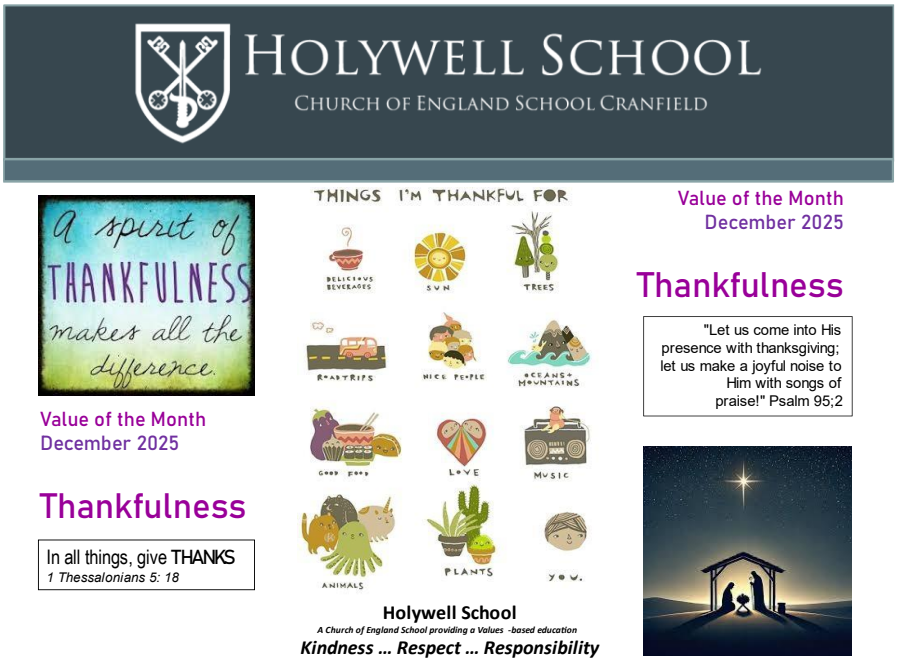
Holywell News

Issue No: 182
December 2025

HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

STUDENTS RETURN TO SCHOOL - MONDAY 5TH JANUARY 2026

Mr Simpson's Headlines



Our Value of the Month is THANKFULNESS and, at the end of a long term, we have been reflecting on what we're thankful for. Family and friends are often top of our list and, in our worship this week, I shared with students and staff, my thankfulness to my parents for supporting me to leave home and to go to university. As the son of a butcher and a shop-worker, I was one of the first in the family to go to university. Like my parents, you can make a huge difference by supporting, encouraging and allowing your children to explore their interests and to help them to be the best they can be. As we embark on a new calendar year, think about how you can open doors and support our students to take on new challenges, to try something different and to 'live life in all its fullness'.

WE have continued to explore the idea of building bridges and at Christmas, we have been thinking about the ultimate bridge-builder: Jesus. "The Word became flesh!" Christians believe that Jesus bridged the greatest gap we can imagine… the gap between God and humanity. He entered into our world. He became one of us. So, how did Jesus build that bridge?

- He connected across difference: Jesus welcomed people who were different—outsiders, people disliked by others, people from different backgrounds. He didn't erase differences; He connected across them.
- He taught peaceful problem-solving and forgiveness: rather than the Old Testament stance of 'an eye for an eye', Jesus promoted tolerance, 'turning the other cheek' and seeking a way to resolve differences and build a bridge.
- He built the ultimate bridge through His life, death, and resurrection—giving Himself so that people could reconnect with God and each other.

I leave the belief bridge choice to you, but, whatever your faith, or even if you have no faith, we can all aspire to connect across difference and celebrate the diversity of each other and of our community and to be peaceful problem-solvers.

We have also challenged students to a 'thankfulness challenge'. The idea is to come up with 30 images of thankfulness over the next 30 days.
Form groups can do this as a group challenge or it may be something you'd like to do at home … your simple challenge is to take a photograph of something to represent each of the listed themes, topics or concepts. We'd love you to share any family collections … all the themes get us to think about the simple things for which we might give thanks.

I'm always thankful for time in the classroom with students and this term, my Year 6 English group have really worked hard to get to grips with lots of grammatical terms as well as finding out how to write instructions – I loved reading their ideas about how to be awesome and how to survive the winter … there was lots of hot chocolate and snuggling up warm and cosy with family.

I am also thankful when students bring work of which they are proud and which staff have recognised as excellent work. Year 8 have been visiting lots recently as they have completed their 'design and make' desk lights. They have been creative and inventive in their designing and have made some high-quality products.

I was also very thankful to parents who took some time to meet and talk with us about how we might develop our secondary provision. We discussed what was working well and there was some lovely feedback about our wonderful staff, our excellent curriculum, the amazing additional clubs and opportunities as well as the support and care we provide for the students. We discussed how we might develop our support for students as they move into Years 9, 10 and 11. We started with thinking about what we would like our Year 11 students to be like. Everyone agreed that we wanted happy students who were confident and skilled to take on the challenges of adulthood and to be thoughtful members of our communities. We wanted them to have resilience, resourcefulness and a clear sense of what was right. Our School Improvement Plan is built around these aspirations and we will plan our curriculum to realise this vision. We also discussed new uniform possibilities - more of that in the New Year!

So, as we close the school for the Christmas break, may I take this opportunity to thank you for all your support this term and to wish you all a safe, peaceful, restful and joyful Christmas. I have every faith that the New Year will be filled with happiness, kindness and achievement … as well as building plans and the last two terms of Holywell as a Middle School … exciting times.

Mike Simpson
Headteacher

Term Dates for this Academic Year 2026

SPRING TERM 2026
Term Starts for all students: Monday 5th January 2026
Half term: Monday 16th February - Friday 20th February 2026
Term Ends: Friday 27th March 2026

SUMMER TERM 2026
Closure Day: Monday 13th April 2026
Term Starts for all students: Tuesday 14th April 2026
May Day: Monday 4th May 2026
Half term: Monday 25th May - Friday 29th May 2026
Term Ends: Friday 17th July 2026
Closure Day: Monday 20th July 2026

Dates are correct at the time of printing. Please note that dates may differ from other schools.

If your child is away from school:
A telephone call, email or WEDUC notification is required on the
first day of absence, before 8.30 am
WEDUC Communications for School

reach more parents by weduc

Please note that we use WEDUC to communicate with families.
We strongly recommend at least one parent/carer downloads the WEDUC app.

If parents/carers need an enrolment code, please email Miss Watson on awatson@holywellschool.co.uk who will be able to supply one. Thank you.

Attendance and Holidays in Term Time

Parents / Carers should be aware that under current government guidelines **we can NOT give permission for any holiday in term time.** Holidays will be classed as **unauthorised absence** for your child. There may, however, be events that a student takes part in out of school which require him / her to miss a school day – we will continue to consider that sort of request. However, it is clear that the government and external authorities will want a very persuasive argument for us to be allowed to record any absence as a permitted time out of school. **No leave will be authorised during the first two weeks of the school year or during exam periods.**

Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence are required to fill in a Leave of Absence Application Form at least 4 weeks in advance of the planned absence and before making any travel arrangements (available from the school office and to download from the school website). We always take a reasonable, supportive approach to requests (especially with regard to fines) however, taking 'the odd day' here and there can have a HUGE impact on learning.

Emergency Contact Details **Please remember to inform the school office of any changes to your contact details**. This includes **change of your home address**, **telephone numbers** (even temporary changes) **and doctors' details**. This is very important, as it enables us to reach you in case of emergency. Thank you

School Caterers

Please note the School Caterers operate a cashless system, so no money is taken at the kitchen. Please can parents regularly check the balance on their child's Parent Pay account via the ParentPay website: https://www.parentpay.com/.

Preparing for Snow (just in case!!!)

Please remember a few key points of how the school handles this.

We work extremely hard to stay open – including having our own snow blower! However, if the weather does overwhelm us and it is decided to close the school before the start of the school day (eg. in the event of severe weather conditions), we will notify you in the following ways:

- by message on WEDUC
- on the school's website (www.holywellschool.co.uk)
- on the Central Bedfordshire Council website using their 'State of Schools' (SOS) system: https://apps.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/webApps/SOS/
- Via the local radio station (BBC Three Counties (95.5 or 103.8 FM / www.bbc.co.uk/threecounties)

It is usually when Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Transport departments deem the roads too dangerous for buses to run and cancel transport that we decide to close the school. In the event of *us* deciding to close, we contact the bus companies to ensure that they do not bring students into school.

Payment for Uniform, Trips and Sundries

Please note that we are now a cash-free school and request that payments are made online whenever possible, with the link on our website.

Tucasi (Scopay.com) For payment of the following:

- **Ordering School ties / blazer badges**
- **Trips**
- **Lost or damaged library books**

If you have not previously logged in to Tucasi you will need an access code from the school. Please email finance@holywellschool.co.uk for this code.

If you are unable to pay online we have the facility to pay by credit/debit card in person at the school office or via telephone.

Staff News

This term, we say 'thank you' and farewell to Mrs Shepherd. Mrs Shepherd has been a great addition to the Science Department and we wish her every success moving back to a secondary school setting.

In the New Year, we welcome back Mrs Knight to the Science team. Mrs Knight was with us last Summer and brings a wealth of experience and passion for all things scientific.

We also welcome Mrs Hayle to Holywell. Mrs Hayle will be leading our Computing Department and is joining us from a secondary school in Milton Keynes. Huge thanks to Mr Massiah who has been teaching our Computing curriculum during the Autumn Term.

This week, we have also welcomed two new members of staff to our school support team:

Mrs O'Reilly joins us in the office as our new receptionist and Mr Martin has joined our site team.

MFL News

Holywell Students Shine in German Comic Competition!

We are delighted to announce the results of the recent Year 6 German Comic Competition, organised by the Goethe-Institute in London! A huge thank you to all our students who submitted entries. The organisers were genuinely impressed by the creativity, imaginative storytelling, and excellent use of German showcased in every submission. It was such a tough decision that the organisers had to choose three winners from our school! We are delighted to congratulate:

- **Maryam** – for her impressive effort in writing her comic entirely in German.
- **Daisy** – for her creative storytelling and touching message.
- **Harper** – for her delightful characters and strong use of German.

Well done to all participants – your hard work and enthusiasm for language learning really shone through!

Year 8 Students Take Their French Learning to the Next Level!

The MFL Department is incredibly proud of the following Year 8 students: Flo, Elbert, Isabelle, George, Maisie, Zara and Oskar who are choosing to dedicate their free time every Tuesday afternoon to further their French learning. These enthusiastic learners are attending a French Zoom course organised by the Alliance Française, the world-renowned organisation promoting French language and culture.

Through this course, students are improving their speaking, listening, and comprehension skills while engaging with French culture in a fun and interactive online environment. Their commitment and passion for language learning are truly inspiring, and we can't wait to see how they continue to grow and develop their skills!

Well done to all involved – your dedication makes the MFL Department very proud!

MFL Star of the Week

Each week, the MFL Department celebrates outstanding students of French and German as our Stars of the Week!

This recognition is awarded to learners who demonstrate exceptional effort, progress, or enthusiasm in their language studies. Students may be selected for their active participation, creativity, or notable improvement and their achievements are proudly showcased on our department noticeboards.

Keep an eye on the school's social media pages for posts featuring weekly certificates and nominations. And if you are named a Star of the Week, you will also earn 5 House Points!

TAKE PART IN THE COMPETITION ORGANISED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
Get Creative and Compete! Year 7 and 8
Oxford German Olympiad 2025–26
Choose Your Challenge!

You may choose **ONE of the three tasks below**, but you are also welcome to complete **two or all three**—the choice is yours!

CHOICE 1: Create a comic strip in GERMAN about a journey undertaken by two or three animals.
CHOICE 2: "Fahrrad, Auto, Eisenbahn, Schiff, Flugzeug … Welche Transportmittel werden wir im Jahr 2050 benutzen?" Illustrate your ideas with drawings or photos.
CHOICE 3: Design a visitor's brochure for a German city you would like to visit. Include photos or drawings and at least 15 GERMAN words or phrases.
Important Details:

1. Submit your finished work to Mrs Morey in Room 4 by 13 February 2026—no later.
2. Winners will be announced by the University of Oxford in March 2026.
3. The winner will be invited to a celebration ceremony at the University of Oxford.
4. The German Olympiad is organised by the Oxford German Network, part of the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages at the University of Oxford.
5. More details in this link: https://www.ogn.ox.ac.uk/content/oxford-german-olympiad-2026

TAKE PART IN THE COMPETITION ORGANISED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
Get Creative and Compete! Year 5 and 6
Oxford German Olympiad 2025–26

1. Draw a picture by hand of your ***ideales Reiseziel (= ideal travel destination).*** This artwork must be created entirely by hand — no digital tools are allowed.
2. Your chosen destination may be real or completely imaginary.
3. Add 10 explanatory labels in GERMAN to your drawing.
4. You must include at least ten labels, all written in GERMAN.
5. Colour your picture and present it as neatly as possible.
6. When finished, submit your work to Mrs Morey in Room 4 by 13 February 2026 and NO LATER.
7. Winners will be announced by the University of Oxford in March 2026.
8. The winner will be invited to a celebration ceremony at the University of Oxford.
9. The German Olympiad is organised by the Oxford German Network, part of the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages at the University of Oxford.
10. More details in this link: https://www.ogn.ox.ac.uk/content/oxford-german-olympiad-2026

We are Now Using Languagenut!

We are excited to share that the MFL Department is now using Languagenut for all Modern Foreign Languages homework tasks.

What is Languagenut?
Languagenut is an interactive online platform that supports students in learning French, German, and other languages through engaging activities, vocabulary practice, grammar games, listening tasks, and pronunciation support. It adapts to each learner, helping them build confidence step by step.

Why we love it:
- Easy to use at home.
- Excellent for independent study and revision.
- Tracks progress so students can see their improvement.
- Fun, game-style activities that boost motivation.

All students have been given login details and will now complete their MFL homework through the platform.

Thank you for supporting language learning at home.

Languagenut Homework Club

Students are warmly welcome to attend our Languagenut Homework Club every Tuesday in Room 4, from 1:05–1:30pm. This is a great opportunity for pupils to:
✔ Get support with their MFL homework. ✔ Use school devices if needed.
✔ Spend focused time practising independently on Languagenut. All students are welcome!

Duolingo

All French and German students have access to Duolingo. Their username and password details are recorded at the front of planners. We encourage students to access the app regularly to further develop their foreign language skills. Duolingo is an app and website that uses a gamified approach to language learning, with lessons that incorporate translating, interactive exercises, quizzes, and stories.

Watching Movies & Shows

Netflix, Amazon Prime or any other streaming service offer a variety of French and German films and shows with subtitles, helping language learners absorb the language naturally. Start watching your favourite films or shows with English subtitles, then switch to French/German subtitles, and gradually move to watching without them.

How Can Parents/Carers support language learning at home?

By incorporating these simple habits listed below, parents/carers can make language learning more interactive, enjoyable, and effective at home!

☑ Make Vocabulary Stick – Encourage your child to make regular use of the *Languagenut* and *Duolingo* apps to support their language learning. Both platforms offer fun, interactive activities that help build confidence, strengthen vocabulary, and boost independent study.

Immerse in Listening – Suggest listening to podcasts, music, or watching TV shows in French/German to improve comprehension and pronunciation.

Practice Speaking – Engage in simple conversations using basic phrases, even if you are not fluent. Consistent practice builds confidence!

📖 Encourage Reading – Borrow or buy books, magazines, or graded readers in French/German to make reading enjoyable and accessible.
📝 Create a Study Routine – Set aside regular time for French/German homework and revision to maintain consistency.
🎬 Explore Culture – Watch films, documentaries, or YouTube channels like *Easy French / Easy German* to connect language with real-world contexts.
❓ Be a Quizmaster – Help your child review vocabulary, grammar rules, or key phrases by quizzing them in a fun and engaging way.

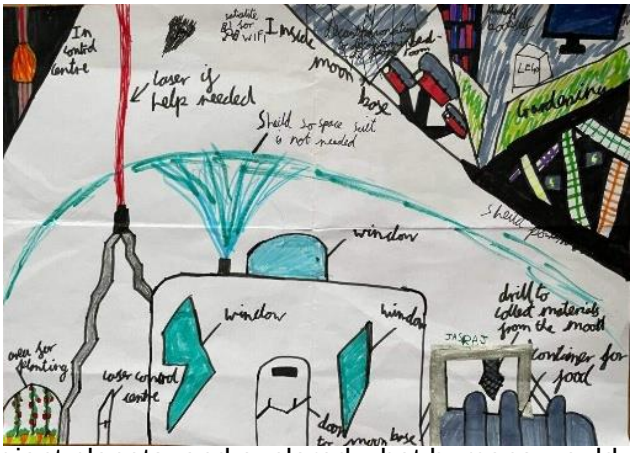
Are you thinking about your GCSE Options yet?

Choosing your GCSE subjects is an exciting step. French or German could open doors you haven't even imagined yet!
Studying a language is more than just learning to speak. It is about discovering new cultures, boosting your confidence, and standing out to future employers and universities.
Whether you are passionate about travel, interested in international careers, or simply want a challenge that is both fun and rewarding, GCSE French or German could be the perfect choice.
To help you and your child explore what studying a language at GCSE really involves, check out this short video from our exam board Pearson Edexcel:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bplJmebh4XI
It gives a clear overview of the course content, assessments, and the amazing benefits that come with language learning.
Don't miss the chance to unlock a world of opportunities! Why not consider French or German as part of your GCSE journey?

Science Department News

It has been a fantastic first term, with students across all year groups fully engaged in their learning and working hard to develop their scientific knowledge and practical skills.

Year Five



In September, we welcomed our new Year 5 students, who quickly settled into life at Holywell. Their year began with a strong focus on developing practical skills. It was wonderful to see the students estimating, measuring, and recording as they completed a wide range of hands-on activities. Our forces topic allowed pupils to build on their learning from lower school. Continuing to work scientifically, they investigated friction, streamlining, and air resistance. We then moved on to our space topic, where students took part in a solar-system scavenger hunt, learned about the rocky and gas-giant planets, and explored what humans would need to live on the Moon. Their imaginative moon-base designs were a real highlight!

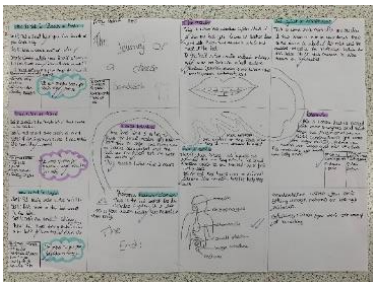
Year Six

A major highlight for many of our Year 6 students this term was earning their Bunsen burner licence! To achieve this milestone, they demonstrated a secure understanding of laboratory safety, correctly set up a Bunsen burner, lit it safely, and used it to investigate the burning times of different materials. What began as a nervous challenge for some soon became a moment of pride, and we were delighted with the confidence and effort shown by all.

Year Seven

Our Year 7 cohort has begun their journey on our newly developed 5-year science curriculum, carefully designed to support students' growth all the way through to GCSE in Year 11. This term, their learning has focused on Matter as Particles, Cells, Forces, and Separation Techniques. Students have shown tremendous enthusiasm and endeavour throughout each topic. Bravo, Year 7!

Year Eight



Year 8 began the year by exploring our Health and Lifestyle unit. Studying diet and nutrition, food testing, and the digestive system helped students make meaningful links between science and everyday life. Their creative "Journey of a Cheese Sandwich" projects were particularly impressive!

Many students especially enjoyed our later work on Separation Techniques and Electricity and Circuits—including some hair-raising encounters with the science of static electricity.

As we end our first term, we look forward to the exciting learning opportunities ahead in the new year. Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas!

Music Department News

Christmas is a busy time for musicians and Holywell students have risen to the challenge.

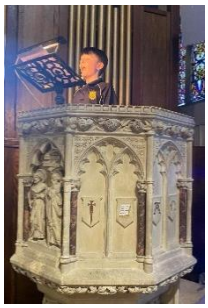
Cranfield Church Christmas Tree Festival - Saturday 13th December

The Christmas Tree Festival is a biennial celebration held at St Peter's and St Paul's Church in Cranfield. The church is filled with trees provided by various organisations and the theme this year was recycled materials. The Holywell tree was actually made from recycled chicken wire and decorated with rubbish collected form the playground!

Twenty Holywell musicians form years 5-8, came and provided half an hour of musical entertainment to an appreciative audience. They included Alfie Bishop and Harris Blessing, playing a guitar duet accompanied by their teacher Mr Trense, Noah Woodcock performing a trumpet solo, Zuzanna Skalecka and Ivy Leighton singing a vocal duet and Holywell Sings performing a selection of Christmas Songs. The students were so good that we have a repeat booking for 2027!

Carol Service Cranfield Church – Tuesday 16th December 6pm

The service this year was a traditional telling of the Christmas Story. The Junior Worship team provided the readings and 'Holywell Sings' sang the carols. The service was performed to friends and family and was repeated four times on the last day of term to ensure that all year groups had the opportunity to come to the church and participate in the service. It is the first time that many of the students have sung in the choir and we have been very impressed with their enthusiasm and attendance at rehearsals. Watch this space for future performances.



Autumn Term Music Exam Successes

Please let us know if your child has lessons outside of school and has passed an exam. We like to display the certificates on the music wow board.

The following students have achieved the following grades in their recent music exams.
Abigail Pearce initial Piano – Merit
Edie Hamman Grade 1 Drums – Pass
Eva Worthington Grade 1 Piano – Merit
Antonia Herbowo Grade 1 Piano – Distinction
Lydia Bell Grade 2 Clarinet – Distinction
Lydia Bell Grade 2 Piano - ?
Natalia Royles Grade 2 Guitar - Distinction
Robbie O'Dell Grade 3 Drums – Pass
Oliver Indge Grade 4 Drums – Distinction
Noah Woodcock Grade 4 Piano – Distinction
Noah Woodcock Grade 2 Trumpet – Merit

PE Department News

It's been an extremely busy half-term, with lots of fixtures and clubs taking place. A massive 'thank you' to all of the students that have taken part and attended clubs…and to the staff that have run them!

Table Tennis

KS3 BOYS

After a two-pool tournament, both Holywell teams topped their pools, which resulted in the boys meeting each other in a final play-off to determine counties. With a win of 5-3 The Holywell A team took the win! Shout out to Freddie F for not losing a single game in the run up to counties! A massive congrats to the 'A team' Freddie F, Freddie B, Seth, Jack. And well done to the other boys who came close, Toby, Callan, Oscar and Toby A.

KS2 BOYS

After a hard-fought battle to a strong Alameda side, sadly the KS2 Boys team fell short of counties by three points. A big well done to Joshua M, Monty, Dylan and Logan. And a third place run in overall for the B team boys; well done to Brynley, Harrison, Harvey and Joshua.

KS2 GIRLS
For the girl's team (Emma, Laura, Mylee and Georgie), an excellent effort was made to get them through to Counties, winning an outstanding 7/8 games. For the County stage of the competition, the students played at Kempston Academy. Unfortunately, they didn't get to the next round but we saw some great performances from all four girls.

Swimming

We took some students to a schools swimming gala at Flitwick leisure centre at the start of December. We witnessed some amazing swims from all our swimmers, with some great starts and tumble turns on show. It was really nice to see the students representing the school in a different sport. The afternoon started with our team captain Arthur Wainwright leading a great warm up both in the pool and on poolside, then competing in the 50 metre backstroke and breast stroke. We got to see some great butterfly from both Tom Hogben and George Outtram. Both the Andrews and Chrysochoidi sisters had impressive swims. We then finished the day with our three relay teams doing exceptionally well. A highlight was the KS3 boys winning theirs by quite a distance! Holywell came away with lots of medals. Our Key Stage 3 boys and 2 girls got gold and our Key Stage 3 girls came 2nd. Well done swimmers!

Year 8 Boys Football

The Year 8 Football team had another fantastic season starting off with a tough match against Parkfields where a few last-minute goals and an outstanding penalty save from Oscar kept us in the lead, ultimately winning the game 6-3. We then had our first home match against Alameda and with such a strong performance from everyone on the pitch Holywell came out with a commanding 9-1 victory. The boys kept this momentum going into their next game against a strong Pix Brook side, battling at the top of the table. Pix Brook started the game strong but Oscar again made numerous fantastic saves to keep the score 0-0. Oscar opened up the scoring from a corner and Archie scored a hat trick along with Tom setting up numerous goals, with some well delivered passes cutting through the Pix Brook defence allowing Holywell to come away with a strong 7-2 victory.
Holywell then took on a very strong RBA team who played some excellent football and managed to take their chances. Although it was a close game, RBA came out on top beating us 3-0. With one more game to go in the season, Holywell had to beat an undefeated Woodlands team to secure 1st place on goal difference and make it through to the county play-offs. Holywell started off strong with some fantastic team football and Sam opened up by scoring a wonderful team goal. Joshua also scored twice in quick succession, putting us 3-0 up. Woodlands battled back into the game making it 4-3 to us with only a few minutes to go. The boys kept up the intensity and Freddie scored two last minute goals to seal an excellent 6-3 victory and put Holywell into the county play-off semi-finals.

Well done to all the boys who have come to training every week and participated in the numerous fixtures, we look forward to the county semi-finals.

Year 5 Boys Football
The Year 5 Football team had their first pre-season friendly against a strong Bromham team in preparation for their season to start after Christmas. The boys battled hard and showed excellent Holywell spirit throughout the match, continuing to apply pressure and defend well as a team. The boys demonstrated some great attacking phases of play and came close to scoring on numerous

occasions. Well done to all the boys who have been attending training every week, we look forward to starting the season strong after Christmas.

Year 7 Girls Basketball

Well done to the Year 7 Girls Basketball team. They came joint third in their recent tournament at Alameda after putting in a fantastic performance. From the opening tip-off, the team showed confidence on the court whilst moving the ball with purpose. What stood out most was the team spirit. Students encouraged one another constantly, celebrated good play, and showed resilience even when matches became challenging.

Y7 Netball

The Year 7 netball team were fantastic. They showed excellent teamwork throughout, constantly supporting and encouraging one another on and off the court. Their commitment to training has been clear to see and really paid off in their performances. A lovely group of dedicated girls who should be very proud of themselves and the way they represent the team and Holywell.

Y8 Girls Netball

Since the beginning of term we have had over 25 year 8 girls attend netball club on a regular basis.

After the success of the Year 8 Girls team winning their league before half term we planned some B team fixture to ensure that all pupils who attended training will be given the opportunity to play in a competitive game against another School.

Our first B team fixture was against Alameda. Some of the girls had never played against another School before and were rather nervous but when we arrived the nerves settled and they got themselves in the zone! The girls played amazingly well and there were lots of happy faces and great team work displayed. Final scores were A team won 11-2 and the B team drew 1-1. Well done to Alena Yabaki who played and has attended training this term.

We have another game against Woodlands planned for the new year and hopefully a trip to see some live netball being played to inspire us even more!

After Christmas, we have our first completive Y5 boys football fixtures followed by KS2 and KS3 girls football. Rugby season starts as well so there will be lots of fixtures for our KS2, Y7 and Y8 boys team and also our KS3 girls. We will also have some cross-country fixtures so there will be plenty of opportunities for students to get involved. Keep via up to date with our results via the school's Social Media outlets.

Lessons

It is still cold outside so please can you continue to ensure that students bring the correct kit for their lessons - please see the PE kit section in the students planners. For lessons on the field, such as rugby, football and health and fitness, students will need football boots (shin pads for football, gumshields for rugby) and long, black socks. Students should also ideally bring a spare top and bottoms to lessons, in case they get muddy. Students will be told which lessons they have after Christmas in their PE lessons, before they break up. Please also refer to the Weduc message sent out at the start of the year.

Clubs
If attending a PE club, students should wear their normal school uniform to school and then change into PE kit before the club. If the club is inside, then a pair of trainers is all they need! If they have PE on the day of the club they are attending, students should wear their PE kit to school BUT bring spare kit to change into if there's a chance they could get muddy!

PE Clubs Timetable – Spring 1st Half Term 2026

	13:05-13:35	13:35 – 14:00	15:45-16:45
MONDAY	**All Years Running Club** (SMc) – Field **Y8 Boys Badminton** (MK) – Sports hall	**Y7/8 Girls Rugby** (MK) - Field	**All Years Table Tennis** (MK) - Gym
TUESDAY	**Y7/8 Girls Sport & Wellbeing** (ES) *Invite only* – Sports Hall **Y5 Boys Football** (ZI) – Field	**Y5 Mixed Netball** (HMc) – Sports Hall	
WEDNESDAY	**Y8 Boys Rugby** (ZI) - Field	**Y6 Mixed Netball** (EA) – Sports Hall	
THURSDAY	**Y5/6 Mixed Rugby** (JU/MK) - Field **All Years Mixed Gymnastics** (CSI) – Gym **Y7 Boys Badminton** (ME) – Sports hall	**Y7/8 Girls Badminton** (MK) – Sports Hall	**Y5/6 Multi Sports** (MK) - Sports hall
FRIDAY	**Y7/8 Girls Football** (MK) – Field **Y7 Boys Rugby** (ME) – Field	**Y5/6 Girls Football** (MK) – Field **Y7/8 Boys Basketball** (ZI) – Sports hall	**All Years Mixed Badminton** (MK) - Sports hall

If you wish to attend an after-school club, please take a permission letter from outside the main school office.

All clubs start Wednesday 7th January

Maths Department News

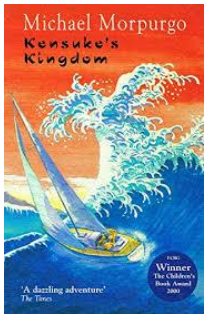
Year Five:
As part of Maths Week England, some year 5 classes took part in an online problem-solving session courtesy of Nrich. It was great fun and definitely got our brains working!

Year Six:

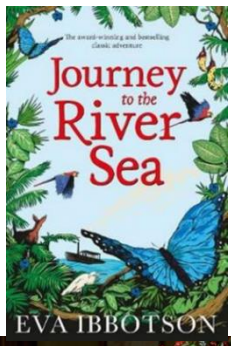
As part of Maths Week England, some year 6 classes took part in an online session about percentages and money from Virgin Money.

English Department News

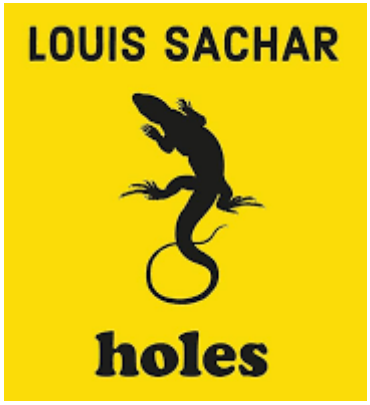
In English, students have been busy learning, creating and having fun!



Year 5 have been studying 'Kensuke's Kingdom' – a novel by Michael Morpurgo. The story is about a boy named Michael who, along with his dog Stella, is shipwrecked on a remote Pacific island and who becomes friends with an enigmatic older Japanese man, Kensuke. Michael learns how to survive and understand nature while grappling with the possibility of rescue and separation. The story explores themes of friendship, humanity, and self-discovery. As the story has progressed, students have taken on a series of writing challenges – from a balanced argument about sailing around the world to writing from the point of view of one of the minor characters – an orangutan called Tomadachi.



Year 6 have continued with their preparation for their SATs in May. They completed their first practice tests and these have helped their teachers to work out some key areas on which to work. One thing which really helps with reading comprehension skills is regular use of ReadTheory – the online reading comprehension website we use for homework. After Christmas, we'll start some additional weekly test practice. We've also had lots of fun exploring how to write instructions with some really creative pieces on 'how to be awesome' and students' own instructions from 'making a cup of tea' to 'how to be thankful and from 'how to capture a dragon' to 'surviving winter'. We are in the middle of reading 'Journey to the River Sea' – a classic adventure story by the wonderful Eva Ibbotson.



Year 7 have been studying one of our favourite books: Holes. Stanley Yelnats' family has a history of bad luck. So, when a miscarriage of justice sends him to Camp Green Lake Juvenile Detention Centre (which isn't green and doesn't have a lake), it's not exactly a surprise. Every day he and the other inmates are told to dig a hole each, five foot wide by five foot deep, reporting anything they find. The evil warden claims that it builds character, but this is a lie and the Warden has ulterior motives. It's a multi-storyline novel that weaves three different timelines into a clever, inventive climax … peeling away layers of connections like the layers of an onion. The novel was also responsible for a surge in the sale of onions … just ask the Year 7s and they'll tell you all about the magical qualities of the humble onion!!

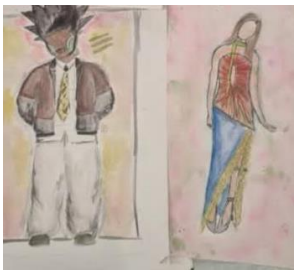
Year 8 have been taking a trip back in time to Victorian England and to the world of Charles Dickens and 'A Christmas Carol'. This classic Christmas ghost story tells the tale of Ebeneezer Scrooge - the "squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner" who despises Christmas and humanity, famously calling celebrations "Bah humbug!" Scrooge is confronted by four ghosts – his deceased, former business partner, Jacob Marley and the ghosts of Christmas Past, Christmas Present and Christmas Yet-to-Come. By the end of the novella, Scrooge has been transformed and promises to "… honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year." Students have written in role as Scrooge and have also done a GCSE-style essay analysing how the ghosts have transformed Scrooge. 70+ students also went to see a theatre production of the story at the Old Vic (report later in the newsletter).

… and the BIG news in the English Department is to say congratulations to Miss Mayles and her partner on the arrival of Louis Zak who was born on 15th December (1 day late!). Both are well and looking forward to their first family Christmas. We all send our best wishes.

Art Department News

6PB and 6SS created their final Goldsworthy inspired land art out the front of the school for everyone to enjoy

7S4 completed their amazing Gargoyles, all artists showed exceptional focus and developed skill, well done!



Year 8 have been very creative with their Figurative Drawings and Fashion Illustrations, with amazing, imaginative designs!

Drama News

Year 8 drama have been trying out new performance skills and recently created some great work in a stage make-up session.

The students loved experimenting with the special effects, with some very realistic creations!

It's been an exciting time in drama. The year 7 have thrown themselves into their silent movie unit, creating some entertaining final pieces. It has been great to watch their confidence growing.

We held 'Holywell's Got Talent', last week. It was a fun evening and wonderful to see a range of performances, from: singing, stand-up comedy, dance, gym, musical instruments to burden impressions! Everyone had a great night and we are very proud of all our pupils for standing up and performing, well done!

1st Louisa Kitching &
Georgie Orpwood-Worley
2nd Thomas Lawes
& Taysen Kettavong
3rd Caitlin Willoughby

But, all competitors were superb and very courageous.

Finally, watch this space for details of the school musical ' Matilda '. Rehearsals begin soon. We'd love to see you there in June!

Design/Technology News

The 'Bridge' group have been learning all about healthy eating and different fruits and vegetables. They have also learnt how to use the 'Bridge & claw hold' to safely use a knife to prepare different fruit and vegetables.

Year 6 pupils have been learning how to make a variety of dishes focussing on different cooking skills; chopping, slicing, combining ingredients and baking.

Year 7 pupils have just started their food lessons this week and have been practicing their knife skills preparing a variety of vegetables to make a pasta salad. They have also been getting into the Christmas spirit making 'Festive biscuits'.

Year 8 students have been working hard designing and making their cushions learning new sewing techniques and developing their skills.

History

It has been a busy half term with Year 5 learning vital skills for their future history lessons while looking at fascinating aspects of Cranfield's past. We have examined attitudes to the building of the airport, the Maypole dancing and carnivals that once gave our village annual entertainment and, most recently, the hoard of Roman coins found in Wharley End.

Year 6 have been looking at Anglo Saxon history, in particular their conversion to Christianity and whether or not this period of history deserves to be called the Dark Ages.

Our Year 7 history students have been immersing themselves in medieval times, considering how well medieval kings got on with the church, nobles and peasants. Not very well as it turned out – poor Thomas Becket was murdered as a result of arguments with the church and King John was forced to reduce his power in the infamous Magna Carta of 1215! Year 8 have been focusing on the Industrial Revolution, particularly the textile and mining industries and making some advanced causal links between the Davy Lamp and the emergence of the modern world. We have learnt so much and made great progress but are really looking forward to the Christmas break!

RE

It has been another half term full of learning and fun! Year 5 have been finding out all about the sabbath and the synagogue while our Year 6 have seen how modern-day Christians such as Corrie Ten Boom and Mother Theresa put Jesus' teaching into practice in their lives. Our Year 7 students have been learning about Muslim rules and culture and considering the benefits and drawbacks of following this religion in the western world.

Year 8 meanwhile have been exploring the arguments for and against the existence of God. This has hopefully helped them to develop their own ideas and emerge with an informed opinion about this thorny topic! We are all looking forward to starting new topics and having more great learning opportunities
next term!

Sustainability and Environment

Eco Option have been busy planting trees in nearby Holcot Wood, they have been replacing the felled Ash Dieback trees with more disease resilient Hornbeam. The group planted around 40 two-year-old saplings, working hard in pouring rain and mud. This was a joint collaboration between Holywell and the Forest of Marston Vale, the trees are expected live for 600 years

Our Recycled Bottle Christmas Tree was a big hit at the Christmas Tree Festival at St Peters Church. Made from plastic bottles picked up from the playground. The aim was to highlight the ongoing issues we have at Holywell with plastic bottles bought in school and not recycled as well as the wider implications of plastic use worldwide.

Students from Year 7 and 8 delivered an assembly on Recycling and Plastic Waste to all the Year 5 students. Sadly, litter remains a big problem in our school grounds. Most of our students do the right thing and put their rubbish in the bins but so much single use plastic comes from home and ends up on our playground. In the New Year we are asking that students take their litter back home to be recycled or disposed of and where possible, to reduce the amount they bring in.

Have an Environmentally Happy Christmas, spend time with family and friends and nice winter walks, listen to the birds and dream.

Yr5 Cinema Trip

On 25th November, we had a great opportunity to watch Kensuke's Kingdom (a book Year 5 are studying at the moment) at Cineworld MK with 30 students in Year 5. The children behaved beautifully and managed to be responsible and spent some pocket money at the local shop beforehand. Showing their respect to the public and didn't need reminding to use their manners.

We are excited to hold more reward trips and activities in the future. We love being able to celebrate those children without any behaviour points! If you didn't come this time, don't worry, there will other reward activities soon. Keep up with the great work and keeping green!

Thank you to Mrs Butcher for securing the tickets. Thank to Mr Lawes and Mr Inskip for driving the mini-buses and to Miss Cauldwell for supporting us! The Year 5's had a great time.

Year 8 trip to A Christmas Carol

We had a great time in London last week taking 70 students to see this fabulous performance at the Old Vic Theatre. The students behaved really well and had a fabulous night. This will really help to reinforce their classroom learning of this classic Dickens tale!

Celebrating Great Behaviour!

In December we celebrated some of our amazing Yr5 students who achieved 0 behaviour points this term! A well-deserved reward for their hard work, positive attitudes and determination to be the best they can be! Hot chocolate (with optional whipped cream and mini marshmallows ☕🍫), biscuits and a film — what more could you want? 😊

Christmas Coffee Morning!

Thank you so much for all of the people who attend the Seniors Christmas Coffee Morning.

It was a lovely morning and the children really enjoyed chatting to you and showing off their impressive singing skills.

Mrs Coaker would like to thank all the staff who supported with the coffee morning.

We would like to thank Mrs Coaker for organising the event.

Watch this space as there will be future events to come.

SEND Team

Our SEND team is Sanchia Davidson as SENDCo and Assistant SENDCo, Gemma Donaldson. You can contact them in the following ways:

send@holywellschool.co.uk – please use this for general enquiries, if you maybe want to touch base with either of us.

For specific support please use:
sdavidson@holywellschool.co.uk or gdonaldson@holywellschool.co.uk

If, at any point, you are unsure if you need support or not, please just reach out. Our new system is just 'get in contact' and we will try and build a picture of what support your child may need.

Useful websites: SEND Local Offer Central Bedfordshire
https://localoffer.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/kb5/centralbedfordshire/directory/home.page

Young Carers

The Thursday lunchtime drop ins will be continuing next year and is an open offer to anyone impacted at home, even if they are not providing necessary care it is a safe space to have a break and connect with other's in a similar situation to them.

Contact jjohnson@holywellschool.co.uk

If you have any questions about this or you want to highlight a young person who may benefit from some additional support. We are continuing to try and promote in school. There is support in the community too, we highly recommend if you feel your child is undertaking additional responsibilities at home to reach out for more info/advice:

https://youngcarersbedford.com/ (Bedford Borough)
https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/182/young_carers (central beds)

Charity News

Christmas shop: We had a very successful Christmas shop again this year! We managed to source some lovely gifts at very low prices and it was lovely to see so many students eagerly buying gifts for their loved ones! We managed to raise well over £200 for our partner school in Tanzania. Thank you all so much and have a very Merry Christmas.

Christmas Jumper Day: Our Christmas Jumper Day on 17th December this year was to raise funds for Bedford Night Shelter and Save the Children and raised the sum of £306.55. Thank you very much for your support.

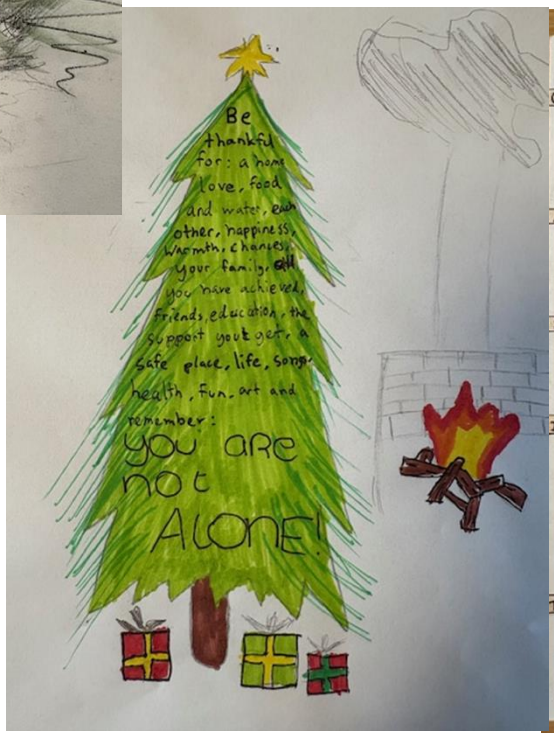
Braiswick Photography – One of the reasons we selected our photography company was because they donate money to Cancer Research UK with every photograph parents/carers buy, which is a great way to help an amazing charity! This year they donated £93.50 on behalf of Holywell.

The MFL "**Christmas Around the World" Bake Sale** was a fantastic success, thanks to the creativity and generosity of our school community. Students and their families produced over 100 impressive cakes and bakes, many inspired by festive traditions from different countries. Across break and lunchtime, Room 4 was filled with queues of enthusiastic customers eager to sample the treats on offer. Together, we raised £337.74, which will be used by the MFL department to fund new language learning resources, cultural activities and immersive experiences for our students.

A huge thank you to everyone who baked, bought, organised and supported the event. Your involvement not only made the day a real celebration of global Christmas traditions but also directly supports our students' language learning.

Our annual Christmas Card competition

We have an annual challenge to create artwork for our official school Christmas Card. This year, there were three winning designs: Ben Bonser-Levey, Raida Mohammed and Anaëlle Pidou.



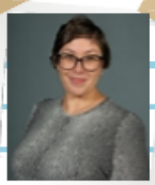
Holywell Safeguarding Newsletter

December 2025
Issue: 8

MEET THE TEAM

Mrs Stewart-McAlpine
Deputy Head & DSL

Mrs Johnson
Family Support / Deputy DSL



Miss Collins
Student Support / Assistant DSL

Welcome to our Safeguarding Newsletter.
We are hopeful you will find it useful.
The Safety and Wellbeing of our students are a priority to us!
We hope that we can connect you
to local and national support, if you need it for you and your families.

Our focus this edition of our newsletter is keeping safe over the Christmas and New Year period, wishing everyone a restful and fun filled break.

If you have a topic you would like us to cover, or you are in need of support, information or advice, please do not hesitate to reach out to one of the team!

Christmas Survival Guide suggestions

Managing Expectations & Boundaries

Be Realistic: Don't aim for a perfect, advert-like Christmas; expect some chaos and things to go wrong.

Say "No": It's okay to skip events or limit presents to protect your energy.

Set Routines: Stick to kids' bedtimes and regular habits to maintain calm.

Take Breaks: Schedule short escapes for tea, walks, or deep breathing to reset.

Sharing the Load & Self-Care

Ask for Help: Delegate tasks like cooking or cleaning to partners or family.

Create Your Own Traditions: If family visits are tough, plan alternative, smaller celebrations.

Digital Detox: Take breaks from social media

Limit Alcohol: Moderation helps prevent hangovers and poor decisions.

child accident prevention trust

Safety around roads – Information from the Child Accident Prevention Trust:

Pedestrians – older children :

Children find it difficult judging the speed and distance of traffic until they're at least eight. Accidents peak around 12, as children start making independent journeys

Where are the safe places to cross?

What should they do if they see their bus and they're on the other side of the road?

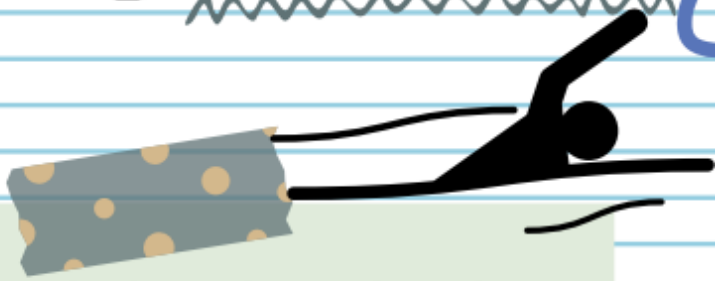
· They can be mesmerised by their mobiles, so remind them not to talk or text on their phones or listen to music while crossing the road.

Cycling

· Get your child into the habit of wearing their helmet. If you cycle as a family, remember to wear yours too

· Look out for cycle training. Many schools offer courses to help children gain practical skills. (Holywell ran Bikability sessions with a number of our Year 5 students this year ; a big thank you to Mr Eames for facilitating).

NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council



Both adults and children need to consider safety around rivers, ponds or any deep water over the summer break!

NFCC's Water Safety and Drowning Prevention Lead, Chris Kirby, said:
Many people also underestimate the dangers of jumping into water or taking a dip to cool off, with these dangers exacerbated for those with limited experience of outdoor swimming.
Meanwhile, unseen hazards and cold-water shock can mean even strong swimmers can get into trouble.
Simple tips to help stay safe include:

- Stick to proper pathways and stay clear of the water's edge
- Don't enter the water after drinking alcohol
- Walk a safe route home after drinking, with friends and away from water
- Cold water shock can kill, walking into the water rather than jumping in can help reduce the risk.

If someone is in trouble in the water,
the best way to help is by staying calm, staying on land, and remember Call, Tell, Throw:
- Call 999 for the emergency services
- Tell the struggling person to float on their back
- Throw them something that floats.

#BeWaterAware

HOW YOU FEEL MATTERS

Getting help in Bedford Borough IT IS IMPORTANT TO TALK

Talk to your school/college mental/health support, a counsellor, doctor, friend, family or a trusted adult.
IF SOMEONE TALKS TO YOU: Help them get help and get support yourself if you need it.

Child And Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) (NHS) ONE PLACE TO GET HELP

A trained NHS mental health professional will respond to enquiries relating to getting help from the NHS child and young people mental health service and emotional wellbeing service. They can also provide self-help resources on how to understand and self help your own mental health. Enquiries, please call 01234 893362

1: INFORMATION

YoungMinds
Mental health charity with a wide range of resources and information
https://www.youngminds.org.uk/

CHAT HEALTH
Service for young people to confidentially ask for help on a range of issues. Talk to a school nurse https://chathealth.nhs.uk/
TEXT: 07507 331450

SCHOOL NURSING SERVICE
Providing support on a range of issues, 1-1 virtually or in school
https://www.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk/Bedfordshire/services/school-nursing
TEL: 0300 555 0606

EARLY HELP (BEDFORD BOROUGH)
The Local Offer holds a wide range of information regarding services and support available, including early help support.
https://localoffer.bedford.gov.uk/mentalhealthhub
TEL: 01234 718 700

SEXUAL HEALTH
iCaSH Provides all aspects of sexual and reproductive health including STIs and HIV testing & treatment, contraception.
www.icash.nhs.uk

DRUG & ALCOHOL SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
Aquarius offer specialist services for children & young people who use substances or gamble and those who are affected by a parent or carers substance misuse.www.aquarius.org.uk
TEL: 0330 008 3925

2: GETTING HELP

SHOUT
Free, confidential, 24/7 text messaging support service for anyone who is struggling to cope. https://giveusashout.org/
TEXT: SHOUT to 85258

BEDFORD OPEN DOOR
Free, confidential counselling for young people aged 13 to 25.
www.bedfordopendoor.org.uk
TEL: 01234 360388

SORTED
Free, confidential counselling for children and young people aged 5 to 25. www.sortedbedfordshire.org.uk
TEL: 01582 891435

SAMARITANS
If you want someone to talk to, they listen, do not judge and do not tell you what to do
www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/
TEL: 116123

CHUMS
Bereavement mental health and emotional wellbeing support for children and young people. https://chums.uk.com/
TEL: 01525 863924

HEALTHY WEIGHT
MoreLife provide weight management programmes for all ages.
www.more-life.co.uk **TEL: 0808 208 2340**

BEAT
National eating disorder charity with lots of resources and support. https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/

3: NEED MORE HELP

CAMHS - Emotional & Behavioural Team
Provide assessments, support and treatment for children and young people up to the age of 18 for moderate to severe mental health problems.
For further information, please visit:
NORTH BEDFORDSHIRE CAMHS
https://www.elft.nhs.uk/services/north-bedfordshire-camhs
TEL: 01234 893301
SOUTH BEDFORDSHIRE / LUTON CAMHS
https://www.elft.nhs.uk/camhs/where-we-work/south-bedfordshireluton-camhs
TEL: 01525 638613
PCAS: You can also ask your GP to refer you to the Primary Care Access Service for mental health support.

4: URGENT SUPPORT

Call 111 Option 2 - 24/7

A free helpline for people of all ages who need urgent mental health support. Young people can talk to a CAMHS professional directly who can arrange additional support.

IN ANY EMERGENCY, DIAL 999