

News from Abbey Park School

Term 4 - March 2024



'Potential into Performance'



**The Park
Academies
Trust**



Message from the Principal

'Potential into Performance'

Dear Parents/Carers,

I would describe Term 4 as a term full of Abbey Park Proud moments. To begin with, I would like to congratulate our team of Year 9 pupils who entered the Young Citizens Magistrates Court competition on their amazing achievement. The role play court scenes were very authentic and our pupils presented the defence and prosecution beyond expectations, against well-prepared opposition from other Swindon schools. The event was attended by the Sheriff of Swindon and the Mayor of Swindon, who carried the trophy presentation at the end. The result – 5 out of 7 trophies going to Abbey Park, including the two top trophies of Best Team and Overall Winners. I happened to be there and it was great to see such happy pupils and an elated Mrs Verlander-Simmonds and Miss Bowie who have put so much work into this, working with the pupils.

Another great event was the Comic Relief fundraising lunchtime. There was such innovation from the Tutor Groups in designing their stalls to raise money. It was so rewarding to see pupils working in their teams for such a good cause. Despite the extended lunch-time, it went very quickly which was due to the fun being had and the conduct of our pupils. Including the non-uniform collection, the total raised was over £2,000 which was a great achievement. We appreciate the time and effort devoted to this and especially parents enabling their children to bring loose change to school.

There are so many other events I could mention, but I must thank Mrs Preece and the pupils who displayed their art pieces at the annual exhibition. Walking around the range of art was inspiring and an excellent opportunity to display the artistic talent we have across the year groups here at Abbey Park.

One other charity event I would like to mention is that of the collection of over 300 Easter eggs in support of Women's Aid. Justin Tomlinson MP and representatives from Women's Aid visited Abbey Park to thank us for our support of the organisation. It was a good opportunity for members of our Student Leadership Team to gain an insight of work in Parliament and the work that Women's Aid carries out.

On the academic front, Year 11 have been working incredibly hard and their second round of mock results show that there is thorough revision happening at home as well as in school. There is now access to a new revision resource area, FOLDR, which provides pupils with revision materials, past papers and personal learning checklists. This can be accessed from home, so we encourage parents to support their child in accessing it. Also, on the note of revision, Session 6 is running and the Easter Holiday Revision sessions have been set up. Our timetable can be found towards the end of this newsletter.

Lastly, was good to see so many parents attend the Tutor Consultation Day. Tutors will have emphasised the importance of pupil attendance. Attendance to school is essential for pupils to progress and flourish, so please ensure that your child is in school as often as possible to enable this. As a school, our attendance is above the current National Average, but we would like it to be higher as we know the benefit that it has. I would also like to emphasise how important punctuality is and how getting into school on time is good preparation for the future.

We finish the term at 3.10pm on Thursday 28th March and return to school on Monday 15th April. I wish all the school community a Happy Easter and look forward to welcoming pupils back for the Summer Term.

Best wishes,

Mr Young
Principal

The PE department has had an exciting lead up towards the Easter break this term with APS pupils representing in Football and Basketball Fixtures.

Football

The boys football teams have kicked off this term with the start of their league fixtures and have come away with some strong wins. The Year 9 A team beat Ridgeway 3-1 and the Year 7 team also won a B team competition with a very impressive performance against various local schools. The Year 8 B team also won their festival at Swindon Academy, only conceding 1 goal the whole tournament.



Basketball

The girls basketball season has bounced back this year with the U14 team remaining undefeated and the Year 7 team playing some great basketball in their tournaments, developing in every match to becoming a really strong team. The U16s start their basketball season this week with a tough game against Bradon Forest but hope to continue their success & development from last year.



Contemporary and Street Dance CAT taster sessions

Swindon Dance practitioners came in to deliver Contemporary and Street Dance CAT taster sessions for some of our Year 8 classes. The programme delivers world class dance training to young talents aged 11-19. It operates on weekends, under the tutelage of industry leading choreographers and artists. The girls were put through their paces by Hollie, who was once a CAT programme pupil herself. Please see Mrs Russell, or the Swindon Dance website for more information about the programme: <https://www.swindondance.org.uk/cat/>

Special Mentions

The PE team would also like to make a special mention to Emily W (Year 7) who has done brilliantly in their sports outside of school. Emily competed on the 25th of February in the British Judo Association English Open in the pre-cadet category (under 14s). She won 2 fights to get to the final. Emily did brilliantly throughout the competition and came away with a Silver Medal - Well Done Emily!



Next term

The sports for session 6 will change, bringing back the popular rounders & athletics and a few other sports continuing. Please check Arbor to see what clubs are available. Everyone is welcome!

We wish everyone a safe and happy Easter and pupils good luck with all their sporting events over the holiday period.

Happy Easter
The PE Department

Art

A Fairer Future art exhibition

On Tuesday 5th March we held an exhibition entitled 'A Fairer Future' by pupils from Abbey Park School. It was wonderful to see a range of work from Years 7, 8 and 9 and to welcome staff and families into the exhibition to view the wide selection of work.

Here are some photos from the day. There are more to view on our Facebook page.



Photo Competition - Results

We would like to say a big thank you to those that took part in our Photo competition. The theme was Primary colours and a lot of thought had gone into the entries we received.

Congratulations to all of those that entered.



Top Winner



Radoslav P

Runners up



Maya S



Jack H

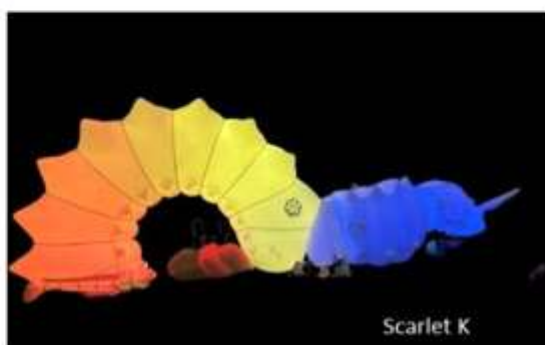


Amelia H

Highly Commended



Mateusz K



Scarlet K



Ewan C



Isabelle B

School Production

The Performing Arts department presented their 5th production last term and had the pleasure of performing Bugsy Malone, which was a lot of fun for both pupils and staff involved.

The show was a fabulous opportunity for the many pupils taking part to experience the challenge of performing in a production where music and drama join forces.

Thanks must be given to cast, parents and staff from Abbey Park School for their commitment, hard work and enthusiasm throughout the production.

It was a great success and everyone got well and truly splurged!

Mrs Henry
Curriculum Leader



Events

Debate Slam

On Thursday 21st March, Abbey Park hosted a Grand Debate Slam against Lydiard Park Academy. The topic at hand was "This House Believes that the Guinness book of World Records should only document records surrounding sporting achievements".

Both schools decided to merge together to form a 'for' and 'against' side. The pupils were given time to organise their arguments, discussing whether 'strange' records should be given merit worthy of documenting such as 'The most doughnuts eaten in one minute'. Comparing it to 'Fastest time achieved in a 1500m race'.

Our pupils bravely presented their arguments to not only our debaters but Lydiard Park Academy debaters and two moderators.

They also showed brilliant teamwork working alongside the Lydiard Park's debate club.

A huge well done to all the debaters and a thank you to the pupils who represented Abbey Park beautifully, showing what excellent, skilful and compassionate debaters they are.

A massive well done to the following Year 7s: Isabelle B , Freya B, Madi C, Megan E, Amelia G, Scarlet K, Isla L and Oliver W.

Miss Carr
Humanities Teacher

Events

A visit from Justin Tomlinson, MP

This year, for the first time, Abbey Park School joined an Easter Egg collection appeal by Justin Tomlinson MP and asked APS pupils and parents to contribute to the collection for Swindon Women's Aid – as well as being supported by other schools from the Park Academy Trust: Red Oaks Primary, Orchid Vale Primary, Bridlewood Primary and Highworth Warneford School.

On 29th February, we were delighted to welcome Justin Tomlinson MP, Emma MacLennan from Swindon Women's Aid and Councillor Daniel Adams to Abbey Park School to launch our joint TPAT Easter Egg Collection for families supported by Swindon Women's Aid. We were very proud of our Year 11 Student Leaders and Year 7 students who thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to ask many insightful questions about the role of an MP and the important work of Swindon Women's Aid, helping to strengthen our APS links with key community groups.

Justin Tomlinson MP said "I am delighted that Abbey Park School has joined the campaign; it is an excellent opportunity to maximise the number of donations we receive. It was a pleasure to meet the students, they were incredibly engaged, and I was very impressed with the questions they asked – they were a real credit to the school."



Easter Egg collection update

We are absolutely 'egg-static' with the response to our recent TPAT Easter Egg Collection!!

In partnership with Justin Tomlinson MP and Orchid Vale, Red Oaks, Bridlewood and Highworth Warneford Schools, we were able to collect:

- 340+ eggs
- 8 chocolate bunny rabbits
- 8 boxes of Kinder/Creme eggs
- 2 bags bursting full of craft materials

These 'egg-cellent' donations will definitely bring Spring cheer to the families who are supported by Swindon Women's Aid, both in the refuge and in the community.

Thank you sincerely to everyone who supported this year's collection for your generosity.

Mrs O'Brien
KS3 Reading Mastery Teacher



GCSE Geography trip - 1st and 2nd February 2024

At the start of February, Year 11 Geographers went to Bristol Harbourside to conduct their final piece of field-work for their GCSE exams.

The groups collected primary data to evaluate the successfulness of the regeneration of the area. We conducted environmental quality surveys, land use surveys, pedestrian counts as well as having a boat tour to show how the regeneration has changed over time.



The pupils should be proud of the work they completed and this will go towards the mock they complete in February as well as their final paper in the summer.

Well done Year 11!

Mrs Graham
Head of Humanities

Year 7 Humanities trip to M Shed Museum, Bristol - 27th February 2024

The Humanities Department took 60 Year 7 pupils to Bristol. They visited the M Shed Museum for a workshop about Bristol and the Transatlantic Traffic in Enslaved Africans. During the workshop pupils were able to explore a range of objects that looked at life in the Kingdom of Benin, the route of the Transatlantic Traffic in Enslaved Africans and objects from the plantations of the USA, including forms of punishments. The pupils listened intently, asked insightful questions and showed great respect to the whole topic.



Pupils also completed a walking tour of Bristol Harbourside and other parts of the city centre, which included looking at where the money from the Transatlantic Traffic of Enslaved Africans had been spent. We then looked at how this linked to current events by learning about the pulling down of the Colston Statue at the harbour in 2020 and discussed the legacy of the slave trade.

We finished our tour by looking at two sailors, the first was the notorious Black Beard who famously drank at the Hatchet pub, where pupils examined the door of the pub that is made from human skin. The second sailor was John Cabot who set sail from Bristol Harbour to Newfoundland and is famous for his other transatlantic ventures.



Staff and pupils enjoyed delving into the history of Bristol, found the day interesting and showed Abbey Park Proud throughout.

Mrs Brownlie and Miss Jones
Teachers of Humanities

TPAT Scholars



The Park
Academies
Trust



**Our Family,
Our Schools**



Year 10 Thriving Minds Senior Stretch Day

On Thursday 14 March, a group of talented scientists from Y10 took part in the Thriving Minds Senior Stretch Day in Oxford. This was a high-profile event that brought together some of the strongest young scientists in the region.

Across the day, our pupils had opportunities to experience a series of university style lectures and seminars on various thought-provoking scientific themes - discussing the future challenges of a world led by Artificial Intelligence, hearing how to pursue your dreams from an F-16 fighter jet pilot or considering what makes lifeforms to be considered self-aware. These were all challenging themes but the pupils did a great job of listening and engaging with their peers from other schools.

Also, it was great that we were able to do this event as a joint venture across all 3 TPAT secondaries; Abbey Park, Lydiard Park Academy, Highworth Warneford School. Hopefully one of the first of many cross-trust experiences for our TPAT learners.

Swindon Court Mock Trials

On Saturday 16th March, 17 of our Year 9 pupils were taken to Swindon Court to compete in the mock trials. This is where the pupils take on all the roles in court and defend and prosecute a case. This was an excellent event that was made possible by funding from the TPAT scholars programme. It was particularly enjoyable to compete directly with one of our partner TPAT academies, Highworth Warneford School - we hope there will be many more opportunities like this to come.

As well as Highworth we were also competing against Ridgeway and as another school had pulled out, our team were competing in two courts at the same time. Only one was marked, the other was classed as a substitute team.

While all 3 schools performed brilliantly and made it a very memorable and competitive day, Abbey Park were named as the overall winners. As a school we won 5 of the 7 trophies up for grabs.

Overall winners: Abbey Park
Best Defence Team: Abbey Park
Best Defence Lawyer: Joshua J
Best Magistrate: Angelica W
Best Witness: Eliska H



This was a fantastic achievement and a testament to all the hard work and effort our students have put into this competition.

We will now be working hard on the next case to see if we can achieve the same success at regionals which will be held in May. Please wish our students good luck!

Ms Bowie (Librarian) & Mrs Verlander-Simmonds (English Teacher)

BRANCHES SUPPORT GROUP EVERYONE WELCOME

Tel: 07486 873405

Email: swindonsendfamiliesvoice@outlook.com



BRANCHES is a support group open to all parents and carers of children and young people with any Special Educational Need or Disability, aged 0-25 years

When?

Tuesday 19th
March

Where?

Punjabi Community Centre,
Gorse Hill, Swindon,
SN2 7BB

Time?

10AM-11.30AM

Guest Speaker:

Paul Dobson - STEP
SIAS
Caroline McAleese - Public Health Specialist
Clare Baily - Home Education
Swindon Mind

Working Together
Strengthening Support
Reaching Out



**Swindon SEND
Families Voice**

BRANCHES is a free support group, however voluntary donations for refreshments are welcomed



To join our mailing list
please scan the QR code



COMMUNITY

- **SEND Sharing Service-** Our lending library which allows families access to SEND related books, sensory toys, practical physiotherapy tools, SEND pushchairs and much more. For a yearly fee of just £3 families can access a whole library of useful and fun items! We also offer a free collection and delivery service for items borrowed. The SEND Sharing service has proven itself to be an invaluable SEND Community resource.
- **SEND Information Packs-** Each year we create information packs for Reception age Children who are identified as having additional needs (no diagnosis required) by their Educational/Childcare setting to help Parents and Carers navigate this time of transition. We reach out to schools, nurseries and home educators to help provide information with a personal touch. A gift from our family to yours.
- **The SEND Room-** Bringing Parents together through our online Facebook Community of over 2,000 parents and carers of children and young people with SEND in Swindon.

CONNECTION

- **Breakfast Catch Ups-** Parent Carers tell us that one of the best forms of support they access is solid, strong connections to other SEND Families going through similar lived experiences. No child with SEND is ever the same, but parent carers often find common ground. Our regular half -termly Breakfast catch up is an opportunity for carers to chat, socialise and come together for a couple of hours of good company.
- **Coffee Mornings and Stay and Play Sessions-** We support Families through our regular Coffee Mornings at Local Primary and Secondary Schools, Nurseries and through connecting with Local Community groups and projects that support families. We also run Stay and Play sessions for children under 5. Both of these services provide a more informal and relaxed approach that allows parents to access face to face support whilst connecting with other SEND families.

SUPPORT

- **Phoneline-** Our phoneline is available to parents and carers who might need a listening ear, an extra boost of courage or some much needed emotional support for those tricky days. As parents of SEND children ourselves we understand how difficult the journey can be. One of our experienced team members is there to give parents and carers their time and support.
- **Branches-** Our support group Branches runs on a monthly basis and alternates between evenings and the day time. We have guest speakers such as professionals who can provide important up-to-date information about local SEND services and experts in various SEND related topics such as Challenging Behaviour, Autism, Anxiety, Toileting and Sex and Relationships for SEND Teens. The group also allows parents and carers to connect with each other and with The SEND Families Voice Representatives.
- **Meeting Support Service-** We are able to provide in person support at meetings to local SEND Families. Meetings such as Team Around the Child (TAC), Community Paediatrics appointments, School Attendance Meetings etc. At each meeting we will type up a set of notes and offer genuine emotional support, as we know from personal experience that these meetings can be overwhelming.

VOICES

- **Strategic Meetings and Co-production-** One of Swindon SEND Families Voice key roles behind the scenes is championing parent carers voices through the co-production that we take part in everyday with our strategic partners. These include Social Care, Health, Libraries, Community Groups and Projects, Education and other Council Departments such as the Travel team. Through this collaborative working we can spread and share important information. We work hard to improve the lived experiences of SEND families in Swindon by sharing their views and experiences with key stakeholders to effect positive change. We attend on average anywhere between 50 and 70 meetings a month making sure that SEND is always at the heart of planning and development of these vital public services and that parent carer voices are always heard.
- **Reshaping Conversations-** is our ongoing project looking to influence and improve the language of professionals and the wider public when talking to or about children and young people with SEND. We want to make Swindon (and the world!) a much more inclusive environment that allows SEND families to feel valued. We have teamed up with other local SEND groups to put together a website, booklet, video and training module. Our training module has now been taken up by Swindon Borough Council and local Health Services and has been used as mandatory training. We aim to keep the project going and keep reshaping even more conversations.



Swindon SEND Families Voice



Swindon SEND Families Voice are the parent carer forum for Swindon. We provide support and signposting to parents and carers of Children or Young People with SEND and additional needs aged from 0-25 (with or without a diagnosis).

SEND Sharing Service:
sendsharingservice.ssfv@outlook.com

SEND Meeting Support Service:
sendmeetingservice.ssfv@outlook.com

The SEND Room:
Find us on Facebook search: SEND Room Swindon
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/TheSENDRoom/>

SEND Stay and Play:
sendstayandplay.ssfv@outlook.com

Branches Support Group
Follow our main Facebook Page for event posters and information:
<https://www.facebook.com/SwindonSENDfamiliesvoice/>

Reshaping Conversations:
<https://reshapingconversations.com/>

Listening Service Phoneline:
To speak to a member of the team please call;
07486 873 405



The SEND Room

Support **E**ncourage **N**urture **D**iscuss

The SEND Room is an online Facebook support group for parents and carers of children and young people aged 0-25 in Swindon who have any Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

- A place to support one another
- A place to meet others who understand
- A place to share information



Search: The SEND Room



To join our mailing list please scan the QR code

Main Email:
swindonsendfamiliesvoice@outlook.com

Website:
<https://swindonsendfamiliesvoice.org.uk/>



Thank You



COMIC RELIEF



A MASSIVE THANK YOU
TO ALL STUDENTS AND STAFF FOR ALL OF YOUR HARD
WORK.



£1072.26 from Fridays stalls
£953.50 from ParentPay
Total £2025.76



This is by far the most we have ever raised together
Thank you to you all.

School Uniform Donations



Do you have any pieces of branded Abbey Park uniform lying around that are still in good condition and could be used by someone else? Perhaps they no longer fit or you no longer need it. Are you just not sure what to do with it? If so, we might be able to help you!

Pre-loved uniform will be put to good use by supporting our pupils and their families. We are looking for donations of branded Abbey Park uniform, specifically blazers and ties but we will happily take trousers, shoes, jumpers and PE kit too.

If you do have any items you no longer need, then please drop them in at reception. All we ask is that donations are in good condition and have been cleaned.

Many thanks in advance for any support you might be able to offer.

Mr Stubbs
Assistant Principal

Pupil Laptops

When pupils are given a school laptop to use at home, please ensure the software and antivirus are updated by turning the laptop on weekly.

Please return the laptop to the school reception or IT office if it is no longer in use at home so that it can be distributed to pupils who now need a device.

If you're experiencing any problems with the laptop at home, please let us know.

IT Support



Library Life

This term has been rather a busy one for the library, mainly due to World Book Day, which took place on 7th March.

Guest speak Joffre White

Our Year 9s were lucky to have a talk presented by the UK patron of reading, author and motivational speaker Joffre White. Joffre told them how he himself was a reluctant reader and his journey to become one of our foremost patrons of reading. His talk was not just about reading, it taught us about being resilient and our own hero. The response from the pupils was really great.



Dress your door competition results

This was completed in tutor time and involved covering your classroom door in the theme of reading. Once again, we had some truly brilliant entries and it was very difficult to narrow it down but, in the end, we selected a winner - 7EC and their Very hungry caterpillar door came first. To see more of our entries please check out our social media sites.



Imagined Worlds Competition results

Pupils had to create a 500-word piece about a world of their imagining. We had quite a few entries but we managed to whittle it down to 4:

1st place: Misia B (Y9)

2nd place: Kaidan R (Y7)

3rd place: Daniel R (Y8) & Nika M (Y7)

Misia will be receiving a high street voucher and a book bundle, while the others each received a book. Well done to them all and everyone who entered.



NEW Easter Egg Competition

You can be in with a chance to win an Easter Egg if you read, review and pass a quiz on a book. Your name will be entered into a draw to win an Easter Egg at the end of term.

The more times you enter, the more chances you have of winning!



Accelerated Reader

We have been working really hard to make this as easily accessible as possible. We have a URL link and a QR code <http://tinyurl.com/aps-reader>



The pupils have been reading and quizzing each fortnight when they attend their library lessons. Every pupil that has taken and passed a quiz received an R2.

Word Millionaire

We also had our first word millionaire - for every test a pupil passes the words in that book are added up and they can accumulate until we have reached a million.

Beth D (Y7) has become our first word millionaire and is well on her way to the 2 million mark. Beth has read over 30 books this year so far. Beth had this to say about her achievement:

'There has never been a point in my life where books didn't help me. As a child I mainly preferred fantasy books and later I grew into Greek myths like Medusa, Hercules or Pandora. Fantasy allowed me to have a glimpse into another person's mind. I used to wonder how authors thought of these. My favourite book genre's are fantasy and myth, but starting secondary there isn't a subject that you'd find alongside dragons! Books like Dork Diaries, Lottie Brooks and Diary of a Wimpy Kid helped me to figure out most things. I understand empathy, kindness and longer words than is average for kids my age.'



Our 2nd word millionaire was Oliver W (Y7), he said:

'Personally, I love reading because it is such a good way to unwind and relax at the end of the day. Immersing yourself in a brilliant book can let you forget about any stress or unhappiness from your day and feel like you are in a completely different universe. Occasionally (if you have a decent imagination) reading can even feel like watching a movie or playing a game. Whether you prefer refreshing yourself with news and facts from around the world or hopping into a portal to fantasyland, sympathising yourself with an imaginary or real character lets you view the wonders of the world from an alternative perspective. Right now, I am reading The Warrior Cats series by Erin Hunter, but as a word millionaire, I have plenty of favourites: The Hunger Games Trilogy (and the prequel book too), The Wind of Fire Trilogy, the extensive Percy Jackson series and Gregor in the Underland series. Overall, I believe reading is as important as school and I feel honoured to have had the opportunity to share my thoughts and feelings about reading.'

We will hopefully be seeing more word millionaires as we progress through the rest of the year.

Next term

Once again, we will be issuing our new year group readers. Please make sure to return your current books:

Year 7: Coming to England by Floella Benjamin

Year 8: Dare to be you by Mathew Syed

Year 9: Noughts and Crosses by Malorie Blackman

We will also be launching our Carnegie Shadowing group to follow along with the award and see which book we think should win. The creative writing club is up and running, which has been quite popular so hopefully some budding writers who will one day find their way on to our shelves.

As always, keep reading!

Miss Bowie

Librarian

Buying books

In the library we try to keep a wide variety of books and authors, however it is impossible to stock everything. If your child enjoys reading it can be difficult to keep up with buying them books, especially in the current economic climate.

So here are a few tips to keep costs down:

- Join your local library, it is free to join and you can borrow up to 16 books at a time.
- While at the library, many have a withdrawn section where you can take as many books as you can carry for £1.
- Charity shops often have a book section, the bonus is you can return them when you have finished and support a good cause.
- Discount book shops such as The Works offer a wide range of books at discount prices.
- Online WoB (World of Books) is a secondhand book shop which offers books at a reasonable price and offers free delivery in the UK.

Useful information

Libraries

Where to find your local library.

Shops

North Swindon Library

Orbital Retail Park, Thamesdown Drive, Swindon, SN25 4AN

01793 707120

northswindon.library@swindon.gov.uk

Current opening hours

- Monday - 2.00pm - 6.00pm
- Tuesday - closed
- Wednesday - 10.00am - 2.00pm
- Thursday - closed
- Friday - 1.00pm - 5.00pm
- Saturday - 10.00am - 2.00pm
- Sunday - 11.00am - 3.00pm

Central Library

Regent Circus, Swindon, SN1 1QG

01793 463238

central.library@swindon.gov.uk

Current opening hours

- Monday - 10.00am - 5.30pm
- Tuesday - 10.00am - 5.30pm
- Wednesday - 10.00am - 5.30pm
- Thursday - 10.00am - 5.30pm
- Friday - 10.00am - 5.30pm
- Saturday - 10.00am - 4.00pm
- Sunday - closed

Where to find your local book shop.

Bert's Books

54 Godwin Court, Swindon, SN1 4BB

07949 190977

bert@bertsbooks.co.uk

Opening hours

- Monday - 8.30am – 5.30pm
- Tuesday - 8.30am – 5.30pm
- Wednesday - 8.30am – 5.30pm
- Thursday - 8.30am – 5.30pm
- Friday - 8.30am – 5.30pm
- Saturday - 8.30am – 5.30pm
- Sunday - 10.30am – 4.00pm

Waterstones

3 Canal Walk, Swindon SN1 1LD

01793 436465

www.waterstones.com

Opening Hours

- Monday 9.00am – 5.30pm
- Tuesday 9.00am – 5.30pm
- Wednesday 9.00am – 5.30pm
- Thursday 9.00am – 5.30pm
- Friday 9.00am – 5.30pm
- Saturday 9.00am – 5.30pm
- Sunday 10.00am – 4.00pm

Boys Mental Health

In a world where discussions around mental health are gaining momentum, it's crucial to recognise that mental wellbeing is as important as physical health. Just as we take steps to keep our bodies fit and healthy, we must also prioritise our mental health. However, initiating conversations about emotions and seeking support can be challenging, especially for young men.



Data reveals that boys and young men aged 11-16, experience mental health difficulties at similar rates to their female counterparts. Despite this, there's a noticeable gender gap in receiving support. Recognising this gap, we embarked on a journey to address it through Barnardo's and the Blueprint Project.

The Blueprint Project is a ground-breaking initiative aimed at understanding and overcoming the barriers young boys and men face in accessing mental health support. We selected students from diverse friendship groups to participate in a one-day workshop focused on discussing boys' mental health. The outcome of this workshop was profound – it led to the creation of intervention groups with support from Naomi, Lead Mental Health practitioner for the Blueprint Project.

During the workshop, participants engaged in team-building activities, explored topics related to mental health and wellbeing, and shared their perspectives on improving support for boys and young men. This feedback served as the foundation for designing a tailored group program focusing on building knowledge, confidence and skills necessary for maintaining good mental wellbeing.

Through their participation, the boys not only gained invaluable life skills such as emotional regulation, communication and critical thinking but also played a pivotal role in shaping the blueprint for a project aimed at benefiting others.

The program included 6 group sessions and 2 one-on-one sessions, covering various topics such as spotting common difficulties like stress, anxiety and low mood, strategies for managing emotions, how to have conversations around mental health and exploring stereotypes around masculinity and mental health.

We believe that by actively involving boys and young men in conversations about mental health and equipping them with the necessary tools and support, we can bridge the gender gap in accessing mental health services. The Blueprint Project serves as a beacon of hope, paving the way for a future where boys' mental health is given the attention and support it deserves.

Through initiatives like the Blueprint Project, we are not only addressing the immediate needs of our students but also laying the groundwork for a more inclusive and supportive community where mental health is prioritised for all. Together, let's continue to break the stigma surrounding mental health and create a brighter, healthier future for our boys and young men.

Below is some of the feedback from the boys that attended the project and happy to share:

"Learning how to check in with friends helped me"

"I am more confident speaking to people"

"[It was helpful] setting personal goals, learning new techniques to deal with mental health and opening up to friends"

"[it was helpful] learning about fight, flight, freeze and having education on stereotypes"

"[I liked] getting to talk to other people in the group about mental health to know you're not alone"

"I thought it was good to talk to someone in the 1-1s"

"[In future I'd like] more people to have the opportunity to do it"

- 100% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they were better able to spot the signs that they or a friend may be struggling with their wellbeing.
- 100% of students agreed or strongly agreed it has positively changed the way they view mental health.
- 88% of students said they have a better awareness of the people/places they can go for support.



At Abbey Park we are committed to ensuring a culture of safeguarding in our school and it is paramount in all we do. We hope that our termly safeguarding update will give you an overview of our approach, offer some useful guidance and information and inform you of what your child is learning in school about how to keep themselves safe. For more information about safeguarding, please look at our website.

What does Safeguarding look like at Abbey Park?

At Abbey Park School we follow the Government policy document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. This is statutory guidance for all schools in England to follow and comply with. It has recently been updated and therefore our safeguarding policy has been updated to reflect this. You can find this on our safeguarding section on the school website. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's responsibility**. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in making sure that children grow up having the best life chances. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all adults should make sure their approach puts the child at the centre of the decision making and that the best interests of the child are always considered. We believe that it is in the best interest of our children to have opportunities to learn how to stay safe both in and outside of school. Our safeguarding themes are woven into lessons across the curriculum, into assemblies and throughout daily life in school. Here are just a few examples of how we teach safeguarding at Abbey Park:

Dedicated safeguarding team in school every day

Pastoral support for each group.

Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA's) and Pastoral Support Assistants who have specialist training in supporting a child in their social and emotional needs

Members of staff who have completed basic mental health training

Mental health pupil ambassadors

Mental health staff ambassadors

A dedicated mental health lead – Mrs Stevens

Wellbeing Wednesday each Wednesday Tutor time looking at how to look after mental health

Assemblies and lessons taught throughout the year, including but not extensively, anti-bullying, equality, diversity, fire, sun, children's safety, exploitation, sexual harassment and violence and online safety.

PHSE curriculum covering how to be healthy, having healthy relationships and developing emotional literacy

Online safety curriculum

RSE (Relationships and sex education) curriculum

Weekly tutor time reminders about staying safe in school and our expectations

If you need any support with your child, please contact a member of the safeguarding Team.

Abbey Park Safeguarding team

Designated
Safeguarding Lead
Mrs Kara Stevens

Deputy Designated
Safeguarding Lead
Mrs Lorraine Hatcliffe

Deputy Designated
Safeguarding Lead
Miss Vanessa Redondo

Deputy Designated
Safeguarding Lead
Mrs Karen Candy



Contact details and circumstances – please keep us up to date!

It is vitally important that we have the correct contact details for every parent/carer. If you change your phone number, e - mail or move house, please let the admin team know or update it on Arbor. We also need at least two emergency contacts for your child.

We also ask that you keep us up to date with any changes in your personal circumstances that may impact your child.

Mrs Stevens: stevensk@abbeyparkschool.org.uk

Mrs Hatcliffe: hatcliffel@abbeyparkschool.org.uk

Miss Redondo: redondov@abbeyparkschool.org.uk

Mrs Candy: candyk@abbeyparkschool.org.uk

Contact details:

Please can we ask that you ensure the school has at least two contact details in case of an emergency. This can be done on Arbor



Useful contacts:

Swindon MASH (Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub) have added a new front door service called 'Contact Swindon' if you have concerns about a child and want to speak to a social worker, family services worker without going through school please call - 01793 464646.

If you have concerns that a child is at immediate risk of harm, please call the Police on 999.

School Nursing team – for support to help children with their physical, mental and emotional well-being and referring to other specialist agencies.

Tel – 01793 465050 or email

snn@swindon.gov.uk

Online safety guidance for parents - <https://swgfl.org.uk/>

Assembly and PSHE this term:

At Abbey Park School all pupils attend Assemblies and PSHE sessions each week.

During term pupils have had the following assemblies: Welcome back – expectations around organisation, Consent and sexually harmful behaviours, Holocaust memorial, Careers, EBACC and online safety.

During PSHE this term pupils have been learning about the following topics:

Year 7	Relationships, diversity, British values, First aid
Year 8	Dare to be you project
Year 9	Government and politics
Year 10	Persecution, British Values and
Year 11	Applying to college and careers

Important Notice – Message from the Police

We have been made aware that professionals are seeing a worrying trend where teenage pupils are arranging to meet up across Swindon in the middle of the night/early hours of the morning.

Parents and carers are asked to remain vigilant and make the usual checks to keep children safe.

If you have any information then please share with police using the following link: [Something you've seen or heard | Wiltshire Police](#).

Or you can speak to your school Designated Safeguarding Lead/Safeguarding team: (details below) who will be able to advise and support.

The Pastoral Team updates



Mrs Stevens
Assistant
Principal
Head of
Pastoral
DSL



Mrs Candy
Head of
Year 7



Mrs Hatcliffe
Head of Key Stage
Year 9 & 10
DDSL



Mrs Redondo
Head of Key Stage
Year 8 & 11
DDSL



Mrs Everett
PSA – Attendance & Yr7



Mr Morris (Mat cover)
Year 8 PSA



Miss Asbury -
Seminars
Year 9 PSA



Mrs Harewood
Year 10 PSA



Mrs Charl
Year 11 PSA



Miss Yeoman
School counsellor



Miss Fry
School counsellor
(MAT Cover)

Below are some useful contacts and places to get advice and guidance if you need it

Where to get help

- ▶ Safeguarding team
- ▶ The Pastoral Team
- ▶ All staff
- ▶ Mrs Fry – School counsellor
- ▶ Reporting tool – school website
- ▶ CEOP
- ▶ Child line
- ▶ NSPCC
- ▶ The dock – online
- ▶ The police
- ▶ Our school website



Online safety:

Each term we will add online safety guides for parents. All of these guides can be found on our website under the safeguarding section.

EXPERIENCING BULLYING

In a DfE survey, 36% of parents said that their child had been bullied in the past year, while 29% of secondary school headteachers reported bullying among students. Public Health England states that young people who maintain positive communication with their family were less likely to experience bullying – so it's important that parents, carers and educators know how to talk to children about bullying.

1. WATCH FOR BEHAVIOURAL CHANGES

Children who are experiencing bullying may become quiet, withdrawn, or anxious; however, they may also act on the pain and anger that they're feeling. A shift in attitude towards their existing friends (or not mentioning them any more at all) or alluding to new friendships which seem notably different could also be warning signs. It's important to be alert to such changes and talk to your child about them if they occur.



2. THINK THINGS THROUGH

Before acting, ask yourself if this is the right time and place to address concerns about bullying. Might your worries trigger strong feelings – perhaps from your own experiences – that could discourage your child from opening up to you? You could try discussing what you've noticed with another trusted adult who knows your child well.



3. BE OPEN AND UNDERSTANDING

Try to outline to your child the changes that you've noticed in their body language, appearance, behaviour, or tone of voice – and do so without sounding judgemental. Help them to describe what they're feeling – be it anger, sadness, fear or something else – as accurately as possible. If they say they're "angry", do they mean "enraged" or "frustrated"? This will help them to understand how they're feeling and why.



4. LET THEM SPEAK FREELY

Use open questions and a welcoming tone to encourage your child to talk. Listen closely and summarise what they've said at appropriate points (ideally without interrupting) to demonstrate that you're understanding clearly. Bullying may have undermined your child's sense of control, and they may fear that you'll judge them, overreact or impose consequences – so this conversation can reassure them being honest with you was the right decision.



5. CALL A TIME OUT

A conversation about bullying could leave both you and your child feeling distressed. It's important to recognise this and pause at suitable moments to calm down. Take deep breaths, enjoy a hot drink or even have a cathartic cry. This can reinforce trust, while also helping you both feel that you have control over the situation and the emotions that you're feeling.



6. STAY INFORMED

Make sure you know your child's school's definition of, response to and relevant contacts for bullying. This information should be in their anti-bullying policy, which ought to be available on the school's website. Class teachers or form tutors are usually the first point of contact, though there may be dedicated support teams or key workers to help your child, depending on the specific situation.



7. PREP YOUR CHILD FOR THE RESPONSE

Schools' responses to bullying vary depending on whether they're resolving disagreements and arguments, or addressing unintended verbal or physical harm and so on. It's important to work out with your child whether any harm was intentional, how much control they had over the situation and how often such incidents have occurred. Reporting concerns accurately will get the best outcome for your child more quickly.



8. SUMMARISE YOUR CHILD'S EXPERIENCE

When you contact the school, make sure you've precisely described what your child experienced: what happened; when; where; and who was involved. This will help the school to investigate further, identifying any witnesses, as well as those who were directly involved. It can also help the school to know how your child is feeling and how they'd like the matter to be resolved.



9. LIAISE WITH THE SCHOOL

Any school has a duty to ensure that the members of its community feel safe and included. It's important for children to learn their role in this. The school must determine how best to restore these feelings of safety and respect. It's often best for schools to keep parents and carers informed of any action taken – and for families to avoid taking matters into their own hands.



10. CHECK IN FREQUENTLY

Once the issue has been resolved and the bullying behaviour has stopped, your child may still feel anxious and might find it difficult to rebuild relationships or develop new ones. Parents, carers and the school should all keep an eye on how the child is feeling and acting over the following months. Any relevant information should be shared, so that further support can be planned if necessary.



FamilyFirst

Here's your free copy of the UK's
largest parenting title - Enjoy!

This can be accessed here: <https://familyfirst.co.uk/issue2-24>



Term 5 Curriculum Map - KS3

'Potential into Performance'

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
English	Fiction writing: World Myths	Non-Fiction Writing: Culture & Opinion	Non-fiction Writing: Speeches
Maths	Fractions	Angles	Quadratics
Science	Movement Ecology	Waves Bioenergetics	B2 Organisation
MFL	Spanish: Mi Ciudad French: En ville	Spanish: Operación Verano French: Le sport en direct	Spanish: Una Aventura en Madrid French: Le monde Francophone
Humanities	History: India (History and RE Buddhism focus)	History: World War One Philosophical Thinking: War and Peace	Geography: Population and Settlement History: Making of modern Britain Philosophical Thinking: Life after death
Business Computing	Programming in Scratch	Programming in Minecraft	Python Programming
Design Technology (DT)	Interactive flyer – Farm to Fork	Abbey Park of 2050 Branding	Key Designers
Visual Arts	Still life drawing and photography	Gargoyles - Clay	Mask Project - Introduction to photography
Performing Arts	Drama: Module 5 Physical Theatre Music: Gamelan	Dram: Titanic Module - exploring the historical context of disaster and its consequences Music: Film Fanfares	Drama: Blood Brothers - Willy Russels’ play explores the social and economic reality of Liverpool in the 1970s Music: Film Music
PE	Athletics, Rounders, Cricket	Athletics, Rounders, Cricket	Athletics, Rounders, Cricket
Personal, Social, Health & Citizenship Education (PSHCE)	Health & Wellbeing: Relationships (RSE)	CEIAG: Community and careers	Drugs Education – Global Impact

Term 5 Curriculum Map - KS4

'Potential into Performance'

Year 10		Year 11
English	Literature and Context: Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde Revision for Mocks/ Retrieval and Consolidation Spoken Language	Revision
	Media	Build-up, revision & Assessment
Maths	Multiplicative Reasoning	Exam Prep & Revision
Combined Science	P6 Waves	Revision & Exams
	C5 Energy Changes B7 Ecology	Revision & Exams
Individual Science	Spanish: A currar & Hacia un mundo mejor French: Bon travail & Un oeil sur le monde	Spanish: A currar & Hacia un mundo mejor French: Bon travail & Un oeil sur le monde
	MFL	
Humanities	Geography: Physical Landscape of UK History: Origins of the Cold war 1941- 58 Philosophical Thinking: Religion and life Sociology: Paper 1: The Sociology of Education	Revision
	Business: 1.4 Making the business effective & 1.5 Understanding external influences on business	Business: Exam preparation & Revision
Business Computing Media	Computer Science: Algorithms, Programming & Theory of various topics.	Computer Science: Exam preparation & Revision
Design Technology (DT)	D&T: Theory - Specialist technical principles. Design strategies and modelling. Communication of ideas	D&T: Revision
Food Preparation & Nutrition (FPN)	FPN: 3.4 food safety	FPN: Exam preparation and food skills
Fine Art	Identity Project	
Visual Arts	Photography Identity	
Performing Arts	Drama: Component One Aberfan Creating Music: Practice of the above through listening activities	Drama: Exam Preparation Music: Revision
	PE	
Personal, Social, Health & Citizenship Education (PSHCE)	Rounders, Dodgeball, Basketball, Cricket, Table Tennis, Rounders CNAT: R185 Topic 4- Review of planning & Leading/ R186- Media in Sport GCSE: Paper 1- Applying the principles of training/ Preventing injury in physical activity	Rounders, Dodgeball, Basketball, Cricket, Table Tennis, Rounders BTEC: Unit 3- Applying the principles of personal training
	RSE: Healthy relationships	Revision

Easter Holiday revision sessions

Pupils who have signed up to Easter holiday workshops need to arrive 10 minutes before the start and meet at reception.

All pupils must leave site over the lunch period.

Week 1					
	Monday 1 April	Tuesday 2 April	Wednesday 3 April	Thursday 4 April	Friday 5 April
AM 10-12	BANK HOLIDAY	ENGLISH	GEOGRAPHY		MATHS FOUNDATION
PM 1-3		DRAMA – Exam paper	MUSIC CNAT - PE		MATHS HIGHER
Week 2					
	Monday 8 April	Tuesday 9 April	Wednesday 10 April	Thursday 11 April	Friday 12 April
AM 10-12	DRAMA STUDIO REHEARSALS	DRAMA STUDIO REHEARSALS	SOCIOLOGY DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY	ART	MEDIA STUDIES DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY
PM 1-3	DRAMA STUDIO REHEARSALS	DRAMA STUDIO REHEARSALS	PHOTOGRAPHY	ART	BUSINESS STUDIES
Monday 15th April		All years return to school			
Wednesday 17th April		Trip: Insight day at the University of Gloucestershire			
Friday 19th April		TPAT Scholars Maths Challenge			
Monday 22nd April		Trip: Y8 to Egg Theatre, Bath			
Thursday 25th April		Y8 UKMT Challenge			
Monday 29th April - Wednesday 1st May		Trip: Y9 Maths to PGL, Osmington Bay			
Wednesday 1st May		Primary Science lesson			

Monday 6th May	School Closed - May Bank Holiday
Tuesday 7th May	Trip: TPAT Masterclass at Lydiard Park Academy
Wednesday 8th May	Trip: Y8 to Bristol Aquarium & M-Shed Museum
Wednesday 15th May	Trip: TPAT Scholars to Marlborough College
Thursday 16th May	Immunisations
Tuesday 21st May	Character Champion Pizza Party

May Bank Holiday (School Closed)

Monday 6th May

May Half Term

Monday 27th May (Bank Holiday) -

Friday 31st May

Inset Day

Monday 3rd June (School open to staff only)

Return to School (all years)

Tuesday 4th June

School Calendar



Abbey Park School Terms and Holidays 2023 - 2024



September 2023							October 2023							November 2023						
Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
				1	2	3							1			1	2	3	4	5
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
25	26	27	28	29	30		23	24	25	26	27	28	29	27	28	29	30			
							30	31												

December 2023							January 2024							February 2024						
Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
				1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7				1	2	3	4
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30	31					26	27	28	29			

March 2024							April 2024							May 2024						
Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
				1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			1	2	3	4	5
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30						27	28	29	30	31		

June 2024							July 2024							August 2024						
Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
					1	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7				1	2	3	4
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	29	30	31					26	27	28	29	30	31	

INSET Days 1st and 4th September, 16th and 17th November, 19th February, 3rd June and 19th July

Lunchtime Finish 20th December and 18th July

Bank Holidays 2023/24 UK

25 December '23	Christmas Day	29 March '24	Good Friday	27 May '24	Spring Bank Holiday
26 December '23	Boxing Day	1 April '24	Easter Monday	26 August '24	August Bank Holiday
1 January '24	New Year's Day	6 May '24	May Day Holiday		