



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM
SCHOOL



UOB SCHOOL

NEWS

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents, Carers, and Friends of the School,

I write with the spring 2026 term now behind us, to introduce the University School's spring newsletter. Whilst unusually short as a term, you will recognise the School's same high expectations and rounded provision for pupils and students. I delight in the breadth and number of activities, excursions, expeditions, enrichment, and wider learning opportunities that have occurred, alongside our day-to-day core business in and out of the classroom. These support so richly our intent to widen horizons, open eyes, and foster character.



The Principal, Colin Townsend, Mr Guler, and the Axiom Maths group of pupils and students

The photograph on this page introduces to you the Members of our Axiom Maths Pupil Group – young mathematicians regularly engaged inside and outside of the classroom with problem solving and reasoning activities. Axiom Maths believe that mathematics provides a unique power – to imagine things never before imagined; to see beyond what others have seen; to solve unsolvable challenges. The aims of this work align keenly with our School's focus on virtues. Intellectual virtues of curiosity, critical thinking and reasoning; civic virtues of working and learning together; the performance virtue of determination to hold the course when answers are not immediate or obvious. I offer thanks to Mr Guler from our mathematics team for steering this programme, and to Taj Al Deen (Year 12 – studying A level mathematics) one of our Sixth Form mathematics leaders, for giving time generously to support and encourage younger peers.

We look ahead to the summer term from Tuesday 14 April 2026 – and indeed preparations for the coming School year 2026/27. We now know the details of the 150 children and families who will be joining the University School from September 2026 into Year 7, indeed from 1595 applications for admission. Our minds are already focused on induction plans to ease anxieties that can understandably arise from transfer from primary to secondary schooling. I extend a warm welcome to our new families as we look ahead.

For our pupils in Year 11 and students in Year 13, teachers and leaders at the School continue to prioritise a range of academic and pastoral preparation – empathetic of the important tasks ahead for those young people – and ambitious to support each to successful progression come August. If your child is a member of one of our public examination cohorts I encourage that you support them in putting in place a balanced revision programme over the two week School holiday period – alongside time for rest, relaxation, and recreation. When the examination period arrives, we wish all of our children success.

To close, whilst we all enjoy a short time over this holiday period to rest and breathe, we find ourselves also at holy and cultural periods. I therefore wish you a happy Passover, a peaceful Easter, and a happy Vaisakhi.

With kindest regards,

Colin Townsend
Principal

*"Mathematics is not about numbers, equations, computations, or algorithms:
it is about understanding."*

*William Paul Thurston (1946–2012) USA
Professor of Mathematics, Universities of Princeton, California, and Cornell*

THE CHAMPIONS OF CHARACTER CLUB



THE
JUBILEE CENTRE
FOR CHARACTER & VIRTUES



In February 2026, an initiative was launched with the potential to transform the lives of young people in Birmingham. The Jubilee Centre, in collaboration with the Birmingham City Football Club Foundation, delivered the first Champions of Character Club pilot at the University of Birmingham School. This club is a school-based strategy designed to harness the power of sport in fostering essential character strengths among individuals.

The Champions of Character Club seeks to redefine the role of sports in education. It emphasises that sport extends beyond mere competition; it has the power to build a strong community and instil values that are crucial for success in several aspects of life. By participating in this club, young people will learn that the skills and values gained on the sports field are equally important off it.

The primary objectives of the Champions of Character Club include:

- **Empowerment of Youth:** Encouraging young people to harness their potential by developing character strengths such as resilience, teamwork, and leadership.
- **Holistic Development:** Supporting pupils in becoming well-rounded individuals who can thrive in academic, professional, and personal settings.
- **Community Building:** Fostering a sense of belonging and mutual support within the school community through sports-based activities.
- **Character Education:** Highlighting the importance of values such as respect, integrity, and perseverance, both in sports and everyday life.

Through workshops and team sports, pupils actively engaged in experiences that promote character development.



By transforming the way young people view sports, the club hopes to inspire future generations to embrace the values of community and commitment. The club represents a unique opportunity for young people to grow both as athletes and as individuals. By focusing on character development through sport, the club is poised to make a significant impact and will be delivered to other schools in the region this year.

A WINNING PRESENTATION

Congratulations to Max in Year 8 for his achievement in persuasive writing and public speaking. Max recently delivered a speech to his peers, demonstrating his ability to articulate his vision for the future and his passion for pupil leadership.

In his presentation, Max outlined how he would contribute to the school community as part of the pupil leadership team. His ideas were not only innovative but also rooted in passion to make a positive impact through school events and activities and by promoting environmental responsibility and sustainability.

Max's clear vision, coupled with his strong communication and leadership skills, left a lasting impression on his peers who recognised his potential and voted him as the winner.

This is excellent preparation for the future when the opportunity to be part of the school's pupil leadership team arises. We are confident that Max will continue to inspire and lead with integrity and enthusiasm and look forward to seeing all the wonderful things he will accomplish in the future. Well done!



FORMER MD OF COCA COLA (GB) VISITS UOB SCHOOL

We were delighted to welcome Chris Banks CBE and current Academy Trust Member, to our school for an inspiring session with our GCSE and A Level Business Studies pupils and students. With an impressive career spanning several senior marketing and leadership roles, including Managing Director at Coca-Cola, as well as founding his own business in the food and beverage sector, and former University of Birmingham School Chair of Trustees, Chris shared invaluable real-world insights with the group.

The session was filled with engaging discussions, drawing from his extensive experience in the industry. He provided our students with a unique perspective on the challenges and opportunities in the business world, emphasising the importance of innovation and adaptability.

Our pupils and students actively participated, asking thoughtful questions that reflected their keen interest in the subject matter. Chris responded with practical advice on various topics, including: crafting a standout CV, developing a success-oriented mindset, sharing strategies for developing the mindset needed to thrive in the modern workplace, underscoring the importance of resilience and continuous learning.





BIG IDEAS, BIG IMPACT

Year 9 pupils recently embarked on an exciting journey with the Big Ideas project, organised by a charity – Solutions for the Planet. This enrichment activity aimed to spark creativity and instil a sense of responsibility for sustainability and entrepreneurship amongst pupils.

Engaging with Experts

The day began with a session where pupils had the opportunity to listen to passionate volunteers. Experts shared valuable insights into the pressing need for sustainable practices in today’s world and how entrepreneurship can play a pivotal role in creating positive change. Pupils learned about innovative solutions and the impact of individual actions on the environment.



Collaborative Learning



Pupils then participated in group activities, where they were challenged to brainstorm and develop their own sustainability projects. Working collaboratively, they combined their diverse talents and ideas to devise unique solutions aimed at addressing real-world environmental issues. This hands-on experience not only reinforced their understanding of sustainability but also nurtured essential skills such as teamwork and creative problem-solving.

Thank you to all the mentors who played a crucial role in guiding and inspiring the pupils. Their support and encouragement harnessed the pupils' enthusiasm and confidence to think boldly and creatively about a sustainable future.

With the knowledge and skills gained, our pupils are well-equipped to become the change-makers of tomorrow. As they continue to explore and implement their sustainability projects. We eagerly anticipate the positive impact they will have on their communities and beyond.

Together, let’s continue to nurture and support the next generation in their quest to create a sustainable future.



WORK EXPERIENCE REMINDERS



Year 10: Your ‘Own Placement Forms’ need to be submitted by **Friday 17 April 2026**.

Year 12: Work Experience will take place between **Monday 29 June - Friday 03 July 2026**. Take time during the break to think about possible placement opportunities you would like to attend.



UOBS ASPIRING TEACHERS



It's been another busy start to the year at UoBS for our trainee teachers. We've had the pleasure of hosting nine teachers completing their first training placements. The trainees joined us from the University of Birmingham, the University of Worcester, and the University of Warwick. They have made great progress with us and built strong relationships with our pupils and students.

We are currently hosting another five teachers who are completing their second placement with us. Their dedication and excitement for teaching continues to enrich our school environment.

Interested in Training to Teach?

Our school is committed to supporting aspiring teachers as they embark on this rewarding career path. If you're interested in training to teach, we'd love to help you explore the options available.

For more information, please reach out to David Ashmore, our Initial Teacher Training senior mentor, via d.ashmore@uobschool.org.uk.



CELEBRATING NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK



We were thrilled to host careers staff and apprentices from Balfour Beatty VINCI at our school for National Apprenticeship Week. Their visit provided our Sixth Form students with insights to apprenticeships and the workings of assessment centres. It was particularly inspiring to hear from our alumna, Beth, who left UoBS in 2019 and is now employed as a Section Engineer at the company. Her motivating talk illustrated the apprenticeship pathways available beyond Sixth Form. Thank you to Bethany Williamson, Naomi Bates, Grace Lee, and Mohammad Sharif for sharing their experiences and guidance with our students.

Representatives from HSBC, the University of Birmingham, and Mott MacDonald also generously offered their time during the week to discuss apprenticeship pathways and career opportunities with our pupils and students.

Our pupils posed thoughtful questions, displayed genuine curiosity, and engaged in conversations about their future pathways. Such interactions are possible when employer representatives are approachable, generous with their insights, and passionate about their work.

We are grateful to all our employer partners who supported national apprenticeship week at UoBS.



A JOURNEY TO GENEVA

Discovering CERN

My first impression of CERN (the European Organisation for Nuclear Research) was one of awe at the innovative and scientific setting. The site is a marvel of modern science, with buildings shaped like tubes and spheres against a backdrop of stunning mountain ranges. The design of the buildings reflects the advanced scientific operations within, particularly the Large Hadron Collider (LHC). The purpose of our visit was to delve into the world of particle physics and understand the ground-breaking work conducted at CERN. I learned that CERN is not only about accelerating and colliding particles but also about exploring the universe. The ATLAS detector, with its size, was particularly impressive. Observing the security protocols and learning about the experiments conducted there was insightful.

Experiments and Discoveries

During our exploration, we learned about various experiments, including the ALICE Experiment, which recreates conditions like those just after the Big Bang by colliding heavy ions at high speeds. This experiment aims to understand the formation of matter in the early universe. The Large Hadron Collider, the largest and most powerful of its kind, has been integral in discoveries like the Higgs Boson, which has significantly influenced the Standard Model in physics.

Culture

Beyond the scientific discoveries, the trip offered a cultural immersion into the vibrant city of Geneva. A treasure hunt around the city allowed us to interact with locals and appreciate Geneva's beauty. Visiting sites like the Jet d'Eau, with its spectacular water display, and relaxing by Lake Geneva were memorable highlights.

The Value of the Experience

This trip was invaluable in expanding my knowledge of physics and international relations while allowing me to experience Swiss culture. It bridged the gap between theoretical learning and real-world application, offering an understanding of international collaboration. The sense of community among fellow travellers and the friendships formed added to the experience.

Travelling with the school provided a stress-free and enjoyable experience, thanks to the meticulous organisation by our teachers. I highly recommend this trip to other students, as it offers an opportunity to see iconic places, learn new things, and create lasting memories. It was a beautiful journey, both in terms of the stunning sights and the personal growth it offered.

By Arjun B, Muhammad J, Jaiya K, & Haani M - A level Physics & A level Politics students, UoBS Sixth Form.



SPARKING CURIOSITY



Year 10 pupils presented their research posters to staff and peers during enrichment this term. This event celebrates academic curiosity and creativity, as pupils showcased their work on a broad range of topics that spanned arts and culture, climate change, human rights, sports, politics, and artificial intelligence.

Pupils were able to choose their own topics and presented posters on a variety of subjects including:

- Should guided tours be allowed on Everest? This topic sparked discussions on the environmental and ethical implications of tourism.
- Should footballers get paid as much as they do? A thought-provoking analysis of the economics of sports and the societal value placed on different professions.
- Is subtitled or dubbed anime better? Exploring the cultural nuances and personal preferences that influence how audiences consume different media.
- Should social media be banned for under-16s? A timely exploration of the impact of social media on youth, considering mental health, privacy, and social development.



The enrichment was not only about undertaking research but also about developing essential skills including critical thinking, communication and presentation skills.

Well done to everyone involved!



SUPREME COURT DEBATE DAY

Our Year 12 politics cohort took part in a virtual UK Supreme Court Debate Day. Students had to prepare arguments for and against the question, "Do stop and search powers strike a fair balance between the rights of the individual and the interests of society?"

In order to prepare, our students worked with government lawyers to help them best prepare their cases and how to use evidence to support their points. Students presented their cases very articulately and were praised for how authentic and well-researched their cases were. They were also able to see the inner workings of the UK Supreme Court by receiving a comprehensive overview of what the court actually does from an official who works for the court.



LEARNING TOGETHER, LEADING TOGETHER



Below are just a few highlights from our collaborative work with the University of Birmingham and other external providers this term, bringing together our School, the University, and professional expertise to enrich learning and research.

- Colleagues from the College of Social Sciences at the University of Birmingham delivered an assembly to our Year 10 pupils about the work experience opportunities available to them on campus. Pupils who have applied will be meeting with their placement hosts in June.
- 50 pupils from Year 10 and Year 11 attended masterclasses on campus about 'How to read a Shakespeare Play' and 'The Moral of An Inspector Calls' to support their GCSE exams and coursework.
- Year 12 students attended an 'Aspiring Medics Day' organised by colleagues at the College of Medicine and Health at the University to learn more about careers in medicine.
- Year 7 pupils enjoyed taking part in drama workshops on campus in collaboration with the RSC (Royal Shakespeare Company).
- Our Physics department continues to run their Physics Network events each term. These events bring together teachers of Physics from our region to collaborate and share good teaching practice. Professor Dan Cottle from the University regularly supports the running of these sessions.
- 20 of our Computer Science students will be attending a taster week at the School of Computer Science, UoB in July.
- MAKE UK delivered a virtual assembly to pupils in Years 8 to 11 to inform them about the post-16 engineering apprenticeship programmes that they could apply for in the future.



COSTUME DESIGN WINNERS!



Congratulations to pupils Anaya and William who have been selected as finalists in The Rep Theatre's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' costume design competition – chosen from over 200 entries!

A special shoutout to William, whose design will be brought to life on stage this April. Judges "loved his bold use of colours, strong character interpretation, and whimsical fantasy style."

A great achievement – well done to you both! [Find out more on The Rep website here.](#)



SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS

A recently introduced feature for our newsletter, where we will share pupil and student accomplishments from outside of School. Whether it's a new skill, winning an award, or helping others in the community - we want to hear about it! If you would like your child to be featured and celebrated, please contact us by scanning the code at the bottom of this page.



Arjun S in Year 8 has been an RAF Cadet since October 2025, and has learned how to operate radio systems, trained in First Aid, and is currently learning how to conduct public speaking and organisational skills - something he can use both in and out of cadets! Arjun also enjoys taking part in his defence martial arts lessons outside of school and takes pride in attending his lessons regularly and maintaining his discipline. It's wonderful to see Arjun taking part in so many enrichment activities outside of school!



Emily R in Year 12 is a competitive swimmer and won a bronze medal in the 209m backstroke at the recent Warwickshire County Championships. Emily has also qualified for the Regional West Midlands championships due to be held in a few months! Alongside swimming, Emily loves to play hockey with her team at a local club.



Lilly-Harmony B in Year 10 loves to dance and regularly takes part in dance classes with the popular and very successful Diversity Studio Group!



Mustafa A in Year 9 has received an Honour Award from the Lord Mayor for outstanding community service through activities such as litter picking and tree planting. Mustafa is also a keen cricketer and has been awarded the Best Impact Player Award by Warwickshire County Cricket Club in recognition of his excellent performance and positive contribution to the team. His family and the School are very proud of his achievements.

Wonderful news for **Connor T** in Year 9 who is now a fully qualified First Aider with St John Ambulance Service, which means he can now help out at events and administer first aid. Connor is hoping to attend his first event next month.



Congratulations to **Ethan C** in Year 8 who recently achieved a Merit in the ABRSM (Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music) Grade 8 Piano Performance Exam! Ethan has consistently worked hard over several years to reach this level, demonstrating his commitment, discipline, and passion for music. Amazing news!



SCAN ME



UOBS CLIMATE AMBASSADORS

This half term has been a productive time for our pupil 'Climate Ambassador' leaders. The team has engaged in several activities aimed at enhancing sustainability and promoting environmental consciousness within our school community. Here's a recap of our efforts so far:



- **Litter Picking Initiative:** One of our goals was to have a dedicated litter picking effort around the school grounds.
- **Bin Survey:** Assessing recycling practices: To better understand our school's recycling habits, we conducted a bin survey. The survey evaluated how well the school community is recycling and whether it is being done correctly. The results provided insights to areas where we can improve our recycling efforts.
- **Meeting with the Site Manager:** We then met with the site manager to discuss the current sustainability measures in place at our school. This helped us to understand the school's existing efforts and identify any opportunities for improvement. We shared our suggestions, which included increasing the number of recycling bins, implementing a composting programme, and exploring renewable energy options.
- **Designing a Logo:** We created a logo to represent our Climate Ambassadors team. The design process was collaborative and creative, with input from various team members. It will be used in all our future communications and campaigns to enhance our visibility.

Looking ahead, we are excited to build on the momentum of this half term's achievements. Pupils should speak to Miss Pyper if they would like to get involved!



STUDENTS ENGAGE WITH INDUSTRY EXPERTS TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF BIRMINGHAM

Pupil and student volunteers recently met with staff from Cavendish Consulting who talked about the role of communications and public affairs in local developments. They gave an overview of the large-scale developments happening across Birmingham and asked our young people to give their views on the potential impacts of these projects on local communities. Pupils and students were encouraged to take a more active role in local developments by taking part in future focus groups for their voices to be heard.



"Some of the 'new town' plans that were completed were lovely and thoughtful. The students also had an excellent level of awareness of things going on in Birmingham, much more than I did at that age!" From a member of staff at Cavendish.

Helene Dearne OBE, Director of Employment, Skills, Health and Communities at West Midlands Combined Authority visited our school to talk to pupils and students about the demand for skills in our region. Helene talked about the role of the Combined Authority in how decisions are made and shared her own career journey. She listened to the views of our young people and gave some useful advice on career pathways and accessing work experience.

THE BOOK NOOK

Young Poet Laureate - Pupil shortlisted

Following on from our memorable visit from professional beat-boxing poet, Jas Gardosi, in November, some of our pupils were inspired to enter the National Literacy Trust's competition to become Young Poet Laureate for the Midlands region. We are delighted that our pupil **Titus H** has been chosen as one of 20 shortlisted. Congratulations Titus!

Visit from Michael D Kennedy

As part of our Wordplay Festival celebrations, Michael delivered a workshop in School for our Year 10 photography pupils. He talked about his role as an artist and illustrator and helped them develop their own pieces.

World Book Day

One of the highlights from World Book Day was a collaborative project where pupils from every year group contributed to a collection of booked-themed acrostic poems. Pupils were able to express their love for reading with an artistic flair. In addition, we celebrated the day with a series of popular quizzes based on books and literature, encouraging friendly competition and teamwork between all ages (including staff)! Staff members shared their favourite and current reads with the school community to exemplify a love for reading.



Reading Champions for
Spring Term:
Form 7X2 & 7Y2!



Top Borrowers

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Jack RM (Year 9) | 6. Kashif B (Year 11) |
| 2. Aisha R (Year 8) | 7. Mahi K (Year 7) |
| 3. Hephzibah O (Year 8) | 8. Solyana S (Year 13) |
| 4. Usman K (Year 7) | 9. Areejah S (Year 9) |
| 5. Mioya-Chinui B (Year 7) | 10. Alice M (Year 10) |

Most Popular Books

1. The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes – Suzanne Collins
2. Party Pooper – Jeff Kinney
3. The Recruit – Robert Muchamore
4. Powerless – Lauren Roberts
5. For Whom the Ball Rolls – Dav Pilkey
6. One of us is Lying – Karen McManus
7. The Cruel Prince – Holly Black
8. Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire – JK Rowling
9. Loki – Louie Stowell
10. Black Clover Vol. 1 – Yuki Tabata



YEAR 8 SCHOLARS

Year 8 pupils recently had the opportunity to visit the University of Oxford as part of their graduation from The Brilliant Club Scholars Programme. This initiative enables young pupils to engage with university-style learning and broaden their academic horizons.

The theme for this year's presentations was "Economics - What is Money?" This topic allowed pupils to explore the subject of economics, focusing on the concept and significance of money in society. The pupils explored several key aspects of money, including the function of money in society, the history of money and the evolution of economic systems, and the role money plays in society influencing everything from consumer behaviour to government policies. Each pupil presented their understanding of the topic through engaging and insightful presentations.

The Brilliant Club Scholars Programme aims to motivate and empower pupils by providing them with access to higher education experiences. Pupils on the programme are mentored by a PhD researcher. By taking part, Year 8 developed their research and academic writing skills and experienced a day exploring the University of Oxford.



JOBS ON TOUR

As part of our Sixth Form aspirations programme, we have been taking our students to various cities and universities to explore options open to them post-18. So far this year, students have visited the University of Nottingham and the University of Manchester - taking campus tours, finding out about the student facilities and enrichment on offer, visiting accommodation, and other popular landmarks. We look forward to visiting Sheffield and Oxford in the summer.



PASTORAL UPDATES

Online Safety

Violent clips, online 'wars', and shock-value challenges can spread rapidly across social media feeds - often appearing in front of young people who weren't actively looking for them. This guide (on the page opposite) explains how algorithms, messaging groups and viral trends can expose children to real-world violence online, sometimes normalising harmful behaviour or encouraging risky offline actions.

It also highlights the emotional, social and legal risks linked to engaging with violent content. From anxiety and community fear to the dangers of sharing or promoting violent posts, the guide offers practical advice for parents, carers, and educators on discussing online safety, understanding the law, and helping young people respond positively and responsibly.

We hope you find this a useful guide, to complement the work we do in school with pupils via Learning for Life.



Character Celebrations

At the end of each term Year Leaders run our year group awards assemblies. Teachers and year teams nominate pupils and students based on the development of their intellectual virtues and community virtues. We hope pupils and students enjoy the shared celebration and individual successes.

Holiday activities - Bring it on Brum!

As we have shared previously - you can access the holiday activities from Bring it on Brum! [Home - Bring it on Brum!](#)

Here, you can not only find activities for your child over the holiday, but also family support services such as bereavement support, financial support services and early help. To book holiday activities through the Bring it on Brum! website or directly with the holiday club, parents/carers will need a Bring it on Brum! Code, which is the school's 7-digit DfE number - 330/4014



**Autism
Central**

Autism Family Support

Please find linked [Anna Freud | Autism Central](#), a support hub for families to access. Here, you can find online webinars as well as peer support.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about ONLINE TRENDS ENCOURAGING VIOLENCE

7 out of 10 teens report seeing violent content on social media, with over half of that content featuring fights involving young people. Most don't 'seek' it but are shown it through social media feeds or messaging groups. 91% of young people involved in violence have seen violent social media content. Viral trends, challenges, or 'wars' that are spread online risk encouraging violence offline, while real-world incidents may also be recorded and promoted online.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

ALGORITHMIC EXPOSURE

Social media platforms are designed to keep users engaged, meaning dramatic or extreme content can spread widely and quickly. Algorithms often recommend content that reflects users' past interactions. As a result, young people may see more violent material if they have viewed, commented on, or shared it before. Repeated exposure can make violent content appear frequently in their feeds without them fully understanding why.

WEAPONS AND CRIMINAL RISK

Teens exposed to high levels of real-world violence on social media sometimes report feeling an increased need to carry a weapon for 'self-protection'; however, carrying a weapon increases the risk of victimisation (harm and injury by others) for young people. In addition, carrying a weapon is a serious offence that can lead to police arrest and a criminal record.

SHARING VIOLENT CONTENT

Encouraging or assisting an offence is a crime in the UK, including via social media, and can lead to arrest. This means sharing, forwarding, or reposting violent content carries a risk for young people too. Showing examples of content to a trusted adult is appropriate, but young people should take care not to further spread violent material by posting it online or sharing it within large messaging groups.

FEAR, ANXIETY, AND MARGINALISATION

Research shows young people's emotional wellbeing can be negatively impacted by repeated exposure to violent online content, especially when it depicts 'real-world' violence (as opposed to fictional depictions in games or films). Posts featuring weapons, threats, attacks, and fights – or content that appears to glorify gang activity – can increase feelings of anxiety or fear among young people. Material that encourages violence targeting people because of their identity, such as their nationality or religion, can also create disproportionate harm for children belonging to those groups.

AVOIDANCE AND ISOLATION

Real-world violence on social media can increase young people's belief that their local communities – or the 'outside world' more generally – are unsafe places. This can result in avoidant and isolating behaviours, which may negatively affect their wellbeing. As well as feeling fearful of others, teens also report feeling judged for spending time together in large groups, which may affect their social interactions and leisure time.

Advice for Parents & Educators

STAY INFORMED

Stay alert for updates from police, schools, or local authorities, and follow the advice provided. Be cautious about unofficial accounts, fake content, and misinformation, which can spread quickly online or in chat groups. Ensure you get accurate information from trusted sources and encourage young people to do the same. Remind them never to share violent content online and to speak to a trusted adult instead.

DISCUSS SOCIAL MEDIA

Encourage young people to talk about the content they see online and the effect it can have. This can be an opportunity to discuss topics such as misinformation, AI-generated material, the attention economy, and algorithms, helping them understand how and why extreme content can spread online. Explore tools available to block, report, and remove harmful content, and signpost where to get support and advice, such as reportharmfulcontent.com.

TALK CRIME AND SAFETY

In most of the UK, the age of criminal responsibility is 10 (12 in Scotland). This means there can be serious criminal consequences for carrying a weapon, taking part in violence, or filming or sharing violent content. Discuss the law with young people alongside practical safety strategies. Ask questions such as: "What could you do if you feel unsafe?" Work together on action plans and remind them they can contact a trusted adult or the police if they witness or experience violence.

ENCOURAGE POSITIVE ACTION

Focus on strengthening young people's positive experiences both online and within their local communities. Discuss strategies to reduce negative social media effects, such as time limits, unfollowing certain accounts, or taking breaks from apps. Encourage offline activities such as spending time with friends, visiting local places, and taking part in hobbies that bring them joy, purpose, and connection. Remind them they can seek support with any concerns at any time via childline.org.uk.

Meet Our Expert

Dr. Holly Powell-Jones is the founder of Online Media Law UK and a leading UK expert in media law, online safety, and young people. Her PhD investigates youth understandings of criminal and legal risks in a digital context. She works in schools to provide award-winning education on the criminal, legal, and ethical considerations of rapidly advancing technologies.



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SPRING CONCERT 2026







SPORT AT UOBS

Girls' U13s Cricket Winners

Well done to our Year 8 pupils who won their cricket match against Selly Park Girls' School, 62-46. Special mentions:

- Minni - opposition's MVP
- Lauren - 2 wickets in 2 overs
- Evie - 2 wickets and retired from batting

A huge thanks to coach Alexis for organising the team and leading them to victory!



Year 10 Silver DofE Practice Expedition

Year 10 pupils successfully completed their three day residential for their Silver DofE Practice Expedition in Malvern. They showed great resilience, teamwork, and determination along the way.

A huge well done to all involved and thank you to the staff who supported them throughout the weekend. We're excited for the qualifying expedition ahead this summer!



Regional T1 Rugby Tournament

In cold and wet conditions at Moseley RFC, our Sixth Form mixed-gender rugby team took part in the Regional T1 Rugby Tournament. The squad worked hard throughout and performed well against strong opposition. They finished in second place, narrowly missing out on progressing to the next round. Well done to all players for their effort and teamwork.



U13s Netball Team Shines in Tournament

Our team recently unleashed their skills and sportspersonship at a recent local tournament, bringing young athletes together from various schools and clubs.

Several players stood out with their performances, and it was a testament to their hard work and training. The future looks bright for these young athletes!



U15s Girls' Football

Our Under 15s Girls' Football Club has truly been a highlight this term. With over 40 enthusiastic girls participating, it stands as our most popular club this season. The club has cultivated a sense of belonging and camaraderie amongst its members, creating lasting memories and friendships.



THULANI'S ATHLETIC SUCCESS

Thulani's (Year 10 pupil) commitment and dedication to his training with BRAT Athletics Club has been truly commendable. Thulani's recent performances include:

- **2-Lap Sprint:** Thulani secured a solid 2nd place finish with a time of just 22.1 seconds.
- **Standing Long Jump:** He achieved a remarkable distance of 2.52 meters, demonstrating his strength and agility.

Thulani's skills have not gone unnoticed. He was selected to represent Team Birmingham in the Sports Hall Regional League competition. The team emerged victorious, earning a spot at the nationals in Nuneaton this April. Thulani is thrilled about this opportunity and promises to update us on his progress.

In addition to competing, Thulani trains diligently with BRAT Athletics twice a week. His personal best times in outdoor events continue to improve as the season progresses:

200m: 24.6 seconds

100m: 11.8 seconds

With the new season on the horizon, Thulani's coaches have high expectations for his performance. His dedication, coupled with his progress so far, points to a promising future in athletics.



GET INVOLVED!

National Literacy Trust - UoBS Home Words Project

As part of our Arts & Culture Festival celebrations we are inviting families to share a word or phrase which you use at home, that not everyone would understand. The word should be important or meaningful to you. Your word might be: a word from your home language (e.g. Bengali, Chinese, French, Somali, Urdu, Welsh) a word specific to the local area (e.g. Brummie, Black Country dialect) or a word specific to one of your hobbies (e.g. gaming, sport, art).

Submitted words will be combined to create a piece of poetry celebrating the diverse languages of UoBS. [Click here to submit your word\(s\).](#)

Heritage & Home: A UoBS Community Cookbook

We're creating a community recipe and memory book for our school - a keepsake that celebrates the amazing range of cultures, traditions, and family stories that make up our community. We would love for you to share your favourite recipe along with a few memories connected to it. This could be a dish you enjoy during festivals, something eaten every Sunday, a comfort food or snack made by a loved one, or a recipe handed down through generations.

This project isn't just about food - it's about stories, togetherness, identity, and connection. [Click here to submit your recipes.](#)



TERM DATES 2026

Summer Term 2026

*Staff Professional Development Day: Monday 13 April 2026

Term Starts: Tuesday 14 April 2026

*BANK HOLIDAY: Monday 04 May 2026

Half Term: Monday 25 May to Friday 29 May 2026 (09 days incl)

*Staff Research Day: Friday 26 June 2026

*Staff Professional Development Day: Monday 06 July 2026

Term ends: Friday 17 July 2026 from 12.00

*no pupils or students to attend/non-teaching day.

Autumn Term 2026

*Staff Professional Development Day: Tuesday 01 September 2026

*Staff Professional Development Day: Wednesday 02 September 2026

Induction Days for Year 7 & 12 ONLY: Thursday 03 & Friday 04 September 2026

Term Starts for ALL pupils & students: Monday 07 September 2026

*Staff Professional Development Day: Wednesday 07 October 2026

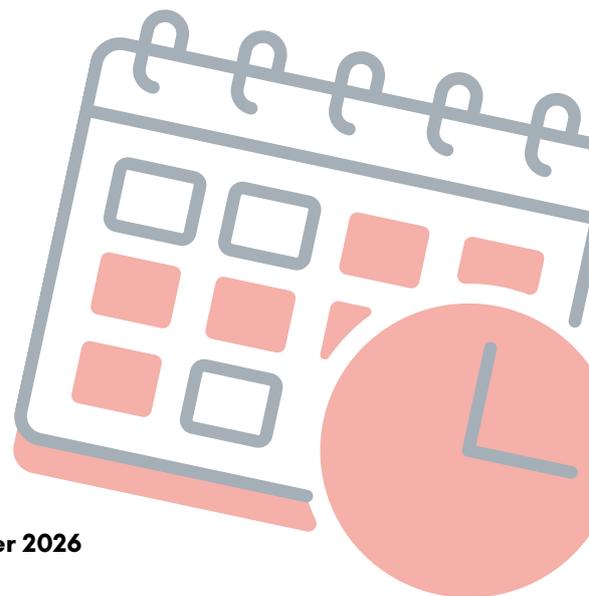
Half Term: Friday 23 October to Monday 02 November 2026 (11 days incl)

*Staff Research Day: Thursday 03 December 2026

*School closed: Friday 04 December 2026

Term ends: Friday 18 December 2026 from 12.00

*no pupils or students to attend/non-teaching day.



USEFUL CONTACTS

PAUSE - Forward Thinking Birmingham

0207 841 4470

A mental health service provider for young people up to the age of 25 in Birmingham.

Childline

0800 1111

[childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk)

Support for children and young people in the UK, including a free 24-hour helpline.

SHOUT

Text 'SHOUT' to 85258

Available 24/7

A FREE and confidential service for anyone in the UK who needs support.

Birmingham Mind

0121 262 3555 (helpline)

help@birminghammind.org

Open 09.00 - 23.00 everyday. Offering support to people who may be feeling low, anxious, worried, or stressed.

NSPCC

0800 800 5000

[nspcc.org.uk](https://www.nspcc.org.uk)

Support for children and anyone worried about a child.

Kooth

[kooth.com](https://www.kooth.com)

Free, anonymous online support service for young people.



10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators MANAGING EXAM STRESS

At some point in their education, children are almost certain to encounter exam stress, which can cast a shadow over their mental, emotional and physical wellbeing. Mental health charity YoungMinds estimate that a staggering 87% of pupils suffer from exam stress – highlighting the urgent need to minimise its impact on children's health and happiness.

1 PRACTISE WORKLOAD WISDOM

The build up to exam season is such a busy and pressurised time in a child's education that it can be difficult for youngsters to avoid feeling overwhelmed. Encourage them to consider whether their current workload is realistic and allows them sufficient time to relax and recharge. Work with them in crafting a revision timetable that's manageable and includes breaks and occasional days off.

2 ADVISE CLEARING THE CLUTTER

A disorganised work environment is proven to negatively affect our ability to focus, as well as our emotional state. Encourage children to keep their desk, notes and revision materials tidy – creating a dedicated, well-kept study space to promote maximum focus. Foster their creativity by suggesting they incorporate vibrant colours, mind maps and even quirky drawings into their revision notes.

3 MASTER THE MATERIALS TOGETHER

Revision seems far harder when a child is uncertain where to begin or what sources to consult. Support them in confirming revision materials with their various teachers – emphasising the importance of gathering a range of resources to get a more comprehensive understanding of the subject. Feeling more prepared should nurture the child's confidence and help to dispel some of their anxiety.

4 RECOMMEND CREATIVE NOTE-TAKING

Writing out notes in full – rather than simply bullet pointing – can be a strong start to a child's revision. Reinforce this idea, encouraging the use of flashcards (featuring shorter versions of previously taken notes) for effective repetition and memorisation. Discuss the power of regularly reviewing notes to help them stay in the child's memory.

5 USE VISUAL AIDS AND MNEMONICS

Encourage the use of visual aids like videos and sticky notes to enhance learning. Some children find these resources far more useful than simply reading their notes as written. Explore creating mnemonics for a fun and effective study approach – and it's also worth noting that the strategic use of colours is a proven means of triggering recall during exams.

SMILE

6 GATHER A 'TECH TOOLKIT'

Technology can be a huge advantage in exam prep. Educational YouTube channels and revision websites like BBC Bitesize can be immensely powerful resources for helping children to expand and retain their knowledge. You could also recommend the use of flashcard apps and educational podcasts for revision and reminders when young people are on the go.

7 KEEP IT FUN

Revision tends to go far more smoothly if children are having fun in the process. Injecting some humour into their notes, for instance, can make details more memorable – as can relating information to their real-life experiences. Try to encourage a variety of study methods, such as incorporating physical activity (even simply taking a walk) into their revision routine.

8 SUGGEST ACTIVE REVISION STRATEGIES

Make sure children are aware of different study techniques. You could emphasise the effectiveness of spaced repetition by reviewing material regularly over time to reinforce learning and improve retention. Discuss the benefits of active recall methods – such as self-testing or explaining a concept aloud – in identifying where their strengths and weaknesses lie.

9 ENCOURAGE A POSITIVE MINDSET

It can be easy for children's thoughts to fall into a downward spiral when they're stressed about exams. Try to foster a growth mindset by emphasising the importance of giving it their all rather than aiming for complete perfection. Positive self-talk and the use of affirmations can help build confidence and reduce anxiety, while visualising success and setting realistic goals can help them stay motivated and focused.

10 HELP THEM TO SEIZE THE DAY

There are lots of things children can do on the day of their exam to reduce stress and increase their focus. Talk them through some helpful exam-day strategies – such as arriving early, reading the instructions and the questions carefully, and pacing themselves during the test. Suggest some relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing or visualisation, to help them manage any nerves before and during the exam.

Meet Our Expert

Minds Ahead design and deliver the UK's only specialist postgraduate mental health qualifications. Winner of the Social Enterprise UK: 'One to Watch' award, the charity provides training and support to education organisations and local authorities. This guide has been written by Adam Gillett – a learning and development specialist who is also Associate Vice-Principal for Personal Development at Penistone Grammar School.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

University of Birmingham School
12 Weoley Park Road
Selly Oak
Birmingham
B29 6QU

0121 796 5000
uobschool.org.uk
reception@uobschool.org.uk

   @uobschool