



Soar Valley College

A SPECIALIST MATHS AND COMPUTING COLLEGE

ASPIRE ENJOY ACHIEVE

Newsletter

Autumn Term

October 2024

Message from the Principal

Welcome to the first newsletter of this academic year. We started the year on an extremely positive note, with some of our best ever results from last year's Year 11 students. Outcomes in all subjects were very high, and the progress measures in particular were superb.

This great start has been followed by a very successful half term. The weekly bulletin for students is packed with adverts for clubs, competitions, leadership opportunities and more, and the numerous activities for students have been very well attended, and just some of them are detailed in this newsletter.

Our Year 7 students have settled well, and we celebrated this in their first Parents' Evening in the last week of the half term at a very successful Settling In Evening. The final assembly of the half term highlighted how well they have understood just what it means to be a Soar Valley student, with the year group having the highest number of achievement points so far this year. Our achievement points are awarded to students for achievements around the core values of the Soar Valley Way – Effort, Participation, Respect – and these have been demonstrated in abundance. Well done Year 7, keep it up!

I would like to take this opportunity to remind parents/carers that no absences from school can be authorised for holidays or other non-educational reasons. Attendance is so important; if children are not here they cannot learn. We are proud of our excellent attendance figures at Soar Valley and, with your continued support, will improve even further I am sure.



GCSE Results Day

The year started with the joy of GCSE Results Day when we celebrated the success of our students. As always the day involved lots of smiling faces, some very proud parents, and some tears of joy.

Our fantastic GCSE results are something of which we believe the students should be really proud. Our progress figure — a measure of how much value we add to students' education — shows that students at Soar Valley achieve almost one grade higher **in every subject** than students in the average secondary school in the country, which is amazing!

This figure places Soar Valley College in the Top 7% of schools nationally, a truly phenomenal achievement and testament to the hard work of staff and students and the support of parents, which is something we do not take for granted.

We are now starting to build towards the final exams for our next cohort of Year 11 students and look forward to celebrating similar success in 2025!

THE SOAR VALLEY WAY

Effort
 Effort is everything at Soar Valley.
 Effort is something that anyone can demonstrate, no matter your starting ability. You are expected to demonstrate excellent levels of effort in all aspects of your school life, within and beyond the classroom. With maximum effort, you can aspire to great things and ultimately make great progress.
 How will you show excellent effort?
 By being:
 Organised, Diligent, Resilient, Dedicated, Committed, Reflective, Ambitious

Participation
 You are expected to participate fully in the wide and rich experiences that Soar Valley offers to you. Participation, in its fullest sense, ranges from your academic contributions in lessons, attending a variety of extra-curricular opportunities and volunteering your time and effort to support the work of the whole school community.
 How will you ensure you fully participate?
 By being:
 Courageous, Confident, Proactive, Reliable, Independent, Responsible, Enthusiastic

Respect
 Our strong and positive relationships underpin much of Soar Valley's great success. Being respectful to all members of our proudly diverse community creates an environment where you, and others, feel safe and supported to achieve your very best.
 How will you show respect?
 By being:
 Kind, Polite, Empathetic, Caring, Considerate, Thoughtful, Trustworthy

I agree to do my best to follow the Soar Valley Way
 Name: _____ Form: _____



The House System @SVC

What an action-packed start to the new academic year – plenty of House activities were on offer to ensure all students had something they could participate in! The House system embeds a sense of community, friendship and healthy competition amongst both students and staff, so this year we wanted to ramp things up from the offset and the Heads of House would like to say a huge thank you to all of the staff who ran a competition and got the year off to such a competitive start!

There was a range of activities available to encourage everyone to get involved and give their House a head start in the league table. House Captains showed who had what it took to be the best driver, Mario style, students in Year 7 put their culinary knowledge to the test in a 'Guess the Chef' showdown, and, to start the spooky season off correctly, a Werewolf themed competition ran across KS3.

Time Reaction Challenge

The Flash? Quicksilver? They have nothing on our students! During one of the fortnightly House form times, students were assigned the task of seeing who had superhuman speed in the Time Reaction Challenge.

House Reps had to hold a 30cm ruler at 0cm above their peers' fingers, before releasing and seeing how quickly their Housemates could catch the ruler being dragged back down by gravity.

The results are in and there is a big divide between the fastest and slowest Houses, with Abbey taking first place, followed closely by Beacon and Victoria. Bradgate, you'll need to get your skates on next time!

House	Rank	Total Time in Seconds	Total Distance In millimetres
Abbey	1 st	150	18799
Beacon	2 nd	120	20020
Victoria	3 rd	100	20421
Watermead	4 th	90	20885
Castle	5 th	85	22307
Bradgate	6 th	80	26074

House	Total Time in Seconds	Position
Victoria	140	1
Bradgate	154	2
Beacon	160	3
Watermead	175	4
Castle	181	5
Abbey	190	6

Hula Hoop Chain

Speed seems to be the recurring theme as we get things off to a swift start! To motivate our new students into the House spirit, teamwork and participation was the name of the game in one settling in session.

Each form in Year 7 had to connect in one straight line and work a hula hoop from one end of their form to the other in the shortest time they could. There was much shouting and excitement to be had as each form was timed whilst battling it out. Ultimately Victoria showed they had lightning reactions and dominated the challenge!

A special shout out to 7.8, Beacon, who had the fastest time of any form and really demonstrated the community spirit we strive for at SVC.

Inter House Sport

The first term also witnessed the first inter House sports competition of the year: basketball!

Competition has been fierce so far, with all teams being very strong. The games were fought out in good spirit and in true Soar Valley style with lots of **EFFORT** being put in by all students. Whilst some of the dribbling techniques were questionable, it was lovely to see the students enjoying themselves.

The results from the first three rounds are extremely tight but currently Castle lead the way, followed by Abbey, Watermead, Victoria, Bradgate and finally, Beacon. However, you've got to be in it to win it, and Year 7's time to shine is up next. It really is all to play for!

The Heads of House would like to thank all of the students involved so far and cheer on those left yet to play.





The House System @SVC

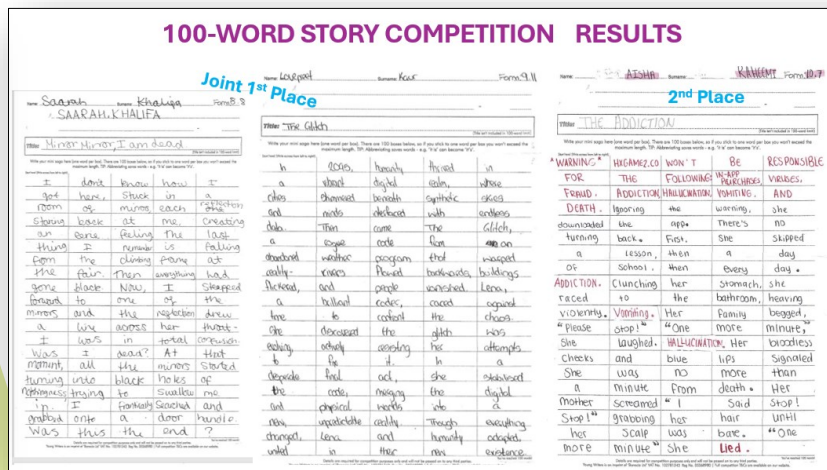
The Glitch—100 Word Story Competition

Most of us have experienced an IT glitch but imagine if every clock suddenly stopped – even the battery and solar powered ones! What might happen? Or what if the sun had not risen for five years? What thrilling or terrifying consequences could be unleashed by ‘The Glitch’?

Creative students assembled as they put their skills to the test in the first library competition of the year, to write a 100-word story on the theme ‘The Glitch’.

Watermead may have dominated with entries, but after what was a tough call the voting of an unbiased team of adjudicators decided quality over quantity really does matter with a joint first place between Beacon and Victoria!

Mrs Richardson and Miss McKillop want to thank all those who entered for their enthralling stories and cannot wait to see what you produce next with the themed poetry competition.



Students across all key stages were tasked to demonstrate their architectural and engineering skills to build the tallest possible tower using only paper and Sellotape. However, there was a twist: not only did they have to construct their tower in timed conditions but it also had to be capable of supporting a golf ball at the top without collapsing!

After a gruelling 15 minutes Abbey were the clear winners with not only the tallest tower, but a tower so strong that it managed to withstand the weighty golf ball for well over a minute! An honourable mention should be given to the participants of Victoria who had the highest number of entrants.

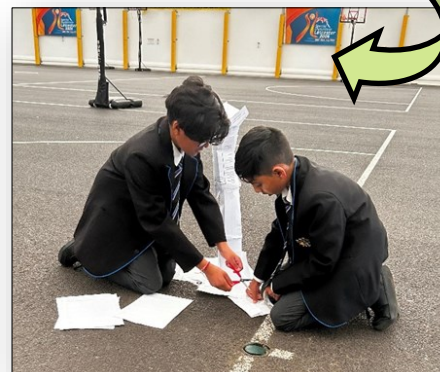
Only time will tell if our KS4 students can make a dramatic change to the current standing!

And finally...

The Heads of House would like to thank all students for their participation in events so far this year and encourage you to keep motivated to ensure your House comes out on top.

Which House will win the House Cup this year? Only time (and **EFFORT**) will tell!

Tower of Triumph





Your PASSPORT to SUCCESS

At Soar Valley we are clear that **EFFORT IS EVERYTHING**. Participation in extra curricular opportunities and House competitions is a great way to stretch yourself and make the extra effort needed to push beyond what you thought was possible.

House Councils Ready for Action

House Captains have been elected and are ready to take on their first major responsibility by calling the first House Council meetings of the year, with the newly appointed House Reps, next half term.

The Student Council form a strong thread in our student community, empowering their peers and making positive contributions to the wider school. They should be proud of the leadership they have begun to display, and we look forward to seeing them develop in their role as the year progresses.

Head Students Elected

The school's new **Head Students** have been elected and have already begun to make their presence felt in the first term of their year in post.

Their first task was to speak at Open Evening to prospective Year 7 parents. They were hugely impressive and did themselves and the school proud.

Since then they have spent time undertaking student voice around some key issues and have presented their findings to the school's Senior Leadership Team. Again, their maturity and presence shone through.



Congratulations to Dhrudip, Aisha, Zahrah, Aleeza and Taib, our newly elected and very impressive Head Students



What they reported to SLT was their intention to focus on 4 strands during the year.

- 1. Participation:** The Head Students have already begun to facilitate clubs and activities in their own time with younger students. Here you can see volunteers [in blue hi vis] leading table tennis at lunchtime, and the chess club run by the students.
- 2. Charity:** The intention is to undertake charity events in order to 'give back to the community'. The school will continue to support the Air Ambulance charity and to take part in national charity events such as Children in Need.
- 3. Mentoring:** The students are keen to offer both academic and pastoral support to other students. They are currently discussing starting a Sparx Reader club at lunchtimes to target reluctant readers in Year 7 and Year 8, supporting Key Stage 3 students with their homework and introducing a Big Buddy system.
- 4. Well Being:** And finally, they would like to establish a friendship table for students who are struggling to make new friends where they can come to sit and chat whilst they eat their lunch.

Normandy Trip 2024

A group of 28 Year 8 pupils recently embarked on an exciting trip to Normandy, France, where they explored both the region's rich history and enjoyed a variety of engaging activities.

One of the highlights was a visit to Mont St Michel, the stunning medieval island commune, where the pupils marvelled at the impressive architecture and enjoyed the breathtaking views. The trip also included a stop at a traditional French market, giving students the chance to practise their language skills while discovering local foods and crafts.

Another memorable visit was to Jublains Roman fort, which allowed the students to immerse themselves in the ancient history of the region. They also visited Vitré Castle, an impressive medieval fortress that allowed the pupils to step back in time. Looking at more modern history, students also paid their respects at the St James World War 2 cemetery, learning about the sacrifices of soldiers and gaining a deeper understanding of this period of history.

In addition to the many cultural visits, the students also participated in a series of team-building activities designed to challenge them and encourage cooperation. They tackled an obstacle course, worked together on a thrilling zip wire, and tried their hand at archery, building confidence and camaraderie along the way.

The blend of cultural, historical, and physical activities made the trip a well-rounded educational experience, providing both fun and learning for everyone involved.

Language Leaders

The MFL department has chosen 22 Year 9 students to undertake the role of **Language Leaders** for the year ahead. The programme is facilitated by the organisation 'Routes into Languages' and upon successful completion students receive a nationally recognised certificate of achievement.

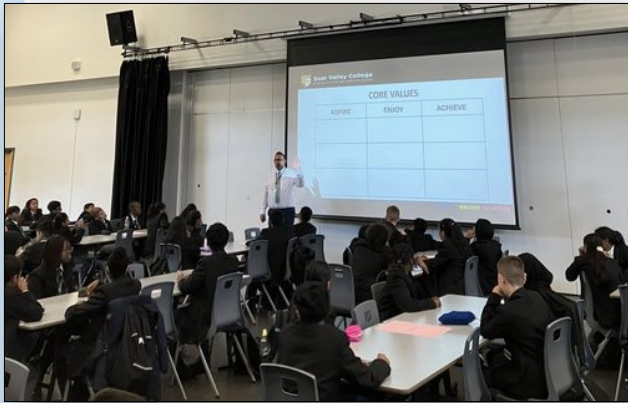
The programme aims to help students build their confidence whilst gaining leadership skills through teaching younger students as well as adults.

Students selected for the programme attend planning sessions after school where they work collaboratively to create lessons which will then be delivered to Soar Valley staff, Year 7 classes and students in our local primary schools.

Hopefully some of these young leaders will take on the role of Languages Mentors in Year 10 to build on this experience.



What else is going on @SVC?



Year 7 Extended Transition

Over the past few weeks we have been spending some additional time with our Year 7 students to support with their transition and to help them to understand our expectations around the Soar Valley Way.

Students have worked hard to understand what **Effort** looks like, and have a better understanding of what we mean when we say that 'Effort is Everything' at Soar Valley.

They have also taken part in a **Participation** session, where they learnt how to use the Participation Passport, and how we expect all students to be involved in the wider life of the school.

They have also taken part in a **Respect** session and learnt about how to have healthy and positive relationships and our definition of bullying and how it is not tolerated at Soar Valley.

The final session was run by Mrs Ost, Director of English, and focussed on teaching students some of our key strategies around oracy and literacy so that they can quickly learn how to express their ideas to the best of their ability at all times in all lessons.

'Maths is Fun' Club

On Friday lunchtimes in the first half term Mrs Parmar, one of our wonderful team of Teaching Assistants, has been running a club specifically targeted at engaging students in improving their maths knowledge through a series of fun activities.

Activities have included board games, problem solving and matching games. It would be great to see even more students taking advantage of this opportunity in the next half term!



Speak Up Returns

The Speak Up project will be running again this academic year. Sessions run every Tuesday throughout the academic year in the drama department.

Speak Up is a creative project run in partnership with external professionals that enables students to talk about the things that matter to them and to express their views in whichever creative medium they wish whether this be graffiti, song, performance, poetry, puppetry or dance!

Students involved in the Speak Up project will have the opportunity throughout the year to work with a range of professionals from across the creative industries and have already taken part in a puppetry workshop and an acting workshop with specialists from these fields.

Curve Theatre is Soar Valley College's partner theatre for this project and we are very excited to see what ideas the young people explore this year.



What else is going on @SVC?

Careers Update

It has been a busy start to the academic year for careers education at Soar Valley College. Year 11 students for example have been working really hard to complete applications for their chosen Post 16 pathways.

To support them with their decision making we once again ran our annual Post 16 Options Evening at the beginning of October. During the evening, we welcomed Post 16 providers from across the city and county. As always, the range of providers was vast helping us to ensure that all students gained independent information on the full range of Post 16 options available to them. Providers present included local colleges and universities, and apprenticeship and training providers, who were able to talk to students about the many qualification options Post 16 and beyond, as well as the various apprenticeship and training routes available. On the evening students were encouraged to identify the best pathway to follow.

In addition, all Year 11 students are continuing to receive their one-to-one careers advice and guidance sessions with our own careers advisor Mrs Patel.

To support students further, we have been fortunate to host a virtual assembly for Key Stage 4 students on higher education with De Montfort University and we look forward to welcoming Project Ask and Leicester College next half term to deliver further assemblies on apprenticeships and Post 16 study.

The deadline for Year 11 college applications is Tuesday 19th November 2024. Please continue to support your child with completing this as we prepare them for the next stage of their careers education journey. You can further support your child by attending college open days to ensure your child chooses the right learning environment for their Post 16 study. All information can be found on our school website or on local college websites.

This year we are offering work experience to our current Year 10 students, about which information was shared on the Key Stage 4 Transition Evening in September. Thank you to students for completing their application forms for this and we look forward to preparing our students for this brilliant opportunity which takes place in June 2025.

Finally, next half term sees the launch of our new careers platform, Unifrog. All students will receive their log in details and the careers team will guide students on how to track their own careers journey using the programme. This is an exciting project for Soar Valley College, and we look forward to sharing more information with you over the next few months.

In the meantime, should you have any questions or comments about the careers education programme at Soar Valley, please email careers@soarvalley.aspirelp.uk



Scholars Programme Launches

We are pleased to once again be working alongside The Brilliant Club to deliver the Scholars Programme to 42 of the highest achieving students in Year 9.

The Scholars Programme gives students the opportunity to work alongside a PhD tutor to explore a unique and very different subject alongside their ordinary studies. The subject studied depends on the expertise of the tutor, all of whom have either completed or are currently working towards a doctorate in their area of expertise.



Students are required to complete a series of tutorials and will then produce a challenging 3000 word final assignment on the topic studied.

However, more importantly, whilst doing so they are being helped to improve their skills in both research and academic writing and each of the three cohorts will also have the chance to visit a Russell Group university when they graduate from the programme.

Library News

If you would like support with encouraging your child to read for pleasure then please contact our librarian, Mrs Richardson

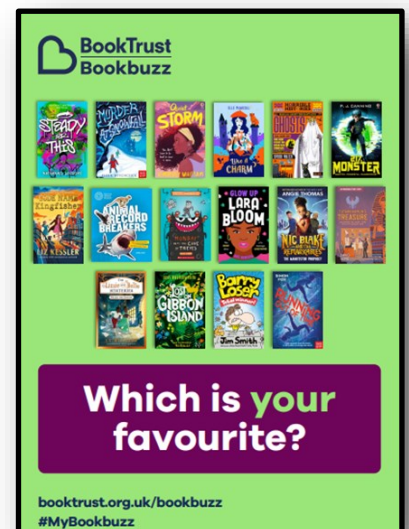
Welcome to Soar Valley College Library News Update. This half-term has been a busy one: Year 7s have been selecting their Bookbuzz book and all students have been learning about Banned Books Week and exploring a range of titles relating to Black History Month.

Next term will see the launch of the **8 for 8 Book Challenge**, a Reading Challenge for our Year 8 students, Year 9 students have a 'Book Talking' session from Creative Learning Services to look forward to, and all year groups can get involved with the library House competition, which this month invites students to write a short poem which could link to Black History Month, Remembrance Day, or Diwali.

Bookbuzz—The Gift of a Book

Bookbuzz gives students the chance to choose and keep a book they will love from a collection of 16 titles, newly selected each year by a panel of Book Trust reading experts, practising teachers and school librarians.

This term, **Year 7 students** were invited to select their Bookbuzz book during their library lesson. The specially ordered books are expected to arrive by the end of term, just in time for the Christmas holidays. The book is a gift, from Soar Valley College, for students to keep and enjoy.



Bookbuzz

Banned Books Week



Every year libraries across the world are asked to censor or remove books from libraries. Banned Books Week is an annual event highlighting, and celebrating, the importance of students' freedom to self-select reading materials because students who are given the freedom to read are more likely to read for pleasure and children who read for pleasure are likely to do significantly better in school than their peers who rarely read.

At Soar Valley College we believe in the power of reader choice and value free and open access to information. Students are taught how to self-select books that will engage them, and they feel comfortable reading because 'an essential part of becoming a real reader is knowing yourself as a reader made possible through wide reading driven by access to abundant books and personal choice' (Willhelm and Smith, 2014).

Soar Valley College is committed to supporting your child's educational journey and fostering a lifelong love of reading. The library catalogue is extensive. With over 9,000 books, and new books being added weekly, plus more available via our ePlatform, there really is something for everyone. For more information visit the [Library page of our website](#).

EVEN MORE...

Library News

If you would like support with encouraging your child to read for pleasure then please contact our librarian, Mrs Richardson

8 for 8 Book Challenge

Soar Valley College Library is introducing an exciting new project for Year 8 students which we believe will greatly benefit their academic progress in English and, more importantly, nurture a lifelong love for reading.

We are thrilled to present the '8 for 8 Book Challenge' - a reading initiative designed to broaden your child's reading horizons. This project has been carefully crafted to enrich their literary experiences and foster a deep appreciation for the written word.

Beginning after October half-term, '8 for 8' is open to all Year 8 students. Here's what they can expect:

- 1. Book Group Sessions:** Your child will have the opportunity to join our reading group once a month. These sessions will not only encourage them to explore challenging topics but also spark lively discussions and debates.
- 2. Exploring 8 Titles:** Over the course of the year, your child will delve into eight carefully selected titles. These books have been chosen to engage their minds, inspire critical thinking, and ignite their passion for reading. They will also be introduced to a wide range of themes and genres.
- 3. Author Engagement:** We are delighted to inform you that throughout the year, there will be opportunities for your child to interact with authors. They can ask questions, gain insights into the writing process, and be inspired by those who craft the stories they love.
- 4. Additional Optional Activities:** In addition to our regular sessions, there will be optional extra activities designed to enhance your child's reading experience. These may include creative projects, book-related events, and more.

There is a growing body of evidence which illustrates the importance of reading for pleasure for both educational purposes as well as personal development and so it is with great delight that we embark on this reading adventure together.

Students will be provided with more information during their library lessons after half-term.



Black History Month

Black History Month is a celebration of Black History that takes place throughout October every year. This year the 37th UK Black History Month will be celebrated, the first taking place in 1987.

The focus for Black History Month UK 2024 is 'Reclaiming Narratives' and students at Soar Valley College have seized the opportunity to explore the wide array of texts available in the library, both fiction and non-fiction, which shine a spotlight on some of our favourite black authors and which help develop our empathy, understanding and knowledge of important people, authors and issues.



World Mental Health Day—10th October 2024

To celebrate World Mental Health Day we welcomed our partners from the NHS Mental Health Support Team (in Schools) to join us. They staffed an information stand during breaktime and lunchtime for our students and talked with students about the support they can offer, as well as giving students the chance to be creative with some practical activities to support their own wellbeing and to celebrate positive Mental Wellbeing through the **#helloyellow** message.

The Mental Health Support Team (in Schools) are a part of the NHS, and have joined Soar Valley to support the children and staff in raising awareness of good mental health and to support us to develop a whole school approach to improving mental health for all. They can provide support through assemblies, workshops, information stands promoting mental health, such as **#helloyellow**, and working 1:1 with individual students.

The two Education Mental Health Practitioners that visit Soar Valley regularly to work with our staff and students are Alex Orton and Demi Boyce. They use low intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) based interventions, with practical ways to improve emotional and mental wellbeing. They are excited to continue their journey with us on the road to better mental health for all.

SAVE THE DATE

Annual Flu Vaccinations

Tuesday 19th November

All children from Reception to Year 11 are being offered a free flu vaccination in school as part of the national vaccination programme. Flu can be an unpleasant illness and can make some people seriously ill.

The flu vaccination is **safe and effective**. It helps to protect against seasonal flu and serious related complications, such as bronchitis, ear infections and pneumonia. It will also help to prevent the spread of flu and protect others who are vulnerable. There are two different types of vaccine available:



Nasal flu vaccine

Offers the best protection against flu. It is given as a spray squirted up each nostril. It's quick and painless.

For some children the nasal spray is not suitable for medical reasons. Our team will review the medical information submitted before offering the flu vaccine injection.

The nasal vaccine contains traces of a highly processed form of porcine gelatine.

Injectable flu vaccine

The injection is given into the muscle in the upper arm, which may cause soreness.

This vaccine is offered as an alternative if the nasal spray is not suitable due to medical reasons.

This vaccine does not contain porcine gelatine.

To find out more, visit: tiny.cc/flu Vaccination If you haven't already given your consent for the vaccine and wish to do so please follow these instructions:

How to give consent for your child to get the flu vaccination

- Make a note of the code for your school. For **Soar Valley College** the school code is **LE120286** and visit www.leicsandrutlandimms.co.uk or scan the QR code using your smartphone camera to go straight to the website.
- Select **Seasonal Flu**, enter the school code and fill out the form. On the consent declaration page you can consent for the nasal flu vaccine **or** the injectable flu vaccine.
- You will receive a confirmation email when the form is submitted.



School Nursing Team

Katherine Askew is our School Nurse and she comes in to support students every week. Through our Pastoral Teams we regularly refer students for support but students can refer themselves through the Chat Health service. Students can contact a duty nurse by texting **07520 615386**.

The service is available 9am—5pm every week day, excluding bank holidays. The text line stays open during the school holidays too. They guarantee that you will receive a response within 24 hours Monday-Friday.

This service is confidential, information would only be shared if there are worries about safety or if information shared may put someone at risk or in danger.

They offer confidential health advice and support on a range of areas including sleep, exam stress, self harm, mental health, sexual health and anxiety **plus many more important topics** such as nutrition and diet, smoking, friendships, alcohol, exercise, anger management, puberty, relationships and support for young carers.

You can find further information about this service as well as advice on how to support your child's physical and emotional health at: www.healthforteens.co.uk/

Breakfast Club

Start your day, every day, with fun at the *Breakfast Club*!

From 7:30am in the Dining Hall, you can hang out with friends, play games, or, if you're feeling particularly productive, borrow a laptop to finish off your homework with help from a teaching assistant!

There's a huge range of board and card games to choose from like Frustration, Mastermind, Loom Bands, Bananagrams, What The Meme, Uno, chess, and many more!

And the best part? At 8:10 a tasty bagel is available to fuel you for the day ahead! Don't miss out on the fun [or the food] and join us next half term.



Dates for Your Diary

Parents' Evenings	
Year 9	Thursday November 21 st
Year 11	Thursday January 16 th
Year 8	Thursday February 27 th
Year 10	Thursday April 3 rd
Year 7	Thursday May 8 th
Term Dates	
Diwali [CLOSED]	Friday November 1 st
Autumn Term ends	Friday December 20 th
Training Day [CLOSED]	Monday January 6 th
Spring Term begins	Tuesday January 7 th
Spring Half Term Break	February 17 th — 21 st
Eid [CLOSED]	Monday March 31 st
Spring Term ends	Friday April 11 th
Summer Term begins	Monday April 28 th
Bank Holiday [CLOSED]	Monday May 5 th
Summer Half Term Break	May 26 th — 30 th
Summer Term ends	Friday July 7 th
Other Events Next Half Term	
Children in Need	November 15 th
Y8/9/10 Reports Home	November 21 st
Y11 Mock Exams	Nov 25 th — Dec 5 th
Ex Y11 Celebration Evening	December 5 th
Y11 Languages Mock Speaking	Dec 9 th — 13 th
Winter Concert	December 12 th
Year 7 Wales Residential	December 16 th — 20 th

And finally...

After many years of working with Leicester Tigers, Soar Valley College has been selected as only one of **six Leicester Tigers official hub schools** in the East Midlands.

This means that they will support our staff to further develop their knowledge about coaching rugby; they will support teachers and students in lessons; and they will help with extra curricular clubs including running festivals at SVC for our students to participate in and for our local primary schools.

