</sup> form if you are interested in this amazing opportunity.

A reminder to be logging on and completing your online learning.

Your sincerely,

Mr Bala  
Associate Assistant Principal Post 16

Year 12 student of the week – Lily MG  
Year 13 student of the week – Izzy CB  
Year12 attendance – 93.9%  
Year 13 attendance –94.4 %

Events –

8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> July - Year 12 work experience



To: Year 11 Parents / Carers

**Gospel Oak School**

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7<sup>th</sup> March 2025

**Our Ref:** SBO.KH.3205

**Your Ref:**

Dear Parent/Carer,

**Re: Leavers Hoodies**

We are excited to inform you that Year 11 students will have the opportunity to purchase leavers hoodies as part of their final year celebrations. This is a wonderful way for them to commemorate their time at Gospel Oak School and show their school spirit as they approach the end of their secondary education.

From 28th April 2025, we have made the decision that Year 11 students will be allowed to wear their leavers hoodies to school in place of their regular blazer. Please note that the hoodies are completely optional, and if you wish for your son/daughter to have one, they are available for purchase through Aperture Portraits via their link <https://apertureuniforms.co.uk/collections/gospel-oak>.

The cost of the hoodie is from £19.00 each. When placing an order, please ensure you include the correct size for your son/daughter. All hoodie orders need to be submitted by Friday, 21st March 2025 in order to ensure delivery before the end of the school year.

To place your order, simply use the link provided by Aperture Portraits and follow the instructions provided. We kindly ask that you submit the order by the given deadline to guarantee your son/daughter receives their hoodie on time.

Thank you for your continued support, and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us via [Gospel Oak School - Contact Us](#).

Kind regards,

**Miss S Bott**  
**Senior Vice Principal**



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To: Yr 11 Parents/Carers

7<sup>th</sup> March 2025

**Our Ref:** CM.KH.3218

**Your Ref:**

Dear Parent/Carer,

**Re: Year 11 Revision**

As we move ever closer to the Year 11 summer GCSE and BTEC assessments, I am writing to update you on further support which is in place for your daughter/son.

All teaching of content – the learning that students could be tested on in the summer examinations – has been completed and all lessons are now focusing on revision. This is enabling students to further practise how to apply their knowledge to examination questions; this is often referred to as ‘exam technique’. All subjects have a clear revision programme in place, and details of these can be found by visiting [Gospel Oak School - Revision Programmes](#) on the school website; you will notice that the format of these vary from subject to subject as the final assessment timescales are different and subjects do not all have the same amount of curriculum teaching time.

Students have also been provided with revision activities which they must undertake in their own time. Again, these have a clear focus on further preparation for exam success. You will be aware of the work that has been undertaken in school to support students with understanding the importance of working independently outside of the classroom to ensure their success; the activities that your daughter/son will be completing can be found at [Gospel Oak School - Revision Programmes](#). Please remember that students are welcome to study in the LRC at breaktime, lunchtime and after-school if needed; in addition, the Sixth Form Silent Study area is also available after-school for Year 11 students if they would prefer to work in this space.

You will be aware from the school eZine that all students are being provided with additional support from Elevate, an outside company, who specialise in supporting revision programmes and revision techniques in school. Last Friday we hosted our first set of workshops with Elevate, entitled ‘Ace Your Exams’. Feedback from many of the students has been exceptionally positive; we will welcome Elevate back into school on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> March for a second workshop with all students based around ‘Student Elevation’ with a focus on motivation and belief.

Our extensive programme of Exam Masterclasses continues to be well-attended; the full timetable for these is here: [Gospel Oak School - Revision Programmes](#).

Students must be working hard in all lessons and outside of the classroom in order to achieve success; our rewards' programme recognises those who make good choices and are preparing to succeed and school staff will continue to sanction those students who are not meeting at our expectations. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all of your support and encouragement of your daughter/son; it really is a team effort to lay the foundations for successful examination performance. Please do get in touch via [Gospel Oak School - Contact Us](#) if further support is needed.

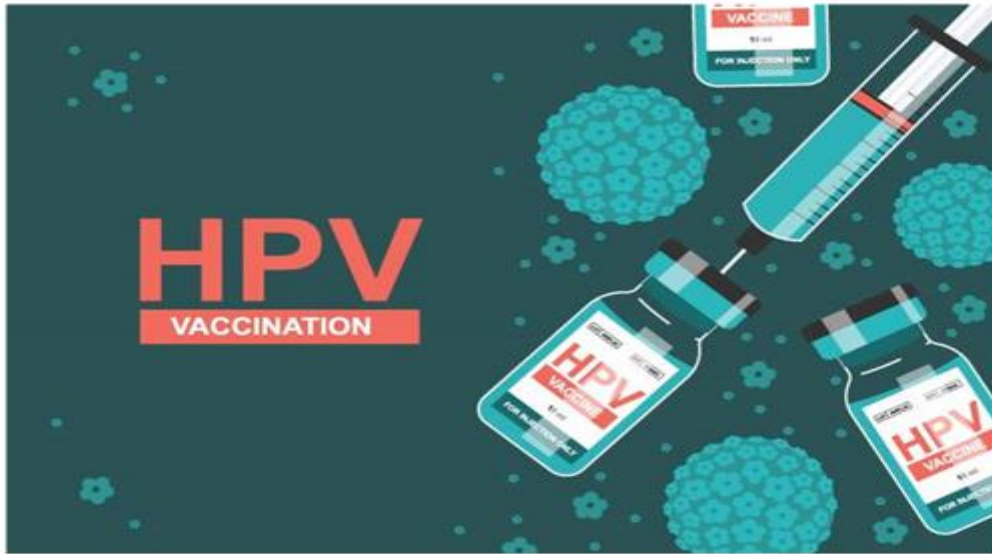
Yours faithfully,



**Miss C Middlehurst**  
**Senior Vice Principal**

Please complete the below link for your child to receive their vaccine:-

<https://midlands.schoolvaccination.uk/hpv/2024/sandwell>



Vaccination UK will be attending Gospel Oak School on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2025 to administer the HPV (Human Papillomavirus Vaccine). Should you wish for your child to receive his / her vaccine then please complete the above link by midnight on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025. Please ensure that your son / daughter has no allergies to the vaccine and should you have any queries then please contact Vaccination UK on 0121 592 1110.

### Ramadan

We would like to inform you that during the month of Ramadan, the Theatre will be available at lunchtime as a dedicated space for prayer. Students observing Ramadan are welcome to use this space to prayer or rest away from the main cohort in a private space for reflection and support from peers.

For those who require cleansing before prayer, the ground floor white toilets and the disabled toilets near the theatre will be available for use.

If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact us:

[Gospel Oak School - Contact Us](#)

## IMPROVING HELP FOR FAMILIES IN SANDWELL



- ✓ Are you Parent/Carer/Guardian for a young person (up to 18 years old) in Sandwell?
- ✓ Got a few minutes to spare?
- ✓ Can you help us by answering 4 questions?
- ✓ Would you like the chance of winning a £20.00 High Street Gift Card?

**We would love to hear from you about what support you need and what might get in the way of you receiving this help.**

**COMPLETE THE SURVEY HERE!**



At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit [nationalcollege.com](https://nationalcollege.com).

# 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators USING TECHNOLOGY TO BOOST READING SKILLS

The way we engage with text has changed dramatically over the years. Whether reading captions on social media, instructions in a video game or an e-book on a digital device, technology plays a major role in modern literacy. While traditional books remain invaluable, digital tools can enhance reading skills by making text more accessible, interactive and engaging.

## 1 CHOOSING THE RIGHT TYPE OF TEXT

Before integrating technology, consider the **TYPE** of text that a child engages with. If they need help on occasion, digital reading tools can assist by scanning and reading words or sentences. These tools are especially useful for students with reading difficulties, and can even be used in exams if they're part of their routine learning process. Proper training and practice are required, but they can be a great help when tackling printed text.

## 2 READING ON SCREEN

Many devices now allow users to customise text for better readability. Adjusting font type, size and background colour can significantly enhance comprehension. For many readers, white text on a black background is the easiest to see, whereas other styles – such as dyslexia-friendly fonts – are designed to help those who are struggling. Teaching children how to personalise text settings on their devices empowers them to read more comfortably and with greater confidence.

## 3 ACCESSIBILITY TOOLS

Most modern devices include built-in tools designed to support readers. These features can be found in Settings under Accessibility and may include text-to-speech, speech-to-text and screen magnification functions. Enabling these tools can make digital reading more user-friendly, especially for children with learning difficulties or visual impairments, who might have an easier time with spoken language than the written word, or who might simply require a closer look at the text.

## 4 INTERACTIVE READING PROGRAMMES

Many digital reading devices, such as Kindle and other e-readers, offer features like word highlighting, adjustable text speed and built-in dictionaries. These tools help learners to break down complex words and phrases while maintaining an appropriate reading pace. Some programmes even allow users to track their progress, making reading a more structured and motivating experience.

## 5 VIDEO GAMES AND READING SKILLS

Many video games require players to read instructions, character dialogues and mission objectives, making them an unexpected but effective literacy tool. Games that involve storytelling, puzzles or problem-solving often include large amounts of text – encouraging children to read these texts aloud or discuss them can improve their comprehension and vocabulary in a fun, engaging way.

## 6 SUBTITLES AND CLOSED CAPTIONS

Watching videos with subtitles or closed captions is an effective way to enhance reading skills. As children watch their favourite shows or online videos, they can follow along with the text, gaining a better understanding of how written words sound when spoken aloud. This is particularly beneficial for reluctant readers, as it exposes them to words in a familiar, engaging context. Repeatedly watching content with subtitles reinforces word recognition and comprehension.

## 7 USING AUDIOBOOKS

Audiobooks are an excellent way to develop listening and reading skills simultaneously. Children can follow along with the text while listening to a narrator, reinforcing word recognition and fluency. For struggling readers, listening to an audiobook before attempting to read the text independently can boost their confidence and comprehension.

## 9 TEXT-TO-VOICE TECHNOLOGY

Text-to-voice software reads digital text aloud, making it easier for learners to follow along. Most smartphones, tablets and computers come with this function built in. When enabled, users can highlight a passage or sentence and press Play to hear it read aloud. This tool is particularly helpful for auditory learners and those who struggle with decoding written words.

## 8 VOICE-TO-TEXT FOR WRITING AND READING

Voice-to-text tools allow users to dictate words, which are then transcribed into text. This feature helps children see the connection between spoken and written language. By using text-to-voice to have their dictated words read back to them, learners can identify mistakes and improve their reading and writing skills simultaneously.

## 10 SOCIAL MEDIA AND PARENTAL CONTROLS

While social media provides opportunities for reading, most platforms have age restrictions of 13–18 years old, making parental guidance essential. Many social media videos include captions and comments that can encourage reading. However, it's important to use the platform's parental controls (such as time limits and content filters) to create a safe and educational online environment for children. Encouraging responsible social media use can ensure a balanced and productive approach to digital literacy.

### Meet Our Expert

Catrina Lawl is a qualified special needs teacher and experienced SENCO. She recently launched her own site, *Neuroteachers*, which offers a library of short, 'how-to' and explanation videos for educators. Catrina also writes and delivers online training and events for multi-academy trusts, businesses, schools and training organisations.



The National College