

## Headteacher's Update

19<sup>th</sup> April 2024

It is always a pleasure to be able to formally welcome the students at the start of a new term as I did in my assemblies this week. Hopefully, all of the students and their families had the opportunity to recharge their batteries ready for the term ahead. Anecdotally, I've received lots of positive feedback from a number of students in years 11 and 13 about the two week break and just how well they were able to organise themselves and manage their revision schedules whilst building in time for some of the leisurely activities, including exercise, that will support their wellbeing in the lead up to the externally assessed examinations in the weeks ahead.

My focus for this week's assemblies was inspired by some articles that I had read in the media in recent weeks and my ongoing concerns about the sheer volume of information that young people are exposed to nowadays, particularly through online platforms, and how they might be able to navigate their way through what seems to be an increasingly complex information landscape.

As a starting point, I chose to focus on the difference between facts and opinions and asked the students to critically analyse information to identify what is objective and proven as a fact as opposed to subjective opinions, which may be true or untrue and may also be supported by evidence, but ultimately are someone's interpretation of reality. From researching this area, it is my *opinion* that far too much of the information that is presented as factual is in fact opinion. Furthermore, there are far too many opinions that are presented as the only viewpoint whereas other opinions may well have support and be equally valid.

Related to this is the issue of influencers, namely the people whose opinions we are influenced by. There is a body of research that suggests that we are more influenced by some people than others mainly because we attribute values to those people based upon their appearance, wealth or other measures of success. Another factor from research that may influence the information that we choose to consume or ignore is what is termed a confirmation bias. This suggests that we seek out information that reaffirms our attitudes and beliefs and ignore information or evidence that challenges those beliefs. An example of this could be skipping past opposing comments on an online forum whilst spending time reading comments that you find favourable.

Whatever our opinions or beliefs, as a Headteacher it is my belief that we should support our young people so that they can be more critical of the information that they are consuming, that they know and understand how to find evidence and can decipher between good quality research based information and information that is merely based on the attitudes and opinions of others. Furthermore, the rapid technological advances, particularly in relation to artificial intelligence, may mean that we will all need to be better informed to enable ourselves to be better protected from those who may wish to misuse it.

### Executive Headteacher, Primary-Lead

I would like to congratulate Colin Tucker, Headteacher at Ryefield Primary School for his recent appointment as the Executive Headteacher for the primary phase of the Vanguard Learning Trust.

A letter outlining his appointment can be found [\[here\]](#).

Finally this week, we would like to share some images of the daffodils that were planted as a memorial for Mr Cahill. The donation of daffodil bulbs was an incredibly generous gesture and now that spring has arrived the daffodils have definitely brightened up the school surroundings.



Wishing all of our families a wonderful weekend.

**Gary Mullings**  
Headteacher

## The Time Capsule

Our second edition of the Time Capsule, the Vyners School History magazine, has now been released.

I would first like to express my gratitude to how well the first edition was received.

The students worked so hard on it and were blown away by the response from fellow students, their teachers, parents and members of the wider Vyners community that took the time to read their articles.

In our second edition we are continuing our aim to make sure that we are covering a wide variety of time periods and perspectives in our articles. The editorial team have been hard at work crafting articles to give a fresh perspective on some popular topics and uncover some less well studied corners of the past. The team has also recognised a few events. We have an article on the history of stories in honour of World Book Day and articles on Ickenham and Uxbridge to celebrate Local History Month.

Please click on the link [\[here\]](#) and delve in to discover the exciting articles in this edition.

**Mr Beale, Subject Leader - History & Politics**



## Safeguarding Snapshot

Please click [\[here\]](#) for this week's safeguarding snapshot on energy drink consumption by children.

## Local Community Event

Georgia Nicholls (G.Nix Fitness), is a local personal trainer and exercise & mental health coach. She runs her classes in and around Ruislip and supports people in the local community, of all ages, with their mental health through exercise.

***Georgia is running a free event this Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> April at Middlesex Stadium in Ruislip, which anyone is welcome to attend.***

The Mental Health & Exercise Festival (MHEC-Fest) is designed to teach people how to use exercise to improve their mental health. There will be an educational talk (suitable for all ages), followed by a short, fun, energising workout.

The link for details of the event and how to sign up for a free place are as follows:

<https://mailchi.mp/3ee9d20d325a/mhec-fest>