



NEWSLETTER

Holmes Chapel Comprehensive
School & 6th Form College

Issue: 197

Date: 23rd January 2026



Dear Parents and Guardians

On January 27th, our school will join the global commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day. This date marks the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1945, the largest of the Nazi concentration camps. Here at our school, teaching about the Holocaust is part of our history curriculum. The Holocaust Memorial Day however goes beyond the historical facts regarding the dreadful atrocities committed against the Jews and others at that time in history. It is a day to remember the six million Jewish people murdered by the Nazi regime, alongside the millions of others who suffered and were persecuted. Many groups of people such as Roma and Sinti people, people with disabilities, and people from the LGBTQ+ as well as many others were persecuted and murdered because of their characteristics, beliefs and identity.

Recognising Holocaust Memorial Day allows us to reflect on the fact that genocide and the persecution of groups on the grounds of race, religion and characteristics is not a thing of the past. There have been genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur. The Rohingya Muslim minority group in Myanmar has faced what the UN describes as a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing." with hundreds of thousands have been forced to flee their homes due to state-sponsored violence. Women and Girls in Afghanistan face "gender apartheid," having been stripped of their rights to education, work, and even the right to speak or show their faces in public.

These current events remind us that the horrors of the holocaust are not confined to history but a recurring threat that requires our constant vigilance. This is why we need to pay attention to remembering the lessons of the past, so that our children and their children grow up and thrive in a safer, more understanding, tolerant and accepting world.

Genocide, racism, sexism, homophobia, misogyny and a host of other prejudiced and discriminatory behaviours begin with our words, actions and behaviours. They start with how we talk about people from different groups, the language we use and whether we explicitly seek to build up and understand each other or seek to marginalise and discriminate. Discriminatory behaviours are enforced by the spread of misinformation via social media, influencers and groups. When unchecked and unchallenged, this can lead to the normalisation of prejudice and perhaps an acceptance of what is happening in our communities right under our noses.

Holocaust Memorial Day challenges us to look at our own community and our own actions, language and behaviours towards each other and towards different groups of people. I don't remember who first said it but there's a phrase that leaps to mind 'what we permit, we promote'. So when we see any kind of discrimination or prejudice, we have a choice, perhaps even a responsibility to be a bystander and watch it happen or to be an upstander and do something positive about it. By learning from the testimonies of holocaust survivors, we honor their experiences and pledge to build a future where diversity is celebrated rather than feared. Let us use this week to reflect on how we can use our voices to protect the dignity of every individual in our school and beyond.

Thanks for reading and for working with us to ensure we provide a strong community where we are all strive to a safe, welcome, inclusive environment where our children thrive, learn and grow so that they are happy and fulfilled
Warm regards

Nigel Bielby
Executive Headteacher



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For more information please click here [Holocaust Memorial Day](#)



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Mobile phones – reasserting the ban for all

In December I wrote to you regarding the whole school ban on children having access to their mobile phone during the school day. In that letter, I talked about the ways in which some children are failing to comply with the expected standards by refusing to lock their phone away, lying about having their phone or carrying more than one phone. More recently, we have now found that some children just put just the phone case in the locker or even put a calculator in the locker instead of their phone.

This update letter is to reaffirm our full commitment and full compliance to a **phone-free school day for ALL children**. The key takeaways from my previous letter letter are:

- The Goal:** To reduce anxiety, bullying, and improve "cognitive load" (focus) in class whilst improving socialisation, conversation and face to face engagement with each other
- The Issue:** Some students are failing to comply by choice. This includes, for instance, lying about having a phone nor handing in "dummy" old phones while keeping their real ones.
- The Rule:** All phones must be locked in lockers for the full day from the start of tutor time to the last bell for ALL children
- Exemptions:** Only children with serious medical needs where there is an absolute requirement (Diabetes) will now be exempt. Being anxious will not be an acceptable reason for having unrestricted access to their phone all day
- Support Needed:** Please check that your child isn't carrying a second device and reiterate the clear expectations and rules about mobile phone policy so that they understand that school is a phone-free sanctuary for everyone.



We introduced our ban some time ago now and our school was ahead of the curve in recognising that our children deserve the right to a day free from the harmful and disruptive impact of social media and a day when they socialise face to face, free of the highly addictive nature of their phone and the social media sites they use. The vast majority of informed adults and parents share this view so we have to ask the difficult question about how we make this work for every child and do the difficult things to ensure 100% compliance.

The government has recently opened a consultation on children's access to social media and mobile phones and the conversation is moving fast on this important health and wellbeing issue

[**Government to drive action to improve children's relationship with mobile phones and social media - GOV.UK.**](#)

[**UK to consult on social media ban for under 16s - BBC News**](#)

Around Cheshire, many schools are now thinking about launching or have recently launched a ban. Clearly, Here at HCCS we are not at the start of this journey and are much further down the road in terms of implementation. However, we are not there yet and it is clear that we all, families and school, need to tighten up so that ALL children follow our policy and process by locking their phone (s) away at tutor time and leave it there until period 5 has ended.

What is going to happen at our school?

I am working directly with school leaders, year group teams and teachers over the next couple of weeks to secure the processes and procedures that deliver the simple yet challenging ambition that all phones are locked away all day so that the school day is entirely mobile phone free for every child. Once again, I need the committed, full support of all families as we tread some hard ground so that all of our children have a phone free day



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Curriculum Matters

It's been a busy few weeks across the curriculum since we returned from Christmas - and it's only going to get busier between now and the end of the year!

Please take a moment to read through the information below which focuses on key messages for each year group and which refer to information we share in our [Curriculum and Learning web pages](#)

Years 7 and 8 - students will receive their interim grades on 12th February. They will use our 1-9 banding system which is explained [here](#). Bandings are based on the assessments which students have sat since the start of the year - the schedule for which is here: [year 7](#) and [year 8](#) (these are best viewed by zooming in on a computer). As parents and carers you can track when students should be revising for assessments from homework tasks, which are visible to you on Satchel One.

Year 9 - this week saw the launch of our Options process for 2025. The full slideshow for the evening can be found [here](#), while you can look at the sheets outlining the courses on [this page](#). If you want to delve deeper, you can click on the KS4 button to look at our [KS4 curriculum web page](#), which goes deeper into what knowledge is taught and assessed when. If you want to know more about courses or have further questions, please contact the head of subject - details can be found [here](#).

Year 10 - the first mini mocks for Year 10 will be English literature and maths paper 1 on 2nd February. These are the first 'proper' exams, sat in the sports hall, with external invigilators which provide students with a first chance to show how well they are performing in these two key areas. Please encourage your child to take part in the Thursday after school revision group in CR1 and CR2

Revision material has been shared by e-mail and is on the google classrooms.

The next mock window will be the 15th-17th April, combining: English language, sciences, humanities and drama. English literature and maths paper 2 will have full mocks on 18th-23rd June, alongside all other subjects not examined in April.

Year 11 - following results evening last week, we're now starting the run-in to summer exams. Subject specific revision plans and resources will be issued in the coming weeks, and these will be in both google classrooms and on the school website, so that parents can access them easily. The study base is open every Monday-Wednesday after school in the LRC and it has been pleasing to see a growth in numbers since results - remember this is an area for silent directed study - please encourage your child to use it.

Where students have significantly underperformed in the mocks, some subjects will be running after school resits and teachers will be contacting home directly. If you want to contact a subject teacher, please do so via the head of subject - details can be found [here](#).

You will soon receive an invitation to book an appointment for a review meeting with your child's tutor on 12th February.

Interim Glossary: Years 7,8,9

Achievement Points
Awarded to students for demonstrating good and effective learning behaviour in lessons and around school.

Behaviour Points
These are sanctions put in place for when behaviour or learning is inappropriate or a student fails to meet expected standards.

Attendance Expectations
At HCCS we consider attendance of utmost importance and are currently working in partnership with Cheshire East Local Authority to ensure parents have a minimum attendance target of 90%. It is a legal requirement for a child to be present in school. You may be prosecuted if you do not give your child an education. You will normally get warnings and offers of help from the local council first.

98 – 100% Attendance	No weeks of lost learning	Excellent! Keep it up!
97 – 98% Attendance	1-10 days of lost learning	Good. Can you reach 98%?
96 – 97% Attendance	2-19 days of lost learning	Meeting expectations
95% Attendance	Almost 6 weeks of lost learning – 150 missed lessons	Poor attendance
90% Attendance	7 weeks and 2 days of learning missed – 200 lessons	Totally unacceptable. This is a serious concern.
75% Attendance	9 weeks and 1 day of learning missed – 250 missed lessons	This is a safeguarding concern – neglect

Approach to Learning

OUTSTANDING	when given the opportunity a student always demonstrates effective learning.
VERY GOOD	when given the opportunity a student frequently demonstrates effective learning most of the time.
GOOD	when given the opportunity a student consistently demonstrates effective learning.
VARIABLE	when given the opportunity a student inconsistently demonstrates effective learning.
POOR	when given the opportunity a student rarely demonstrates effective learning.

Welcome to HCCS
Year 9 Options Evening 2026

Mr Tim Munro
Mr Mike Forsyth

We learn together
We belong to this community
We are proud of ourselves and each other
We have consistently high expectations



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Curriculum Matters...continued

Year 12 - Now that we are half way through the year, courses are in full swing. Our vocational students are already in the thick of coursework and some have undertaken external assessments. It is vitally important that these students make full use of their SST periods to keep on top of their deadlines. All students will have a Mock Exam week at the end of April; again, now is the time to make SST periods and revision time count!

Year 13 - Mock exams are immediately after half term. Teachers have been sharing with students what they should be preparing and which gaps in knowledge they need to revise. The February half term will enable students to really focus on this - it is not an opportunity for a break from work or revision and we expect them to use the time efficiently. Success here will lead to success in the summer!



Click here for our Holiday date schedule for the 2026-2027 Academic year

The National Year of Reading 2026

2026 has been declared as The National Year of Reading! We are busy planning many events throughout the year to encourage more and more pupils to enjoy reading. Look out for:

- Story telling week (Feb 2nd - Feb 8th)
- HCCS Literature Festival (March 2nd - March 6th)
- World Book Day (March 5th)

Don't forget to pop into the LRC to find your next book to read.



Learning Resource Centre News

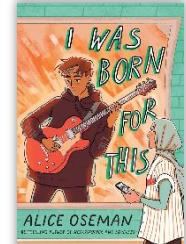
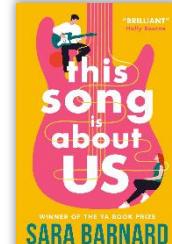
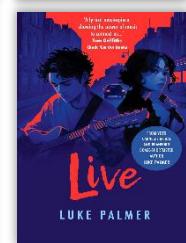
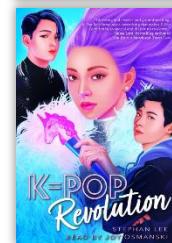
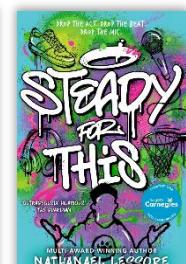
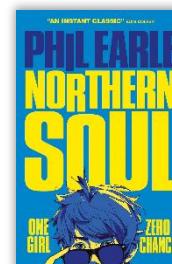
National Storytelling Week 2nd - 8th February 2026

Created by Society for Storytelling, this fantastic annual event is a joyful celebration of the power of sharing stories. Stories teach us about the world; they allow us to step into someone else's shoes and feel empathy; they help us to relax and escape and they can help develop essential literacy skills.

Part of the National Year of Reading 2026.

The theme for National Storytelling Week 2026 is Soundtrack your story. Everyone has their own musical story - whether it's in the songs we love and the music we dance to, through British Sign Language and the rhythms we feel, the soundscapes of everyday life, or the soundtracks we hear in films and games. Music connects us to words. It helps us express who we are and how we see the world.

Here are our top recommendations for this year's storytelling week!





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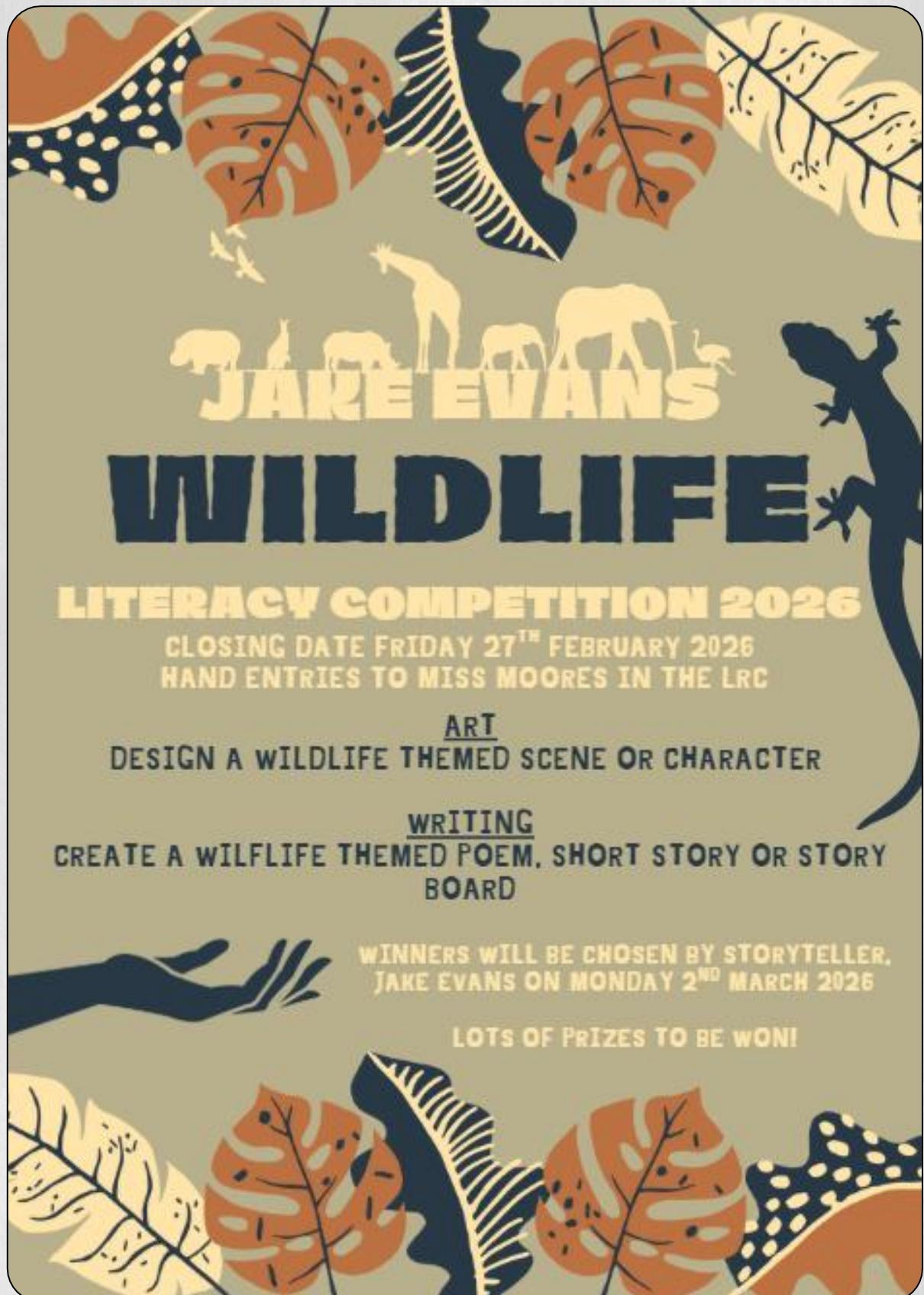
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JAKE EVANS
WILDLIFE

LITERACY COMPETITION 2026

CLOSING DATE FRIDAY 27TH FEBRUARY 2026
HAND ENTRIES TO MISS MOORES IN THE LRC

ART
DESIGN A WILDLIFE THEMED SCENE OR CHARACTER

WRITING
CREATE A WILDLIFE THEMED POEM, SHORT STORY OR STORY BOARD

**WINNERS WILL BE CHOSEN BY STORYTELLER,
JAKE EVANS ON MONDAY 2ND MARCH 2026**

LOTS OF PRIZES TO BE WON!



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Year 8 News

Congratulations to Lexi, Dexter and Harper for representing their club in the North West Indoor Sports Hall competition last week. Their club 'Crewe & Nantwich' won overall.

They were up against 8 teams including big teams like Warrington and Liverpool which is huge achievement. Well done!



Congratulations to Gus who won the Cheshire XC champs a couple of weeks ago by 53s too. Northern champs this weekend, so fingers crossed. He has also been selected to represent Cheshire along with Lily from Year 8 in the upcoming cross country Championships. Well done!



Dance News

I had the pleasure of watching many of our students from Years 7–13 perform in Laura Wilson's School of Dance show on Saturday. The performances were exceptional, showcasing outstanding talent, commitment and professionalism. A huge well done to everyone involved — you truly smashed it! **Mrs Thomas**





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Netball Results

This was our first game back after the off season over the winter months. The girls were eager to get back and play some great netball competing against Congleton for the first time this season.

All the girls across all years were fantastic ambassadors for the school and community. They worked together and played some amazing netball with limited numbers due to injuries / illness. Unfortunately year 9's lost but we pick ourselves up and try again next game.

Our year 10 / 11 team gained a draw 8 all, from a strong Congleton side.

Well done Girls this was a fantastic night of netball, we are very proud of you all.

Year 9 - Hannah G POM

Year 10/11 - Tiah M POM



On Tuesday, our Year 7 and 8 netball teams played an exciting match against Congleton. Both teams showed excellent teamwork and sportsmanship throughout the game.

The Year 7 team got off to a strong start, with accurate shooting and great defensive work from], helping the team secure a close score 6-5. The girls communicated well on court and worked hard in every position.

The Year 8 match was closely contested, with end-to-end play and some fantastic interceptions from]. Despite strong efforts and excellent teamwork, the team narrowly. Player of the Match was awarded to Hattie Jones for their outstanding performance.



Well done to all players for representing the school. We look forward to the next fixture!



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Yule Logs

Our year 7 students took part in a yule log decorating competition.

We had so many AMAZING entries that we found it almost impossible to choose our winners.

We have quite a few runners up due to the wonderful creativity and brilliant decorating skills from our year 7 students.

Well done Year 7.



[Click here](#) to see the winners and runners up

BADGED
UNIFORM WAREHOUSE

CLEARANCE SALE

HOLMES CHAPEL COMPREHENSIVE UNIFORM

MOST ITEMS 50% OFF

HCCS Boys PE Polo Shirt	From £10.50
HCCS Girls PE Polo Shirt	From £10.50
HCCS ¼ Zip Jacket	From £12
HCCS Girls PE Fleece	From £12.49
HCCS Boys PE Shorts	From £6.50
HCCS Girls PE Skort	From £10.75
HCCS Multi Sports Top	From £10.50
HCCS Training Pants	From £11.75
HCCS Leggings – Calf	From £11.50
HCCS Leggings – Ankle	From £8.50
Tie	£3.25

OFFER ONLINE AND IN STORE WHILE CURRENT STOCK LASTS

everybody
HEALTH & LEISURE | Holmes Chapel Community Centre

NEW

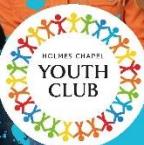
YOUTH **CLUB**

THURSDAY
29TH JANUARY
6PM – 8PM

FREE PIZZA & JUICE!

First session FREE!
11 - 16 year olds

everybody.org.uk



**FIRST EVER ANNUAL
CHESTER PAEDIATRICS
CONFERENCE**



Join us for a day of expert presentations, workshops, quizzes, activities, bake sale, raffle and pizza! Full itinerary to follow...

Wheeler Building, University of Chester

24TH JANUARY 2026
9am - 5pm

Link to event tickets -
<https://campus.hellorubric.com/?eid=47043>



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Cheshire East Courses

Free Youth Mental Health First Aid Course for parents

For parents and carers of young people aged 11-18yrs to help build knowledge and confidence to support their child's mental health issues.

Link: <https://www.justdropin.co.uk>

<https://livechesheast.cloud.contensis.com/images/schools/bulletins/documents-for-bulletins-2026/mhfa-template.jpg>



Visyon parent/carer workshop: Managing Emotions

Visyon runs a supportive parent/carer workshop on Managing Emotions, designed to help parents better understand and respond to children's and young people's feelings. The session will share practical tools to build emotional resilience, improve communication and support wellbeing at home.

This session will be held at Wishing Well in Crewe.

Link: <https://www.visyon.org.uk/>



SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

<https://livechesheast.cloud.contensis.com/images/schools/bulletins/documents-for-bulletins-2026/pw-managing-emotion.jpg>

UK Youth Parliament Election Open from 26 Jan to 20 Feb 2026

11-18-year-olds are invited to vote for their Members of Youth Parliament in the UK Youth Parliament elections from 26 January to 20 February 2026. Your students can cast their vote online using the link provided. If your school would prefer a more authentic voting experience, the Participation Team can supply ballot papers and ballot boxes, or even run the election for you. Get involved and help make young people's voices to be heard in shaping youth representation locally and nationally. Link:

https://surveys.cheshireeast.gov.uk/s/UK_Youth_Parliament_Election_2026/



<https://livechesheast.cloud.contensis.com/pdf/schools/bulletins/documents-for-bulletins-2026/voting-poster-2026-28.pdf>



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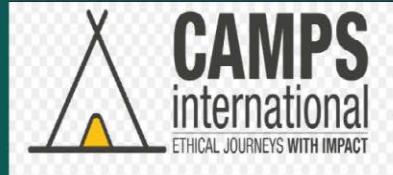
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YOU'RE INVITED TO OLIVIA'S FUNDRAISING

BORNEO BINGO

At The Victoria Club
Holmes Chapel

Bingo - £3
per game.

Early Bird
offer - £10 for
4 games.
Book by 1st
Feb

Bingo/Raffle/Sweets/Fun

Raffle £1 per ticket
1st Prize
2 night stay for 2 in
a Luxury Shepherd
Hut with Hot Tub

Raffle Prizes incl:
Spa Day pass
Alcohol
Chocolates

Saturday 7th February 2026
Doors open 6.30pm. 7pm start

For tickets contact

daniellethompson@hotmail.co.uk



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SEND Drop Ins

SEND 0-19+ health practitioners (On behalf of health visitor/school nursing services Cheshire East) for parents of children & Young people for support, signposting and guidance with all SEND related issues and helping to understand why your child may be struggling and ideas that may help. Think your child may have SEND and not sure where to go or what to do? Need support around toileting, sleep, behaviour or development – feel free to drop in for a chat?? You will be seen on a 1-1 basis and there is no need to bring your child.

Monks Coppenhall SEND Hub	Oakenclough Family Hub	Ash Grove Family Hub
05/02/26 - 9.15am - 12.15pm (appts only) 05/03/26 - 9.15am - 12.15pm (appts only)	27/01/26 - 1pm - 2pm (appts only) 10/02/26 - 1pm - 2pm (appts only) 16/03/26 - 10am - 11am (appts only)	02/02/26 - 9am - 11am (appts only) 02/03/26 - 9am - 11am (appts only)
Disley Library & community centre	Congleton Family Hub	Nantwich Children's Centre
06/02/26 - 9.30am - 11am (drop in)	13/02/26 - 9am - 11am (appts only) 11/03/26 - 1pm - 3pm (appts only)	17/02/26 - 9.15am - 12.15pm (appts only) 17/03/26 - 9.15am - 12.15pm (appts only)
Alsager Library	Knutsford Children's Centre	
18/02/26 - 1.30pm - 2.30pm (drop in) 18/03/26 - 1.30pm - 2.30pm (drop in)	27/02/26 - 9am - 11am (drop in) 20/03/26 - 1pm - 2.30pm (drop in)	

To book an appointment:

At Congleton, Ash Grove or Oakenclough email startforlifenorth@cheshireeast.gov.uk.

At Monks Coppenhall and Nantwich call 01270 371240.

Venues and contact numbers

Alsager Library, Alsager, ST7 2QH

Ash Grove Family Hub, Macclesfield, SK11 7TD Tel: 01625 374484

Congleton Family Hub, Congleton, CW12 3AH Tel: 01260 371061

Knutsford Children's Centre, Manor Park North, Knutsford, WA16 8DB

Monks Coppenhall SEND Centre of Excellence, Crewe, CW1 4LY Tel: 01270 371240

Nantwich Children's Centre, Nantwich, CW5 5GX Tel: 01270 371240

Oakenclough Family Hub, Wilmslow, SK9 2PZ Tel: 01625 374180

For future dates please see –

[Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) - drop-in sessions in Cheshire East - Wirral Community Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/children-and-families/send-0-19-plus/0-19-plus-SEND-drops-in)



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