

## School Leadership Messages

### Smartphones in the News

Mrs Ghey, the mother of murdered teenager Brianna, has rekindled the debate about the use of smartphones by younger teens. She has drawn attention to the ubiquity of social media and the challenge to parents and carers in effectively policing content. Other parent groups have joined the debate and are calling for age restrictions on access to social media sites and for some groups, a minimum age for ownership of a smartphone. This follows on from a [UN report](#) from the summer calling for a ban on smartphones in schools.

At Fortismere we have a mobile phone policy that allows non-smart phones to be switched off at the bottom of bags for Years 7-11. However, phones that have cameras and internet access are not allowed. This protects our students from viewing harmful content, online bullying and illicit photograph or video taking during the school day. This supports our safeguarding in keeping school a safe space. We have noticed this year that there has been a rise in students bringing their smartphones onsite for which we will continue to conduct random searches. Please could we ask that you respect our policy and work with us in keeping your children as safe as possible.

### Top Positive Points

Well done to the following students who were the top scorers this week

Amber Charnley Y8	Khadar Mohamed Y8
Jack Poormand Y8	James Spyrou Y9
Lily Topham Y8	Juna Abd El Qader Y8
Anagha Anand Y7	Awesta Jewayni Y7
Goknil Tujen Y7	Zani Mutebi Y7
Sam Harntha Y8	Michael Nowakowski Y8

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### Calendar

12.02.24-16.02.24	Half term holiday
19.02.24	Return to school Week 1
19.02.24	Y9 Deadline for Option choices
24.02.24	Quiz Night 6.30pm



2024  
The Year of the Dragon

## Co-Headteachers

### Weekly Roundup

In keeping with Fortismere's usual approach to the week before a holiday, this week was incredibly busy with a range of exciting events and activities.

On Tuesday, we were proud to host the regional (Haringey) final for the Jack Petchey Speak Challenge. Just like Eurovision, the winners of the previous year's tournament get to host the next one. We were very impressed by the organisation of the Speakers Trust and their Jack Petchey colleagues. The event went like clockwork and the South Wing Hall was transformed. A number of schools from across the borough had Y10 students competing and the quality of the speeches was superb. These students, including Fortismere's own three competitors, were deeply engaged with current issues and articulated their concerns and solutions with confidence and accuracy. Often the discourse around young people in Haringey focuses on knife crime and anti-social behaviour. It was heartening to hear of these students' aspirations and hopes for the future. The event created an atmosphere of optimism for the future and a reassurance of the resilience, ambition and engagement of our local young people. Thank you to Mr Allen for his part in the proceedings and the time he dedicates to working with our Y10 students in preparation for Speak Out.

We had two parent events this week, starting with Y9 Options Guidance meetings on Tuesday. These were a hybrid mixture of remote and face to face and we were delighted by the number of parents and carers who could attend and the interest shown in our curriculum. We look forward to seeing the option choices after half term. On Wednesday, Y11 parents and carers were invited in for Y11 Parents' Evening. For some parents, this was their last parents evening and it was lovely to catch up with parents we have known over the years. We received some very kind and thoughtful comments, thank you to all those who could attend.

Yesterday evening saw the Charity Bands Night. This is organised by the 6th form and last night's was organised and compered by Lizzie Wells and Aaron Franks in Y13, raising funds for Crisis. The quality of the music was, as ever, excellent. We covered soul, heavy metal, musical theatre, pop and performers' own compositions - an eclectic mix! The performers spanned the age range including the father of a member of staff and the staff band, 'Cover Lesson'. We were impressed that Cover Lesson managed to reference both paninis and tuna melts in their first track, a homage to our canteens. The event raised in excess of £2,000 and the audience was treated to a very moving talk from Matt Downie MBE, the Chief Executive of Crisis who placed the fund raiser in the context of the growing need caused by homelessness.

It wasn't only parents and evening events this week. We had three activities led by houses: a University Challenge competition, the sale of pancakes for Cancer Research and the delivery of roses for Valentine's Day. The House system is going from strength to strength and it is really pleasing to see so many of our students participating in our extra curricular events.

It has been a short half term but we suspect that most of us are ready for a break. We wish all our families a Happy Chinese New Year (one of our Co-Heads is a dragon!) and an excellent holiday.

## Year 9 Options

### Options Deadline Reminder

A quick reminder that the deadline for your child's options to be submitted is: **Midday on Monday 19th February, 2024**. All students have been sent their Usernames and Passwords by email to their school email address. This email also contained the link to the website where the information is entered.

You can find all the information relating to the options process including the Options Booklet, the Options Evening Presentation and department videos on this page [Year 9 Options process](#) This is the link for submitting options: [www.studentoptions.co/fortismere/](http://www.studentoptions.co/fortismere/)

Students select six subjects from the list and should choose their subjects in order of preference.

**1** should be your absolute favourite subject

**2** should be your second favourite subject

**3** should be your third favourite subject

**4** should be your fourth favourite subject

**5 and 6** should also be genuine contenders [entered as R and S in the system, Reserve & Second Reserve]

If you have any further questions please contact either Ms Cuenca or Mr Barsby

Mr Barsby

Assistant Headteacher

## Year 10 Notice

### Fortismere Host Speak Out Challenge Regional Final

On Tuesday evening we had the honour of hosting the Haringey Regional final of the Jack Petchey Speak Out Challenge. Around 700 Year 10 students from across Haringey took part in the Speak Out Challenge this year and three of our very own got through to the final, competing against 16 other students from a range of local schools. The event was compered by Nik Fysekis (last year's Haringey Champion and current Y11). Nik did a superb job, presenting the event with charm and wit, completely at ease and speaking passionately about the opportunities that The Speaker's Trust have given him this year, visiting universities and learning about careers in politics. Ece Uckun (Y11) was last years' runner up so this time she acted as a judge, wonderfully representing the school as she confidently mingled with the other esteemed judges: writer and director Simon Josiffe; barrister Evie Snow; chief executive of the The Young Brent Foundation Christopher Murray and BBC news presenter Robin Brant. We were also honoured to host the Mayor of Haringey Lester Buxton, who was blown away by the passion and eloquence of the students. Our Fortismere entrants did an exceptional job, their outstanding speeches a result of their creativity and hard work, giving up many lunch times to practise as well as their diligent preparations at home. They even performed in front of their entire year group in assemblies (thank you to Mr Aldridge and Ms Overs for helping with those).

**Aidan Greenberg** brought the house down with a hilarious yet empowering speech about being 'Proud to be a Nerd'. He entertained the audience with seemingly effortless skill. **Peter Dolan** delivered some of the most profound wisdom of the evening with his logical yet warm exhortation for us to reconsider: 'What is the Perfect Life?' **Noah Helfgott** inspired everyone with a moving speech, rooted in both personal experience and a sound understanding of how the right mindset can help us to overcome obstacles, speaking about how 'The Little Things Add Up'. I'm naturally biased of course, but our students really seemed to stand out due to their intelligent, well-reasoned and clear speeches. It would have been very tricky for any of them to win after our clean sweep last year! Please congratulate them on their sterling efforts.

Huge thanks also to everyone who made it possible: Ms Davey and Ms Judge (for supporting the evening and giving the opening address); Vice-chair of Governors Ian Macaulay (for being on hand ready to be a judge) Ms Ward (for kindly hosting the workshop in the library); Mr Yakup and Ms Demetriou (for helping organise the catering and funding); Ms Fernee (for providing the catering); the Premises team for all their hard work and Ms Vangucci for supporting her tutees. And a special thanks to the three Year 10 students

who gave up their whole evening to be helpers: guiding guests, carting around the catering, preparing the programmes and acting as timekeepers. Well done Fabian Warren, James Flanigan and Gil Ellison.  
Mr Allen English Department



## Modern Languages Notice

### Chinese New Year Celebrations

Chinese New Year arrives on the 10th February this year but Fortismere started the celebrations early. The school came alive with performances by visiting artists, invited to Fortismere from our Confucius Institute. Mandarin students and staff were treated to a feast of cultural delights, from traditional Chinese singing and dancing to dragon dancing and musical instrument workshops. The mastery of the Guzheng (Chinese string musical instrument) added a symphonic layer, while a thrilling showcase of martial arts skills kept everyone on the edge of their seats. The professionals brought an authentic touch to the celebrations and made the Chinese New Year at Fortismere a truly wonderful experience. These celebrations were also a warm-up for the exciting Mandarin language and cultural events that are coming during the year ahead; our students are looking forward to the Y10 MEP trip over the Easter holidays and the Y9 MEP trip in the summer. The year of the dragon is going to be a truly unforgettable year for our students! We wish you all a prosperous new year ahead!

Heqiang Li, Zhong Wang and the ML team



## Physics Department News

### British Physics Olympiad

Congratulations to the Fortismere students who participated in the British Physics Olympiad. This competition requires students to take on a series of fiendishly challenging physics related problems that go well beyond the A-Level curriculum. Both our students did well and achieved recognition. Ben Rayner achieved a Bronze certificate. Leo Colley achieved a gold certificate putting him in the top 10% of all competitors – an amazing achievement.

For younger students interested in competing in the British Physics Olympiad competition in the future, we run two preparation events. For **Y11 - the Intermediate Physics Challenge on Friday 1st March** and for **Y12 - the Senior Physics Challenge on Friday 8th March**. Both events will take place in L 10 for 1 hour after school. Please contact Mr. Commons in advance so that he can enter the students.

Mr. Commons  
Head of Physics

## Drama Department Notices

### Kidz Kabin Nursery Visit Drama for 'Room on the Broom' Magic

One of the Y10 Drama GCSE classes launched our TIE (Theatre in Education) projects by performing Room on the Broom to Fortismere Kidzkabin Nursery. The students created a magical and engaging performance. The students from the nursery were a lovely and fun audience. They stayed after the show to talk to the students. The nursery manager sent us their thoughts after the show. Well done Year 10



*"It was amazing" "I'm going again" "I like the witch" "The frog is my favourite" "I touched the broom it was magical" "Dog my favourite"*

### Coldfall Primary Year 3 Trip to Ancient Greece

The whole of Year 3 at Coldfall Primary School visited North Wing this week to watch another Year 10 Drama GCSE class perform their own spectacular version of *Night at the Museum*, teaching the audience all about the Ancient Greeks. 90 children loved the show



and asked plenty of questions at the end. Our GCSE students entirely wrote and directed this show and ensured they were including lots of learning opportunities within the show. Congratulations to all.

## Sixth Form Drama Students re-live Live Aid

On Wednesday evening, A Level Drama Students re-lived the day music brought the world together; Live Aid. **Just for One Day** a new musical, was on at the Old Vic theatre and featured the songs of Bob Dylan, David Bowie, The Who, U2, Queen, The Police, Elton John, Paul McCartney, The Pretenders, The Cars, Status Quo, Sade, The Boomtown Rats, Diana Ross, Ultravox and more!

We danced the night away as this story about the event and the political unrest and social revolution of the 1980s played out. The sixth formers enjoyed this show and we recommend it.



## Sport & PE Notices

### Haringey Boys Basketball

Congratulations to both our Year 8 and Year 10 Basketball squads for their efforts on Tuesday evening - we played Greig City Away and won both games!



### Hockey Team Progress On

Our senior boys Hockey team won their match at Southgate Hockey Club on Wednesday, which means they progress to the next round of the competition. There is some real talent in this team - Mr Cox was very impressed with the level of skill and game play. Well done to all.



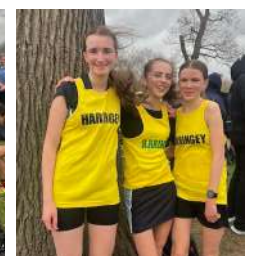
### Haringey Badminton

Congratulations to our Y7/8/9 Badminton teams this week - they represented the school in the Haringey Badminton Competition on Tuesday at Dukes Academy. There were fantastic individual efforts on the court as well as some great teamwork in the doubles. Our Y8s were mostly up against Year 9 students and they did brilliantly. Overall results were Girls 3rd and Boys 5th. Well done everyone.



### Middlesex Schools Cross Country Event

Earlier this week we took a small team of cross country runners to represent Haringey in this important event taking place at Harrow School. The weather would have been perfect for cross country if it hadn't been so windy! Haringey had a strong team who all did well despite the gales. The yellow Haringey vests were



easy to spot at the finish line. Amy Kirk was 2nd in the intermediate girls competition and Ivy Gray finished in the top 10 which means that both qualify for the prestigious National ESAA Schools' Cross Country Championships. Maya, Jessica, David and Aiden all ran really well in what is a highly competitive environment. Well done all.

## New After School Clubs Timetable

There will be some changes to the clubs timetable after half term, please see *attached*

## Upcoming Fixtures

<b>Monday 19th February</b>	Y7 Girls Netball Tournament @ Channing School 1pm-3.30pm
<b>Tuesday 20th February</b>	Y8 & Y10 Girls Basketball @ St Thomas More School 2pm-4pm
<b>Wednesday 21st February</b>	Y7 & Y9 Boys Basketball @ Greig City Academy 2pm-4 pm, 1st XI v Ashmole School - Semi Final Middlesex Cup - Away
<b>Thursday 22nd February</b>	Y8 & Y10 Boys Basketball @ Greig City Academy 3pm-5 pm

## Library Notices

### Top Tips to Keep your Children Reading

Top Tip No: 17 Get them excited about books. Look out for author events and activities in bookshops and libraries, for example:

- [Events | Children's Bookshop](#)
- [Pickled Pepper Books Half-Term Events](#)
- [Piccadilly YA Book Club | Events at Waterstones Bookshops](#)



And when the tickets are released, make a day of it (or two days) at Ally Pally at the Book Fest (see below).

### Save The Date

The first North London Book Festival at Alexandra Palace is taking place on 21<sup>st</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> March [North London Book Fest](#). The full programme announcement and ticketing is going live shortly. This literary celebration features debut and iconic authors with readings, panel discussions, Q&As, workshops and book signings across multiple stages at the Palace. The line up is really amazing and includes Lemony Snicket, Natalie Haynes, Michael Rosen, Costa-winner Stuart Turton, Robin Ince, Neill Cameron of the Phoenix, Laura Bates and a whole load more. Watch this space! (You can also sign up for updates on the website above and follow on Twitter/X @NLBookFest).



## Club News

The Alexandra Palace Children's Book Award club on Mondays is hugely enjoyable. Students are reading the six shortlisted books and seem to love them, and having lunch in the 6<sup>th</sup> form area of the library is a real treat! We're getting closer to our fantastic day out at the Award Ceremony at the end of March. And we have another student-led club in the library after school for half an hour on Thursdays and Fridays – the Gimkit Club (Gimkit is apparently a “live learning game show”...)



## Recommended Reads of the Week

3 in 5 (59.4%) children and young people say that reading helps them relax. Nearly 1 in 2 (46%) say reading makes them happy. 3 in 10 say reading makes them feel more confident (29.8%) or helped them deal with problems (27.3%). So here are a few books from our library for Children's Mental Health Week.





## Fortismind

### Children's Mental Health Week

Happy Children's Mental Health week! This week, to celebrate, our students have been spending their tutor times taking part in a wide variety of activities all themed around mental health. Students did a reciprocal reading session on neurodiversity and how that can affect mental health and then had a discussion around this. They explored what they could do to be good friends and classmates to their neurodiverse peers. Students had a pastoral curriculum session and also an assembly on anxiety and specifically social anxiety, to understand how that can present and what they can do to help themselves and their friends. And they even took part in an Inter House quiz all about mental health to see how much they know about the different conditions that can affect young people. On Thursday, I met with the mental health ambassadors to hear from them about the sorts of things that are worrying our young people. These conversations were really helpful and will inform the survey that I will be asking some students to complete to help us improve our mental health provision at Fortismere.

It's been a busy and thoughtful week and I hope that students have learned a little more about themselves and how they can not only look after themselves but also their friends moving forward. And I hope that they will have a restful half term filled with sleep, healthy but delicious food, exercise and fresh air and whatever else makes them happy!

Miss Jones

Mental Health Champion

## LINC Notices

### Meet the Team....

This week we're introducing Mr Fari, Assistant Headteacher and our school SENDCo (Special Educational Needs & Disability Co-ordinator)



**What inspired you to work with and support young people in schools?** I always knew I wanted to work with people and in particular working to enable others to achieve. I had fantastic support at school and felt that I was encouraged to do well by adults who had a lot of time and care for me. I wasn't 100% sure I wanted to be a teacher but entered the profession when a great opportunity came up after university. I thought it would be rewarding and I would gain skills while I decided what I wanted to do. However, it quickly became clear that I loved it and couldn't leave!

**What's the best thing about your Job?** Seeing the improvements and progress young people make, particularly when there are barriers and challenges that make it difficult to see the path to individual success.

**What would you like to share with the school community this week?** In my role as SENCo, I often find myself offering support and advice to parents/carers who are keen but unsure how to support their child with learning needs and difficulties. They are often looking for ideas and strategies they can use at home to help children feel supported and encouraged. I thought it would be useful to share some resources with you:

- [ADHD: www.additudemag.com/parents-with-adhd-on-parenting/](http://www.additudemag.com/parents-with-adhd-on-parenting/)
- [Autism: www.gingerbread.org.uk/find-information/parenting-perspectives/parenting-autistic-child/](http://www.gingerbread.org.uk/find-information/parenting-perspectives/parenting-autistic-child/)
- [Literacy: www.readingrockets.org/topics/about-reading/articles/literacy-tips-parents-children-learning](http://www.readingrockets.org/topics/about-reading/articles/literacy-tips-parents-children-learning)
- [Top Tips: www.adityabirlaintegratedschool.com/blog/10-things-parents-can-do-to-help-their-kids](http://www.adityabirlaintegratedschool.com/blog/10-things-parents-can-do-to-help-their-kids)
- [Local area support: www.haringey.gov.uk/children-and-families/local-offer](http://www.haringey.gov.uk/children-and-families/local-offer)
- [Barnet Local offer: www.barnetlocaloffer.org.uk/](http://www.barnetlocaloffer.org.uk/)

I also wanted to share a poem I came across many years ago when I started my training to be a SENCo. It shared a parent's experience of coming to terms with their child's disability. It resonated with me and I wanted to share it with you. It is called 'Welcome to Holland' and was written in 1987 by Emily Perl Kingsley who became an advocate for inclusion following the birth of her son, Jason, who had Down Syndrome:

*Welcome to Holland*

*I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child with a disability - to try to help people who have not shared that unique experience to understand it, to imagine how it would feel. It's like this...*

*When you're going to have a baby, it's like planning a fabulous vacation trip - to Italy. You buy a bunch of guide books and make your wonderful plans. The Coliseum. The Michelangelo David. The gondolas in Venice. You may learn some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very exciting.*

*After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off you go. Several hours later, the plane lands. The stewardess comes in and says, "Welcome to Holland."*

*"Holland?!?" you say. "What do you mean Holland?? I signed up for Italy! I'm supposed to be in Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy."*

*But there's been a change in the flight plan. They've landed in Holland and there you must stay.*

*The important thing is that they haven't taken you to a horrible, disgusting, filthy place, full of pestilence, famine and disease. It's just a different place.*

*So you must go out and buy new guide books. And you must learn a whole new language. And you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met.*

*It's just a different place. It's slower-paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around.... and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills....and Holland has tulips. Holland even has Rembrandts.*

*But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy... and they're all bragging about what a wonderful time they had there. And for the rest of your life, you will say "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned."*

*And the pain of that will never, ever, ever, ever go away...because the loss of that dream is a very, very significant loss.*

*But...if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things... about Holland.*

*c. 1987 by Emily Perl Kingsley. All rights reserved.*

## **House News**

### **Franklin House update**

A huge thank you to the Franklin House ambassadors who organised Valentine's Day roses to raise money for the West London Rape Crisis Centre. They willingly gave up five of their lunchtimes to sell and deliver the roses and spread the love and Valentine's Day cheer! We raised an impressive £148.32 for the charity and I was seriously impressed by their maturity and enthusiasm.

Miss Jones

## Half-Term Activities

### Haringey Holiday Fun

You can download a copy of the February Half-Term Holiday Fun booklet to find details of activities taking place in Haringey during half-term, including sports, arts and crafts, and drama workshops. [Download booklet here](#)



## Safeguarding

### Reporting concerns - My Voice

We have set up a new system called **My Voice** for parents/carers and students to use to inform us of any safeguarding concerns they may have. We will no longer be using the [safetalk@fortismere.org.uk](mailto:safetalk@fortismere.org.uk) email

If you want to report something please complete a form on My Voice - this is a short and easy form and can be accessed via this [link](#) or by the QR code. You can report your concerns anonymously but we do ask that you share as much information as you can to enable us to provide support to any student who may require it.



My Voice will be monitored during school time with limited monitoring during non-school time. If you are concerned about an immediate risk of harm to a child you should report it to Police or Social Services ([Haringey](#) / [Barnet](#)).

You can also speak to Ms Sullivan, the Designated Safeguarding Lead about any safeguarding matters or concerns or alternatively contact your child's Head of Year

**Year 7** Ms Fox [kfox@fortismere.org.uk](mailto:kfox@fortismere.org.uk)

**Year 8** Ms Jackson [kjackson@fortismere.org.uk](mailto:kjackson@fortismere.org.uk)

**Year 9** Ms Cuenca [icuenca@fortismere.org.uk](mailto:icuenca@fortismere.org.uk)

**Year 10** Mr Aldridge [saldridge@fortismere.org.uk](mailto:saldridge@fortismere.org.uk)

**Year 11** Ms Boot [aboot@fortismere.org.uk](mailto:aboot@fortismere.org.uk)

Ms Sullivan

Designated Safeguarding Lead