

# Batchwood Newsletter



Spring 2 24-25

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## Headteacher's Letter

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we come to the end of another busy and rewarding term, I want to take a moment to reflect on all the wonderful achievements of our school community. It has been a term filled with hard work, resilience, and plenty of reasons to celebrate.

Firstly, I would like to thank our dedicated staff. This term has not been without its challenges, particularly with staff absences, and yet our incredible team has gone above and beyond to ensure that students continue to receive the best possible education and support. We have appointed two new members of this term Paddy Hackett (PE teaching assistant) and Olivia Scott (teaching assistant). To help ensure students have access to the support in lessons they require.

Our students have continued to impress us with their enthusiasm, determination, and achievements. Year 8 students have shown great commitment in their swimming lessons, improving not only their skills but also their confidence in the water. Meanwhile, our Year 11s have gained valuable experience through their work placements, preparing them for life beyond school. The skills and insights they have developed will undoubtedly serve them well in the future.

A special mention must go to the students who have participated in Proud Thursday. It continues to be inspiring to see so many young people eager to share their hard work and receive well-deserved recognition. The pride they take in their learning is truly heartwarming, and we look forward to seeing even more students engage with this initiative next term.

We have also seen the power of community spirit with our fantastic Red Nose Day celebrations. From the bake sale to the hilarious Pie the Teachers event (which some of us are still recovering from!), it was wonderful to see everyone come together for a great cause.

Looking ahead, we have an exciting summer term filled with opportunities. Our Year 11 students will be preparing for their GCSE exams, and we encourage them to stay focused and make the most of the support available. We also have key events such as Year 10 mock exams, Year 6 transition days, and residential trips that promise to be enriching experiences for all involved.

As we head into the Easter break, I hope that everyone takes the time to rest, recharge, and enjoy time with family and friends. Wishing you all a wonderful Easter and looking forward to another successful term ahead!

Ross Whitaker



# Red Nose Day 2025



Batchwood celebrated Red Nose Day with a mufti day and Pie the Teachers. Students were able to pay money to pie staff and some staff got to pie students! Pablo the dog enjoyed extra dessert up on the astro turf. Students also raised money for Red Nose Day with a bake sale.

# Resilience and attendance

## Building resilience in students and improving school attendance



At Batchwood School, we recognise the important role that resilience plays in helping our students navigate life's challenges and achieve their fullest potential. Resilience allows students to overcome setbacks, adapt to changes, and develop the skills needed to thrive. However, for some of our students, building resilience can feel like an ongoing journey with unique challenges.

Many of our students struggle to feel motivated to attend school regularly. Missing school can create gaps in learning, increase feelings of anxiety, reduce resilience and lead to further feelings of disconnection from school.

### The impact of poor attendance on future outcomes

The long-term consequences of poor attendance are significant. Regular school attendance is a key factor in academic success, but it also plays a vital role in social and emotional development.

To support our students and help them build resilience, we focus on ensuring that every student feels accepted and understood, reducing anxiety and promoting confidence in attending school.

We also encourage families to work with us in developing strategies to support attendance and addressing any concerns so we can remove barriers to school attendance.

If you need any support with improving school attendance, please contact your form tutor or Sally Smiles, Attendance Lead.



## Student Work Gallery

Massive well done to everyone in year 8 who took part in swimming for 6 weeks.

Every single person improved their swimming skills and had an amazing time. Miss McShane was very proud of all the students that took part. The students also completed Unit Award Schemes certificates for the swimming skills.



## Football tournament updates

KS3 and KS4 boys both competed in a SEN school's football tournament. Both teams played well scoring lots of goals and finishing high in the table.

KS4 Boys came 2nd only on goal difference and KS3 boys came 3rd by 3 points. The standard of football across both teams was great to watch.

KS4 player of the tournament was Archie M (11C) with some outstanding defending.

KS3 player of the tournament was Aiden K (N1) with some great goalkeeping.



# Join our Parents Association!

Dear Parents,

We would like to extend a warm invitation to you all to join our Parents Association! This is a fantastic opportunity to get involved in our school community, share ideas, and support each other as we work together to enhance our children's educational experience.

As a member of the Parents Association, you'll have the chance to meet other parents, participate in exciting events, and play a vital role in shaping the future of our school. Whether you have a bit of time to spare or would like to contribute in other ways, your involvement would be deeply appreciated.

If you're interested in joining us, please follow the link below to let us know. We're excited to hear from you and can't wait to work together in making our school an even better place for our children!

Meetings would likely take place in the evenings and can be held at school or online, whatever best suits the association. This can be discussed when we have enough volunteers.

Follow the link below to register your interest.

<https://forms.gle/Npbqq94UB1q1B6TS6>



# GCSE Exam Timetable

Subject	Date	AM or PM
<b>English Language</b>		
Paper 1	Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2025	AM
Paper 2	Friday 6 <sup>th</sup> June 2025	AM
<b>English Literature (option)</b>		
Paper 1	Monday 12 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	AM
Paper 2	Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	AM
<b>Maths</b>		
Paper 1 (non-calculator)	Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	AM
Paper 2 (calculator)	Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> June 2025	AM
Paper 3 (calculator)	Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> June 2025	AM
<b>Science GCSE Double and Triple</b>		
Biology 1	Tuesday 13 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	PM
Biology 2	Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> June 2025	AM
Chemistry 1	Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	AM
Chemistry 2	Friday 13 <sup>th</sup> June 2025	AM
Physics 1	Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2025	AM
Physics 2	Monday 16 <sup>th</sup> June 2025	AM
<b>Business</b>		
Paper 1	Friday 9 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	PM
Paper 2	Friday 16 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	PM

*Art and Food exams TBD, students in these exams will be notified as soon as possible.*

# Harpenden Town FC

Did you know that 3 members of staff at Batchwood play or manage the local Harpenden Town Football Club?

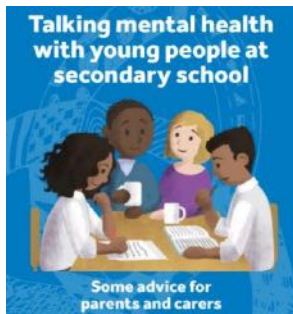
Mr Williams our Deputy Head, coaches Harpenden Womens Football Club. Miss McShane (PE) and Erin (TA) both play for the club.

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2025, will be the last home game of the season, where hopefully Harpenden FC will win the league title! Harpenden town FC are currently 12 points ahead in their division. Kick off is at 2pm at Harpenden FC home ground, Rothamsted Park, Amenbury Ln, Harpenden AL5 2EF. Come along and show support!





# Mental Health and Wellbeing



## It's good to talk

"The teenage years are both exciting and challenging to parents and children. Children start to see a future independent of their parents while parents have to find new ways of protecting a young person who may choose to turn to peers rather than parents for support.

This period can be a confusing and testing time which can be hard for parents. Most young people navigate their way through adolescence. However, for a small number of children problems can become persistent and can threaten the connection between parent and child. Talking early on, before problems become too ingrained, almost always helps.



Sometimes we stop talking because we don't know what to say. We hope this leaflet may help. Of course, we all know that it's not always possible to talk, but it is always good to make the offer. Sometimes supportive friends or a trusted adult – perhaps a teacher – can help. Professionals are there, but even if their help is required, it is still good to talk."

Professor Peter Fonagy, CEO of the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families

## Mental health and wellbeing during secondary school

As parents and carers, it can be hard to know whether your child's feelings and behaviour are normal or becoming a problem. This is especially during adolescence when young people can feel a great deal of pressure and increasingly want to loosen their family ties.



Young people's need for independence is partly due to changes in brain development. This makes reading and understanding others more difficult than when they were younger. This can leave parents feeling that young people are in a world of their own, when actually they can be struggling to understand themselves and others!

A rollercoaster of changing emotions and feelings that come and go is completely normal at this age. Feelings and moods that become a problem are those which last a long time, become overwhelming, and stop your child from doing what they want to in their lives.

We know that having strong relationships lies at the heart of good mental health. As parents and carers we also have our own stresses such as money, job security and juggling family demands. These can put pressure on our capacity to respond sensitively to our children.

Talking can be a helpful way for young people to manage their wellbeing as it helps them to make sense of and manage difficult experiences and feelings.





# Mental Health and Wellbeing

## Top tips for talking

- ★ **Give your full attention, be curious and take it seriously.** We all know it's not nice to be half listened to. Being actively interested in your child can be a powerful way to help them feel listened to and understood. Try to resist the urge to downplay or dismiss what your child is telling you.
- ★ **Emphasise that you are always available to talk.** It may be that your child doesn't want to talk, can't find the words at the moment or is trying to assert their independence. But don't be misled by your teenager's need for separation. They need you just as much as ever.
- ★ **Take time to reflect.** Research shows that thinking about what is going on in your child's mind and being aware of your own thoughts and feelings promotes secure attachment, good social skills and the ability to 'read' others.
- ★ **Provide empathy.** When children feel truly understood they start to be able to manage their emotions and this has a big impact on their wellbeing. Using empathy is also a great way to defuse tension.
- ★ **Be aware of your own stress and negative feelings.** They can really get in the way of feeling close to your child. Reflecting on the causes of stress can prevent it from spilling into your relationships at home.
- ★ **Think about timing.** Ask yourself 'Is this the right time to talk?' Choose a time when you can focus on your child and ignore distractions.



- ★ **What should I do if I am worried?** You can find some advice and guidance listed on the back of this leaflet. In particular, MindEd for Families provides comprehensive information on a range of mental health problems. If problems persist, become overwhelming or you feel your child is displaying particular symptoms, we strongly recommend that you visit your GP.

## Where can I find advice and guidance?

**Child in Mind:** a series of podcasts we have developed at the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families. They feature BBC Radio 4 presenter Claudia Hammond interviewing our clinical experts, and have been shortlisted for the Mind Media Awards. They are freely available at [www.annafreud.org](http://www.annafreud.org):

- The adolescent mind
- What is therapy and how does it work?
- Why do some people self-harm?
- What is trauma and how does it affect the brain?
- Is medication for mental health problems safe?
- The impact of sexual material online
- What do we know about anxiety and what can parents do about it?
- What is ADHD and what help is available for children with ADHD?
- What do we know about eating disorders and how to cope?



**ChildLine** for 18s and under  
0800 1111

**YoungMinds Parent Helpline**  
0808 802 5544

**Youth Wellbeing Directory**  
[youthwellbeing.co.uk](http://youthwellbeing.co.uk)

**NSPCC** 0808 800 5000

**Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families**  
[www.annafreud.org](http://www.annafreud.org)

**The Mix** [www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)

**MindEd for Families**  
[www.minded.org.uk/families](http://www.minded.org.uk/families)

### About the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families

The Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families has developed and delivered pioneering mental health care for over 60 years.

Our aim is to transform current mental health provision in the UK by improving the quality, accessibility and effectiveness of treatment.

We believe that every child and their family should be at the heart of the care they receive, working in partnership with professionals.



### ***Parent & Student Workshops being delivered by the Mental Health Support Team***

There have been a range of parent workshops that have been delivered by the MHST on topics such as **sleep**, **self-harm**, **challenging behaviour** etc. The MHST have also delivered **social media** workshops to our students to embed safe online practices. If you have any parent and/or student workshops that you feel would be helpful for you or your children, please let us know and I would be happy to discuss this with you. There will also be more workshops delivered to the students by our MHST so please watch this space!

***If there is anything you would like to see or hear about in the Batchwood Newsletter regarding Mental Health and wellbeing, please do let me know, I would love to hear from you!***

Miss Maxen

Mental Health & Wellbeing Lead

[cmaxen@batchwood.herts.sch.uk](mailto:cmaxen@batchwood.herts.sch.uk)

# Important Diary Dates



## April 2025

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- 4<sup>th</sup> - End of Spring Term (1.15pm finish)
- 22<sup>nd</sup> - Summer 1 starts (all years)
- 28<sup>th</sup> - Year 7 First aid workshops with Red Cross
- 28<sup>th</sup> - Residential to Brathay Outdoor Centre
- 29<sup>th</sup> - Construction careers visit



## May 2025

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- 5<sup>th</sup> - Bank holiday (school closed)
- 12<sup>th</sup> - Herts University visit (Year 10)
- 23<sup>rd</sup> - Half term



## June 2025

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- 2<sup>nd</sup> - Return to school
- 26<sup>th</sup> - Year 11 leavers evening (to be confirmed)



## July 2025

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- 1<sup>st</sup> - Year 10 mocks
- 10<sup>th</sup> - Year 6 transition day
- 23<sup>rd</sup> - End of year (1pm finish)