



PRINCIPAL'S PARENT/CARER BRIEFING

w/c Monday 9th March 2026

Dear Parents / Carers

MOBILE PHONES AND PHONE POUCHES

It has now been a couple of weeks of running our Phone Pouch approach to Mobile Phones. I would like to thank Parents/Carers for their support in this. We are very pleased with the way that the change has been embraced by our students. Whether it be on the school gates first thing in the morning, or during unlocking at the end of the day, they have responded extremely positively and calmly. It has been very interesting to hear students' viewpoints on this, and the fact for many students they certainly understand, and also welcome the fact that the pouches remove the option for them to worry or habitually check / wonder about notifications and messages.

It is very important that students, Parents/Carers remember that the pouch is school equipment and, therefore, must be brought and also should not be damaged or defaced. If it is lost or damaged, then a replacement will need to be purchased for £20.

Of course, a reminder that should there be a need for you to urgently contact your child through school, then you can do so via the usual methods. Otherwise, they will pick up any messages you have for them at the end of the school day. Likewise, should a child urgently need to contact you before the end of school then please direct them to the Year team or Student Reception at breaktime and lunchtime where either they, or an adult, can make a call to you.

We shall continue to monitor how the use of Phone pouches continues. Of course, any student who now decides to not engage with this process can expect more significant interventions beyond just a confiscation of a phone and return at the end of the school day which would include the expectation that an adult collects the phone instead. If this is deemed to be required, then communication will be made directly with you about this.

ACCESS TO TOILETS AND LOST LEARNING TIME

You will have received a letter last week explaining a slight adjustment in our processes to access toilets during the school day. It is important that students are in lessons for the maximum time possible to reduce the impact of lost learning. Even 5 minutes out of a lesson can result in gaps and interrupt the flow of learning. Therefore, we have clarified to students that the times for using the toilets are during social times (before school, breaks, lunchtimes and after school). Toilet supervision has been adjusted and patterns of use are being monitored. There are adequate toilets available during this time given that the toilet area is not one where students should be congregating. We have made some adjustments to the processes around toilet access, especially in the Key Stage 4 toilets, at break and lunchtime to help this. Toilets are still available if required at the transition points between the lessons in between break and lunchtimes. In emergencies / if required, there is still a process of accessing toilets during lesson times. As you will appreciate, supporting students being in lessons on time for the maximum time is important to support their learning and outcomes over time.

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PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT EVENINGS

Thank you to all Parents/Carers for their attendance at the Year 7 Parents' Evening just before half term. In the first week back after half term, we held the Year 9 Options Evening. This was a very positive event with lots of considered and thoughtful conversations to be heard throughout the evening between Parents/Carers, students and staff.

This week on Thursday is the Year 8 Parents' Evening, with bookings still open on Arbor if you are yet to have made appointments.

Advanced notice that the Year 10 Parents Evening is on Thursday 16th April.

MID TERMS AND INTERNAL ASSESSMENTS

Year 10 recently had their first set of internal examinations. They rose to the occasion very well, with our routines and expectations being matched and students recognising the formality of the situation.

This week Year 11 have their second set of Mock examinations which are focussed primarily on the Core subjects for those assessments undertaken in the school hall. They provide a final opportunity for students to experience examination conditions but, most importantly, provide a focus for them on their level of knowledge, security, application within assessed conditions and chance to further develop their revision and study skills.

YEAR 11 AND KEY STAGE 4 REVISION HUB

The key to success for students in the summer, is to ensure that attendance to school including punctuality, is excellent and that engagement within lessons and learning continues to be strong. A key message is that students should 'control the controllables'. This means completing all controlled assessment / coursework in subjects where this applies to make a significant inroad to the final grades. In addition, being well planned in terms of revision timetables, creation of materials and reflecting on the aspects of each subject where learning is less secure makes a big difference. The Key Stage 4 revision Hub is a one stop shop for this and please, as Parents/Carers, support by helping your child to engage with the materials on here.

It is accessed via the main school website, click on Key Apps and Choose KS4 Revision Hub and login with the child's school Google account.

YEAR 9 CURRICULUM AND CHOICES 2026-2028

The deadline for completing preferences was at the start of this week. Thank you to those families that have supported this happening. A reminder that all the information can be found here, which includes timelines and next steps:

<https://www.parksideschool.net/curriculum/ks4-curriculum-and-options/>

HOUSE SYSTEM

In the last couple of weeks we have revealed to students the names of the new 'Houses'. They are a group of inspirational and varied individuals who all embody key characteristics and attributes that align well with our values and aspirations for students. Students have been introduced to the new names and are currently engaged in an exciting opportunity for them to personalise their new house and really make the house their own.

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The new Houses are named after:

- J.B. Priestley - the local born author and key figure in helping to start the Welfare State.
- Anita Rani - Bradford born TV presenter and the Chancellor of University of Bradford
- Adil Rashid MBE - the Bradford born Yorkshire and England cricketer
- Ellie Kildunne MBE - the Keighley born female World Rugby Player of the Year and Rugby Leader World Cup Winner.

We shall update you on the progress towards key aspects, whether it be logos, colours or the key attributes and characteristics that students have identified about their new 'House' character.

ECO CHAMPIONS / PUPIL BOARD

We are excited to share a new green initiative led by our **Eco Champions**, who are currently representing Parkside School on our Wellspring Academies Trust Pupil Board.

Our student leaders are on a mission to enhance our local ecosystem by planting a **wildflower meadow** in front of Parkside Wood. With over 1,000 trees already on our grounds, this new meadow will provide a vital habitat for bees, butterflies, and other local wildlife, while making our school environment even more beautiful.

How You Can Help

To bring this vision to life, we are looking for donations of **Wildflower seeds and Flower bulbs**.

How to Donate

If you are able to contribute, please bring any donations directly to our Main Reception. Alternatively, if you have questions or would like to coordinate a larger donation, please contact Mr. Siggins at daniel.siggins@parksideschool.net

Any donations, no matter how small, would be greatly appreciated by our students and the environment!

SCHOOL PRODUCTION

Thank you to those of you who came along to support the school production of Oliver (Jr) this year. It really was an excellent show with our very talented and committed students putting on a really enjoyable and humorous show. It was wonderful that prior to the evening performances, we had the opportunity to welcome students from Cullingworth, Oxenhope and Harden primary schools to watch it. They had a great time and our students and staff were very happy to welcome them to Parkside.

A show like this is a big team event, and thanks to the Performing Arts team for their hard work. However, it is the students who have been preparing for this during their E&A time on a Monday afternoon, alongside rehearsals after school and at weekends who are the stars.

CAREERS, EMPLOYABILITY AND COMMUNITY

This week is **National Careers Week**. Over the next couple of weeks, there are lots of opportunities for our students to engage with activities that are all connected to this theme. For example, Year 7 will be participating in a Royal Navy, STEM carousel; Year 8 will be listening to a provider and an employer in assembly; Year 9 students will be further developing their employability skills & careers knowledge within their PSHE careers focused workshops; Year 10 will be completing their drop- down careers day on 25 March, which will include employer-led mock interviews and a variety of careers focused

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workshops; Year 13 will be taking part in a series of supported apprenticeship application workshops, led by alumni and industry experts.

In addition, coaching groups will be completing a variety of tasks and accessing virtual resources to further develop their understanding of the world of work, in preparation to making those key transition choices. Resources and information can always be accessed through Unifrog, our online careers platform. You will shortly be able to access it using your own sign in to research the information available and also to access your own child's area: <https://www.unifrog.org/>

In addition, BBC Bitesize careers have a huge library of resources including videos and quizzes designed for this NCW programme. Use this link to investigate yourself:

https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/careers?dm_i=3YNL,1RXKU,7F4TGJ,70RUN,1,0,0,0&scrlybrkr=87593773&extn=true

A group of our wonderful students visited **New York** over the February half term. Whilst it was cold, fortunately they avoided the significant snowfall that landed just after they had returned to the UK! The highlights of the visit included:

Day 1: Midtown Magic

We kicked off with a walking tour of the city's architectural gems, including the stunning Grand Central Terminal.

Lunch was a hit at Ellen's Stardust Diner, where the staff serenaded us with Broadway hits. This was followed by a breathtaking sunset view from the top of the Empire State Building.

Day 2: Icons & Broadway

History took centre stage as we took the ferry to the Statue of Liberty and paid our respects at the 9/11

Memorial & Museum. After a high-energy dinner at the Hard Rock Cafe, we headed to the theatre for a spectacular performance of Moulin Rouge! The Musical.

Day 3: Skating & Shopping

Our final day was all about classic NYC fun:

- Ice Skating: Gliding under the gold statue at Rockefeller Center.
- Shopping: Finding deals at the massive Macy's Herald Square.
- Farewell Meal: A final group feast at Bubba Gump Shrimp Co.

The staff who attended the visit were full of praise for each and every one of our students, who were fantastic ambassadors as well as soaking up all the enriching opportunities on offer during the visit.

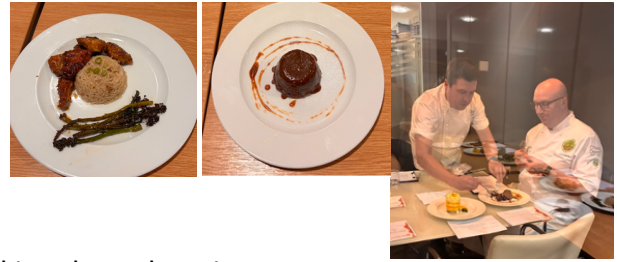


On Wednesday 4th February, Olivia H in Year 9 travelled with Mrs Trowers and Miss Burrell to the Regional Final of the **Future Chef competition** held at Sheffield Hallam University. Olivia was competing against seven other students from across Yorkshire and the North West. She cooked Chinese sticky chicken with seasoned rice and pan-fried greens, alongside lava cake and caramel sauce. Whilst Olivia

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didn't get through to the national final in London, she did get some fantastic feedback from the industry chefs who judged the competition. Well done Olivia, what a fantastic effort and experience. If you think your child may fancy having a go next year, the school heat will be running in October, so keep an eye out!



The **PwC Workshop** series continued with students working through various scenarios discussing options, choices and outcomes. They included time management, problem solving, teamwork & business wear. They discussed the most effective forms of communication from a recent survey and learnt that body language was the highest with 55%, tone of voice second with 38% & what you actually say was a mere 7%.

Each student had written an email to a 'work colleague' in advance of the workshop and these were all discussed as a group. In addition, one of PwC Managing Directors came in to chat to the students about his job role and school leaver options and at the next session he will bring some school leaver recruits in to chat to them.

A group of Year 10 students visited the **Craven College Aviation Academy** at Leeds Bradford Airport. The students learnt how planes take off and land, including a practical element creating paper planes linking learning in the curriculum to careers, received a tour of the facility and saw £400 million worth of aircraft in the immediate hangar! They learnt about the different roles within aviation, what qualifications are required for the various areas/roles and listened to some students already based at the centre about their current experiences. Apparently, Leeds United had been there the night before taking a private plane to their match with Chelsea which caused a bit of a stir!



Kind regards

Robin Ghosal
Principal