

Friday Focus



Issue 195 | March 2026

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

Photo of the week
#weareblythe



YEAR 10 TALK

Nick Mellors from Connect Fibre came in to talk to Year 10 computer scientists about the skills and attributes needed for a successful career in computer science / IT and project management. Thank you for visiting us, Nick.



ECO-GARDEN

Spring is here, and so are our new After-School Club projects! This term we are launching a House Flower Border Challenge, where each house will design and create its own flower border and compete for the best design, planting and overall impact around the school garden. Whether you're interested in designing, gardening, building and planting, or documenting the project, there is a role for everyone. Join us Thursdays after school to help plan, plant and bring your house's flower border to life, with the finished displays judged later in the term for House Competition points and prizes. Please see Mrs Cotterill in N10 if you're interested in taking part – let's make our school bloom this spring!

British Science Week



SPARKING CURIOSITY

This week, we have been proud to celebrate British Science Week in school. With this year's theme, "Curiosity: what's your question?", students have been reminded that curiosity lies at the heart of all great science. It is curiosity that drives discovery, challenges old ideas and helps us better understand the world around us. Our Year 9 students have been investigating the rate of photosynthesis using Elodea pondweed, while Science staff across the department have been delivering engaging British Science Week-themed lessons designed to spark questions and inspire deeper thinking. As part of the week, Mr Knight has also delivered assemblies to all year groups, highlighting how curiosity helped pioneers such as Ignaz Semmelweis and Edward Jenner transform medicine and change the way society thinks. It has been wonderful to see students engaging so positively, asking questions and showing genuine curiosity in their learning. We are excited to keep that momentum going – look out next week for our Medical Mavericks lessons!"

WELCOME

Parents of Year 6 students who were successful in their applications to join our school were notified at the start of March and it is wonderful to see how many have already registered their interest in our Summer Schools. Feedback from these additional transition opportunities is always really positive but our recent survey of Year 7 students and parents showed overwhelming support for these three-day events. Mr Jackson is grateful that so many staff and current students are willing to help with the organisation and delivery of the various exciting sessions.

Mrs Johnson
Headteacher

Pride, Respect & Kindness

BOOK MASTERMIND CHAMPION

Before half term, Blythe Bridge High School competed in the annual JMAT Book Mastermind against five other schools. Representing us, Hope M showed fantastic dedication in preparing for the event and impressed in both rounds – including a specialist round on Little Women by Louisa May Alcott.

Thanks to Hope's brilliant performance, Blythe Bridge took the overall win and brought home the Book Mastermind Shield!

Hope was also awarded a £20 book token for her achievement. A huge well done to Hope and thank you to Mrs Jones for her support – we're incredibly proud!



YouTube Safety Update: New Parental Controls

YouTube have published their latest update on how parents can support their child on YouTube. YouTube will now allow parents to set the amount of time viewing Shorts – this can even be set to zero. YouTube Shorts are short videos, usually less than 60 seconds long, which when continuously watched, can lead to excessive screen time. Furthermore, parents will also be able to set bedtime and “take a break” reminders. You can find out more here:

<https://blog.youtube/news-and-events/updates-youtube-supervised-accounts-teen/>

If you would like to find out more about supervised accounts on YouTube, then this article explains the different settings available:

https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/10115420?hl=en&ref_topic=15279060&site=15275282118002181205-EU

Would you like to read this newsletter in a different language? You can use the translate tool on our web version: <https://www.knowledgecs.is.org.uk/march-2026/>

Mobile phones: do you know the risks?

We know that children having access to a smartphone can expose children to risks including:

- Viewing inappropriate content
- Excessive screen time/use, which in turn can affect their mental health and sleep pattern.
- Contact from inappropriate people/grooming
- Cyberbullying
- Spending money on in-app purchases/scams

What effects do mobile phones have on children's mental health?

Compass discuss the research around this important topic, outlining the positive and negative effects that mobile phones have: <https://compass-uk.org/services/compass-changing-lives/online-resources/what-effects-do-mobile-phones-have-on-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health/>

EE Online Safety Hub

EE has published age guidance for smartphone usage to improve children's digital wellbeing. In summary, they recommend that children under 11 should use non-smart devices, for children aged 11-13, they advise that if a smartphone is used, then parental controls should be enabled and access to social media restricted. Finally, for 13-16 year-olds they still recommend that parental controls are implemented and appropriate restrictions set up. You can read the full guidance here: <https://ee.co.uk/internet-online-safety>

Could you delay when your child is given a smartphone with Smartphone Free Childhood?

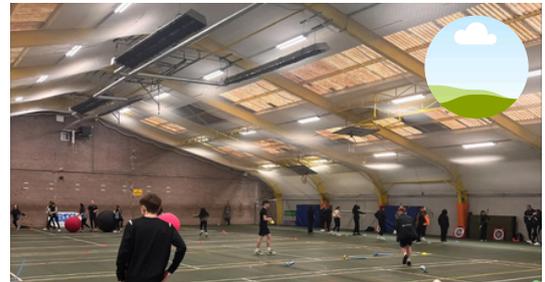
The premise behind this movement is that all parents/carers of a class all agree not to give their children smartphones (therefore the level of peer pressure is reduced) for a set time or until a specific: <https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/>

What device?

When you think it is the right time for your child to have a phone, then “Which?” provide an overview of some options available: <https://www.which.co.uk/reviews/mobile-phones/article/buying-a-first-mobile-phone-best-dumb-phones-and-smartphones-for-kids-a403c3y8a7r>

SUPER SPORTS LEADERS

On Tuesday, 10 of our Year 10 Sports Leaders ventured to Northwood Stadium to support and help deliver the School Partnership Games. Throughout the day, our leaders helped to run and support a range of activities including Kin-Ball, bike smoothie making, throwing events, netball, and archery. Many schools from across Stoke-on-Trent attended the event and provided fantastic feedback about how helpful, enthusiastic, and supportive our leaders were during the sessions. It was fantastic to see our students thriving in a sporting environment and growing in confidence as the day progressed. Their leadership, teamwork, and communication skills really shone through while supporting younger pupils and helping the activities run smoothly. A huge thank you to our Sports Leaders for the way they represented Blythe Bridge High School and Sixth Form — you were a real credit to the school!



ONLINE SAFETY NEWSLETTER

Our new monthly online safety newsletter is now available on our website for your perusal:

<https://www.bbs.co.uk/.../Online-Safety-Newsletter...>



Pride • Respect • Kindness

Southern Lotus
BREAKFAST CLUB
CUTE & EASY COLORING BOOK

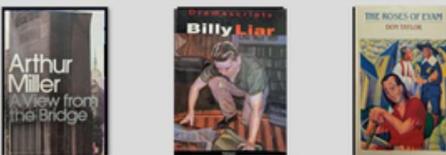
BLYTE BRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL
& SIXTH FORM

Drama Reading

Fancy reading a playscript instead of a novel?

Borrow a script, write a review and possibly win a prize as well as points for your house!

This half term's Drama house competition



Spring house competition for drama

Borrow one of these or many other play scripts that the drama department has, read it and then write a review of the play.

The Year 12 Drama subject ambassadors will judge the entries and award prizes and house points.

All reviews to be received by Mrs Baines by 11th April.

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



KICKSTART

With unlimited free toast and hot and cold drinks, breakfast club is a great place to start the day. Kickstart opens at 8am and is available to any student who wants to come along and pop in. Although the colouring books and board games are always in use, at the moment Uno is definitely the most popular game with students from Year 7 through to Year 11.

From Monday we are open to staff as well so feel free to come along and join us!

READING ADVOCATE

Mrs Ashcroft is reading: *The Cruel Prince* by Holly Black



The Cruel Prince follows mortal girl Jude Duarte, who, after her parents are murdered, is taken to the treacherous High Court of Faerie, where she endures torment from the wicked Prince Cardan. Determined to belong and gain power in this world that despises humans, Jude gets entangled in deadly palace intrigue, using her cunning to navigate betrayals and schemes, ultimately aiming to control Cardan and reshape Faerie's future by seizing power for herself and her sisters. I loved reading this book and I am already looking forward to reading the second one in the series. I really enjoy reading books in this genre and would say I usually go for fantasy books if I am choosing which book to read.



LOOKING FORWARD



SPRING TERM MONDAY P4 CITIZENSHIP



- Year 7: What is self esteem?
- Year 8: What is gambling / addiction?
- Year 9: Contraception , STIs, confidential advice.
- Year 10: What is mental health?
- Year 11: Revision skills

Sixth form students will study independence and safety with a focus on travelling safely both abroad and whilst working or living independently.

KEY DATES

- Monday 23rd March**
 - Year 9 Progress Evening
- Wednesday 25th-27th March**
 - Silver Rewards Trip
- Friday 17th-19th April**
 - DoFE Bronze and Silver Practice
- Monday 27th April**
 - Year 9 Options Evening



CAREERS SPOTLIGHT - BENCHMARK 3

Congratulations to our Year 7 skills champions! After last week's Step into NHS event, we are excited for our students to discover the skill they will be representing and encouraging in others. Well done Year 7!



ASSEMBLIES

Year 7-11: Eid al-Fitr
Year 12-13: International Day of Happiness & Self-Care



Group	Block 5 (S)
Year 7 Girls AC	23 rd Feb – 27 th March
Year 7 Girls DV	Football
Year 7 Boys AC	Swimming
Year 7 Boys DV	OAA
Year 8 Girls AC	Basketball
Year 8 Girls DV	Swimming
Year 8 Boys AC	Volleyball
Year 8 Boys DV	HRE
Year 9 Girls AC	Handball
Year 9 Girls DV	Swimming
Year 9 Boys AC	Tramp
Year 9 Boys DV	HRE
Year 9 Boys AC	Football
Year 9 Boys DV	Football



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.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP

We are going to introduce two positions of sixth form leaders for the start of next academic year. The process of selecting students for these roles will start in the summer term ready for the 2026/27 academic year. If you are in Year 12 and are interested in such a role, now is a good time to start thinking about it. More information will be communicated in the coming months that will give you plenty of time to make a decision and apply.

HOUSE UPDATES

- Sphinx: I311**
- Centaur: I166**
- Serpent: I160**
- Pegasus: I124**

Upcoming Competitions

- KS4 Spelling Bee
- Year 8 Art Competition
- Spitfire Modelling
- Cross Country - Thursday 19th March
- Easter Bake Off - Thursday 26th March
- Escape Room
- Swimming Galas



MENU CHOICE

STREATERIES	LUNCH MENU: TRADITIONAL
<p>MON Pasta Bakes & Meatballs Pasta Bake Chilli Lime Aali</p> <p>TUE Honey Mustard Glazed British Bangers with Roasted Red Onion Honey Mustard Glazed Veggie Bangers with Roasted Red Onion</p> <p>WED Slow Roast Garlic & Rosemary Pork with Apple Stuffing Cauliflower & Broccoli Chippy Bake</p> <p>THU Chicken Tikka Balti Curry Butterbean Tomato Chilli Masala</p> <p>FRI Choose from: Battered Fish Sausage or Veg Sausage Pasta Slice Chicken Nuggets Chips</p>	<p>SIDES</p> <p>Zesty Dressed Bean Brosslet</p> <p>Leek, Mashed Potatoes, Healthy Peas & Gravy</p> <p>Roasties, Savvy Cabbage & Cauliflower</p> <p>PASTA & NOODLE POTS</p> <p>Thai Green Vegetable Noodles</p> <p>Best Ever Bolognese</p> <p>Classic Meatball Pasta</p> <p>Classic Veggie Chow Mein</p> <p>Super Green Lentil Pasta</p> <p>DELI HOT</p> <p>BBQ & Crispy Onion Wings</p> <p>Crispy Chicken Burger</p> <p>Thai Curry Pizza Slice</p> <p>Curried Chicken & Spinach Wrap</p> <p>Chewy Chips</p> <p>FILLINGS</p> <p>Spiry Peri Chicken & Cheese</p> <p>Bolognese</p> <p>Meatball Marinara</p> <p>American Style Cobb Salad</p> <p>Honey Mustard Chicken Cobb Salad</p> <p>Special Salad</p> <p>DESSERTS</p> <p>Cinnamon Rollin Out Cookie</p> <p>Banana Sticky Toffee Pudding & Custard</p> <p>Custard Tart</p> <p>Cheesecake</p> <p>Chocolate Cookie Slice</p>

Daily Meal Deals: Baggit! Chef's Specials

Freshly Made from Scratch: DAILY!

Fresh Cut Fruit & Yogurt Pots available Daily

HANDCRAFTED DELI SANDWICHES, BAGGETTES, WRAPS, SALADS & MORE

DELIKITCHEN HOT GRAB & GO

Those in receipt of free school meals are entitled to £2.72 per day.

Follow us on



Instagram

@blythebridgehighschool



KICKSTART

N1

8:10-8:40am

MEET FRIENDS
CHECK HOMEWORK
READ OR PLAY GAMES
PURCHASE STATIONERY

TOAST & DRINKS AVAILABLE

SUPPORTED BY YEAR 11 PREFECTS

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:



Confusions is a collection of five short plays that are interlinked which is recommended for sixth form students.



Private Peaceful is a wonderfully evocative story set in WW1 that is a novel, film and now playscript.



My Mother Said I Never Should follows four generations of women in one family through different events in their lives.

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.



plus

BLYTHE BRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL & SIXTH FORM

PRE-LOVED UNIFORM SHOP

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

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%.

Warp's View of Reality
Nobody is as happy as they seem on Facebook or as wise as they appear on Twitter.



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
Instant messages are distracting, which often leads to forgetfulness.

Increases Stress and Anxiety
Over use of mobile phones leads to increased anxiety, feelings of loneliness and low self-esteem. Reliance on mobile phones can cause irritation, frustration and impatience.

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.



- Funding for Selected Routes
- Full or Part-Time Routes
- Gain School Experience

Train to Teach

in Local Schools

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



The John Taylor SCITT

jtscitt.co.uk

BLYTHE BRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL & SIXTH FORM COMMUNITY LETTINGS



BLYTHE BRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL
& SIXTH FORM

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

ST11 9PW



Free School Meals

HAVE YOU REGISTERED YET?

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



To apply, visit the Staffordshire County Council website
www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/educational-awards-benefits/freeschoolmeals/apply-online.aspx