



Every Student Thriving

28 March 2025

Dear parent/carers,

It has been a week of **inspirational and aspirational speakers** as JCS welcomed Professor Simon Conway-Morris from the University of Cambridge who gave a wide-ranging talk to students from Y7-12 encompassing his work in the field of paleo-biology and convergent evolution. It was fantastic for our students to hear from such an esteemed speaker and gave them a **glimpse into Higher Education** learning as well as sparking their curiosity on an array of topics. Additionally, Year 12 welcomed Professor Sir Keith Willett CBE to deliver a brilliant talk about his career as a trauma surgeon working both in the UK and abroad, his role as a Government advisor, his activities within the armed services and his current position as the chair of South Central Ambulance Service. He was incredibly engaging and his talk highlighted to our students the **varied career routes** within the NHS.

As the Easter term draws to a close we begin to look towards the summer. Year 11 and 13 are gearing up for the full examination season; focus week is taking shape, D of E weekends are being prepared for along with the World Challenge, transition is beginning and the experience of the world of work becomes a core focus for year 10 and year 12.

For our examination students **Easter is a critical time for discipline and applied focus**. This is time that, if invested wisely, will pay high dividends in terms of examination performance. Easter is late this year which means exams start very rapidly after our return. This makes the Easter vacation even more critical in the preparation phase for the examinations. I constantly urge students to aim higher than their likely grade. **The magic 10% extra could gain a full grade** (Often it is less as students frequently sit between grades.). A good use of time could make that gain a reality but that requires discipline, organisation and resilience as well as a balanced programme of play and work.

Talking of work: **Work experience** is an invaluable part of being educated about the world of work and John Colet's commitment to this initiative is first class. Just as later in life when securing a job, the responsibility lies with the student to source a potential placement and this aspect of work experience provides an important learning opportunity.. Sourcing a company, making a call and then informing the school all involve independent skills. Year 10 and 12, by embracing this process, significantly increases their experience and skill set which deepens their character and adds value to their personal portfolio.

Last week we had a **Challenge Partners visit**. We are part of an organisation of good or better schools who, throughout the year, make three day visits to each other to act as a form of quality assurance. This is essentially a peer to peer experience. It is very valuable as four leaders from four different schools from around the country formed the team that came to visit us. They were also led by an experienced Headteacher. We made the sixth form our key focus as we wanted an independent external review of our provision to inform our thinking for the future. Over 28 lessons were sampled, several panels of students were spoken to and key strategy documents assessed. It was a delightful experience and yet **further evidence of a sixth form of high pastoral support and high challenge which supports students with a wealth of experiences and character building opportunities**. I will give further insights after Easter.

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TOOLED UP this week focuses on the issues that have been explored in the highly acclaimed **NETFLIX series Adolescence**. This presents some very challenging areas that we all need to get to grips with but can seem overwhelming and disturbing in their nature. But further knowledge gives us insights that may help us to help our young people so please check out the support and information links in the TOOLED UP section below.

As always take care, be kind.

Ian Brierly

REMINDERS & NOTICES

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

End of Spring Term	-	4 April (2.55 finish)
Return to school	-	22 April
INSET Day	-	2 May
Bank Holiday	-	5 May
Year 8 History Trip	-	10 May

THE MEDICAL ROOM

We have had some recent issues with parents/carers who are telling their child to come to the medical room if they are feeling unwell for our medical officer to call to get them collected. A number of these students are well enough to stay in school and when this is explained the students become rude and confrontational using the notion that 'my mum/dad said..'

Please support us by ensuring that the right messages are sent to your child about remaining in school. If you send your child into school then they are well enough to be here and the medical officer is eminently qualified to judge if a student should be sent home. Thank you.

CURRENT VACANCIES

- Science Technician
- Cover Supervisor

Please check our website for further details [here](#).

SAFEGUARDING LEADS & INFORMATION

If parents have any concerns about this practice or, believe that any young person at John Colet School might be at risk, then please do contact one of the members of our Safeguarding Team via - safeguarding@johncolet.co.uk

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PARENT SUPPORT : Click [HERE](#) for practical tips

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about BLUESKY SOCIAL APP

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

While Bluesky has been around since 2019, it's suddenly taken off in a big way thanks to a significant exodus from X (formerly Twitter). Indeed, it looks and behaves a lot like Twitter before Elon Musk bought the platform. Bluesky has been touted in recent months as a safer, more open-minded alternative to X – but like any social media site, it still has its share of risks.

AGE RESTRICTION
13+

With an App Store rating of 17+ & Google Play rating Mature

NO PRIVATE ACCOUNTS

While most social networks allow accounts to be private, at the time of writing, all Bluesky accounts must be public. The development team has indicated this might change in the future, but the app is built on a public-first protocol. If private accounts are ever introduced, it may only be in a limited way – such as through the implementation of group chats.

INTERACTIONS WITH STRANGERS

Every account being public means that anyone can be contacted by anyone else. While users don't have to respond and can easily block people and move on, it does mean that youngsters are at particular risk of being conned by scammers, messaged by predatory adults or exposed to others with ill intentions. These hazards can be compounded by the fact that Bluesky doesn't require its users to provide their real name.

TROLLING AND BULLYING

While Bluesky currently feels a lot friendlier than X seems to have become, its lack of private accounts means that there's nothing to stop users from trolling and cyberbullying younger people. While accounts can be blocked and reported, a persistent bully could simply create a new profile, potentially making their victims feel unsafe in continuing to use the app.

DANGEROUS MISINFORMATION

Established news organisations have fact-checking and editing processes, but social networks have no such controls and can often serve as breeding grounds for misinformation and disinformation. Bluesky will possibly be no different once it reaches a certain size, and children may not have the critical thinking skills to tell fact from fiction – or to discern an informative, honest user from a malicious one.

ADULT TARGET AUDIENCE

Bluesky isn't designed with children in mind, and there aren't many parental controls on the platform. In an interview with the BBC, Bluesky's CEO originally said that the app would only allow users aged 18 and above to sign up, but a spokesperson later clarified its age restriction as 13+. This could imply the app was originally meant for an adult audience and suggests that making the platform more child-friendly might not currently be a priority.

RAPID GROWTH

At the time of writing, Bluesky seems calm in comparison with other social networks where moderation is lax and the atmosphere toxic – but that's due at least in part to its smaller community. The app has recently been adding as many as a million users per day, and if that continues, there'll be more unpleasant users to handle, and moderators could struggle to maintain the pleasant environment Bluesky is currently known for.

Advice for Parents & Educators

USE THE ADULT CONTENT FILTER

Bluesky doesn't have much in the way of parental controls, but there are content filters which can hide sexual and graphic imagery. These are enabled by default for underage accounts but can be manually turned on in the 'Moderation' section of the app's settings. The 'advanced' Bluesky Moderation Service lets you restrict content even further, hiding – for example – self-harm content, extremist rhetoric, and even rude posts.



LOOK OUT FOR FAKES

Impersonation is a problem on all social networks. While the consequences are usually benign, imposters sometimes attempt to scam or groom children by pretending to be a popular influencer or online personality. Bluesky is unique in that it can be connected to official domains, with users' handles linking to other sites; while this isn't widely used right now, it could be a reliable way to verify celebrities and public figures in future.



ENCOURAGE BLOCKING AND REPORTING

Another tool that Bluesky uses to ensure a decent experience is muting and blocking accounts. The former prevents you from seeing a specific user's content, while the latter stops them from seeing yours. If a child is encountering trolls or bullies on the platform, encourage them to use this function, while also reporting the offenders to help make the platform a nicer place for everyone.



KEEP AN OPEN DIALOGUE

As with all social media platforms, moderation and content filters can only do so much; it's highly likely that a child will eventually face something unsavoury. For that reason, it's important to make sure that young people are aware of the risks and know how to handle the technology if anything they see on the app makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable.



Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, TechRadar, Tom's Guide, The Evening Standard, The Guardian and The New Statesman.



The National College®

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/bluesky-app>



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TOOLED UP - PARENT SUPPORT



We understand many parents and schools are currently navigating concerns sparked by the themes highlighted in Netflix's series *Adolescence*.

At **Tooled Up**, we are committed to supporting parents and carers when it comes to the issues raised in the programme and **have a host of resources on** topics including **misogyny, incel culture, social media** and the **rise of violence against women and girls**.

If you worry about information on **TikTok**, listen to our **podcast [Misogynistic Content on TikTok](#)**, which explores **how incel ideology covertly proliferates on mainstream social media** and **what parents might do to counter** this.

Every parent has heard of Andrew Tate, the self-confessed misogynist whose videos have been viewed billions of times. **Our webinar [Andrew Tate and Toxic Influencers: A Guide](#)** looks at his **methodologies and appeal** and **examines what can be done to mitigate** the risk that exposure to this type of material can bring.

For **access to all Tooled Up resources on themes** raised in *Adolescence* click **[Netflix's Adolescence: Related Resources in Tooled Up](#)** where we have collated **a comprehensive list to support you**.

IMPORTANT: UPCOMING WEBINAR

[Adolescence on Netflix - Action Points for Parents and Staff: 23rd April, 19:00 BST](#)

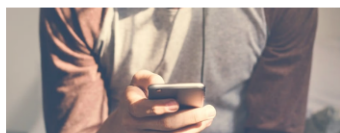
Join Dr Kathy Weston for this **interactive session** reflecting on **essential lessons, key takeaways**, and the **practical actions** that **parents** and **educators can implement** on the issues raised by Netflix's *Adolescence* series.

There will also be a Q&A at the end of the session.

To register click here: [Adolescence on Netflix: Action Points for Parents and Staff](#)



Misogynistic Content on TikTok



Andrew Tate and Toxic Influencers



Netflix's Adolescence: Resources

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COMMUNITY SUPPORT

**sing out for
mental health**

12th April 2025
Aylesbury
Waterside Theatre

Hundreds of Buckinghamshire singers join forces **to raise awareness of the impact of singing on mental health** in a ground breaking concert.

With host
Andy Collins

Scan the QR Code for tickets

www.singoutfor.org

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**Mind Morning:
Theme - ADHD**

CREATING A **FREE** SPACE FOR ALL **PARENTS/CARERS** TO MEET, MINGLE AND NETWORK WITH OTHERS WHO CAN RELATE, WHILST ENGAGING WITH VARIED TOPICS, TO HELP LEARN NEW WAYS TO SUPPORT AND BETTER UNDERSTAND THEIR CHILDREN.

TO BOOK ON SCAN QR CODE BELOW
LIMITED SPACES AVAILABLE

SCAN HERE

Monday 31st March 2025	9:30 am - 10.30 am	THE GATEWAY, AYLESBURY HP19 8FF
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www.scouts.org.uk

**JOIN THE MISBOURNE
EXPLORER SCOUT UNIT**

We Provide Young People With Skills For Life

Where and When?:

We meet on Thursdays - 19:30-21:00 at the Baptist Church hall in Great Missenden

Activities:

We have many weekend camps (usually 1 per half term)

- Winter camping
- Sea kayaking
- Caving
- Mountaineering
- Survival Camp
- Water Weekend
- Plus a variety of adventurous activities on our evenings.

Expeditions:

We offer Duke of Edinburgh Previous expeditions include:

- Canada
- Chamonix, France
- Dolomites, Italy
- Scotland and Lake District
- Plus many more opportunities within scouting.

Sign up now!

The Misbourne Explorer Scout Unit is recruiting. We are an active unit with an interest in Adventurous Activities. We welcome any one between the ages of 14-18. We are a youth led organisation and want to hear about what you want to do!

If you want to join us come along to our new persons evening on the 1st May by filling out this google form:

<https://forms.gle/kHWYU5WStfaeFLS37>

If you want to come along sooner or would like some more information please let us know!
jenson.m.thomas@gmail.com

**Buckinghamshire
Family Learning**

**A FREE two-hour workshops for
parents and carers of children at
Secondary school in Buckinghamshire**

**Help your Child to Think Critically to Gain Confidence
and Self-Esteem (FMWB023)**

Support your child to build self-esteem and confidence by developing problem solving strategies and creative thinking.

Wednesday 23rd April, 7:00pm - 9:00pm

Help Your Autistic Child at Home Workshop (FMAC134)

We will help you to understand autism and its characteristics. Help you create a supportive and inclusive environment for your child at home.

Wednesday 7th May, 9:30am - 11:30 am

Thinking About Volunteering Workshop (FMVW018)

Build your confidence and explore volunteering as an optional step to start or return to employment.

Wednesday 30th April, 7:00pm - 9:00pm

To book your FREE place, choose a date and contact our enrolment team on 01296 383582, scan the QR code or click on the link. For more information call/text Kathryn on 07770 641997.

[buckinghamshireadulthoodlearning.org.uk](https://www.buckinghamshireadulthoodlearning.org.uk) [BucksAdLearning.org.uk](https://www.BucksAdLearning.org.uk) [adulthoodlearningbc.ac.uk](https://www.adulthoodlearningbc.ac.uk)

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