



Head Talk

This week I wanted to highlight a 'must see' on Netflix, if you have access to it. The programme that I am talking about is 'Adolescence'. This is a 4-episode series, that focuses on the role that social media plays in young people's lives, with very tragic outcomes. I would recommend that any parent/carer, that is considering giving their child a device to access social media, watch this and think about how they can coach their child and understand the world that they are going to get into.

At Hamilton Primary School, we are seeing more and more incidents of children getting involved in online chats outside of school, that spill over into school time and adversely affect the children's mood and ability to manage their emotions. Children do not have access to their phones at school and this will continue.

I am planning on running a parent/carer session in the summer term for all parents/carers of children that have access to a device that can access messaging and social media, to explain the risks associated with them and I will also be focussing on the impact of AI technology on this area too. This will be a face to face event in the school hall, as online events are not as effective at getting the message across. Please look out for a booking form via MCAS in the next few days.

On a slightly different note, the Learning Conferences last week seemed to go very well. I spoke to a number of families and the feedback was very positive. These are still a great way to open the school up for you to see the work that your child has undertaken and provide you with an opportunity to discuss the progress they are making. The next update on progress will be the end of year report. This year we will be sending an 'e-version' of the report only. If you require a

paper copy, you will need to contact us directly, and we will provide this for you.

We are not too far from the Easter Break. The PSA have a couple of events planned before the end of the term - so keep an eye out for these!

As always, Mr Greatorrex and I are available to have a chat with on the playground on most days. Please do pop over to see us! Have a great couple of weeks.

E-Safety Nugget

This week I thought it would be helpful to share the links to security settings on WhatsApp so that you can stop your child from being invited to random chat groups. As you know the recommend age for WhatsApp is 13 years and above, but I know children at Hamilton are accessing it, so I felt the need to issue this guidance. The link is below:

<https://faq.whatsapp.com/1131457590844955>

Borrowing books electronically

This week I thought it would be helpful to share the 'Borrow Box' App with you. This is an app that allows children to borrow e-books from Essex Libraries, using their library card number. The link to follow is here:

<https://libraries.essex.gov.uk/digital-content/using-our-elibrary/borrowbox>

We often forget that we don't need to purchase every book that we want to read. We can borrow them in physical form and online.

If your library card has expired or you don't have one, you can follow this link to register:

<https://libraries.essex.gov.uk/user/register>

Attendance

At this time of year children often have colds and runny noses and feel generally under the weather. School attendance is still vital for children as any missed time means missed learning and catching up for your child. The NHS has a document that supports parents/carers in deciding if their child is too ill to go to school. The link to this is here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

Our Attendance Policy can be found on the school website:

<https://www.hamiltonprimary.com/office/policies>

Our current attendance is 95.9%. This is low, but we are 0.2% better than 2 weeks ago. We have had a number of children who have been unwell, and some families have taken holidays too. If your child has below 90% attendance, they will be classed as being persistently absent. This is not good. It means your child is missing too much education. Please ensure your child attends school. If we have concerns about your child's attendance, we will be writing to you and offering you a meeting to discuss any support that you may need. Our attendance should be 97% or above. Please help us to help your child. Our leading attending year group is Year 3 with 96.8% attendance. Keep up the excellent work.

Spotlight on SEND

I read an article this week about the importance of teaching vocabulary. One study has found that oral literacy shows a downward trend since COVID. Having a good vocabulary not only supports our children with their attainment, it provides them with the confidence and ability to express themselves which in turn can lead to a positive sense of mental wellbeing and behaviour. Here are

a couple of games you can play with your children to develop their vocabulary and oral literacy skills:

- Top Trumps - supporting vocabulary expansion
- Headbandz - supporting questioning skills, categories and concepts
- Guess Who - supporting questioning skills, expressive language and auditory memory

I'm sure you can think of more and have them hidden in cupboards. Have fun and keep talking!

Year 4 – Football Tournament

On Tuesday 11th March, a Year 4 football team took part in a tournament at Shrub End Sports Park. The team did an incredible job of pulling together with very little practice before the tournament, taking on a number of teams that play regularly together.

They secured three draws in their six games, scoring some excellent goals in the process, and only losing by more than one goal to the eventual tournament winners. However, what impressed the most was the way they battled and fought to keep some of the other teams at bay: in one memorable moment, Archie chased a player almost the full length of the pitch before pulling off a perfectly timed last-ditch tackle; in another, Vinnie acrobatically cleared a goal bound effort off the line.

The team had a great time and showed wonderful resilience. It was a true show of the schools' core values.

A big thank you to all the parents who helped walk the children to and from the tournament and the support they gave through the matches.



Year 5 Play

The Year 5 Play will take place on Thursday 3rd April, starting at 1.30pm. All costumes need to be at school by next Wednesday (26th) as there will be a full, in-costume, dress rehearsal next Thursday (27th).

Easter Egg Trail and Bake Sale

On Thursday 3rd April there will be an Easter Egg Trail and Bake Sale after school. Details to follow.

Non-Pupil Days

Thursday 1st May and Friday 2nd May will be Non-Pupil Days and the children are not expected to attend school.

SATS Week

The Year 6 SATS Week will be from Monday 12th May to Friday 16th May this year.

Year 3 Play - Minotaur

Year 3 would like to invite their parents/carers to watch their play on Wednesday 21st May.

Parents Forum

The next Parents Forum will be held on Tuesday 24th June 2025. Details to follow.

School Dinners

From September 2025 the cost of school dinners will go up to £2.55 a day.

Sports Day – Infant and Junior

In a break from tradition we will now have both the Infant and Junior Sports Days on the same day. The Infant Sports Day will take place from 9.30am on the Junior Playground on Monday 7th July and should be included in an hour. The Junior Sports Day will take place at the Garrison Track as per normal and will start from about 1.20pm. Further information will be released nearer the time.

Medicine

If you require your child to have medicine at school, please bring it to the office and fill in a form authorising the school to administer it to your child.

Medicine should NOT be left in your child's bag no matter how sensible they are.

No medicine can be kept in the fridge. If it needs to be cold, please send it in a cool bag with an ice pack.

Calendar Dates

Spring Term 2025

Thursday 3 rd April 2025	Year 5 Play to parents starting at 1.30pm
Thursday 3 rd April 2025	PSA Easter Trail and Bake Sale After School
Monday 7 th April to Monday 21 st April 2025	Easter Holidays

Summer Term 2025

Tuesday 22 nd April 2025	First Day of Term
Thursday 1st May & Friday 2nd May 2025	Non-Pupil Days
Monday 5 th May 2025	Bank Holiday
Monday 12th May to Friday 16th May 2025	Year 6 SATS Week
Tuesday 20 th May 2025	Sunshine Class Assembly to parents 2.30pm – 3pm
Wednesday 21 st May 2025	Year 3 Play to parents – afternoon
Thursday 22 nd May 2025	Class Photos – Van Cols Ltd
Thursday 22 nd May 2025	Rainbow Class Assembly to parents 2.30pm – 3pm
Monday 26 th May to Friday 30 th May 2025	Half Term
Monday 2nd June 2025	Non-Pupil Day
Tuesday 24 th June 2025	Parents Forum 2-3pm
Thursday 3 rd July 2025	Celebration Evening 6-8pm
Monday 7 th July 2025	Sports Day for Infants – 9.30 am Junior Playground Sports Day for Juniors – 1.20pm Garrison Track

Autumn Term 2025

Tuesday 2 nd September 2025	First Day of Term
Friday 24 th October 2025	Non-Pupil Day

Email Information

If contacting the school via email, please use:

parents@hamilton.essex.sch.uk