

The Hedingham School Newsletter

March 2026

Ready, Respect, Safe



Dear Parent/Guardian

Message from Headteacher

I hope you all had a restful and enjoyable half-term break. It has been a welcome relief to return from a week away from the school to brighter and warmer mornings and significantly less rainfall. There is a tangible spring in people's step as we enjoy a bit of sunshine!

Students have quickly settled back into learning routines, and we have seen a slight lift in attendance figures which is encouraging. Mr Daniels has created a vlog titled "Attendance Matters". In this series he will be discussing a range of issues which can affect attendance and provided some tips and tricks to help support parents in the ongoing effort of ensuring high levels of attendance every day. This is available through a link on the home page of our website:

[Attendance Matters - Vlog Series - Hedingham School and Sixth Form -](#)

Year 9 Options Evening

Many thanks to all the families that attended our Options Evening last week. It was an important evening to both demystify the process of guided choice as well as extend an opportunity to speak with subject specialists about the dynamics of the courses that are offered. The evening was extremely well attended and there was a positive buzz around discussions between students, staff and families. The option choice window is now open and we have already received a large number of returns. Please continue to engage in discussion with your children so to ensure that any choice is well considered.

Year 7 Cohort 2026/27

On Monday 2 March, families will have received confirmation of school places following applications made to secondary schools. We have sent correspondence to welcome our new Year 7 cohort and look forward to meeting them as part of our transition programme (both in their primary school setting and on planned visits to Hedingham School).

Science Club

I also visited Science Club where students were competing to create the tallest hot ice towers.

Students created a solution of sodium acetate which they poured onto crystals that immediately solidified into warm "ice" towers. It was a competitive and fun way of learning about crystallisation and exothermic reactions.

Unfortunately, my own attempt collapsed within seconds but many students created some pretty impressive towers!



Rat Club

I enjoyed a visit to "Rat Club" last week, which actually happens to be far broader than just rats; also containing a bearded dragon, stick insects and enormous African snails.

It was great to see a collection of students supporting with the care and interaction of the animals but also impressive to get an insight into their knowledge.

I'm not the biggest fan of rats but really enjoyed seeing students involve themselves in our enrichment offer that operates outside of lessons.



Assemblies

Students had assemblies last week that outlined the “road map” ahead for the next term and a half. I communicated a message to emphasise that a journey through school will have its tough moments, with challenges that test your patience, confidence, and resilience. Yet woven through those challenges are moments of joy, meeting new people, learning things that surprise you, celebrating achievements, and finding activities you genuinely enjoy. Students need to embrace all parts of this journey and I briefly discussed plans around the summer “Activities Week” which we will provide details of in the near future.

This week House assemblies focused on this half-term’s character trait of Perseverance. The assembly updates students on current House Point totals, reads out this half-term’s "Shout-Outs" and notifies students of the upcoming House Competitions. This includes the upcoming Inter-House Sports Fixtures and the Inter-House Arts Competition known as "Hedingham's Got Talent."

Behaviour Expectations on the Buses

This week in assemblies we have talked about behaviour expectations on school and public buses. The key message was around safety of all, passengers and the drivers. It was made clear that when travelling on a bus, school or public, that being respectful to others is key. What will not be tolerated are behaviours such as throwing anything, rude or abusive language or anti social behaviour. Please speak to your child and ask them to report any such behaviour to the SSC, the bus company has made it clear that possible sanction may include temporary suspension from using their transport.

National Reference Testing

A random sample of students in Year 11 were centrally selected to complete recent National Reference Tests. The National Reference Test (NRT) is a yearly assessment in England designed to track how students’ performance in GCSE English language and maths is changing over time. It plays a quiet but important role in how GCSE grades are set nationally. The tests were run on behalf of Ofqual, the exams regulator. Our students involved were a credit to the school. They completed the tests with maturity and focus and we received superb feedback from the NFER examiners.

Subject Reviews

As mentioned in the previous newsletter, subject reviews have continued this half -term with a specific focus on English and Art. It has been a pleasure to talk with students about their learning in these subjects and see some excellent practice in classrooms.

Wellcome Genome Campus

On Thursday 26 February a group of year 11 and 13 students visited the Wellcome Genome Campus in Cambridge. This was the culmination of the ‘Barcoding for beginners’ project on DNA sequencing that has taken place as a joint venture between the school and the campus. Students spent a day in school extracting and sequencing the DNA from local insects and then a day at the campus carrying out various practical activities, a speed networking activity where they met a number of scientists working at the campus and got to see inside one of the world-leading sequencing labs. This was a unique experience which gave them an insight into a career in bioinformatics.



Film and Media Visit

On Friday, 15 Film and Media students travelled to Cambridge to take part in the Watersprite Film Festival's Creative Futures Day. Students had the opportunity to attend talks and Q&A sessions with industry experts, as well as take part in practical workshops. This was a fantastic opportunity for students considering careers in the film and television industry and will help them take those first steps into the profession.

Jewellery

We have noticed a recent increase in the number of students that are coming to school with excessive jewellery. In many situations within the school, jewellery poses a risk to health and safety and also poses the risk of valuable items being lost or damaged during the school day. Can parents please support with ensuring that students do not attend school with jewellery beyond what is permitted in our behaviour policy. Confiscations will continue to operate in school for those who do not follow our behaviour policy.

Year 9 University Workshop

Year 9 took part in an interactive virtual workshop designed to give them a better understanding of higher education. The 45-minute workshop gave students an insight into why they might choose to go to university, dispelled myths about university and broadened students horizons in terms of what benefits a higher education degree could bring to their future career aspirations.



World Book Day

We have had events to celebrate both World Book Day (5 March) and International Women's Day (6 March) this week. For World Book Day, a collection of students (including those from the Good to Great groups as well as A Level English students) have been organising events including scavenger hunts and videos of staff talking through their favourite books.

International Women's Day

For International Women's Day, posters of influential women with fun facts have been dotted around the school for students to find as they move between corridors. Posters included Malala Yousafzai, Agatha Christie, Eleanor Roosevelt, Simone Biles and Beth Mead to name a few. Those who found all of the posters qualified for a prize.

Under 16's Rugby Team

Our U16s delivered a superb performance to secure a 33–12 victory in the County Cup semi-final against Davenant school, combining physical dominance with impressive organisation across the pitch. Man of the Match was Stanley Jennings, for his two tries, relentless defence, and powerful ball carrying that consistently put us on the front foot.

Congratulations to all those students involved; a fantastic team performance and a well-deserved place in the County Cup final.

Year 11, 12 and 13 Exams

Next week is our important second mock week window for Maths, English and Science exams for Year 11 students. We also have mid term exams in Year 12 and some repeat Mocks for Year 13's. So many students have been working hard for these assessments, and I wish them the very best of luck next week.

Paul Finch, Headteacher

