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# THE HOLMEWOOD

SCHOOL



National  
Autistic  
Society

Accredited  
Advanced  
2020



## Newsletter

### Friday 5th February 2021

Dear Families,

Supporting young people with their mental health is always at the forefront of our thinking and teaching at The Holmewood School. This week we have joined in some of the national activities around Children's Mental Health Week. In particular, there has been a lot of learning about the importance of sleep for good mental health. Ms D'Silva has led some excellent sessions with students, and Ms Mayuri led a parent workshop on Wednesday. Thank you to all those who attended and I hope you took away something useful. Sleep is such a sensitive issue as we all know that many autistic people really struggle.

This week also marked the start of LGBTQ+ History month. This is a national month of looking at the history of gay rights and related civil rights movements; the issues that the LGBTQ+ community face; and how we can learn together to promote an inclusive modern society. Students in both Lower and Upper school will be joining workshops, assemblies and other activities to learn about the trailblazers who have dedicated their lives to seeking equality for the LGBTQ+ community. You can find out more at <https://lgbtplushistorymonth.co.uk/> and in the features within our next few newsletters. Please join us in celebrating our own Holmewood LGBTQ+ community by joining in

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Finally, before I leave you for the weekend, if there is anyone else that would like to volunteer to join our Covid-19 mass testing team (at either site) please do let me know. We are gradually seeing more young people and staff returning to school and I would very much like more volunteers to work with us so that education and therapy staff can focus on teaching children rather than testing. Testing days are Monday and Thursday and we will give you access to all the training and PPE you need. Your support would be greatly appreciated.

I wish you all a relaxing, happy weekend.

**Ms Camilleri**

Executive Head Teacher

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## Dates For Your Diary

- **Fri 12th Feb** - Last day of half term (1st half)
  - **Mon 15th - Fri 19th Feb** - Half term holiday
  - **Mon 22nd Feb** - Spring term (2nd half) starts
  - **Fri 26th Mar** - Last day of spring term
  - **Mon 19th Apr** - Inset day
  - **Tues 20th Apr** - Summer term (1st half) starts
-



## True Hero - National Inspiration - Extraordinary

The Holmewood community would like to express their deepest sympathies to the family and friends of Captain Sir Tom Moore who passed away on Tuesday.

In 2020, Captain Sir Tom raised a Guinness world record £38.9 million (inc. gift aid) for the NHS by walking 100 laps of his garden. He also became the oldest person to get a number one single in the UK charts and was knighted by the Queen.

### Here are some of Captain Sir Tom's famous quotes:

'For all those people who are finding it difficult at the moment: the sun will shine on you again and the clouds will go away.'

"You can do and be anything you want to be."

"I've always believed things will get better. The sun will shine again, the birds will sing and we'll all have a lovely day tomorrow."

"Negative thoughts don't seem to be part of me. I always think of the beneficial things, be positive and believe in yourself."

"The hardest part is the first step; once you've done that, if you do another one, it becomes a natural thing."

Thank you Captain Sir Tom. Because of you "tomorrow will be a good day" for so many more.

It's fair to say that Holmewood is a pretty different school to most. We're a small, nurturing environment which caters to a niche. We're flexible and understanding, and our approach is informed by experience, research and multidisciplinary input. This is why parents send their autistic children to us from all over London and beyond in the hope that their needs will be met and they will achieve academic success.

Over the past eight years I have seen such transformation and progress in so many of our young people. I'm not really a crier, but remembering their stories gives me hayfever in the eyes. Of course, as an educator, stories of academic success in the face of adversity are always inspiring, like the young person who now attends university but came to us from a school where he was only expected to fill in the blanks on worksheets.

However it is the smaller life triumphs that bring me the most joy, like a young person who displayed highly challenging behaviours in the earlier years, who is now a calm and studious young man. Or the one who ate the same four beige foods for every meal, that now has a colourful and balanced diet.

Sometimes these stories make us feel as if Holmewood is truly magical. But of course, none of us have magic wands. Progress is obtained through a mixture of our approach, the engagement and support of parents, the hard work of staff, and most importantly a commitment from the young person to accept support and dedicate themselves to the journey. An acceptance of the young person's diagnosis alongside nurturing their strengths and acknowledging their needs is also a pivotal piece of the puzzle. We cannot work our magic without these ingredients.

In his first book, Holmewood Sixth Former Max Toper says it himself:

'I'm doing tremendously well at (Holmewood\*) and am set to leave next July. It isn't a magical school that fixes everything. Yes, I've used their resources, and yes, I've met a lot of wonderful people there too. However, growth came from me as the individual, and I owe it to everyone around me to keep growing as a person.'

Max is so right that Holmewood is not a 'magical school that fixes everything'. But we might just get somewhere if we continue to support one another to [be ourselves and be better](#).

\*Max kindly changed the names of people and places in his memoir **Why is He Still Here?** which will be released on the 24th of February. You can preorder it [here](#).

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**Ms Young**

Head of Upper School



## LGBTQ+ History Month

As part of LGBTQ+ History month we have several guest speakers virtually talking to our young people over the course of the month.

**Simeon** - Simeon (he/him) a 27 year old living and working in London. Currently working at a covid-19 test centre to keep himself busy, providing a rewarding feeling to give back to the community, which he considers to be extremely vital. As well as being in the midst of starting his own company Simeon also has a podcast, where he along with my guest(s) discuss important societal issues, which he believes deserve more attention and conversations.



Growing up as a mixed race gay man Simeon always knew he was different, but never understood why the colour of his skin and sexuality seemed to make him a target for bullying. Once Simeon embraced both his sexuality and skin colour, it allowed him to confidently live his life freely without caring for other people's judgements, on factors about himself that are uncontrollable.

Simeon believes that showcasing strong, unapologetic and empowering LGBTQ+ people and their stories is key to a child's growth and acceptance of others.

Simeon's life motto is "Don't be sorry, be better"

**Leo** - Leo (she/her) is a 27 year old freelance web developer and STEM tutor.

She is a self taught coder after dropping out of university 6 years ago and has been tutoring for 10 years. Leo has also mentored sixth form students and taught university students how to code.

She is interested in neurodiversity and perceives her ADHD as an ability not a disability.



Leo went to an all girls school which had a strong atmosphere of homophobia. She struggled through school since she did not relate to dating like her friends did and finally felt a piece fit into place when she came across the term 'pansexual'.

Leo will be speaking to Elizabeth, Circle and Victoria Classes on Friday 26th February, Central and DLR classes on Tuesday 9th February, and Metropolitan class on Monday 8th February.

**Ramanique** - Ramanique (she/her) is a queer British actor and filmmaker of mixed British/Indian Heritage.

Her spoken word piece 'Other' formed part of the movement production "Playground Lessons in New York" in 2017. The show explored queer identity and asked the question, 'Can you see yourself in my experience?'. The piece also formed a part of SOLOFest 2019 at Warwick Arts Centre.

Ramanique will be speaking to Northern and Bakerloo on Tuesday 9th February.



**Nik** - Nik (he/they) is an LGBTQ+ activist, drag performer, musician and expert on issues of sexuality in Christianity.

He grew up in rural Somerset in a Eastern European immigrant family, and now lives in Bath.



Drag night in Bath which has featured Drag Race UK stars Cheryl Hole and Jayce, performed Glastonbury festival twice, and his activism in Eastern Europe includes undergoing and secretly documenting a “gay exorcism.”

Nik will be speaking to Central and DLR classes on Tuesday 9th February.

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## The Appliance of Science - Gas Pressure

Circle Class this week were looking at gas pressure.

If you ride your bike over a bump in the road, you will be pleased that gases exert pressure on the walls of their container. A pumped-up tyre cushions the rider against bumps, but a flat tyre does not. The pressure of the air inside a flat tyre is just too low to do this.

- Air **pressure** is the pressure within the **atmosphere** of Planet Earth.
- Air pressure is mostly (nearly all of it, nearly all of the time) the weight of the atmosphere above the surface point where the air pressure is measured.
- As we go higher in **altitude** the air pressure will normally go down as there is less air above.
- Sometimes scientific names for air pressure are used; these are; **Atmospheric Pressure** or **Barometric Pressure**.
- Normal air pressure at sea level is 1013 mbar.



Picture 1: 14,000 feet (4,267 metres)

Picture 2: 9,000 feet (2,743 metres)

Picture 3: 1,000 feet (305 metres)

In their air pressure experiments the students investigated force and pressure and how that relates to air pressure. It is an easy way to demonstrate air pressure. Using simple things from around the house like a sponge and straw, they were able to physically propel an object with just air!

Have a great weekend everybody!

**Mr Podichetty**  
Science Teacher



Hello, Parents and Carers.

I hope you are well and keeping safe.

It has been another exciting week in Metropolitan, where the students have been cooking, having a few jokes with each other and making each other laugh through 'getting to know me' questions.

This week, the class team has selected Reuben to write the newsletter on behalf of Metropolitan.

### **News from Reuben**

This week in cooking, one group made Guy's famous chicken wings which all the students enjoyed making and 'getting stuck in.' Although they were a little spicy, the students all loved the taste. Thank you to Guy and his mum for the recipe.

Also this week another group made feta cheese and spinach parcels which were very yummy. To end the lesson, the

Also this week, I've had online college lessons which were about things people have been doing in lockdown like drawing things on the ground with chalk. I am enjoying college and being able to talk to the students in my class. They are nice.



During English We've also been learning about what we'd wish for if we had three wishes, what would we do if we were Ms Camilleri for the day and If we were stuck on an island for 30 days, what 5 things would we take with us. This was a great activity to get to know each other and have great fun.

#### **If you had three wishes what would they be?**

Omolara - To travel, to go on adventures and to be Demi Lavato

Sean - To go skydiving, to go surfing and to go water skiing.

Reuben - To meet Albert Einstein so he can help me to time travel.

Mr Murphy - To meet Arsene Wenger so we can discuss everything ARSENAL!

#### **If you were Ms Camilleri for the day, what would you do?**

Ediz - I would give everybody more holidays so that they can go out with their friends.

Clara - If I was Ms Camileri for the day, I would protect the school, get the students to make friends, and check on how everyones doing.

Ms Eva - Throw a big party for everybody!

#### **If you were stuck on an island for 30 days, what 5 things would take with you?**

Guy - I would take a big old coat with me and eat loads of coconuts for days.

Chisom - I would take food and water so I can survive.

Ms Perera - I would take a water bottle, 20kg of Hairbo sweets (for energy), a pillow, a torch and a fire lighter.

I wish you all a lovely weekend and to stay safe.

From Reuben

On behalf of myself and the Metropolitan team, we would like to thank you for your continued support and wish you all a lovely weekend.

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## Supporting Sleep Strategies

Following on a great turn out at this week's parent workshop and some really interesting discussions, it once again became clear that Sleep remains a big part of our wellbeing. An area I believe hasn't received that much of an attention. However, in the research world there is great evidence that sleep has a direct impact on our wellness, but more specifically on one's psychological health. A good night's sleep fosters mental and emotional resilience. Sleep deprivation affects psychological and mental state. Disrupted sleep patterns have been found in conditions such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder and ADHD. Evidence has shown that prolonged sleep problems may raise risk of development of Psychiatric problems.

Sleep enhances learning, memory and emotional health. Chronic sleep deprivation may lead to increase in negative thinking and worrying. Data shows that 65% to 90% of adults and 90% of children with depression report sleep problems. 25% to 50% of children with ADHD experience sleep problems. These numbers seem to keep increasing in an alarming fashion. Sleep is an area which doesn't just affect the person, but the people living and supporting them, hence it is important that strategies chosen are suitable to the person and family as a unit.

For someone struggling with sleep, here are some general strategies which may be helpful -

**Sleep Diary:** If sleep disturbances are regularly noticed, then having a sleep diary to log your sleeping pattern is a great way to start. There are many sleep diaries out there but the links below are good examples. Complete it for a week and then go through it to find patterns and triggers. The process of keeping a sleep diary and can act as a great tool itself.

<https://www.nhs.uk/livewell/insomnia/documents/sleepdiary.pdf>

<https://sleepcouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Sleep-Council-Sleep-Diary-Interactive.pdf>

**Sleep Hygiene:** Having regular practices which are conducive to falling asleep is the most effective tool.



Improve your sleep with some positive lifestyle changes and consistent sleep habits

## 1 REGULAR SLEEP SCHEDULE

Try to maintain a consistent sleep pattern 7 days a week. Getting up at the same time every day can help.



## 2 RELAXING BEDTIME ROUTINE

Spend time before bed relaxing: read a book, meditate, stretch, do yoga, have a shower or bath. Avoid difficult conversations, activities or work.



## 3 AVOID STIMULANTS

Don't drink caffeine, sugary or energy drinks in the evening. Avoid nicotine before bed. Only drink alcohol in moderation at night, if at all.



## 4 GOOD SLEEP ENVIRONMENT

Keep your bedroom clean, tidy and comfortable. Use a quality mattress and bedding. Keep the bedroom aired, and a temperature between 60 -70 °F (17-21 °C)



## 5 BLOCK OUT NOISE AND LIGHT

Make sure the bedroom is dark and quiet. Use blackout curtains or a sleep mask. Use earplugs, white noise, a fan or music to mask external noise.



## 6 ONLY SLEEP AND INTIMACY

Only use the bed for sleep and intimacy with a partner. Avoid watching TV or using other devices in bed. That will help associate the bed with sleep.



## 7 EXERCISE AND DAYLIGHT

intense before bedtime. Spend time outside in the daylight. Even a short walk during the day can improve sleep.

## 8 EAT WELL

Try to eat a balanced, healthy diet. Avoid heavy, fatty, fried or spicy food late in the evening if you get indigestion. Bananas, yogurt or healthy cereal are good bedtime snacks.



 Created by No Sleepless Nights

**Social Story** to explain why sleep is important

**Environment assessment & modifications:** The surrounding environment plays an important role in signposting our mind and body that it is time to slow down. Keeping technology out of the bedroom is one of the best ways to tackle forming habits which obstruct sleep. If this is not possible, keep it away from the bed area, where there is no sitting space and agree to a rule of no phones and laptops in bed. This means, if anyone wants to use their phone, they will need to stand which inadvertently leads to less screen time.

**Calming your mind:** A large part of sleep issues is inability to relax the racing mind and declutter preparing to rest. A winding down routine with activities which are low key and reflective is helpful. Some examples include - writing in a gratitude journal, colouring mandalas, reading (a book which you exclusively read before going to bed), light stretching, long and deep breathing, meditation on an object. Other external resources include aromatherapy, weighted blanket, eye pillows, compression cover sheet/ socks, black out blinds, red lights, night and day clock, lumie clock, white noise.

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Lumie-Bodyclock-Starter-Wake-Up-Features/dp/B002TEXEAI>



**Apps for relaxation:** If you are used to apps and would like technology to help you, then

**Plum Village App** - mindfulness and guided meditations

[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.plumvillageapp&referrer=utm\\_source%3Dplumvillage.app%26utm\\_medium%3Dweb](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.plumvillageapp&referrer=utm_source%3Dplumvillage.app%26utm_medium%3Dweb)

**Insight Timer** - Meditation, sleep, music App

[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.spotlightsix.zentimerlite2&hl=en\\_GB&gl=US](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.spotlightsix.zentimerlite2&hl=en_GB&gl=US)

**Ms Tokekar**

Occupational Therapist

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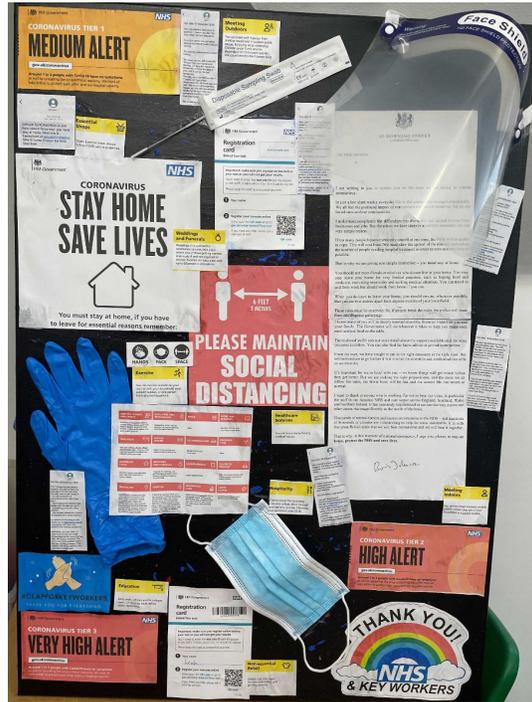
## The Holmewood Gallery

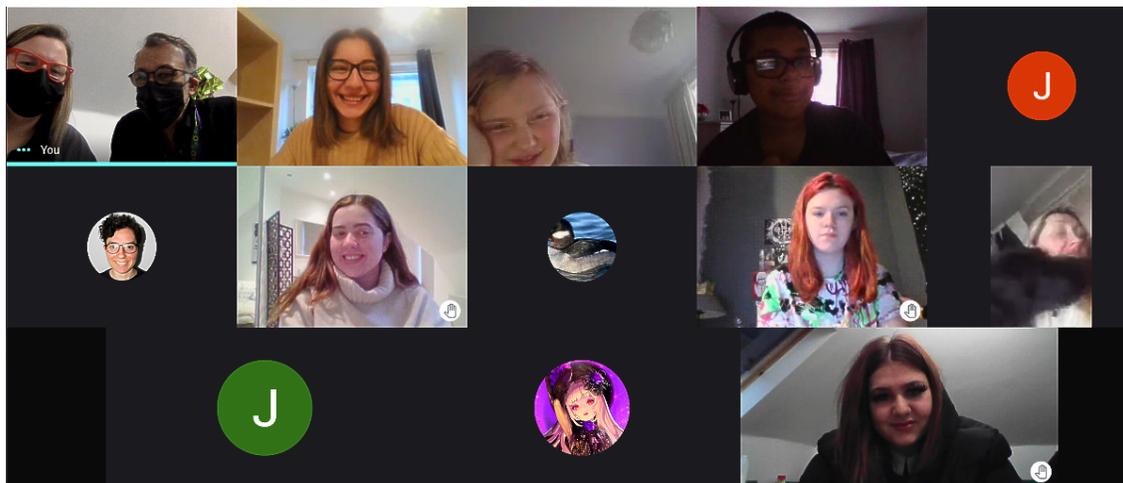


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## Designated Team For Child Protection And Safeguarding

If you are a student and have been harmed, or are at risk of harm, these are the people who can help. You can also talk to us if you are worried that another student is at risk of harm.

Lower School			
			
Ms D'Silva (Assistant Head and Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer for Lower School, Level 3)	Ms Lemposzek (Head of Welfare & Behaviour, Deputy DSO for Lower School, Level 3)	Mr Gibbs (Humanities & PSHE Teacher, Deputy DSO for Lower School, Level 3)	Ms Camilleri (Executive Head, CEOP Ambassador and Deputy DSO, Level 3)
Upper School			
			
Mr Lamb (Deputy Head and Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer for Upper School, Level 3)	Ms Young (Head of School and Deputy DSO, Level 3)	Ms Young (Assistant Head and Deputy DSO, Level 3)	Ms Camilleri (Executive Head, CEOP Ambassador and Deputy DSO, Level 3)

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