

Headteacher's Bulletin

June 2025 Edition

Dear Ratton Parents/Carers,

I hope you have had a good month; it doesn't seem too long ago that I wrote to you at the end of term 5 with the mid-term holiday in view!

Farewell to our Year 11 Students

We held our Valediction Ceremony on the afternoon of Friday 27 June. Year 11 students enjoyed ice cream from a van we had arranged on site. It was a lovely opportunity for students and staff to relax, chat and enjoy a treat together before heading into the main hall to celebrate their time at Ratton. Mrs Papagna led the staff speakers, and I spoke to the year group about rites of passage and carrying a small part of Ratton with them into the big wide world out there, whatever they end up doing in the future. We would love to see them back, inspiring our students of the future, as they have been a wonderful year group. We look forward to welcoming them back to school to celebrate their success on GCSE Results Day, Thursday 21 August.

During the Valediction Ceremony, students and staff received awards and we experienced some excellent entertainment. All students received their Ratton Valediction certificate from me during the afternoon. It was emotional, but more importantly a fitting way to officially bring time at Ratton School to a close. Next up is the Prom on Friday 4 July where we look forward to some flamboyant arrivals, vintage vehicles and sharp dressing!

Year 10 Update

We have around 190 students embarking on external work experience during Enrichment Week, which is a fantastic figure – our highest number for some years. Additionally, for the first time during Enrichment Week we also have a sizeable group of students working at East Sussex College Eastbourne campus on various work-related projects. I look forward to attending a celebration event there on the last day of term and hearing all about their experiences. I'd also like to take the opportunity to thank colleagues at East Sussex College Group for the fantastic partnership we have which allows our students to take up these opportunities.

It also feels apt at this point in the bulletin to let Year 10 parents and careers know that Mr Ahmed, who is joining us in September as Year 11 Leader, has already visited Ratton and we have had some handover conversations with him. He's looking forward to working with the year group and Ms Jenkins. As an experienced leader in previous schools, I'm sure he'll bring some fantastic experience and knowledge to support the year group through their final stage with us. He'll write to parents and carers introducing himself in due course.

Finally, it was great to hear from Ms Jenkins earlier all about the college taster day at ESCG Eastbourne campus today. She told me our students were really well engaged and enjoyed their day. If you are a Year 10 parent, please do have these important conversations around post-16 plans in the coming weeks. Encourage your child to look at the options that would suit them and find out as much as they can about the next potential careers steps that any course can unlock.

Attendance Matters

I would like to again take the opportunity to highlight attendance and thank you for your support this year. Regular attendance at school is essential for your child to achieve their full potential. Research shows that children who attend school regularly are more likely to perform well in their exams, develop strong social skills and have better long-term outcomes in further education and employment.

The Department for Education considers attendance below 90% to be *persistently absent*. This equates to just 1 day off every two weeks and can have a significant impact on learning.

This means 20 days off a year or 100 lessons or hours a year of lost learning.

Even short periods of absence can result in gaps in knowledge that may be difficult to recover.

At Ratton, we aim for every student to achieve at least **96% attendance** over the school year. We are committed to working closely with families to ensure any barriers to attendance are addressed and that students feel supported and motivated to attend school every day.

If your child is facing challenges that affect their attendance, please contact the school as soon as possible. Our pastoral and attendance teams are here to help.

Mobile Phones

Our local MP, Josh Babarinde, has shared details with us regarding the work of Smartphone Free Childhood <https://smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk/newsletter> Constituents have been in touch with him to raise the profile of this organisation. It may be that some of our parents and carers who are reading this bulletin are aware of this organisation or even involved with it.

We know how the high cost of living continues to affect our families, with the news this week of a rise in inflation. I ask you to 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. Breakfast also continues to be very popular with staff who join students every day for a catch up and a chat before the day's learning gets underway.

Personal Development

We have continued a run of workplace visits with our Year 8 students, including a visit to the South Downs National Park. Year 10 students have been engaging with post-16 providers and visiting local colleges for their taster days this month, all part of the process of deciding on next steps in their education.

Current Year 7 students have also received a day's training in readiness for their roles as Transition Ambassadors, supporting our new students next week during transition events and in September and beyond, with our new Year 7 group. Well done to all involved, demonstrating the Ratton virtues of compassion towards our understandably nervous students, and teamwork in fostering belonging and

connections with their younger peers. Thanks to Mr Potten, Ms Sutton-Smith and all involved in training the students.

We've also seen a group of media ambassadors from across Years 7 to Year 10, who recently visited Eastbourne District General Hospital to work with the hospital radio team (Radio DGH), enabling them to practice their interview skills for their up and coming, student-led Podcast, which will focus on and support 'transition' here at Ratton. They were fantastically articulate ambassadors for us and, following this community invitation to Radio DGH (a big thank you to them!), have created some brilliant Podcast episodes that will help support our new students – and families – joining us this September. Another notable example of how Ratton students are connecting with the local community and developing their leadership skills.

Finally, with the Podcast in mind, we are pleased to share the newly released episodes with you. WATCH THIS SPACE, these will be shared via our social media platforms by way of school news and, also, sent directly via Edulink to our new Year 7 families, ready for them to explore with their children over summer.

Sporting Success / Achievement Comms

- Well done to our **#TeamYear8 and #TeamYear9 Sports Leaders** who hosted the KS2 Tennis Festival event at Ratton, which saw 9 school in attendance. Another great success, well done.
- Well done to **Emily W** (#TeamYear10) who, earlier this month, represented at the Brighton Beach Court opening. Emily was invited to play by Hoopsfix for the launch. She was amongst some very talented players, showcasing her own basketball talents; and the youngest there! A fantastic season for her and we look forward to seeing how she develops her talents, a huge well done to her.
- A big well done to **Oscar F** (#TeamYear10) who made the podium at Eastbourne sprint Aquathlon this month. Oscar competed in an open category, which is classed as an adult race and finished in third place! This included a 750m sea swim followed by a 5k run no less! An amazing achievement for Oscar.
- Well done to **Fin L-F** (#TeamYear10), **Jessie O** and **Daniel S** (both #TeamYear9) all of whom represented their school in the Sussex Schools athletics event. Great job, all of you! Also to **Fin L-F** (#TeamYear10), on a separate note, who came 1st in the Cunliffe Cup representing Sussex Schools at the K2 Crawley in the 3K very recently. Fin also ran in Eastbourne's 10K last weekend, he was the 1st male youth aged 15-19. Another fine running success, congratulations.
- A final, and by no means least, congratulations to our **#TeamYear8 & #TeamYear9 Sports Leaders** who recently visited the Lexus Eastbourne Open Championships for the tennis open games at Devonshire Park. Students got to witness world-class tennis right on their doorstep, including top British players in action, including Cam Norrie, Dan Evans, Heather Watson, and Jodie Burridge! A great opportunity and well done to our students who were ambassadors for us here at Ratton. Well done.

Another special achievement this month and shout-out goes to **Amelia R-W** (#Teamyear11, Leaver of 2025!), who secured a 2-year fully funded scholarship to live and study at Wycombe Abbey International School in China, following a successful application process and her hard work in #MFL (Modern Foreign Languages), specifically, within Mandarin.

Amelia made #Press locally, **ARTICLE LINK AVAILABLE HERE** : [Ratton School celebrates an outstanding student success - a prestigious scholarship to Wycombe Abbey International School in China!](#). Well done to Amelia and our staff team, what a fantastic achievement.

As ever, please do continue to share your child's successes and achievements with us, they are always a pleasure to receive and share. We enjoy nothing more than celebrating our students here at Ratton, be it an extra-curricular club, community work, fundraising and much more. Please continue to share photos and celebrations with our trust PR Communications Lead, Lucie Hamblin (lhamblin@sdl.t.org.uk), who will then happily publish and share across our community. As ever, School News updates for this month will follow separately.

We have celebrated many achievements this academic year, showcasing our students and how they continue to demonstrate our school virtues both inside and outside of the classroom, within their community. Let's continue the celebratory momentum, both for current students and new joiners, in the new academic year. I look forward to hearing of achievements over the course of the summer holidays, ready to share come September.

A huge well done, as ever, to all of our students who have done themselves and us all here at Ratton, very proud indeed.

Changes to the School Day 2025-2026

We have been reviewing the structure of the school day, considering student and staff voice and the activities we provide during unstructured breaks. A common theme has been that a longer break would allow for more meaningful time to spend on activities such as clubs, sporting activities and performing arts. As a result, we will be moving to a slightly different structure to the school day.

Please see below for timings:

- 8.10-8.30 Breakfast Club in Refresh – all students welcome for a free breakfast to start the day.
- 8.30-8.35am line up – students will be expected on the playground in line by 8.30am
- 8.35-9am Tutor time
- 9-10am Lesson 1
- 10-11am Lesson 2
- 11- 11:20am First Break
- 11:20am -12:20pm Lesson 3
- 12:20- 13:20pm Lesson 4
- 13:20-14:00pm Lunch
- 14:00-15:00pm Lesson 5

As you can see above, we have shortened the first break and lengthened the second break to allow for a longer 40-minute break at lunchtime, when clubs and activities will run. This will allow more time for structured activities during lunch to benefit both students and staff and expand our already strong extra-curricular offer. We will continue to offer food from Refresh at both breaks - the first break focused on snacks and grab and go food, and the second longer lunch break with a focus on sit down hot meals.

These timings will operate from September 2025. We have already secured an agreement with Stagecoach Buses that the 59 bus that stops outside of Ratton at the end of the day will arrive at 3.10pm (from 21 September) to accommodate the slightly earlier finish time of 3.00pm.

Please do talk to your child to prepare them for this change from September – we will of course be sharing this information in school and preparing students for this change. I will remind you again of this development in my final letter of the year, next month.

Upcoming Events – the last of this academic year!

We're entering a busy final stretch of the term and the academic year. As part of this, we're excited to welcome our incoming Year 7 students for their transition days on **Tuesday 1 and Wednesday 2 July**. These Year 6 students will be joining us in September, and the transition days are a key part of helping them settle in. Moving on, we are holding Year 7 Careers Day on Wednesday 9 July – the Game of Life. There will also be various rewards trips happening and of course our red-carpet event at the Royal Hippodrome Theatre on Thursday 10 July.

The final week of term is our Enrichment Week, and I hope that students are looking forward to taking part in a wide range of activities provided by staff. This week is, as always, one of the busiest weeks of the school year. Our Cultural Fair takes place on the afternoon of Monday 14 July on the lawn in front of the school. We are also all very excited to re-introduce the Ratton School Sponsored Walk for all students on Tuesday 15 July. We have had the go ahead from Eastbourne Borough Council and so will be walking a course of 6-7 miles on the day to raise money for our two chosen charities by our new Student Leadership Team – East Sussex Wildlife Rescue Team and the Children with Cancer Fund. Please look out for the letter including arrangements for the day from Mr Kearsey. The **final day of the term is Friday 18 July**, and students will be free to go at the end of their enrichment activity on Friday afternoon. I hope all our students have a fantastic experience during this week that adds to their own personal development and experience.

I will write again in the final week of the term. Until then I hope you and your families have a lovely start to July.

Best wishes,



Mr Peever
Headteacher