

# HOLYWELL SCHOOL

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THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
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*A Church of England School  
providing a Values Based Education*

Update Letter 04-05-2023

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

I hope that this letter finds you all well and enjoying the May sunshine: it has been most welcome – especially over the recent challenging weeks of strike action. We are very grateful for all your support during the strikes; these are definitely challenging times for schools and, although we are relatively secure in terms of finances (thanks to our brilliant Business Manager, Finance Director and Finance Team), unfunded pay awards and ‘real-time’ cuts to budgets will have an impact on our school. We will continue to be prudent and use the public funding we receive as carefully and as thoughtfully as we can, always basing our financial decisions on our vision to enable all of our Holywell community to ‘Live life in all its Fullness’ through living our values, being the best we can be in community.



## Social Media – Holywell on Twitter and Facebook

Over the last year, we have communicated many times about the responsible use of social media. We don't often get to talk about the positive side of social media! Social media can be an excellent way to keep in touch with friends and family and the virtual community can be a great support and comfort to many. Over the last few years, we have been exploring ways of enhancing our communication with families. These 'Update Letters' have been well-received, our half-termly newsletter continues to showcase some of the great work being done in school and WEDUC has been established as our main means of communicating with our Holywell community. One of the aims in our School Improvement Plan this year has been to further improve our communication with families. We are now proud to announce the launch of our school social media accounts to add to our continuous communication and promotion of a positive school community:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/HolywellCoE/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/HolywellCoE>

Our social media accounts are for promoting a sense of community and will be used to provide families with information about events, activities and positive achievements within our school. The social media accounts will not replace regular communication modes (such as the newsletter and Weduc), rather, they will communicate through social media many of the exciting, fun and interesting learning events which take place, giving you the chance to interact with "likes".

The accounts have been created and will be managed by our new Deputy Headteacher – Miss Craddock – and we are grateful for her hard work in setting these up for us. Attached is the Code of Conduct relating to our account. Please familiarise yourself with the code and note that we will not be posting reminders, nor addressing questions and concerns through our social media accounts.

We are also attaching an updated Photo Permissions form for all parents to complete.



Headteacher: Mr MG Simpson MA, NPQH

Deputy Headteacher: Mr S Van Der Merwe – Deputy Headteacher: Mrs M Purves – Deputy Headteacher: Miss A Craddock

Designated Safeguarding Leads: Miss H Lau & Mrs J Johnson

Senior Leaders: Mrs A Butcher, Mr M Eames; Mrs J French – SENDCo: Miss A Stepney

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## PSHE Day

Last week, we had our annual 'Enhanced PSHE Day'. PSHE stands for 'Personal, Social and Health Education'. On the day, each year group had a different theme:

Year 5: Health and Safety

Year 6: Wellbeing

Year 7: British Values

Year 8: Careers

Here is just a flavour of the day in pictures:



Year 5 covered First Aid, Bike Safety, Water Safety, Fire Safety, Personal Safety and Online Safety; Year 6 looked at Mindfulness, Resilience, Wellbeing, Healthy Eating, Exercise and The Body – they also had the challenge of 'Funky Circuits' – some exhausting circuit training challenges; Year 7 explored British Values through debating and art (creating representations of our values in clay), whilst exploring individual liberty (more clay creativity) and values in sport through a workshop led by Bedford Blues Rugby Club; Year 8 delved into the world of Careers through 'live' online interviews with business people through Careers experts 'WorkTree'; through an online Careers quiz, through a workshop about running a football club with Bedford Town FC and they practised several key business skills – creating presentations to governors and working in teams to complete a range of challenges. Our thanks to Mrs Gough – our PSHE Subject Leader – for organising the day and to all the staff and visitors for making it a memorable experience.

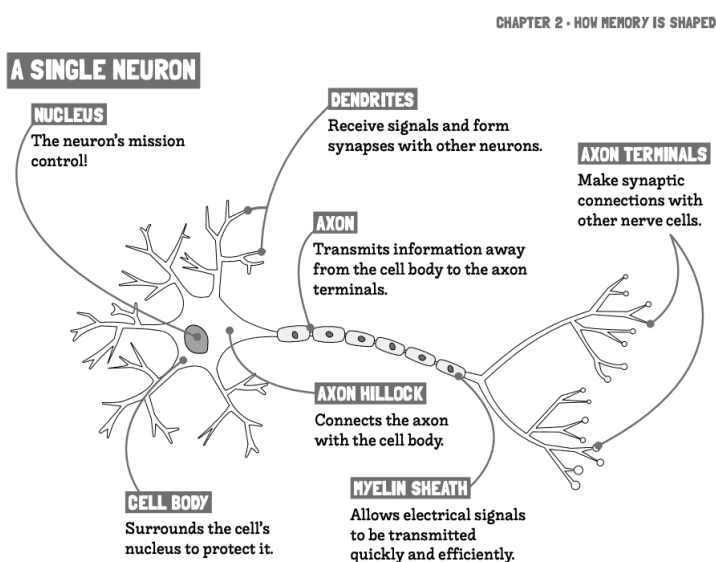


## Memory training

At the start of term, staff had some inspirational and thought-provoking training from Ross Morrison McGill – teacher, author and creator of the brilliant website/blog: @teachertoolkit. We explored how the brain works and how we can use the latest research to further enhance the way we teach at Holywell. Since the day, staff have been trying out some of the strategies and techniques – everything from ‘Brain Breaks’ to retrieval challenges, and from memory hooks to ‘interleaving’. The learning process in the light of how the brain works is fascinating and it has certainly given us all plenty food for thought when planning and structuring our lessons.

**“ If teachers can learn how to support the superhighways of the brain, increasing speed and efficacy of passing signals, they can support students with an important role in the formation of long-term memories. ”**


The brain is composed of about 85 billion neurons. A “neuron is a cell which acts as a messenger, sending information in the form of nerve impulses (like electrical signals)”.



Each neuron can be connected with up to 10,000 other neurons – think of a giant spider web – and when we are learning, important changes happening in the brain, including the creation of these new connections. The greater the connection (practice), the stronger the synapse sends an electrical (nerve) impulse between two nerve cells (neurons). It's how we remember things (declarative knowledge) and perform actions (procedural knowledge). The more we practise, the stronger these connections become –

which is why rote learning, recall, testing (exams) or retrieval practice – whatever you call it – is essential for teaching and learning. Ross compares this to walking through a woodland: without a path, this is challenging. We have to push through the vegetation; but, if we continue to use the same path over and over, gradually a track starts to form and the easier it becomes to follow the trail. “If we stop using the trail, the vegetation grows back, and the trail slowly disappears. This is very similar to what happens in your brain - when you stop practising something, the connections between your neurons weaken and can ultimately be dismantled or pruned. So, regular practice is so important – students should watch out for ‘Blasts from the Past’ in History and RE lessons and other retrieval games and techniques in other subject areas – they are all designed to help fix things in the long-term memory!


## Value of the Month: Joy



# HOLYWELL SCHOOL

CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL CRANFIELD


Be a joy-bringer




## Value of the Month

May 2023

# Joy



Be a joy-bringer



*'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. (Luke 15: 6-7)*

**Holywell School**  
*A Church of England School providing a Values-based education*  
**Enjoy ... Achieve ... Excel ... Care**

Our value of the month is Joy. The challenge to everyone this month is to be a 'joy-bringer'. It is so easy to think about the negative things in life; we often dwell on that one thing we can't do, that one thing which wasn't quite right, that one complaint in a myriad of compliments. We need to always look for the light in the darkest of moments. Some of our students provided some lovely 'light' during some recent staff interviews. As usual, we had a student panel – our students were given the opportunity to ask the candidates several questions and, at the end of the interview, the candidates were given an opportunity to ask the students some questions. Here's a summary of what the students were asked and a summary of their replies:

1. *What makes you proud to be a Holywell student?*

*"Having amazing teachers, teaching assistants and staff around us. We feel safe at all times. We feel like we can be who we truly are and that this is accepted. We are proud to wear our school uniform to represent our amazing school. We can be open and honest without having to worry. We love how all staff put so much effort into making the school the best place it can be."*

2. *Do you feel the importance of the values?*

*"Yes. The sense of community at our school is great. We feel like the values teach us to be the best we can be within the school community and also outside of school."*

3. *What do you like best about your school?*

*"The teachers and staff who help us. They make lessons fun and engaging. You can tell that they must work long hours to create these resources! We also think the school community is the best. We can have fun, be open but most importantly we feel safe at all times"*

The feedback from our visitors about our students was equally complimentary. We are proud of all our students and our staff and this is a lovely reminder of what we can all achieve together. So, let's keep looking for the light and bringing the joy to each other.

Reverend Isaac has also been reflecting on 'Joy':





Saint Paul is responsible for writing 13 out of the 27 books in the New Testament, each is a letter written either to an individual, or more often a whole church community. One of the letters he wrote was to the church that was in Philippi. Philippi was a Roman colony in modern-day Greece, and Paul wrote to them whilst in prison in Rome. You might think that whilst writing from prison Paul's letter to the Philippian church would have been more than a little depressing and downcast – however that couldn't be further from the truth. Out of all the letters that Paul wrote it his letter to the Philippian church that is most filled with joy. Paul uses the word 'joy' over twenty times in this one letter! How is Paul able to be so filled with joy when he finds himself in a Roman prison? Paul's joy comes not from his immediate circumstances, but from his faith that whatever circumstances he finds himself in God is working all things out for his good.

Christians know that it is possible to be joyful despite our present circumstances because we know that we follow in the footsteps of Jesus himself. Jesus, we read in another letter in the New Testament, "for the joy set before him endured the cross, scoring its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:2). Our joy comes from knowing God, and knowing that whatever we go through we are secure with him.

### Coronation Challenge

Another source of joy is looking forward to the King's Coronation and an extra Bank Holiday! On Friday, we will be celebrating this historic moment with a Year Group Bunting challenge. The whole school will be off-timetable in the afternoon to learn about King Charles III and to take part in a creative challenge, pitting year group against year group to make the longest and best bunting. Each flag on the bunting must include one of four things:



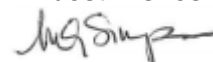
Your class name	A Holywell Value	A coronation key word	A Visual image	Charity Non-Uniform Day
5???	Kindness, Respect, Love, Peace, Courage, Hope, Community Compassion, Care, Equality, Faith, Forgiveness, Grace, Humility, Justice, Joy, Resilience, Responsibility, Self-Worth and Self-Regulation, Service, Thankfulness, Tolerance	King Charles III Coronation God save the King! Crown 6 <sup>th</sup> May 2023 His majesty Celebration Palace Procession Historic Tradition	   	Friday will also be a charity non-uniform day and the theme will be: Friday will be a Red, White and Blue. Money raised on the day will be donated to a charity to be voted on by the students and will be Holywell's contribution to the King's Coronation's 'Big Help Out' challenge.
6???				
7???				
8???				



### ... and finally, Good Luck to Year 6

After the Coronation Bank Holiday weekend, Year 6 will be taking their SATs in English and Maths. They have all been working hard and we know that they will all do the best they can in these national assessments. They have created their own SATs monsters in Art and they will be able to have small versions of these to accompany them on their SATs journey next week. We'll all work together as a school community to support Year 6 and we wish them every success.

All best wishes



Mr Mike Simpson  
Headteacher