



A note from our Headteacher



Claire Harrap-Stanley

This half term has been an incredible start to the new year; students have been actively engaged in developing their learning areas with greenery and increasing their wellbeing. Secondary students have taken their Functional Skills exams and are awaiting the results, providing opportunities for resilience and celebrating successes. There have been significant positive moves around the learning spaces, with the clinical team moving into the main building and the Wellbeing and Senco rooms being revamped to provide warm and welcoming environments. The added Hygge effect has received positive recognition from

our improvement partners and even more so from the students who love connecting with staff and dogs in the spaces. Have a wonderful half term holiday and we look forward to seeing all of the students upon return on Monday 23rd February.

SECONDARY NURTURE 1 – James Burgess

This term, SN1 visited 'The Garden Retreat Training School' in Whitstable. All pupils enjoyed producing various moisturising cosmetics as part of our class enterprise, using a variety of different natural ingredients and oils. Pupils then professionally packaged and labelled the products and will be on sale at the school's Summer celebration.

"I really liked measuring out the different ingredients, I felt like a Scientist"! - Henry B



SECONDARY NURTURE 2 – Richard Gray

Secondary Nurture 2 have had a fantastic term. We've enjoyed an incentive that saw us split into two teams to conquer the escape rooms in Canterbury! One group did Pirates of the Stormy Seas which saw them navigating a ship, and another explored a haunted house... It was difficult, but the class came together brilliantly to do some serious problem solving. Both teams escaped with just a few seconds to spare!

We also went on a trip to the Garden Retreat for an enterprise day. They made 'lotions and potions' that included body butter, lip balm and more.

We're also waiting for three of our students to represent the school in a Table Cricket competition this Wednesday. We're all very excited after our fantastic results last year.



SECONDARY 1 – Elouise Bingham

During their Outdoor Learning lesson, Secondary 1 pupils took part in an exciting and informative visit to Charing and Maidstone East train stations. The group was accompanied by a wonderful guide, Teresa, who shared her expert knowledge of all things rail-related and gave pupils a behind-the-scenes insight into how the stations operate. From tannoy announcements to ticket machines, the children explored each aspect of station life and came away with a wealth of new understanding.

One of the day's highlights was spotting a cargo train transporting rows of brand-new cars, which sparked lots of curiosity and discussion among the pupils. The experience was made even more memorable when the railway team kindly treated everyone to free hot chocolates.

We hope to continue building on experiences like this to further promote pupils' confidence and independence when travelling by train.

One pupil reflected on the visit, saying:

"I learnt that they send ghost trains through the stations to help clean the tracks."



SECONDARY 2 — Hayley Shelton

Secondary 2 have made a fantastic start to the year. In Maths, pupils have been developing key life skills by learning how to tell the time and use calendars confidently. These practical skills have supported independence and real-world understanding. In English, the class have been reading *A Monster Calls*, fully immersing themselves in the text. Through shared reading, discussion, and reflection, pupils have engaged thoughtfully with the story and its themes.

This term has included some wonderful enrichment opportunities. One highlight was a trip to Maidstone East train station, where pupils experienced real-life travel and learned how to navigate train stations and understand train lines safely and confidently.

We finished the term with a lovely enrichment day trip to Margate. Pupils enjoyed a game of crazy golf and a visit to a retro comic book shop, where they were lucky enough to choose and buy a magazine or book each. The day was a great success and a fitting end to a positive and productive term.

Secondary 2 should be very proud of their efforts this term, and we are looking forward to building on this success in the coming weeks



SECONDARY 3 — Aimee Hopwood

Enrichment Trip & Positive Start to the Term At the end of last term, students enjoyed a fantastic enrichment day out to Herne Bay, making the most of the seaside with a visit to the arcades followed by a well-earned trip to the chip shop. The day provided a great opportunity for students to relax, socialise and practise important life skills such as managing money, making choices and behaving

responsibly in the community. Students represented the school extremely well throughout the trip and should be commended for their positive attitudes.

We would also like to congratulate students on how quickly they have settled back into school routines since the Christmas break. This is particularly impressive given the added pressure of the exams they have already sat. Their focus, resilience and maturity during this busy period have been excellent, and we are very proud of the way they have approached these challenges. We are now looking forward to our next end-of-term incentive — a well-deserved trip to the Harvester restaurant for lunch!



SECONDARY 4 — Emmie Bilham

Since returning this term, students in S4 have shown an inspiring level of determination and commitment to their learning. With exam season underway, every student has truly

knuckled down, demonstrating resilience, focus and a positive attitude toward their studies.

We are incredibly proud to share that *every single student* attended their exams and gave it their very best shot. This is a remarkable achievement and a true reflection of their hard work, courage and perseverance. Sitting exams can be challenging, but our students rose to the occasion and should feel extremely proud of themselves.

Alongside their academic achievements, wellbeing has remained a key focus this term. Our students have been busy “cooking up a storm” during wellbeing sessions, developing practical life skills while building confidence and independence. From homemade pizzas to perfectly cooked burgers on the outdoor fire, the kitchen has been full of enthusiasm, teamwork, and plenty of smiles.

All of this hard work has been leading towards an exciting term incentive — **ice skating!** Students have been working consistently and positively, motivated by this well-earned reward and showing just how much can be achieved through effort and determination.

This term has been a fantastic example of what our students can accomplish when they believe in themselves. Well done to each and every one of them — we couldn’t be prouder.



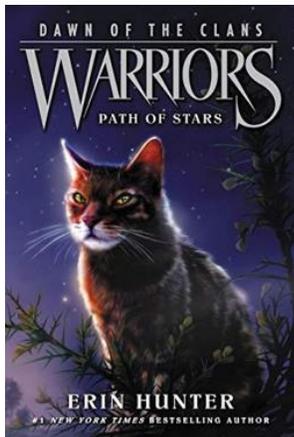
OUTDOOR LEARNING – Remy & Chay

This term, outdoor learning for SN1 and SN2 has focused on developing life skills. A key highlight has been the Sandwich Shop Challenge, where students were set the task of making lunch for one another. This included taking orders, visiting Sainsbury's to shop for ingredients, and then preparing and serving the food to the rest of the class. All the students showed a high level of maturity while in the supermarket, and there were some delicious results.



LIBRARY CORNER

Secondary book recommendation



Warriors: Dawn of the Clans: The Sun Trail by Erin Hunter is a highly praised, action-packed fantasy novel that serves as a prequel to the main series.

It follows a group of mountain cats, including Grey Wing, on a dangerous journey to find a new home, offering an emotional and compelling origin story for the Clans.

SCHOOL COUNCIL

Since September, students have been discussing and debating the school's current behaviour policy. They have actively talked about how they feel this could be improved and have given suggestions for updating and changing rewards and reflection time.

The School Council have discussed the Trauma-Informed Practice (TIP) approach and have requested an updated presentation to be delivered by myself, as the deputy headteacher leading on the wellbeing aspects of the school.

Students have worked together to update the student survey questions for this year. They have carefully considered what they want to learn from the survey and what the data may indicate. OFG have also asked us to complete an additional survey, and many of you, as parents, carers and guardians, received a link to contribute.

As we will need to collect and summarise both surveys, these will be uploaded to our website once complete, and we will showcase the findings in the Spring Term 2 newsletter for everyone to see.

Students have embraced the use of trauma-informed language, which encourages them to better connect with staff and build stronger relationships, but more importantly helps staff to actively support them when they become dysregulated and need co-regulation in the moment. This formed part of an agreed change to the student profile this year, and the

students now have a more streamlined, easy-to-follow document in the format of an escalated 5-point scale model.

One group of students asked for this to be shared, and they generated the following information with supported AI input:

Key Aspects of the 5-Point Scale Theory

Purpose:

A concrete, visual tool that helps students identify their emotional state and manage their behaviours, reducing anxiety.

Application:

Commonly used for managing anger, regulating anxiety, understanding social boundaries, and navigating sensory, social or academic pressures.

Development:

Created in 2003 by teachers Kari Dunn Buron and Mitzi Curtis for autistic students.

Structure:

Maps behaviours on a scale from 1 to 5 (e.g., from “I am calm” to “I am having a massive tantrum”).

Implementing the 5-Point Scale

- **Define Levels:** Create clear, personalised descriptions for each level (1–5), often supported with visuals.
- **Teach and Practise:** Actively teach students to recognise their own levels and associated emotions.
- **Implement Strategies:** Link specific calming or coping strategies to each level (e.g., a “3” might require a quiet space, while a “2” might need a fidget toy).
- **Proactive Use:** Enables students to notice rising emotions early, helping them seek support or use strategies before reaching a “5”.

Students have also contributed ideas on how the positive reinforcement system needs to be reviewed. They have asked the wellbeing team, with my support, to refresh this and deliver it to all staff groups by the end of Spring Term 2.

Students have discussed site developments and how they can influence set decisions, as well as how new resources will be implemented and organised across the school.

Students have asked that I share this TIP information with you as parents, carers and guardians. They have also suggested that additional training or support meetings could be helpful, and that these could support them in their home environments. They generated the following using AI support, which reflects and reinforces our TIP priorities across the school and aligns with our structured and supported policies and procedures at Heath Farm School.

Trauma-Informed Practice: Approaches to Rewards and Sanctions

Trauma-informed practice shifts rewards and sanctions away from controlling, shame-based systems and towards relational approaches that foster safety and emotional regulation. It views behaviour as communication of unmet needs, rather than simple disobedience, and it prioritises intrinsic motivation and individualised support over standardised punishments.

Core Principles for Rewards and Sanctions:

- **Move from “Carrot and Stick” to Connection:** Traditional punishment often fails and can re-traumatise children with complex trauma. Relationship-building and emotional safety are prioritised.
- **Individualise Rewards:** Tailor rewards to each child’s interests and needs to enhance engagement and self-worth.
- **Focus on Process, Not Just Outcome:** Recognise effort and small steps in self-regulation, rather than expecting perfect behaviour.
- **“Catch Them Being Good”:** Use unexpected positive recognition to build intrinsic motivation, rather than relying on systems like “three strikes”, which can create shame.

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- **Relational Sanctions (Consequences):** When consequences are needed, they should be logical, restorative and educational, helping the child learn skills they have “not yet” mastered.
 - **Regulate First:** Ensure the child is calm and emotionally safe before applying any consequence.
 - **Transparent and Consistent Routines:** Clear routines reduce anxiety and increase a child’s sense of control.

If any of you would be interested in additional support or training opportunities that we may be able to offer, please do not hesitate to contact myself or Nichola, our Family Liaison Officer (FLO).

IMPORTANT DATES



2025 - 2026 YEAR CALENDAR

AUGUST 2025							SEPTEMBER 2025							OCTOBER 2025							NOVEMBER 2025																				
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DECEMBER 2025							JANUARY 2026							FEBRUARY 2026							MARCH 2026						
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APRIL 2026							MAY 2026							JUNE 2026							JULY 2026							AUGUST 2026						
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Term 1	01/09/25 - 19/12/25
Term 2	05/01/26 - 02/04/26
Term 3	20/04/26 - 21/07/26

Monday, 1st - Friday, 5th September 2025, Monday, 5th January and Monday, 20th April 2026 are Staff Development Days, where the school is closed to pupils, these dates may change, but notification will be sent.

CONTACT US

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Embracing Thrive: a parent and carers guide



The Thrive Approach®

For over 25 years, Thrive has been working with schools, settings and organisations to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.

Thrive equips educators with training, resources and an award-winning online tool, so they can better understand children and young people's needs and provide targeted, effective support.

With its focus on building secure relationships and providing positive experiences, Thrive helps young people to feel safe, supported and ready to learn.

Building positive relationships

The connections children and young people have with the adults around them are key to their social and emotional development. Thrive activities focus on providing positive experiences and building trusting relationships. This helps young people to:

- Feel good about themselves and know that they matter
- Feel safe and secure in school
- Improve their emotional wellbeing
- Improve their capacity to be creative and curious
- Build their self-esteem and confidence to learn
- Recognise and manage their feelings
- Think before behaving in a certain way...and much more!



How does it work?

Thrive equips educators with strategies and activities to help build young people's social and emotional skills, as well as develop their ability to manage stress and take on life's ups and downs.

The Approach is underpinned by neuroscience, attachment theory and child development research and is suitable for children and young people aged 0-25 years.

What difference does Thrive make?

Schools that have adopted the Thrive Approach have reported many benefits. These include calmer classrooms with fewer disruptions, improved attendance, reduced exclusions and higher achievements. To hear first-hand from settings already using Thrive, visit mythrive.uk/case_studies.

How will my child be involved in Thrive?

Your child will be profiled using Thrive-Online, an award-winning tool used to measure and monitor social and emotional development. Thrive-Online has behaviour and skills surveys that help staff to see where young people are in their development and identify any pupils who could benefit from additional support.

Thrive-Online profiling will be led by school practitioners who will:

- Assess classes, groups and individuals to see where they are in their social and emotional development
- Create targeted action plans to help pupils to manage their behaviour, build emotional resilience and become more open to learning
- Measure and report on progress over time

Find out more

There is lots more information on the Thrive website: thriveapproach.com.

“Thrive has helped my son tremendously. It has given him more confidence and also it has helped him to calm down in difficult situations. I can see a huge difference in him. He looks forward to his Thrive time.”

Parent

If you have any further questions please contact Nina or Heidi:

By telephone - 01233 712030 ext 5827

or by email - njones@heathfarmschool.org / hlockett@heathfarmschool.org

thrive
Removing barriers to learning

