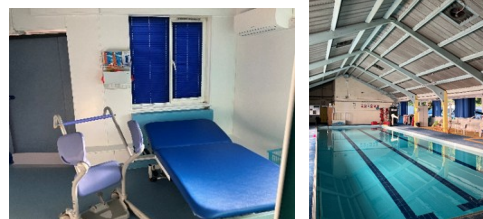


Valence News

A Community Working Together

This week has highlighted the many ways our school community works together to create opportunities and enrich experiences for our young people.

Earlier this term, we celebrated the opening of our refurbished swimming pool changing facilities. We are already seeing the positive impact these improved spaces are having on students' swimming experiences and would like to thank everyone involved in fundraising who made this project possible.



Yesterday's recruitment event was another excellent example of collaboration in action. Whilst expertly organised by our HR team, it was our pupils and students who truly brought the event to life, warmly welcoming visitors, leading tours and sharing their experiences of the school. Their enthusiasm, confidence and pride in their school stood out and was acknowledged by many of our visitors.



We also celebrate the work of our residential students who have been instrumental in establishing a regular gaming club at Westerham Brewery. The project has created valuable social opportunities for our boarding students whilst also supporting the development of skills linked to personalised targets and our Preparation for Adulthood programme. Particular thanks go to Mason, who completed an assessment of the venue to ensure it would be suitable and accessible for all, and who took responsibility for contacting the business and negotiating booking arrangements with the manager. Please read the article on page 4 for further details.



These achievements are a reminder that the strength of Valence School lies in everyone's shared commitment to helping our young people thrive and develop the skills, confidence and independence needed for adult life.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. We wish you all a happy and enjoyable weekend.

Lisa Kavanagh (Vice Principal – Safeguarding & Social Care)

Creating a More Focused, Connected School Day

At Valence School, our priority is to create the very best environment for learning, wellbeing and personal development. As part of this commitment, we are continuing our approach to mobile phone use during the school day through the use of secure phone pouches.

Over recent years, mobile phones have become an increasingly important part of young people's lives. While technology brings many benefits, we also know that constant access to phones and social media can create distractions, reduce face-to-face interaction and impact wellbeing. The school day should be a time when students can fully engage in learning, build positive relationships and develop the confidence and independence they need for the future.

By using phone pouches, students can still bring their phones to school and keep them in their possession throughout the day, but they are unable to access them during the school day. This simple approach helps create a calm, focused and purposeful environment for everyone.

Why are we doing this?

Improving focus and learning

When phones are out of sight, students are better able to concentrate on lessons, participate in discussions and engage fully with learning activities. Removing the temptation to check notifications or messages helps students remain focused and make the most of every lesson.

Supporting wellbeing

Many young people report feeling pressure to stay constantly connected. A phone-free school day provides a valuable opportunity to step away from notifications, social media and online demands, helping students focus on the present moment and reducing unnecessary anxiety.

Encouraging positive relationships

Some of the most important learning that takes place in school happens outside the classroom. By reducing phone use during breaks and social times, students are encouraged to talk, play, collaborate and strengthen friendships through genuine face-to-face interaction.

Developing healthy digital habits

Technology is an important part of modern life, and we want our students to become responsible digital citizens. Learning when and where it is appropriate to use technology is an essential life skill. A structured phone-free school day helps young people develop a balanced and healthy relationship with their devices.

What does this mean for students?

Students may continue to bring a mobile phone to school if parents wish them to do so. Phones are secured in a pouch at the start of the day and remain with the student throughout the school day. At the end of the day, the pouch is unlocked and students regain access to their phone for their journey home.

Importantly, this is not about banning technology. It is about ensuring that phones do not interfere with learning, wellbeing or social interaction during the school day.

Working together

Parents and carers play an important role in helping young people develop positive habits around technology use. By working together, we can support students in building healthy relationships with digital devices while ensuring that school remains a place where they can learn, grow, socialise and thrive.

Thank you for your continued support as we strive to provide the best possible learning environment for every student at Valence School.

To ensure that this approach is fair, consistent and effective for all students, we will continue to apply our Mobile Phone and Pouch Policy expectations across the school. Students are expected to arrive each day and be ready to switch their phone off, securely lock it in a pouch where it will be stored in their bag. Where these expectations are not met, the sanctions outlined below will be applied consistently.

Please refer to the Mobile Phone Policy and infographic on next page for further information.



Learning, Growing and Thriving in Our Gardens

Over the past few weeks, students have been making the most of our wonderful outdoor learning spaces, spending time in both the polytunnel and school gardens. These sessions have provided valuable opportunities for learning, wellbeing and enjoyment while connecting with nature.

Our gardens have been bursting with colour, with beautiful flowers in bloom alongside a wide variety of vegetables that students have helped to nurture throughout the growing season. From watering and weeding to caring for plants and monitoring growth, students have taken great pride in looking after the garden spaces.

One of the highlights has been harvesting the crops they have worked so hard to grow. Students have thoroughly enjoyed picking fresh vegetables and seeing the results of their patience, dedication and teamwork. The experience of planting seeds, watching them develop and eventually harvesting the produce has been both rewarding and educational.

Time spent in the polytunnel, and gardens has also provided many therapeutic benefits. Being outdoors in a calm and natural environment has helped students to relax, develop mindfulness skills and experience a sense of achievement. The hands-on activities encourage independence, responsibility and confidence, while supporting students' physical and emotional wellbeing.

We are incredibly proud of the enthusiasm our students have shown and the care they have taken in maintaining these beautiful spaces. We look forward to seeing what they continue to grow and achieve throughout the year.

The Education Team

Dungeons & Dragons Gaming Club

(Daniel has kindly agreed for his target work to be shared)



Name of Student: Daniel...

Date: 24/09/2026

Record of activity:

Daniel joined peers from his bungalow this evening to attend *Dungeons and Dragons Tabletop Gaming* session at Westerham Brewery. Daniel had previously expressed reluctance to attend this activity as he had stated during a student meeting that he '*does not do board games*'.

However, this evening, Daniel fully participated in the session, playing Trivial Pursuit and Scrabble. Daniel demonstrated social interaction with peers and staff throughout the whole evening. He presented himself with humour, commenting on the outcomes of the games. Daniel was observed smiling and laughing, often when other players would make a mistake or attempt to place an incorrect word on Scabble.

Well done Daniel!

PfA Outcomes



Student's voice:

When asked if Daniel enjoyed his evening, Daniel said 'yes I did'. When asked if he would like to go again next week, Daniel replied 'yes I would'.

Student signature and rating:



PfA Outcomes

 Community Inclusion	 Health & Wellbeing
Social Interactions Keeping Safe (In the Community)	General Health / Managing Health Needs
 Independent Living	 Employment & Work
	Practical Literacy Practical Communication



Month	1st	2nd	3rd
September	K Rogers	J Church	C Nurcombe-Thorne



The Christmas Card Project

This term we have decided to organise an exciting design-your-own Christmas Card project with SchoolPrintWorld.co.uk to raise funds for the school while encouraging creativity and artistic flair in our children! The Christmas Card designs will be professionally printed with your child's artwork on the front and their name on the back.

Your children are busy creating fabulous artwork as we speak which can be turned into a range of professionally printed products. Looking for gifts like personalised candles, mugs, cards, gift labels and more? Then hang fire until you get your order form through, so you can order direct. We'll let you know when your order forms are being sent out so you can know to expect them.

One of our fantastic students, Connor E has helped to design this newsletter for parents. He said 'Please support us as it will help our art department, and it has been fun for the students to do!'

4.11.26



Friends of Valence Fireworks Display

For Students, Staff & Families

Valence School - Wed 4th Nov 2026

5:30pm - 7:30pm

Glow Toys

Food and Drink

Kindly Sponsored by:

Westerham Heights Garden Centre

The Shampán - Westerham

Senior Staff On-call Rota from 25th September 2026

Matt Strange	07894 483673
Lisa Kavanagh	07912 124724
Jo Chivers	07896 905095
Kate Bayman	07827 961903

Date	Day	Time	DSL	DSL
28/09/26	Monday	09:00 To midday	Kate Bayman	Lisa Kavanagh
		Midday to 4pm	Lisa Kavanagh	
29/09/26	Tuesday	09:00 To midday	Lisa Kavanagh	Kate Bayman
		Midday to 4pm	Kate Bayman	
30/09/26	Wednesday	09:00 To midday	Kate Bayman	Lisa Kavanagh
		Midday to 4pm	Lisa Kavanagh	
01/10/26	Thursday	09:00 To midday	Lisa Kavanagh	Jo Chivers
		Midday to 4pm	Jo Chivers	
02/10/26	Friday	09:00 To midday	Jo Chivers	Closed
		Midday to 4pm	Lisa Kavanagh	

Please see below a reminder of the process for reporting absences:

Unplanned Absence: If your child cannot attend school, please notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:45am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school administrative staff on [01959 562156](tel:01959562156) or by emailing valence@valence.kent.sch.uk. This information will be shared with the student's Multi-Disciplinary Team. Absences due to ill health will be authorised however the school may seek additional information from parents, if the pattern or frequency of absences raises a concern.

Planned Absence: Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised, as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and can provide evidence of the appointment.

If your child is a **day student**, please email reception and copy in the **class coordinator and form tutor** as soon as possible with details of the appointment.