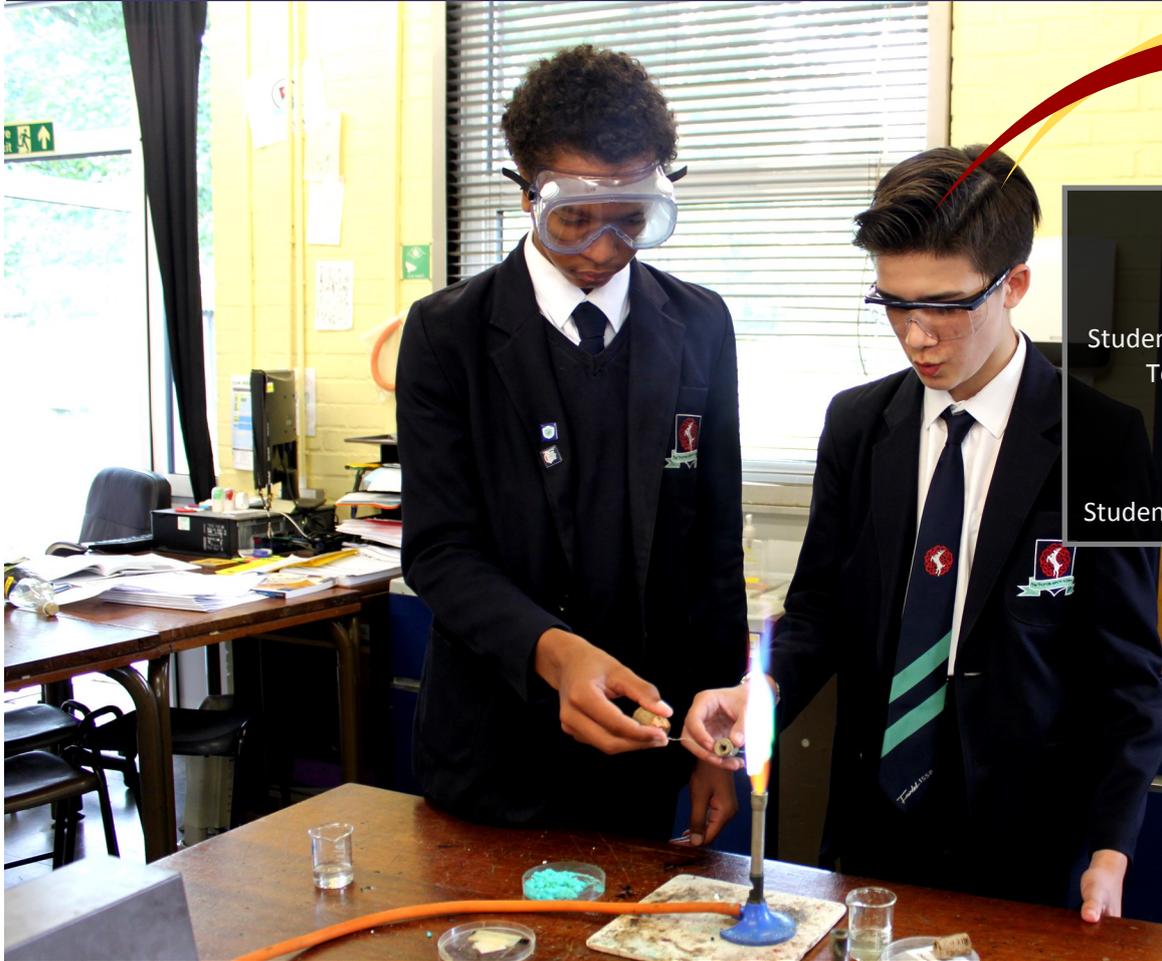


# The Thomas Alleyne Academy

Issue 13 May 18th 2018



## this issue

- New Starter P.2
- UK Maths Challenge P.3
- Student Behaviour + Attendance P.3
- Teacher Award Nomination P.4
- Vincent Motorcycles P.4
- Sixth Form News P.5
- Upcoming Events P.6
- Student Wellbeing & Attendance P.6



Founded 1558

## HEADTEACHER'S UPDATE



Welcome to the latest edition of our academy newsletter. Thank you to all members of our community for supporting our day in memory of Mia Vincent on Monday. We have raised over £800 to donate to Young Minds.

In our newsletter you will read about student success in the UK maths challenge, introductions from our new staff, examples of the fantastic opportunities we provide our sixth form students and our proud link to the historic Vincent motorcycles.

Thank you to the parents who attended last night's parent forum meeting. We discussed our approach to careers education and have agreed a number of useful resources we will share with parents over the coming weeks. Our next parent forum is on Tuesday 26th June and all parents and carers are welcome to attend.

Congratulations are due to Caroline Merser, Head of Music, who has been shortlisted in the Comet Teacher of the Year category. Caroline works tirelessly to promote a love of music in our students and many of your children will have benefitted from the broad range of opportunities provided to them by the music team. I am sure you will all join me in wishing Caroline all the best for the awards dinner on Friday 18th May 2018.

Mark Lewis—Headteacher

# NEW STARTERS

---



**Name:** *Miss S Birch*

**Role:** *Teaching Assistant*

Hi, I am Miss Birch. I am the new TA in the Learning Support Unit. My job is to support students in class. I used to work at Shephalbury Park Primary School before I moved to TAA for a new challenge. I have a degree in Creative Writing and English Literature and I write creatively in my spare time.

I am really enjoying being at TAA and working with all of the lovely staff and brilliant students.



**Name:** *Miss K Howes*

**Role:** *KS3 Student Support Worker*

Hi, I'm Miss Howes. I am the new KS3 Student Support Worker. I used to work at Monk's Walk School. I wanted to join TAA to challenge myself and try out a new role within education. I have an English Literature degree, and I'm also a qualified rugby coach! My main hobbies are reading, knitting and playing rugby.



**Name:** *Mr B Dosanjh*

**Role:** *Teacher of Mathematics*

I selected this school from many because of the supportive and relentless nature here to instil a love of learning within each student we teach every day.

I teach Mathematics because of my passion for numbers that could inspire the next Alan Turing, Stephen Hawking or Ada Lovelace!



**Name:** *Mr S Backhouse*

**Role:** *SENCo*

I am the SENCo, so I am responsible for students with any learning needs or disabilities, the Learning Support Unit and the C2o team. I am also the designated teacher for Children Looked After. This is a new role for me, as before I was a head of faculty and a head of year. I wanted to work at Thomas Alleyne (as I live in Stevenage and wanted to work closer to home - I used to work in Barnet) - but also for a new challenge and career direction.

# UK MATHS CHALLENGE

The UKMT Individual Maths Challenges are lively, intriguing multiple choice question papers, which are designed to stimulate interest in maths in large numbers of pupils. The three levels cover the secondary school range 11-18 and together they attract over 600,000 entries from over 4,000 schools and colleges. 60 of our Year 7 and 8

students were entered this year for the Junior Competition and 60 Year 9 students were entered for the intermediate challenge and the results are impressive!

Well done all, we are phenomenally proud of what you've achieved.

## Winners

John Madgin (Year 9) - **Intermediate Silver** and qualified for Grey Kangaroo  
**Achieved Merit certificate in Grey Kangaroo**

Jago Foord (Year 9) - **Intermediate Gold** and qualified for Grey Kangaroo

### Intermediate Bronze

Emma Wood (Year 9), Abbie Ellett (Year 9), Kabita Bhandari (Year 9), Isabel Mawby (Year 9)  
Melody Brown (Year 9), Vishnu Sureshbabu (Year 9), Connor Broadbent (Year 9)

Abigail Reed (Year 8) – **Junior Gold** and qualified for Junior Kangaroo challenge (top 3%)

Ethan Russell (Year 8) - **Junior Gold certificate**

### Junior Silver certificate

Amelia Edgar (Year 7), Mason Bettles (Year 8), Luke Caton (Year 8), Jamie Hickman (Year 8)

### Junior Bronze certificate

Sophie Hampshire (Year 7), Rose Bigley (Year 7), Nicholas Cozens (Year 7)  
Misti Bunyan (Year 7), Sarah Knell (Year 7), Ruby Ellis (Year 7), Tessa Foord (Year 7)  
Lily Peebles (Year 8), Katie Parker (Year 8), Jorja Jay (Year 8), Leah Shepherd (Year 8)  
Paul Evangelista (Year 8), Billy Finch (Year 8), Ella Smeeton (Year 8),  
Millie Westwood (Year 8), Laila Tipping (Year 8), Michael Erikodi (Year 8)

# STUDENT BEHAVIOUR + ATTENDANCE

It is very important to have good behaviour in our community. We have had a couple of concerns raised by local businesses about our students' behaviour on the way to and from school – this includes dropping litter, poor language, shouting comments into shops etc. We emphasise that we know this is a minority of students, but any poor behaviour affects the entire school's reputation, which in turn could affect their ability to get jobs in the future.

- All students must be on site by 8:25am
- Please report any absences by 9.00am
- Absence text to be sent out by 10.00am (please ensure all contact numbers we hold are up to date)
- Absence responses to be received by 11.00am (this can be done by either responding to absence text/phoning or email)
- If we have not had a response by 11.00am the following actions may be taken:-
- Calling of emergency contact(s)
- Welfare check

Thank you for your continued support.

# CAROLINE MERSER NOMINATED FOR TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Congratulations goes to Caroline Merser—Head of Music, who has been nominated for ‘Teacher of the Year’ at The Comet’s Community Awards 2018. The awards ceremony will take place tonight (Friday 18th May 2018) at the Hotel Cromwell in Old Town.

Despite being the only full-time music teacher at The Thomas Alleyne Academy, Caroline always works tirelessly to ensure as many of our students as possible get the opportunity to experience the joys of music through the enormously wide range of different opportunities she offers them. Caroline runs a different club every single day of the week, including band, choir and boomwhacker club (which is always a particular favourite for many of our students!).

Alongside this, in the past couple of months alone, Caroline has also arranged for lots of our students to perform at a range of different events, both at school and in the wider community. She cares passionately about sharing our students' skills with groups in the Stevenage area. She recently took a number of our budding musicians to spend the day at Roebuck, running a musical instrument day for the primary school students there, and at Christmas, Caroline always takes the choir to sing for a local pensioner group.

Just before Easter, Caroline arranged a number of school

trips for our students, including an extra-curricular Djembe drumming workshop for her GCSE music students and took our choir to sing at the Royal Albert Hall at the Hertfordshire Schools Gala, which was a unique opportunity none of our singers had ever had the chance to experience before. She was also instrumental in coordinating all aspects of the musical numbers in our recent school performance of 'School of Rock', which was a monumental success, and she spent many evenings in particular working with our star of the show, Elliott Moore, to ensure that he had the confidence to sing all his solo numbers so brilliantly on the night.

On top of all this, Caroline always spends time encouraging as many students as possible to take private music lessons and we have a record number of students attending them this year, with lots of different lessons being taken in piano, guitar, ukele, violin, drumming, and brass. She keeps abreast of these students' achievements and always ensures that they are rewarded when they pass another music grade, celebrating their success with congratulations through our school media and on our 'music success' board.

Caroline is a highly valued member of the Thomas Alleyne team and she would be the perfect candidate to receive the Teacher of the Year award.

We wish her luck at the awards ceremony tonight!

## VINCENT MOTORCYCLES

The Bike Stop in Old Town Stevenage recently unveiled a painting of a Vincent motorcycle in their shop to commemorate the brand which was formerly produced at The Thomas Alleyne Academy (where our reception currently is) between 1928 and 1955. The Bike Stop director Martin Brown and local residents and supporters visited TAA on the 15th April to see where the old shop used to be.



# SIXTH FORM NEWS

Welcome to the fortnightly Sixth Form News. Here you will find everything that has been going on in our fantastic Sixth Form Department and any upcoming events/dates that you may need to know about.

Our Year 13 students are now in the full swing of revision for final examinations after receiving conditional offers from their chosen university or higher apprenticeship. Our expectation is that students will be in sixth form for five full days a week preparing for their exams. As parents you can best support them by ensuring that they get good sleep and are not working excessive hours in part time jobs. Listening to your son or daughter's concerns regarding exams and the future is also certainly one way of boosting confidence and sharing their worries can often reduce exam stress and anxiety about plans for the future. Advice and guidance for exam preparation and coping with stress have been issued to all students. Students may wish to revisit some of the websites we have been using and try the following tips:

1. Have you created a good revision timetable:  
[www.getrevising.com](http://www.getrevising.com)
2. Are you sticking to it?
3. Are you downloading and practising by using past exam papers?
4. Find top tips for revision, or stick to your own methods if they have worked before
5. Have a look at [www.thestudentroom.co.uk](http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk) and NHS [www.nhs.uk/livewell/stressmanagement](http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/stressmanagement)

Make sure all students have their timetables and basic information such as:

1. How many exams will you have?
2. When are the exams?
3. What are these exams?
4. How will you be assessed?

**Exam instructions:** Familiarise yourself with the instructions on exam papers; these can be difficult to understand if you read them for the first time under the stress of the exam itself. They usually indicate where to write your name or exam number and how many questions you have to answer. (The invigilator may read the instructions aloud at the start of the exam, listen carefully).

**Plan out your exam time in advance:** For each paper, work out the times that you will start and finish each question – this is one less thing to do in the exam room. Remember these and when you enter the exam room, jot them down and keep sight of them.

**The week before:** Drink plenty of water in the week before the exam so that you are not dehydrated. Build in movement and exercise so that you work off any adrenalin. Work daily on relaxation so that your thinking remains clear and focused. You will still feel some nervous energy which is useful for exams/Learn the information on your flash cards/Check your understanding and memory.

The complete presentation is available for all students on our virtual learning platform, Edmodo, please encourage your son/daughter to download all the information.

## *Social Sciences: Revision Workshops From The University of Hertfordshire*

Year 13 students received a boost to their revision schedule with a visit from Nick Howell of the University of Hertfordshire's Widening Participation team on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> May. He very kindly came to give Sociology and Psychology students a workout to tackle the twin evils of revision: procrastination and feeling overwhelmed. Students were encouraged to share their revision planning and find ways to improve with SMART learning styles. They were given a quick quiz on what helped them to focus and the scores they gave themselves for each aspect of learning revealed whether they were more visual, auditory or kinaesthetic in their approach.

The key to effective revision is to start early and to ask for help from teachers if you feel stuck. Successful planning involves structuring shorter revision periods (up to 40 minutes) with a ten-minute break at the end to reward you for your hard work. It's important to keep mobile phones switched off or in another room during your revision sessions, likewise no social media open on your computer's desktop – you can catch up with WhatsApp when you have completed one of your 40-minute revision slots. Nick also recommended drawing up a timetable and using a diary to plan sessions and not forgetting to schedule in a bit of a social life too! Wellbeing is essential during this intense time leading up to exams and can be helped by trying to get enough sleep, eating well and being organised so you don't have to rush – especially on the morning of an exam. Remember, your brain is like a muscle, so strengthen it with repeated 'exercise' and you should be able to run that exam marathon. As Nick said, focussing on the long holiday after it's all over can help you to get to the finish line in one piece! Our thanks also go to Nick for organising a revision conference for our Year 12 psychology students who had a similar session with a focus on the synoptic elements of revision.

### **Key dates**

Whitsun: **Monday 28<sup>th</sup> May to Friday 1st June inclusive** – half term holiday

Public Examinations: **2<sup>nd</sup> May to 22<sup>nd</sup> June inclusive**

New cohort: **Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> to Friday 6<sup>th</sup> July** – taster lessons for new cohort. All present Year 12 to attend and help.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday 21st May 2018

Year 11 Leavers Assembly

Friday 25th May 2018

Annual Fun Run

Week Beginning 28th May 2018

Half term

This is a reminder to park considerately when dropping off or collecting your child from school.

- Do not collect your child by the entrance on the 'No parking' hatched yellow area – it is illegal to do so and blocks the main road.
- Do not park your car across the T-junction as this creates a safety hazard to other users and is extremely dangerous.
- Do not obstruct the turning from Olde Swann Court into The Grange, this blocks residential and emergency services access.
- In most cases it is sensible to arrange to meet your child in a location away from the front of the school.
- The use of the car park to drop-off and collect students is only permitted with prior permission from the Head teacher.

Thank you in advance for your help and cooperation.

## STUDENT WELLBEING

If your child would benefit from some emotional support, and self-care for their wellbeing outside of school, the links below are great to help you as their parent/carer to guide them. They empower you with the knowledge and understanding your child might need, some also offer services for parents.

<https://mindinmidherts.org.uk/>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/>

<http://stand-by-me.org.uk/>

The headspace app is also free to download, and helps many young people to focus, and sleep. <https://www.headspace.com/>

Tilehouse counselling offers a great service for young people. <http://www.tilehouse.org/>

If you want to discuss your child's needs further you can always contact the school and speak to the HOY.

**The Thomas Alleyne Academy**

1 High Street

Stevenage

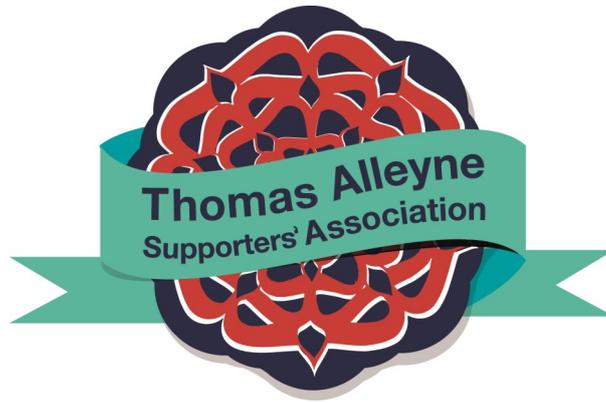
Hertfordshire

SG1 3BE

01438 344 344 ph

[www.tas.herts.sch.uk](http://www.tas.herts.sch.uk)

**ISSUE 13 MAY 2018**



# Thomas Alleyne Supporters Association (TASA)

Thomas Alleyne Supporters Association (TASA)

## What is TASA?

TASA is a group of parents, ex pupils and staff who volunteer their time to organise fundraising events for the academy.

## What does it do ?

Events organised by TASA are created to be fun for the students whilst also raising money to buy items suggested by Student Parliament, to benefit everyone in the academy community. In addition to raising money, it fosters a community spirit. Four events have been planned for this year; Year 7 Fright Night, Year 8 Snow Ball, a Talent evening for all year groups, and whole school Summer Fair.

TASA also provides refreshments at parent's evenings for a small donation and a tuck shop for Sports Day.

## How can I help ?

- You could support TASA by encouraging your child/children to attend the events.
  - Put your spare change in the pot when having a cuppa at parents evening.
  - Attend some of the events if appropriate
- You could consider joining the event planning meetings. New parents are always very welcome and it may not take as much time as you think; we have one planning meeting before each event which lasts approximately an hour, and then as much time as you feel you can offer to support each event. Or you may like to support a single event, that is pertinent to your child's year group.

If you would like more information, please contact Mrs Hayman through  
[admin@tas.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@tas.herts.sch.uk)



# S H FASHION W

Thursday  
24th May  
7.30pm

**Knebworth Barns**  
**SG2 1AX**  
**£20 a ticket**

includes  
fashion show,  
guest speakers,  
stalls, a glass  
of prosecco  
on arrival  
and nibbles

For more information:  
Danielle Swinburne

**01462 679540**

[danielle.swinburne@ghhospicecare.org.uk](mailto:danielle.swinburne@ghhospicecare.org.uk)

**Sign up online**

[www.ghhospicecare.org.uk](http://www.ghhospicecare.org.uk)

Registered Charity 295257



@GHHospice  
Garden House Hospice





NORTH  
HERTFORDSHIRE  
COLLEGE

# WHAT'S NEXT.



## OPEN EVENTS

Visit us at our Hitchin, Stevenage and Engineering & Construction Campuses.

**Thursday 17 May | 5pm – 7.30pm**

**Saturday 23rd June | 10am – 1pm**

Everything we do is about getting you where you want to be in life. A course at North Hertfordshire College will help you prepare for the next step in your career – whether that's university, an apprenticeship or a job.

We understand what employers are looking for from young people and ensure courses provide you with the skills and knowledge that your future employer will expect of you.

[www.nhc.ac.uk](http://www.nhc.ac.uk) | 01462 424242 |  N\_HertsCollege  
 NorthHertsCollege |  NorthHertsCollege

# Guitar Day

21<sup>st</sup> June 2018

A day for students interested in playing in a guitar ensemble: beginner, intermediate and advanced guitarists.

Your son/daughter has been recommended to attend Guitar Day where they will have the opportunity to play their guitar in an ensemble. The day will consist of a series of ensemble sessions, led by Hertfordshire Music Service guitar specialists. In taking part in this day, they will improve and develop their concentration, playing and sight-reading skills and will move their playing forward dramatically in just one day.

## TIMETABLE

Registration	8.30 - 9.00 am
Rehearsal sessions from	9:00 am
Lunch	12.00 - 12.40 pm
Concert	2:00 pm
Day finishes	2.45 pm

(please arrange for your child to be collected promptly)

## LUNCH

It is essential that everyone bring a packed lunch. Squash and biscuits will be provided at break time.

We are inviting all players in years 3 to 8 to come on this one-day course. If you would like to come, please ask your parent/carer to complete the details on the application form and send it to **Stevenage Music Centre** to arrive by:

**Friday, 8 June 2018**

As this is a school day, we ask that your child wears his/her school uniform. A short concert of pieces which will have been prepared during the day will start at 2:00pm. Families and head teachers are most welcome to attend this at The Leslie Rose Auditorium at Stevenage Music Centre at The Nobel School.

**Please note that there is NO parking on site at The Nobel School.**

Application forms can be collected from Ms Mercer.

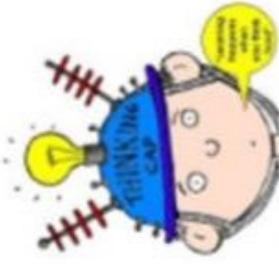
# A parents' guide to revision

Three common techniques that are least effective forms of revision:

- 1) Highlighting
- 2) Re-reading texts
- 3) Re-writing notes



Whilst these techniques may give the illusion of a lot of work being done, we believe these strategies are far more effective methods of revision.



## Revision timetable

Possibly the most important role as a parent in revision is ensuring the revision timetable is stuck to. Pin it up somewhere visible (e.g. on the fridge) and talk about revision with your child. Each revision session should be 30 minutes & then change to another subject. Build in time for meals and breaks to watch your favourite TV shows. And make sure they don't work too late.

## Low stakes testing

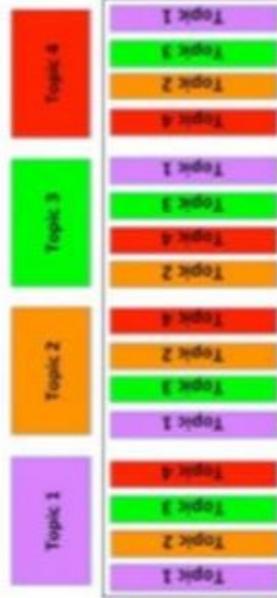
This has been proven to be a highly effective method to aid memory, sometimes known as retrieval practice, parents can play a vital role. By quizzing your child, giving them short tests where the result doesn't matter will help them remember the things they get wrong. Similar to how you remember that question from the pub quiz that nobody knew.

Why not challenge your child to see who can remember the most facts?



## Interleaving

Rather than cramming, revision topics should be spaced out in 'chunks'. This has been proven to help memory. Each chunk should be 20 minutes followed by 10 minutes break. This is known as interleaving.

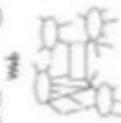
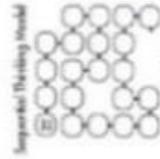


## Transforming

Imported Thinking Model



As it says at the top of this page, re-reading or highlighting text is actually a poor way to revise. A far more effective method is to transform a piece of information from one form into another.



## Online revision

There are many really useful online revision resources many of which now have apps which can be downloaded for free. Here are some of the ones we recommend your child should be using:



## The basics

Make sure music and TV's are off and phones are out of sight. Just having phones visible will be enough to distract your child from revising.



Limit distractions



Find a nice space to revise in



The more you put in the more you get out



Create and use a revision planner



Get on with it and start early!



Revise, Repeat, Remember