

HEADTEACHER'S BULLETIN

APRIL 2024 Edition

Dear Ratton Parents/Carers,

I hope this edition of the bulletin finds you all well. You'll find this is a shorter edition for April as, of course, the Easter holiday took up a good part of the month. I hope you all had a restful and relaxing break – although it seems like a long time ago now!

This term so far at Ratton

We started the term with an INSET day. Staff worked together on developing our oracy strategy at school. Oracy means the ability to articulate ideas and engage with others through spoken language – essentially talking to each other! By developing students' speaking skills, encouraging them to be more effective speakers and developing their listening skills, we further their personal development and ability later in life to succeed in whatever path they choose. Research also suggests that oracy development impacts on the quality of written work that students can produce. Oracy is a key part of literacy, alongside the ability to read and write fluently, which we already focus on across the curriculum here at Ratton.

Staff also engaged with new safeguarding training on a range of possible scenarios in school and spent time in curriculum teams developing their medium- and long-term curriculum plans for the term ahead and beyond.

Year 10

I'd like to recognise how well Year 10 students have engaged with their mock exams so far this term. Their excellent behaviour and willingness to work with us on the essential routines in the exam hall have been commendable. It was great to see. Special thanks go out to Mrs Peters and the careers team for organising the 'Life after Ratton' event this term, where various post-16 providers discussed the opportunities available. With strong connections to our local post-16 providers, we look forward to our students experiencing the upcoming taster days in term 6.

If you are a Year 10 parent or carer, please do have those crucial conversations with your child around the next steps, and the qualifications and grades needed to unlock the door to the next stage in your child's education. This will help provide a clear sense of direction and aspiration, providing valuable support during the demanding final year at Ratton School.

Safeguarding

You may have noticed a tragic story in the media earlier this week regarding the death of a young person, highlighting an increase in global cases of financially motivated sexual extortion – a type of online blackmail widely known as 'sextortion'. The National Crime Agency issued an alert to all schools and professionals working with young people; you can find a link to that warning here: [NCA issues urgent warning about 'sextortion' - National Crime Agency](#)

We will take heed of the warning and build any advice into our strong safeguarding practice.

On the link above you'll find advice for parents and carers. The key points are as follows:

Advice to parents and carers if their child says that someone is trying to trick, threaten or blackmail them online:

- **Don't pay, do stop contact and block:** you may be tempted to pay, but there is no guarantee that this will stop the threats. As the offender's motive is to get money, once you have shown you can pay, they will likely ask for more and blackmail may continue. If you have paid, don't panic but don't pay anything more. Help your child to stop all communication with the offender and block them on any accounts that they have been contacted on.
- **Avoid deleting anything:** try not to delete anything that could be used as evidence such as messages, images, telephone numbers and bank account details.
- **Report to the police or CEOP:** call 101 or 999 if there is an immediate risk of harm to your child. Or you can use the [CEOP Safety Centre](#) to report any online blackmail attempts.

Adults can also support young people in getting their images removed using Childline and the Internet Watch Foundation's [Report Remove tool](#), the National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children's [Take It Down](#) tool, and reporting to the platform or app it has been shared on. Further information for parents and carers on how they can support their child can be found in the CEOP Education's [online blackmail](#) article.

If you have any questions or concerns relating to this issue, please contact Mr Brown, Deputy Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead, or your child's Assistant Year Leader who also acts as a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead for their year group. We are always here to help.

Sporting / Extra-Curricular Success

- A big well done to Davidson K in #TeamYear11, who was presented with his embroidered Black Belt, as an acknowledgement for his continued commitment to his club. Davidson continues to practice and train, helps teach other students and helps at gradings and events. Well done.
- A great achievement for Ted W in #TeamYear10, who earlier this month asked to represent Harlequins in the RFU U15 DPP Festival at North Bristol RFC, the only scrum half from Sussex to be selected.
- Well done to Riley B in #TeamYear9, who achieved a Distinction in his Grade 4 Piano exam. Good job Riley.
- A big well done and thank you goes to those Year 8, 9 & 10 learners who supported and ran the Year 5 & 6 (KS5/6) Local primary Hockey tournament at the Saffrons Hockey Club. A well-attended local event, with lots of KS5/6 learners from across 8 primary schools, all of whom had a great time and learnt a lot. Well done.
- A big achievement for Ava B in #TeamYear9, who we are proud to share has qualified for the Dance World Cup 2024 in Prague. Ava will compete towards the end of June, and we look forward to hearing how she gets on. A huge well done to Ava, an incredible achievement.
- Well done to a selection of #TeamYear9 learners who successfully completed their Broze Duke of Edinburgh award over the Easter weekend. They navigated through very thick fog whilst crossing

the downs, navigating their way to the top of the Long Man safely to reach Alfriston. Well done to you all.

- Well done to Finn B in #TeamYear10, who played Hockey for Sussex Under 15s. Finn represented his county with pride and did his team proud. Well done.
- Well done to Fin L-F in #TeamYear9 who competed in the London Mini Marathon, after being selected to compete for the South East region. Fin placed an amazing 2nd for the South East U15 team, 39th overall and 6th for his age. A great achievement, well done.
- A big well done to Ethan P #TeamYear11, Jess F and Amelia S both #TeamYear10, who all represented Sussex in both the boys' and girls' teams, U16 SEESFA semifinal. The boy's team are now in the regional and national finals. Great job, all of you. Well done #TeamRatton, another fantastic run of sporting success. Keep up the good work all of you.

**Please note that some of these achievements have not yet hit our school news/socials, these are currently being published ready to bring us up to end of April/beginning of May. Watch this space, school news will be shared under separate communication.*

Free Daily Breakfast at School

Just a reminder that the national breakfast programme continues here at Ratton. Young people can grab a free hot or cold breakfast – including hot drinks, cereal, porridge and bagels – in Refresh from 8.15am every morning. We contribute to funding this initiative, but the majority of the cost is borne by the programme itself.

We know how hard the cost-of-living crisis is affecting our families, and so I would encourage your children to attend each morning if they need to. We know that if children are hungry, they will struggle to learn at school too, and so the breakfast programme helps us to help our children learn effectively throughout the day. Staff are also present each morning to sit down and chat with students, which makes for a lovely atmosphere and start to the day. All students are welcome to attend, and we'd love to see more students eating a good breakfast to start the day.

Attendance Matters

Thank you for all your support with attendance. Our whole school attendance has improved since the Easter holiday, and we have had two of our strongest weeks of students attending school since early in the year.

The good news is that attendance at Ratton School continues to remain above both the national and East Sussex average attendance rate for secondary schools; thank you for your ongoing support in ensuring your child attends school regularly. Please don't hesitate to contact your child's Year Team if you would like to discuss support or any issues around your child's attendance and we will help you in any way we can.

Team if you would like to discuss support or any issues around your child's attendance and we will help you in any way we can.

Reminders for the new term

Uniform has looked good so far this term, with students looking smart and ready to learn. However, there are a couple of issues I'd like to address in this bulletin for the new term.

Please can I remind parents and carers that hoodies and unbranded jumpers are not part of school uniform. Students will receive a signature on their handbook for each occasion they are wearing a non-Ratton sweatshirt or hoodie. Can I also ask parents and carers to support us in encouraging their children not to wear joggers or tracksuit trousers under their school trousers. We have seen a small number of students do so this term and conceal items such as vapes within them. For safeguarding reasons, and in line with our uniform policy, we will ask any student wearing these items under uniform trousers to remove joggers or tracksuit trousers in a suitable location. Refusal to do so will mean that we would need to contact home and arrange for the student involved to go home and change, before readmittance to school.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to remind parents that we do not expect to see students using mobile phones at school; if we do, they will be confiscated and stored safely until the end of the day for students to pick up before they leave school. A significant majority of students work with us on this to keep school a safe place and free from any negative interactions on social media during the day. If a student needs to make a call home in an emergency, we can always facilitate this; if you as a parent or carer need to contact your child, please phone via reception and we can find your child to speak with you. Thank you for your support on this.

Upcoming Events

We look forward to welcoming our Year 7 parents and carers to Ratton School for our first Year 7 teacher consultation evening on Thursday 9th May – I hope to see many of you there. GCSE exams have started for students in practical subjects and speaking exams are underway for languages students. The first GCSE exam in the hall for Year 11 is also on Thursday 9th. Good luck to all Year 11 students over the coming weeks in their GCSE exams.

Best wishes,



Mr Peevers
Headteacher

