

Valence News



Short Week Full of Achievement and Celebration

With two short weeks upon us, it has nonetheless been a busy and productive time across the school. This week has been slightly shorter due to our staff training day taking place tomorrow, and next week will also be shortened by the early May Bank Holiday. For some of our students, this period marks their final opportunity to prepare ahead of the exam season, which begins at the end of next week. We are incredibly proud of all they have achieved so far and wish every student sitting exams the very best of luck during this important time.

This week also saw our final Arts Day of the year, with Simmonds classes taking part in a range of creative activities inspired by the theme “Under the Sea.” The day was full of imagination and creativity, and we look forward to sharing photographs from the workshops in next week’s edition of the newsletter.

In addition, this week a number of students have been undertaking their Duke of Edinburgh expedition, which included a challenging trip to Bedgebury Pinetum. Despite windy conditions and a range of challenges, students demonstrated impressive resilience and teamwork—well done to all those involved.



Finally, this Saturday the Westerham Fair on the Green will take place with family activities, food and music on offer - it promises to be a wonderful community event. The school shop will be actively involved, so please do pop along to support if you can.



Matthew Strange, B.Ed (Hons) NPQH | Principal
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Owl Class

Owl Class have enjoyed getting outside to do water play, physical management, bubbles and play with their friends. There were lots of giggles!



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News in Computing April 2026

In Term 4, students in Hawking 4 and Hawking 6 had the pleasure of Sevenoaks School coming into Computing to deliver and support Microbit sessions which they thoroughly enjoyed. They managed to use the Microbits to program messages to each other so they could see how the programming can work to communicate.



This term Key Stage 2 & Key Stage 3 have started their Digital Literacy strand of the curriculum, learning about the different aspects of Online Safety, Digital Etiquette, Applications, and digital software.



Key Stage 4 & Key Stage 5 students are diligently working towards WJEC accreditation & OCR Cambridge Technicals, with GCSE's currently taking place in school. Good Luck!

Please see the poster with top tips for managing exam stress

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators MANAGING EXAM STRESS

At some point in their education, most young people will encounter exam stress, which can affect their mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing. Mental health charity YoungMinds estimates that 87% of pupils experience exam-related stress. This highlights the importance of supporting young people to manage exam pressure effectively, maintain perspective, and protect their overall wellbeing during these periods.

1 PRACTISE WORKLOAD WISDOM

The build-up to exams can feel overwhelming, with competing demands on time and energy. Encourage young people to reflect on whether their workload is realistic and allows them time to rest and recharge. Support them in creating a manageable revision timetable that includes regular breaks and occasional days off. Remind them that plans can be adjusted if they feel overwhelmed, helping to reduce the pressure and prevent burnout.

2 CLEAR UP THE CLUTTER

A cluttered workspace can reduce focus and increase stress levels. Encourage young people to keep their study area tidy and organised, with clearly arranged notes and materials. A calm, dedicated space can support concentration and create a more relaxed mindset. Adding colour, mind maps, or creative elements can also make revision feel less daunting and more manageable.

3 MASTER THE MATERIALS

Revision can feel particularly stressful if young people are unsure where to begin. Help them confirm key study topics and materials, ensuring they're using accurate and relevant resources. Reducing uncertainty can help them feel more in control of their learning. Reassure them that they don't need to know everything perfectly, as building their understanding over time is what matters most.

4 GET CREATIVE WITH NOTES

Writing out detailed notes, rather than relying only on bullet points, can strengthen their understanding and retention. Encourage young people to turn these notes into flashcards for regular review and repetition. Feeling familiar with their material can boost their confidence and reduce anxiety during exams. This approach can help them feel more prepared and less likely to panic under pressure.

5 USE VISUAL MEMORY AIDS

Visual resources can make learning more effective and reduce their frustration when information feels difficult to grasp. Encourage the use of diagrams, videos, sticky notes, and colour coding to reinforce key ideas. Creating simple mnemonics can also make information easier to remember. Using a variety of methods can help prevent mental fatigue and keep revision feeling fresh and manageable.

6 BUILD A TECH TOOLKIT

Technology can be a valuable supporting tool during exam preparation when used in a balanced way. Educational websites, revision platforms, and subject-specific videos can help explain complicated topics clearly, reducing the risk of confusion or stress. Encourage young people to use these tools to support – rather than overwhelm – their learning, and to take regular breaks from their screens to protect their wellbeing.

7 KEEP REVISION ENJOYABLE

Revision is often more effective when it feels engaging and varied. Encourage young people to incorporate humour, real-life examples, or creative approaches into their learning. Mixing study methods, including light physical activity such as short walks, can also improve their mood and focus. Enjoyable revision experiences can help reduce stress and make the process feel more positive and sustainable.

8 USE ACTIVE STUDY METHODS

Active revision techniques can help young people feel more confident and in control of their learning. Strategies such as spaced repetition and active recall, including self-testing or explaining concepts aloud, can highlight both their strengths and areas for improvement. This clarity can reduce last-minute panic and support a calmer, more prepared approach to exams.

9 USE AI THOUGHTFULLY

AI tools can support revision by making learning more personalised and manageable. Young people can use them to generate practice questions, summarise information, or break down topics into simpler steps. Used carefully, these tools can reduce overwhelm and save time. Remind young people to check AI information with trusted sources to ensure its accuracy and build confidence in their understanding.

10 PRACTISE WITH ONLINE TOOLS

Online revision platforms can help young people test their knowledge and track their progress. Many offer quizzes, flashcards, and practice papers aligned with exam boards. Encourage regular self-testing – including timed activities – to build up familiarity with exam conditions. Becoming more comfortable with the format of exams can reduce anxiety and help young people approach them with greater confidence.

Meet Our Expert

Minds Ahead design and deliver the UK's only specialist postgraduate mental health qualifications. Winner of Social Enterprise UK's 'One to Watch' award, the charity provides training and support to education organisations and local authorities. This guide has been written by Adam Gillett – a learning and development specialist who is also Associate Vice-Principal for Personal Development at a large secondary school.



The National College®

See full reference list on our website

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Senior Staff On-call Rota from 30thth April 2026

Matt Strange **07894 483673**
Lisa Kavanagh **07912 124724**
Jo Chivers **07896 905095**

Date	Day	Time	DSL	DSL
30/04/26	Thursday	09:00 To midday	Lisa Kavanagh	Closed
		Midday to 4pm	Lisa Kavanagh	
01/05/26	Friday	09:00 To midday	Closed	Closed
		Midday to 4pm	Closed	
04/05/26	Monday	09:00 To midday	Closed	Closed
		Midday to 4pm	Closed	
05/05/26	Tuesday	09:00 To midday	Jo Chivers	Matt Strange
		Midday to 4pm	Matt Strange	
06/05/26	Wednesday	09:00 To midday	Matt Strange	Jo Chivers / Kate Bayman
		Midday to 4pm	Jo Chivers/ Kate Bayman	
07/05/26	Thursday	09:00 To midday	Jo Chivers / Kate Bayman	Lisa Kavanagh
		Midday to 4pm	Lisa Kavanagh	
08/05/26	Friday	09:00 To midday	Lisa Kavanagh	Closed
		Midday to 4pm	Lisa Kavanagh	

Reminder

**Students finish normal time
on Thursday 30th April**



Friday 1st May—Inset Day

Monday 4th May Bank Holiday