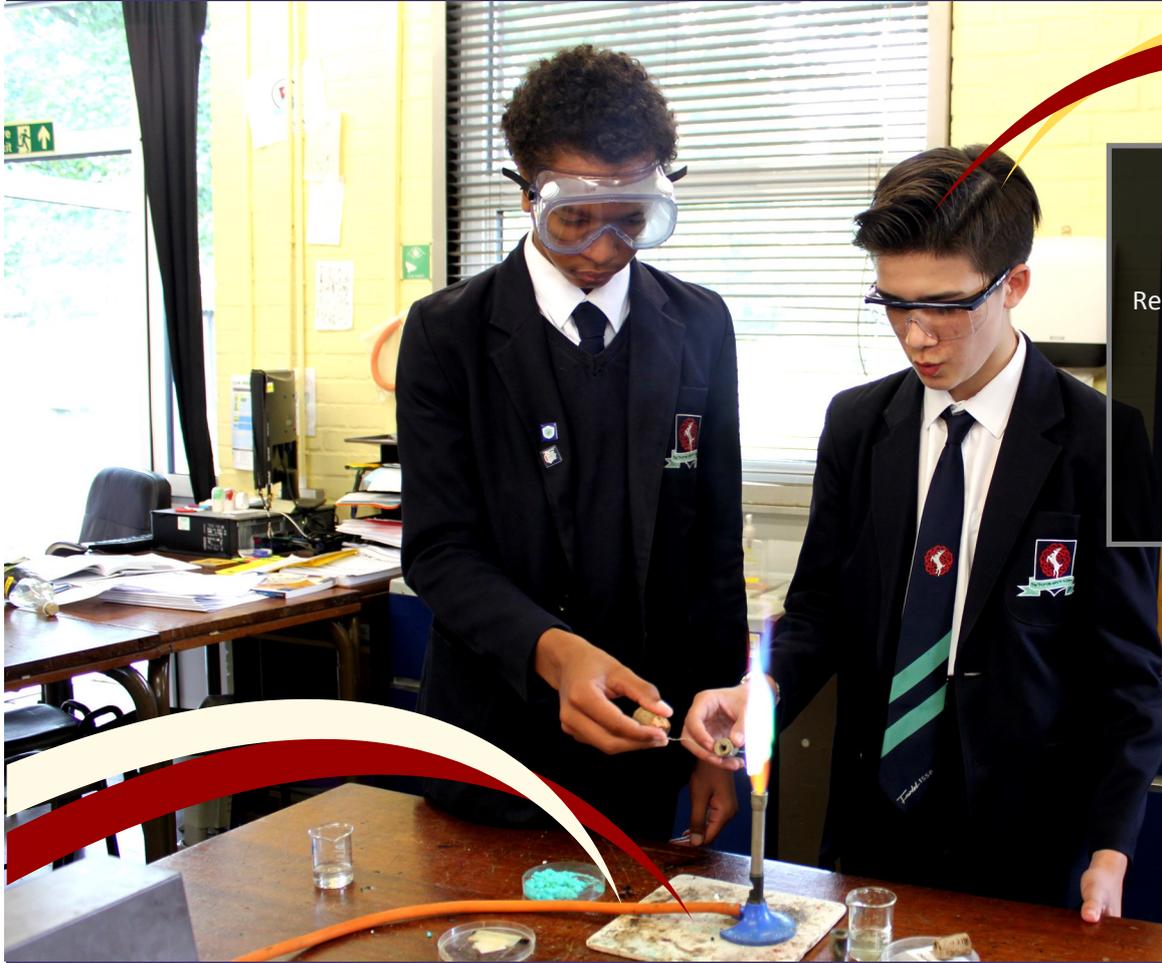


The Thomas Alleyne Academy

Issue 09 February 1st 2019



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HEADTEACHER'S UPDATE



Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter.

Over the last two weeks we have seen a number of events focussed on keeping our students safe. Thank you to all the parents who attended our recent talk by Marilyn Hawes from Freedom from Abuse about keeping our children safe. Marilyn ran extremely informative workshops with students, staff and parents during the day and provided us with hard-hitting and relevant

information about the risks faced online and in our community. The theme of safety was also shown by the student-produced film showcased at Stevenage cinema. The film focussed on educating others about the dangers of knife crime and was commended by the police who had sponsored this event. Well done to all involved.

Mrs Humberstone has also been working extremely hard to ensure we are showing respect to other cultures and beliefs as part of our annual series of Holocaust Memorial Events. As well as live-streaming a survivor testimony, leading a trip to the Jewish Education Centre and running whole-school assemblies, Mrs Humberstone has also led primary school workshops at school to educate the youngest children in our community about the importance of tolerance and diversity.

Mark Lewis

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

Thomas Alleyne has hosted several events this month to mark Holocaust Memorial Day. Apart from thought provoking House assemblies, Year 9 and 10 joined with many other schools in viewing a live streaming of Survivor Testimony from Harry Spiro. Harry, 89, spoke candidly about his experiences in the glass factory in Piotrków ghetto, then, amongst others, Rehmsdorf labour camp and Theresienstadt. Harry was the only one of his family to survive.

Year 6 students from Fairlands, Roebuck and Martins Wood Primary schools visited to partake in workshops looking at this year's theme for Holocaust Memorial Day – Torn from Home—and took part in a Postcard Project where they were able to write to survivors.

Some other Year 9 and 10 students also visited the Jewish Museum and then Northwood Synagogue where they were privileged to hear first hand survivor testimony from Marianne and Peter Summerfield. Further details of these events will appear in the next Newsletter.

Jackie Humberstone
Head of Religious Education



OPERATION EDGE—BEYOND THE BLADE

As part of Herts police's anti knife crime initiative Operation Edge, The Thomas Alleyne Academy and several other schools in Stevenage all made films, which were screened at Stevenage's Cineworld on Thursday 17th January.

Students were given the task of making an educational film, no more than seven minutes long, which were shown at other schools to inform young people about the dangers of knife crime.

Speaking after the event, Stevenage Neighbourhood Inspector Simon Tabert said: "The judges were impressed by the standard of all of the entries and I hope we will be able to use these films further as part of our ongoing work to tackle knife crime."

"The standard of filmmaking was exceptionally high, and the students portrayed powerful on-screen messages."

Mr Gitto



IT'S A FACT—READING MAKES YOU SMARTER!

How?

- ⇒ **Reading makes you smarter.** Research shows that regular readers display greater knowledge and higher academic achievement. Your knowledge allows you to be more interesting.
- ⇒ **Reading develops your verbal abilities** by introducing you to a more varied range of words.
- ⇒ **Reading books improves your focus and concentration.** Unlike blog posts or the internet (where you are often distracted by the suggested content), reading a book takes being fully engaged and closing off the outside world and immersing yourself into

the text, which over time will strengthen your attention span.

- ⇒ **Reading reduces stress.** A recent study from the University of Sussex showed you need only read silently, for six minutes, to slow down your heart rate and ease tension in muscles.
- ⇒ **Reading improves your imagination.** Your imagination is your only limitation. By reading a written description of an event or a place, your mind creates an image in your head, instead of having the image placed in front of you when you watch television or a film.

TAA – Recommended Reads

Year 7 students are reading 'A Monster Calls' by Patrick Ness in English this term. If students enjoyed this book, they should also try:

Bridge to Terabithia—by Katherine Paterson

A Christmas Carol—by Charles Dickens

Missing—by Catherine Macphail

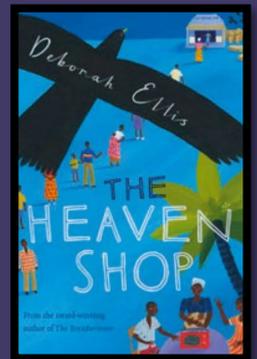


Year 8 students are reading 'My Sister Lives on the Mantelpiece' by Annabel Pitcher in English this term. If students enjoyed this book, they should also try:

The Heaven Shop—by Deborah Ellis

The Bone Sparrow—by Zana Fraillon

I am Malala—by Malala Yousafzai



More challenging reads for older teens:

A Change is Gonna Come—by Mary Bello

How I Live Now—by Meg Rosoff

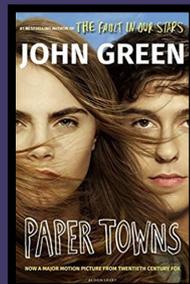
The Rest Of Us Just Live Here—by Patrick Ness

If I Stay—by Gayle Forman

The Fault In Our Stars—by John Green

Paper Towns—by John Green

My Sister's Keeper by Jodi Picolt



STRANGER DANGER IN THE 21ST CENTURY

On Monday 21st we were very lucky to be joined by Marilyn Hawes, CEO of Freedom from Abuse. She was with us all day, presenting to every year group during the day, followed by a session for staff after school and for parents in the evening. She addressed a number of issues around the challenges our students face both on and off line. She was also clear with the students about understanding the difference between a friend and a stranger, because this may not always be as obvious as you would think.

The presentations were very powerful and definitely sparked conversation amongst all

parties. We had an excellent turn out from our parents and the feedback from the day has been overwhelmingly positive. Parents who attended were clear that they will be making changes at home as a result of the talk to ensure their children are protected.

Thank you to those parents who were able to attend and support us in ensuring our students are kept safe through greater understanding and a raised awareness of the issues we all face in society today.

TASA

Can you help?

Known in most other schools and academies as the Parent and Teacher Association (PTA), TASA is a group of parents and staff who volunteer their time to organise fundraising events for the academy.

Fright Night for Year 7 was hugely successful this year, but we were greatly saddened to cancel the Snow Ball, a Christmas disco for Year 8, due to poor ticket sales. We apologise to anyone who was looking forward to attending this. Our events are designed to be fun, and to raise money. TASA uses the money raised to enhance TAA for our students but TASA relies on the help and support of volunteers, and we are always looking for more, and for some original fund raising ideas.

Our next meeting is Thursday 7th February at 6.00pm to 7.30 pm in the Library, when we will be discussing what events we can organise for students and families for the coming year. If you have any ideas of what you could support us with, either by helping at an event or just attending, we would really appreciate your thoughts.

Please email us at tasa@tas.herts.sch.uk, or come along to our next meeting where you will be most welcome.

Christmas Jumpers

It seems to have become an annual event to have a Christmas Jumper Day. We appreciate that with growing children this can be an added expense at an already costly time of year which makes it difficult for some families.

If you have a Christmas jumper that will no longer fit anyone in your family after this year, we would be most grateful if you would donate it to us. This would mean that next year we could help out students whose family may find this added expense difficult to manage, and everyone can participate by wearing a Christmas jumper. If you are able to help, please send any suitable jumpers to school with your child/children.

Thank you

Carol Hayman

PEER MENTORING

Our current peer mentors were coached over several weeks in the Summer term on how to help support, guide and advise younger students who are having a few minor problems such as organization, making friends or coping with homework. The Year 7 peer mentees have now been carefully matched with peer mentors, many of whom have themselves successfully overcome such problems.

Having a mentor is a valuable support to younger students in the school, so we are very proud of these newly qualified mentors, who have joined with some Year 10 who undertook training and mentoring sessions last year and have chosen to continue with their fantastic work.

Mr Lewis and Mr Woolley recently met with

The Thomas Alleyne Academy peer mentors to celebrate their achievement in completing their training, discussing all aspects of the Peer Mentoring Programme, before awarding them with certificates and badges and congratulating them on their success. We are very proud of them all.

Mrs Hayman



SPORTING NEWS

The Year 7 basketball team have enjoyed a good start in their group of matches this term, winning two and losing one narrowly by just one point!

Ben McAree has been a standout performer scoring a number of points in each match and leading the team well with his extra knowledge and experience of playing. Other individuals are making good progress learning to play basketball competitively for the first time. The team has another three matches coming up soon and hopefully will continue being successful.

Results:

TAA 18 - 19 Nobel
Barnwell 17 - 32 TAA
TAA 20 - 17 Marriotts

Well done to our Year 7 Netball team who have also had a great start to the year—they beat Barclay school 7-2 on Wednesday 30th.

Our U13 girls football team also beat Priory school 2-1 on Wednesday leaving them undefeated!

Well done to all our sports teams.

SIXTH FORM NEWS

Aim High: Choosing a University Course

Following our presentation from the University of Salford on 'Choosing a University' we invited our local university, Hertfordshire, to provide information to our Year 12 students on choosing a course. There are over 140 universities in England and Wales with a combination of over 50,000 courses and Ms Pearce, Outreach Officer, showed students how to find a course, what the entry criteria is, what mode of study each course offers including deferred entry and sandwich courses and how they are assessed. Students were also given guidelines for maintenance loans, accommodation and living expenses. Studying for a 3/4-year degree is expensive with most courses costing £9,250, per annum. There are many other options for obtaining a degree such as sponsored and higher degrees and degree apprenticeships. We will be delivering in-depth timetabled sessions for all of these as part of the sixth form complimentary curriculum.

Our STEM students have completed their online applications for Nuffield Placements and we hope to hear soon as to whether or not they have been successful. Nuffield Placements are highly competitive but offer over 1,000 students each year (nationwide) the opportunity to work alongside professional scientists (including quantitative social scientists), technologists, engineers and mathematicians. Students in the first year of a post-16 science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) course studying at a state-maintained school or college in the UK are eligible to apply.

Create and Succeed: LiS (GSK Leaders in Science Programme)

On Thursday 24th January our Science Students

spent the day at GSK as part of the above programme. They worked with apprentices and scientists and one of our own apprentices, Chloe who is a Laboratory Science Apprentice in Biological Mass Spectrometry whilst studying for her degree in Chemistry.



Dates for your diary:

Tuesday 5th February 2019—MBDA – Apprenticeship Opportunities talk – all Year 12

Wednesday 6th February 2019 - Barnwell School Sixth Form Parents Evening (call 01438 222500) from 4.00 to 7.00 pm

Monday 25th February 2019—Year 13 Psychology Conference, London

Wednesday 6th March 2019—Year 13 Sociology Conference, London

Tuesday 12th March 2019—ALL Year 12 – National Apprenticeship Show, Milton Keynes

Tuesday 26th March 2019—ALL Year 12 – UCAS Fair, Excel, London

(Parents' Evening for Year 12 students studying at The Barclay School: Thursday 4th July 2019 – times tbc)



Upcoming Events

Wednesday 13th February 2019

Year 9 Parents Evening and Options Evening (early close)

Thursday 14th February 2019

Y10 Bright Sparks Concert

Thursday 14th February 2019

Parent Forum

Monday 18th-Friday 22nd February 2019

Half Term

Wednesday 27th February 2019

Year 7 Parents Evening

Don't forget to read Mr Lewis' weekly blog which is published every Friday on our website. Head to www.tas.hert.sch.uk/blog to check it out!

ISSUE 09 FEBRUARY 2019

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kik

Kik (or Kik Messenger) is a free messaging app used by 300 million people worldwide that lets users exchange messages, photos, videos, GIFs and webpages via a Wi-Fi connection or data plan. Kik is unusual in that your child can sign up without a phone number and then find and message other people via just their username. Kik is aimed at anyone aged 13 years and older – the app says teens between 13 and 18 years old will need parental permission but it does not verify ages.



AGE RESTRICTION
13+

1 new message

What parents need to know about

Kik



CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION & GROOMING

Police in the UK have warned that Kik has featured in 'more than 1,100 child sexual abuse cases in the last five years' and that 'children are at risk' on the app. Offences involving the app include child sexual exploitation, grooming, and image violations. Kik has also been identified by US police as being used by sex predators, and they say it is responsible for several recent incidents involving children, including the murder of a 13-year-old girl by a man she met via Kik.

FAKE OR ANONYMOUS PROFILES

What makes Kik unique to most other private messaging apps is the fact that it doesn't require a phone number as it works through Wi-Fi instead. By using a username, your child can avoid sharing personal information with others on Kik, but on the flipside, this makes it far easier for people to remain anonymous or to create a fake persona.

SEXUAL PREDATORS

Some people may use Kik with the intention of targeting children. Typically, this is a subtle and a potentially dangerous individual who will initially portray themselves as a friend who 'understands' a child. They may also lie about their age and it's possible that your child could be manipulated by a stranger into doing regrettable or illegal activities, and maybe even meeting them in real life.

JOINING PUBLIC GROUPS

As soon as Kik is downloaded, your child can join public groups to chat with up to 49 others about anything from music, to sports, to travel by searching for topics they are interested in. However, groups can include inappropriate names and content. There are also private groups on Kik that can be joined by scanning a group Kik code or if they're added by someone on their contact list.

SEXTING



Due to the general ease of sharing photos and videos, sexting has been reported on the app. These messages can be screen-captured or copied at the press of a button, which could lead to further dangers, such as blackmail and cyberbullying. It is illegal to make, possess, download, store and share sexual images, photos and videos of a person under the age of 18. This also includes any sexual images, photos and videos that a child may have taken of themselves.

KIK 'BOTS'

Users can add 'bots' to their friends list and communicate with them on the app. 'Bots' are automated software programs built into the app that mimic conversation – developers, brands and Kik can create 'bots' to communicate with any Kik user who has opted to start a conversation with them. Kik has been associated with 'pornbots' and 'spambots', which try to lure users into clicking on links or porn websites by using suggestive and often personalised messages.

VIDEO CHAT

Your child can take part in a live video chat with their friends in a one-to-one chat, or with up to six friends at a time in a private group chat. There is the danger that conversations can be recorded and shared without their knowledge, and with live video conversations, your child is at risk of seeing or hearing content that is inappropriate, sexual or violent.

PERSONAL OR COMPROMISING USERNAMES

As Kik works with usernames and not phone numbers, some people may search for clues as to who someone is in real life, based on their name. For example, if your child uses their real name or something similar, strangers could potentially find out their identity and even start looking for them on other social media platforms.



Top Tips for Parents

1 new message

CHOOSING A USERNAME

When setting up a Kik account, ensure that your child knows the importance of a secure username and why it shouldn't contain ANY clues as to who they are in real life – especially their first or last name. Get them to choose a username that is hard to guess, using a combination of letters and numbers.

SHARING USERNAMES

Explain to your child that sharing usernames on social media channels, such as Twitter, Instagram or Facebook, will make it visible to people they might not know – and they'll be able to message your child. If your child joins a group, anyone within that group will be able to see their username. Your teen will have a Kik Code that's unique to them and lets your child connect with anyone that scans the unique code; encourage your child not to share their Kik Code with anyone they don't trust.

DEACTIVATING ACCOUNTS

If your child is under 13, you can submit a deactivation request to Kik by emailing support@kik.com. Use the subject line 'Parent Inquiry' and include your child's Kik username and age in your message. If your child is over 13 and you want to close your account, you will need access to the email address registered to their account before you visit <https://ws.kik.com/deactivate>.

FIND GENUINE FRIENDS

The Kik app includes an optional feature that your child can turn on to help find real friends on Kik. The feature works by checking for accounts in Kik that match an email address or phone number stored in contacts (on a smartphone). If the app finds a match, it will notify both your child and their friend with a Kik message.

SHOW HOW TO BLOCK & REPORT

Teach your child how to block and report users on the app. Kik's 'block' feature lets users block all contact with another user, without revealing to the other user that they've been blocked. The blocked user's name will no longer appear in contacts in Kik. Your child can also report a group if they think it's offensive or being used for abuse. Some users of Kik have reported that they receive sexually explicit, automated messages over the app – this is when automated spam bots have been created to distribute explicit images and texts using the service. Your child can use the 'Report' feature to report spam. Once reported, there is the option to keep or remove the chat from the conversation list. If conversations are saved, Kik will automatically block the spam account but save the chat history.

DON'T TALK TO STRANGERS

If your child knows not to talk to anyone they don't know in real life, the risks of using Kik are drastically lowered. Alternatively, if any stranger happens to send your child a message, teach them to ignore it.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

If your child sees something disturbing, pornographic, deviant or otherwise troubling, they may be left confused and in need of somebody to explain it to them. As such, tell your child that you are always there to help them if they need it, and if they start acting differently to normal, calmly ask them why.

AVOIDING UNEXPECTED IMAGES

Kik censors images from strangers to limit low-rated content being shared by surprise. The app will blur all photos in messages when users who have never interacted before contact each other for the first time. Users can only share unblurred images after they have both approved each other.

USING A VALID EMAIL

According to Kik, it is really important for users to provide a valid and accessible email address when registering their account. This will help to make sure your child is able to receive important emails from the service, such as a link to reset their password, when they need them.

MUTING OR LEAVING A CHAT

If someone has said something inappropriate to your child through Video Chat, they can mute the user or leave the Video Chat. Tap on the person's Video Chat bubble and a mute icon will appear. When a child mutes themselves, their microphone will be disabled and nobody else in the chat will be able to hear them.

1 new message

SOURCES:
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-20160511-parent-needs-to-know-about-kik>
<https://www.kik.com/wh/faq-uk/articles/1152006389386-Keep-your-Kik-account-private>
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-45566276>



1 new message



National Online Safety

A whole school community approach to online safety

www.nationalonlinesafety.com

Email us at hello@nationalonlinesafety.com or call us on 0800 368 8061



TECHNICAL THEATRE CLUB!

F7 Every Tuesday
Lunchtime, starting 15th
Jan at 1.30pm

If you are interested in
light, sound and set
design then this is the
club for you!

Chinese New Year

5th February

Come and
celebrate Chinese

New Year

with a selection of

your favourite

Chinese dishes!

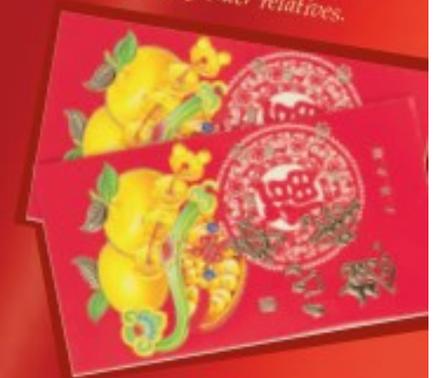
Gong Xi Fa Cai



Gong Hei Tai Choy



Children are given money in
'lucky' red envelopes called
Hongbao by older relatives.



2019 ~ Year of the Pig