

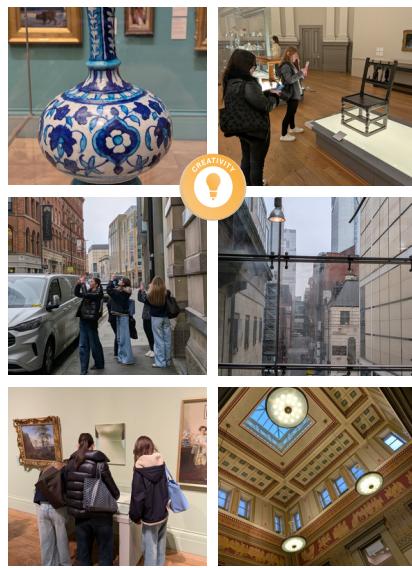
# Friday Focus

Issue 192 | February 2026



**Highlights of this week's news at school and forthcoming events**

**Photo of the week**  
**#weareblythe**



## SIXTH FORM VISIT MANCHESTER

Year 12 and 13 Art and Photography students recently enjoyed an inspiring visit to Manchester Art Gallery. The trip provided a valuable opportunity to engage with a wide range of artworks and photographic practices, encouraging students to explore new ideas, techniques, and themes. They returned to school full of enthusiasm and creative inspiration, which will directly inform and enrich the development of their A Level projects.

## U13 STOKE-ON-TRENT NETBALL COMPETITION

A huge well done to our U13 netball team who finished 3rd in our group, narrowly missing out on a place in the semi-finals. Throughout the competition, the girls showed outstanding pride, respect and kindness both on and off the court. Their teamwork, determination and positive attitude truly represented the school. A special shout out to Isobel, one of our Sixth Form Netball Leaders, who came along to lead the team. She did a fantastic job coaching, motivating and supporting the girls to do their best.

**WELL DONE TO THE CAST AND CREW OF ANNIE FOR A WONDERFUL WEEK OF PERFORMANCES! ENJOY HIGHLIGHTS ON PAGE 2**



Our Netball Leaders are now delivering netball alongside Miss James at our school netball club:  
Every Tuesday  
3:10-4:00  
Open to all Year 7, 8 & 9 girls

Everyone is welcome - it would be great to see some new faces. Check out the netball group's video on our Facebook page!

## WELCOME

What a fabulous week of performances we have had! The cast and crew of *Annie* should be so proud of what has been the best musical yet! From the backstage support, staff and students on set production and refreshments, to those with roles on the stage, every one of you has been amazing. To Mrs Baines, Miss Housley and Miss Balewski - wow! Thank you for everything you have done! Same time next year!?

Mrs Johnson  
Headteacher

## Pride, Respect & Kindness



## YEAR 9 PODCAST WORKSHOP WITH BBC RADIO DERBY

This week our Year 9 students worked with journalist Kayleigh Hall from BBC Radio Derby, exploring how we consume news and what makes journalism trustworthy. Students then got creative, recording their own podcast introductions across genres from true crime to sports! A brilliant insight into modern media. Thanks Kayleigh!

★★★★★ "PURE SUNSHINE IN MUSICAL FORM" ★★★★★



"THE ORPHANS LIT UP THE STAGE"



"LUCIE MADE THE PERFECT ANNIE"



"FRANKIE'S MISS HANNIGAN WAS CHAOTIC COMEDY GOLD"



"PIPPA AND OLIVER MAKE THE DREAM DUO"



"EXCELLENT ENSEMBLE"



"UNFORGETTABLE"



New Vic Borderlines

# CHAPTER 2

Aged between 14-19 years old?

Have you ever wondered why one day you're fine and the next you feel like you can't get out of bed?

Have you got ideas about how to support and help yourself and others through zine making, Tiktoks or creative outlooks but no space to express it?

Come and join the New Vic Theatre for creative wellbeing sessions designed for you by you!

A chance to express yourself, build confidence, make friends and make a difference!

INTERESTED? Contact Liv [shape@newvictheatre.org.uk](mailto:shape@newvictheatre.org.uk)  
WhatsApp - 07957 378999  
Insta - [newvicborderlines/](https://www.instagram.com/newvicborderlines/)

WEEKLY SESSIONS  
WHEN: MONDAYS 10AM-12PM  
AND TUESDAYS 4PM-6PM  
\*you don't need to be able to attend both days to join, just one\*

WHERE: NEW VIC THEATRE

DRAMA  
WRITING  
PHOTOGRAPHY  
FILM  
ZINE MAKING

NEWVIC

DISCOVER YOUR CREATIVE VOICE WITH CHAPTER 2!

Are you aged 14–19 and looking for a safe space to support your mental wellbeing? Join Chapter 2, an exciting and free creative project by Borderlines at the New Vic Theatre. Whether you are currently waiting for support or just navigating daily stress and anxiety, the youth-led sessions are designed by you, for you.

## What's in it for you?

- Get Creative: Explore drama, writing, photography, film, and zine-making.
- Build Confidence: Express your identity and discover new ambitions.
- Connect: Meet new friends and find peer support in a safe environment.
- Unlock Opportunities: Gain access to cultural events, volunteering, and training.

Where: New Vic Theatre  
Who: 14–19 year olds

For further enquiries or concerns, please contact our DSL on [s.owen@bb-hs.co.uk](mailto:s.owen@bb-hs.co.uk)

# FOOTBALL

On Wednesday, the Year 10 football team played away at Discovery Academy. Blythe controlled the game from the start and played some nice football in the process. Goals from Seth G x3, Kian W, Ethan W-H and a birthday penalty for Mitchell B ensured a 6-1 win. Player of the match: Seth G.

**Screen time and resilience: A psychologist's guide**

The BBC has published an article on screen time and resilience in children, by Dr. Marsha Denner-Gallahue. It includes ways to support resilience in encouraging screen time.

The article explores nine ways in which screen time can be used to develop media literacy skills, as well as ways to support your child to challenge what they see on screen. It also discusses some of the ways screen time can be used to develop healthy screen time habits.

At the end of the article, there are links to further articles that may be of interest, including how to manage your child's overall screen challenge.

You can find more here: <https://www.bbc.com/parenting/article/what-is-resilience>

**What you like to read. What resilience is a different language? You can use our new resilience tool on our web version: <https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/what-is-resilience/>**

## Online Safety Newsletter February 2026

### Using AI to alter images

AI image generator and moderator tools are widely available and often used by children. Whilst these tools can be used for creative purposes, we need to be aware of the potential risks and ensure that children understand when and the circumstances when they should not be used, even if harm is not intended.

**What are AI image generators and moderation tools?**

It's when Artificial Intelligence is used to create or modify images, for example it could be used to swap faces, change or move objects in images, or even create entirely new images. These tools are often very realistic and therefore difficult to see that they are fake.

**Parents and carers**

If parents and carers are using these tools, they need to be aware of potential loss of privacy and the importance of consent. They should know that they should never use these tools to alter images of children without their consent.

**What are adults asked to know about using these tools?**

- Children should not be allowed to manipulate images of school staff, teachers or other adults without their consent. It is important to use tools to create or edit photos of teachers under any circumstances.
- Manipulation of images of others or other children – if you are using AI tools to create or edit images of other children, it is important to be aware that these images could be used to harm or harass others.
- The tools should not be used to create images that could embarrass or threaten others.
- Copyright owner – who owns the copyright? These images could be used without permission and can affect one's digital footprint.

**What should I do?**

- Do not let your child if they are using these tools and ascertain the reason why they are using them. If they are using them for fun, check the age rating of any apps that ascertain that they are using and set up parental controls to prevent them from using them.
- Teach your child's digital literacy by teaching them to recognise online risks and to behave responsibly online.

**Further information**

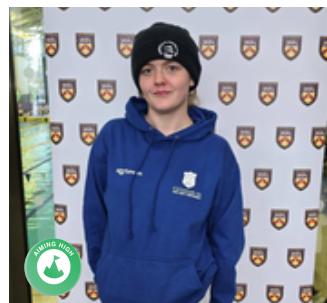
- <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/what-is-ai-and-what-can-it-do-to-children-at-home/>
- <https://nspcc.org.uk/2024/07/17/understanding-images-dreams-at-home/>

## ONLINE SAFETY NEWSLETTER

Our Online Safety Newsletter is available on our website for your perusal.

[https://www.bb-  
hs.co.uk/.../Online-Safety-  
Newsletter...](https://www.bb-hs.co.uk/.../Online-Safety-Newsletter...)

As always, please contact our DSL on [s.owen@bb-hs.co.uk](mailto:s.owen@bb-hs.co.uk) if you have any concerns.



## MAKING WAVES

Huge congratulations to Katy-Hope on an incredible performance at the Staffordshire County Championships! A 100m Butterfly finalist, 4th in the 200m Butterfly, and now the 4th fastest 13-year-old in the county - despite only just turning 12! She's less than a second off a regional time, with her 10 hours a week of training at Cheadle Swimming Club really paying off. Good luck to Katy-Hope and other Blythe Bridge students competing in Weekend 2 (14th/15th Feb)!

# REAPING ADVOCATE

## Mrs Hayes is reading: The Silent Patient by Alex Michaelides

*The Silent Patient* by Alex Michaelides is a gripping psychological thriller about a woman who stops speaking after being accused of murdering her husband. As a psychotherapist tries to uncover the truth behind her silence, shocking secrets begin to surface. With constant suspense and an unexpected twist, this book is perfect for readers who enjoy dark mysteries and page-turning plots.



## Alumni in Action



## FROM BBHS TO BLUE LIGHTS

Year 10 were inspired by former student Charlie and her colleague Niamh from Staffordshire Police. Charlie shared her journey from a disengaged pupil at Blythe Bridge High School & Sixth Form to training Detective Constable in the CID, highlighting the importance of resilience, supportive role models, and staying open to change. Niamh spoke about the different pathways into policing, giving students insight into the opportunities available. Thank you to Charlie and Niamh for sharing their time, experience, and inspiration - a real reminder that hard work, guidance, and perseverance can shape a meaningful future.



# LOOKING FORWARD



## SPRING TERM

### MONDAY P4 CITIZENSHIP



Year 7: What should I eat to fuel focus and mood?

Year 8: How can I resist peer pressure?

Year 9: Protecting my health

Year 10: Health and Wellbeing

Year 11: Revision skills

Sixth form students will focus on living independently and keeping safe, covering themes of travel, data protection and money safety.

## KEY DATES

Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February - Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March

- Year 11 mock examinations

Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March

- Year 9 MENACWY/TDIPV Boosters

Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March

- Year 9 Progress Evening

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March

- Year 8 HPV Immunisations

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> March

- Silver Rewards Trip



## CAREERS SPOTLIGHT - BENCHMARK 6 + 7

A group of eleven enthusiastic Year 8 students represented the school brilliantly at the Big Apprenticeship Expo held at Stoke City, where they engaged with a range of employers offering apprenticeships, including Panelco, the Army, Capula, Ford Mainwaring, and Stoke-on-Trent City Council. Throughout the event they were impeccably behaved, showing maturity and confidence as they asked thoughtful, incisive questions about future careers and training opportunities. They demonstrated the key skills of Communication, Listening, Speaking and Aiming High through their conversations and returned with hands full of pens and sweets-and with minds full of inspiration. Their conduct was exemplary and a real credit to the school.



## ASSEMBLIES

Year 7-11: Spring  
Year 12-13: Mental Health



Group	Block 4 (5) 12 <sup>th</sup> Jan-13 <sup>th</sup> Feb
Year 7 Girls AC	Dance
Year 7 Girls DV	OAA
Year 7 Boys AC	Swimming
Year 7 Boys DV	Handball
Year 8 Girls AC	HRE
Year 8 Girls DV	Dance
Year 8 Boys AC	Basketball
Year 8 Boys DV	Football
Year 9 Girls AC	Volleyball
Year 9 Girls DV	Dance
Year 9 Boys AC	Handball
Year 9 Boys DV	Swimming

## REMINDER

A reminder for students to check their timetables and bring in the correct kit for their PE lessons with appropriate footwear. Please also remember to bring in ingredients for food technology lessons.

## HOUSE UPDATES

Following the brilliant success of the Sixth Form vs Staff table tennis house competition, students are powering through the final stages of our Core PE house competitions! And there's plenty more to come - don't miss the Spelling Bee straight after half term, plus an exciting Swimming Gala on the horizon. Keep your eyes peeled!

**Sphinx: 814 (1st)**

**Centaur: 812 (2nd)**

**Pegasus: 678 (3rd)**

**Serpent: 641 (4th)**

### Upcoming Competitions

Spelling Bee

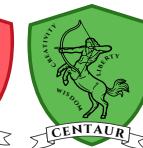
Core KS3 Competition

Year 8 Art Competition

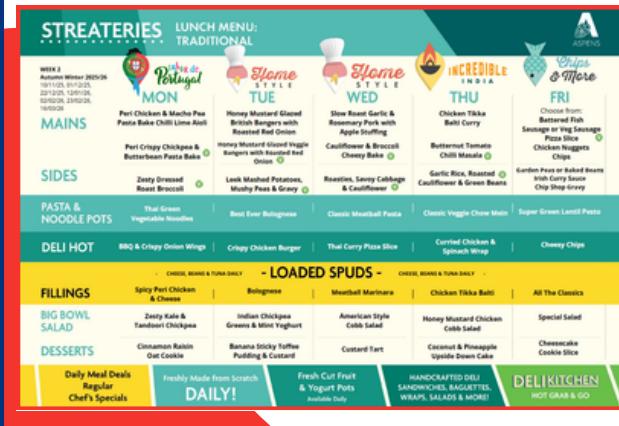
Spitfire Modelling

Cross Country

Swimming Gala



## MENU CHOICE



# Check this out

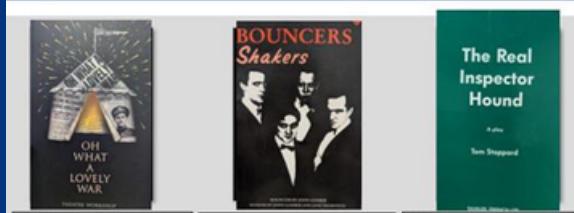


## Drama Reading

Fancy reading a playscript instead of a novel?

Every half term, the drama department will recommend three playscripts that you can borrow to read.

This half term's recommendations are:



**Oh What A Lovely War**  
War is a satirical take on WW1, full of song and dance that juxtapose greatly with those moments of shock and anger..

**Bouncers and Shakers** is a double bill of loud, proud, physical plays that show life in a Northern town as a variety of characters get ready for a big night out.

**The Real Inspector Hound** follows two theatre critics watching a ludicrous whodunnit who then become involved in the action.

You are very welcome to borrow these or other plays through Mrs Baines.

Did you know you can raise free donations for Blythe Bridge High School & Sixth Form every time you shop online? With over 7,500 retailers including Tesco, Amazon, John Lewis and more, a percentage of what you spend is donated to our school at no extra cost to you. Signing up takes just a moment and is completely free – simply scan the QR code below to get started and help support our students.



## 6 Reasons to Put Your Phone Away

by @Inner\_Drive  
www.innerdrive.co.uk



### Lowers Concentration

Having your phone out while doing homework or revision has been shown to reduce performance by 20%.



### Increases FOMO

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), or the compulsive need to know what others are doing, leads to worse moods and increased anxiety.



### Reduces Memory

Nobody is as happy as they seem on Facebook or as wise as they appear on Twitter.



### Increases Stress and Anxiety

Overuse of mobile phones leads to increased anxiety, feelings of loneliness and low self-esteem. Reliance on mobile phones can cause irritation, frustration and impatience.

### Wears Your View of Reality

Instant messages are distracting, which often leads to forgetfulness



### Makes You Sleep Worse

Prolonged use of a mobile phone leads to poor sleep quality and duration. The backlight on your phone delays the release of Melatonin, which is a hormone important for sleep.



If you are interested in purchasing items please email [t.matthias@bb-hs.co.uk](mailto:t.matthias@bb-hs.co.uk) and we will let you know what we have in stock. Donations are always welcome.



## Train to Teach in Local Schools

Primary (3-7) • Primary (5-11) • Secondary (11-16)



The John Taylor SCITT

[jtscitt.co.uk](http://jtscitt.co.uk)

# BLYTHE BRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL & SIXTH FORM

# COMMUNITY LETTINGS



Blythe Bridge High School & Sixth Form is excited to offer our school facilities to the local community and businesses.

If you are looking for a regular indoor or outdoor venue for your club or society, or a space for a one off event, we offer a range of facilities.

## THESE INCLUDE

**MUGA PITCHES ● GRASS FOOTBALL PITCHES ●  
MAIN HALL ● CLASSROOMS ● ICT SUITES ● ART  
FACILITIES ● HARD COURTS ● SWIMMING POOL**



Scan the QR code for our price list and a copy of our hire request form  
01782 392519  
[office@bb-hs.co.uk](mailto:office@bb-hs.co.uk)  
ST11 9PW



# Free School Meals



See if you are entitled...

It costs nothing to try, so why not give it a go!

You may be eligible for support via benefits related Free School Meals if you meet any of the following low income entitlement criteria:

- Income Support
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance. Please note the 'new style' job seekers allowance is not a qualifying benefit.
- Income Related Employment and Support Allowance. Please note the 'new style' employment and support allowance is not a qualifying benefit.
- Eligible for Child Tax Credit but not Working Tax Credit and the household income (as used by HMRC to assess tax credits) is not more than £16,190.
- The Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- In receipt of the 4 week run on of working tax credit
- Universal credit (provided you have an annual net earned household income of no more than £7,400 as assessed by earnings from up to three of your most recent assessment periods). Your net earned income is your household income after taxes and deductions and does not include income from Universal Credit or any other benefits you may receive.

Even if your child prefers packed lunch, it is worth registering to receive benefits such as:

- A discounted place on some school trips
- Year 6 Headstart pack on transition including one school tie and headphones
- 20% voucher for National Schoolwear, Hanley
- Access to free food and activities during the school holidays

Help the school by registering for Free School Meals!

By registering for Free School Meals, you will also allow school to receive PUPIL PREMIUM, which is extra money from the government to support children from families on lower incomes. The funding that school receives can be used for a range of interventions including help with costs of school trips, music fees, teaching assistant staff, after school programmes and equipment.

The Pupil Premium strategy can be found on the school website.

## Holiday Activities and Food



[www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Education/Educational-awards-benefits/Holiday-activities-and-food/Holiday-Activities-and-Food.aspx](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Education/Educational-awards-benefits/Holiday-activities-and-food/Holiday-Activities-and-Food.aspx)



To apply, visit the Staffordshire County Council website  
[www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/educational-awards-benefits/freeschoolmeals/apply-online.aspx](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/educational-awards-benefits/freeschoolmeals/apply-online.aspx)