

ISSUE 16
24th May 2024



MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to our end of term edition of the Blog for Term 5.

Our Year 11 and Year 13 students are now 2 weeks into their summer examinations. I wanted to start by saying a big well done to all of them for all the incredibly hard work they have been putting in to preparing for these and to wish them all continued good luck for the remaining examinations after half term.

I met this week with members of our new Parent Teacher Association – The Holcombe PTA. I am enormously grateful to the 10 or so parents who have committed to giving up some of their free time to organise fund raising activities for the school. Next term we will be celebrating our Founders Day on Thursday 18 July with a range of activities during the school day and a summer concert in the evening. Our new PTA have agreed to support both events on the day and will start introducing themselves to the students and to you as parents and carers. Please do save the date so as many of you as possible will be able to join us for the evening concert.

Whilst talking of saving dates, can I ask all parents of students in years 7-9 to save the date of Thursday 27 June as this will be our first Key Stage 3 Prizegiving evening where we will be celebrating a wide range of outstanding achievements from some of our younger students. More details will be issued on this after half term.

When we return we will be into Term 6 and the last term of this academic year. The British weather is notoriously unpredictable and if we do get a prolonged spell of very hot weather then we will issue guidance on any uniform changes. However, when we return after half term our uniform regulations will be staying as normal until we inform you otherwise, so please do ensure that your child is attending school properly dressed. We are becoming particularly concerned with trousers at the moment with more and more boys wearing trousers that are either too large or without a belt. Please do ensure your son has trousers that fit correctly for when we return.

One slight change will be Year 12 where we will be trialling a new uniform code and a new approach to punctuality. We will issue this guidance in the first week or two of next term with a view to trialling this for the last four to five weeks of this year. If the trial is successful then we will extend this to the whole 6th form in September.

I'm sure amongst our parents/carers there are a range of views about the upcoming General Election which was announced this week. Here our overriding mood is one of frustration since we were expecting, any day now, a final decision from Ministers on the proposal for our school (and Fort Pitt and Chatham Girls) to become a co-educational school from September 2025. However, with the election now called we are preparing that this decision could now be delayed. All I can say at this point is that we remain hopeful that this will finally be approved soon and I will keep you all updated on any news when we receive it.

Next term will be a busy one with the end of examinations, Prizegiving, Induction for our new Year 7 and new Year 12, Art/DT exhibition and Founders Day, on top of the usual day to day work that we do here. I will look forward to providing further updates next term but for now I wish you and your families a very happy May half term break.

Mr L Preston
Headteacher

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Our students have been involved in a number of brilliant activities over the couple of weeks. Please take a moment to read through these fantastic opportunities.

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KEY DATES

Term 5

- **Friday 24th May**
- Last Day of Term 5

Term 6

- **Monday 3rd June**
- First Day of Term 6
- **WC 3rd June**
- Year 7 Exam Week
- **WC 10th June**
- Year 10 Prelims

STAY CONNECTED

Follow Us on Social Media

See all of the enjoyable and engaging activities we get involved in throughout the year.

Follow us on our social media channels.



[@TSAT - Holcombe Grammar School](#)



[@TSATHolcombe](#)



[@tsat_holcombegrammarschool](#)





CAN WE HELP?

What is the Hardship Fund?

The Hardship Fund is a source of financial help available to all registered full time school students. The aim of the fund is to help the students who have difficulties paying for:

1. Curriculum trips, visits and year group residentials
2. Uniform, shoes or sports kit
3. Emergency travel expenses
4. Equipment to access individual studies

Payments from the fund do not need to be repaid

Please scan the QR code below or click this [link](#) to see how we can help:

Scan me





PLACES WHERE KIDS EAT FREE (OR FOR £1) DURING MAY HALF TERM 2024

moneysavingcentral.co.uk/kids-eat-free



LAS IGUANAS

Join 'My Las Iguanas' via the App & Niños eat free with every adult main

ASDA

Kids eat for £1 All Day, Every Day at Asda cafes, with no adult spend required.

SAINSBURYS CAFES

Kids eat for £1 with the purchase of an adult hot main. From 11:30am every day.

PAUSA CAFE @ DUNELM

Kids get 1 mini main, 2 snacks & a drink FREE with every £4 spend after 3pm

THE REAL GREEK

Kids under 12 eat FREE every Sunday for every £10 spent by an adult

TGI FRIDAYS

Kids Eat Free When 'Stripes Rewards Members' purchase an adult's main meal (App needed)

PUREZZA

Children under the age of 10 get free pizza at Purezza with every adult meal purchased

TRAVELODGE & PREMIER INN

Buy 1 Adult Breakfast from just £8.99 & up to two kids eat breakfast for free

SIZZLING PUBS

Every Monday to Friday, 3 - 7pm, kids' mains are £1 with every adult meal.

BEEFEATER & BREWERS FAYRE

Two children under 16 can get a free breakfast every day with one paying adult!

PRETO

Kids up to age 10 eat free all day, every day with paying adults at Preto in Half Terms

MORRISONS

Spend £4.49 and get one free kids meal all day, every day.

GORDON RAMSEY RESTAURANTS

Kids under 8 eat FREE all day, every day at selected Gordon Ramsay restaurants

YO! SUSHI

From Monday 27th May to Friday 31st May 2024, kids eat free all day at YO! Sushi (minimum adult spend £10).

WHITBREAD INNS

Two kids under 16 eat for FREE with every adult breakfast purchased

BELLA ITALIA

Children eat for £1 with any adult main. The offer is valid 4-6pm Mon to Thurs.

BILLS

Two kids can eat free ALL DAY (Weekdays) from Monday 27th May to Friday 31st May 2024, with one adult main dish.

DOBBIES GARDEN CENTRES

At Dobbies, for every adult breakfast or lunch purchase, kids eat for FREE. Every Day!

TABLE TABLE

Two children under 16 can get a free breakfast every day with one paying adult!

IKEA

Kids get a meal from 95p daily from 11am

HUNGRY HORSE

Kids eat for £1 on Mondays

FUTURE INNS

Under 5s eat for free with any adult meal.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

10 Conversation Starters for Parents

Talking about mental health to children is sometimes hard. To the point that we can put off raising the subject, not wanting to unearth problems or raise overwhelming subjects that we perceive our child is too young or not ready for. But rather than keeping children in the dark, this guide is designed to help you confidently talk about mental health, so they feel comfortable talking about their own worries and end any stigma before it begins.

NOS National
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#WakeUpWednesday

1 LISTEN

This sounds obvious, but it is not something we are always great at. Active listening is where we listen without interrupting or making judgements and shows interest in what is being said. If your child feels listened to in the 'smallest of problems' they will become confident that you will listen when the 'biggest of problems' arise.

2 ASK TWICE

The campaign from time to change is great. <https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/support-ask-twice-campaign>. Be tactful about your child's wellbeing. Children instinctively know when your questions and support come from a place of wanting to help and care.

Are you sure?

3 THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A STUPID QUESTION

This advice also relates to the first point. If your child can ask you any questions about the smallest of things and you listen and answer without shaming or belittling, then they will have more confidence to ask the biggest of questions.

4 BE OPEN AND HONEST

Children appreciate honesty, particularly if you are having to share information or talk about a difficult subject. For example, you may be talking about death or loss; 'It's very sad that Nana has died' or 'I feel sad that Nana has died'. How you talk about a subject will differ depending on their age and developmental maturity. Talking about death to a younger child for example will be different to that of an older teen, as their experience and understanding of death is different.

5 KNOW WHEN TO SEEK HELP

Assess the severity of the mental health difficulty you are noticing. Is the difficulty making it hard for your child to function regularly throughout everyday life? How frequently is your child affected, how long does it last and how persistent is it? Are they having problems controlling the difficulty? Talk to your child about your concerns and that it is likely they will need further support beyond family and friends.

6 TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH NATURALLY

Speak about mental health as part of everyday life, so that talking about our feelings and those of others is normalised. If the usual 'are you ok?' is not creating an opportunity for dialogue then say something like 'I know when something like that has happened to me I felt like this... is that how you are feeling or are you feeling something about?'

7 EMPATHISE

'It makes sense that you would feel this way, it is understandable'. Children often worry about things that we, as adults, might see as trivial or silly. However, for them at their age and stage it is a big concern and they need our kindness and care when they show their vulnerability and share their worries.

8 HELP YOUR CHILD FEEL SAFE

Teens particularly feel that by talking about their worries or concerns that this will make things worse. Reassure your child that you will discuss a plan of action together and what may or may not need to happen next. If they are a younger child, it is likely you will need to lead the conversation and explain next steps.

9 MIND YOUR LANGUAGE

Be mindful of the language you use at home to describe and talk about mental health. Stigma often arises from misconceptions and a choice of language which is harmful. Using the word 'mental', 'man-up' or other such words in a derogatory way won't encourage your child to talk about their mental health for fear of being belittled.

10 IT IS OK TO SAY 'I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT'

Adults do not have all the answers but often children think they do. It is ok to acknowledge that what your child is experiencing is not something you have come across before or know anything about, but that you will work it out together and seek help together.

Meet our expert

This guide has been written by Anna Bateman. Anna is passionate about placing prevention at the heart of every school, integrating mental wellbeing within the curriculum, school culture and systems. She is also a member of the advisory group for the Department of Education, advising them on their mental health green paper.



Sources of Information and Support

Your GP
Young Minds <https://youngminds.org.uk/>
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/>
<https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/news-and-blogs/parenting-tips/2016/november/a-simple-guide-to-active-listening-for-parents/>
<https://www.themix.org.uk/mental-health>

Every school day matters! ✓

Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance are Changing!

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice Fines issued after 19th August 2024.

Per Parent, Per Child

Penalty Notice Fines will now be issued to each parent, for each child that was absent.

For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

5 consecutive days of term time leave

Penalty Notice Fines will be issued for Term Time Leave of 5 or more consecutive days. Inset training days are school days and can be included in the 5 or more consecutive days where there was intent to be absent for term time leave.

10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period

Penalty Notice Fines will be considered when there has been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child.

Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate, due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.

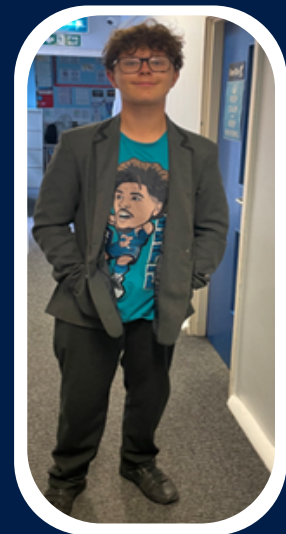
MENTAL HEALTH WEEK



Observing Mental Health Week helps to raise awareness about mental health issues, reducing the stigma and misconceptions surrounding mental illnesses. By educating our students, we can foster a more understanding and supportive community.

Members of the school community wore green on Thursday 16th May to raise funds for the Mental Health Foundation.

Thank you to the students and members of staff we raised over £100.



ART & DESIGN



Our GCSE and A Level Photography students have been exploring different ways of using lens. In particular students have been experimenting with cyanotypes. The method uses UV light and could be something students and their families can do at home. Materials can be easily bought online and with a sunny day (a rarity) amazing images will appear. Students can then scan the image and print to a larger size. Fabrics can also be used for cyanotypes. You could gather gardening materials and place them onto the treated fabric before leaving it in the sun to develop. As well as learning about how to use digital cameras and how to edit, students also learn how to use our darkroom to develop their images in different ways



ORIENTEERING COMPETITION



On a day of unseasonably poor weather, twelve intrepid Holcombe students – all of whom had been selected for their positive attitudes and commitment to extra curricular sport - descended on Capstone Park to take part in the annual Medway School Games Orienteering competition. The morning session saw teams, working in pairs, navigate their way around a route of 4.5km to locate a series of checkpoints in the quickest time possible. After a quick lunch break (or a much longer one for those teams who completed the course quickly!) the sun appeared and the afternoon session saw the teams complete a different course of around 4km. At the end of a day when some students recorded completing in excess of 20,000 steps, the results were announced. Once the time for both course had been combined there were gold medals for the Year 7 team of Alfie Higgins & Ryan Stapley as well as the Year 8 team of Dylan Drabble and Jude Simmons. All of the students who took part in the event represented the school with distinction and should be very proud of their efforts.



A rain-soaked Year 7 team after completing their first course.



The Holcombe Grammar teams from Year 7, 8 & 9 who represented the school with distinction.



LAW THEATRE TRIP



On the 9th of May, Year 12 Law students and Year 10 students embarked on a school theatre trip to watch a fantastic production called "Witness for the Prosecution". Students spent the day travelling up to London where learners were given the opportunity to step inside the magnificent surroundings of London County Hall and experience the intensity and drama of this gripping story of justice in a unique courtroom setting. The drama surrounds a gentleman named Leonard Vale who is accused of murdering a widow to inherit her wealth. The stage was laid out like a courtroom which enabled the audience and the students to fully immerse themselves within the trial process. Some members of the audience were able to become members of the jury and were able to give their verdict of whether the defendant was guilty or not. This helped the students apply their law knowledge of the roles within the courtroom, the role of the jury and judges within the trial linking to their study of the English Legal System. The play allowed learners to solidify their learning of the work of lay people and legal personnel in a courtroom and to understand and contextualise their knowledge of criminal trials. It was a fantastic way for teaching and learning to take place outside of the classroom.

To read what our students thought about the performance, please click [here](#).



MUSIC TRIP



On 22nd May, the Music department took 30 students to watch the re-imaged for the stage performance of the acclaimed Studio Ghibli animation Spirited Away at the London Coliseum in London.

It was surprisingly funny, and the way they did subtitles was interesting. A particular highlight would be the Kamaji with the six-armed man.’ – Ruben

‘I really liked Spirited Away because of all the culture and all of the music.’ – Jake

‘The show was great it was a bit confusing but the set was great and the way they used it was amazing. I would go again if I had the chance’ – Connor

‘It was very well done as the costumes matched the film perfectly and I loved the part where No Face was huge!’ – Thomas

‘The show was on of wander, witches and magic. I was amazed by how they fit everything in really, at one point I didn’t even look at the subtitles and I could still understand what was going on. Truly Amazing!’ – Isaac

‘Incredibly immersive, intriguing, easily followed Japanese masterpiece of a production’ – Max

‘I really enjoyed the show and how it was portrayed in acting, dance and song. I didn’t have a favourite part because it was all really great.1 – Ethan

The students were fantastic during the trip, we look forward to taking others to watch this in the near future!



MUSIC CORNER



Upcoming music events that might interest you:



Rochester Cathedral - Elvis by Candlelight Friday 24th May 2024 at 7:30pm Ticket prices vary between £15-£30 for more information visit <https://www.rochestercathedral.org/new-events/2024/elvisbycandlelight>

The Orchard Theatre Dartford – Northern Soul Live The signature Thursday 30th May 7:30pm Tickets £31.50 For more information contact Box Office: 0343 310 0033 or visit <https://trafalgartickets.com/orchard-theatre-dartford/en-GB/whats-on>



Peacock Theatre London Yamoto: The Drummers of Japan Hinotori The Wing of Phoenix 4th-22nd June. Tickets price varies between £18-£65 depending on location of seats. Expect remarkable athleticism, high energy spectacle and drums that explode with energy. Passion meets tradition in a show which drums up the spirit of Japan. For more information contact visit [YAMATO The Drummers of Japan / Hinotori – The Wings of Phoenix - Peacock Theatre - Sadler's Wells \(sadlerswells.com\)](https://www.sadlerswells.com)

Woodville Theatre Gravesend – Hip Hop is Alive 2024 – Fringe festival event Thursday 6th June 6pm Tickets are £3.00. For more information contact Box Office on 01474 337500 or visit [Hip Hop is Alive 2024 - A Fringe Festival Event | The Woodville](https://www.woodvilletheatre.co.uk)



MUSIC CORNER



Upcoming music events that might interest you:



Speakers for School are offering a Virtual Parent Event on Tuesday June 25th at 6.30-7.30pm where you can hear more from creative professionals in industries such as film, music, visual effects and the career pathways available [click here to book](#).

The Oasthouse Theatre Rainham - The Acoustic Session Saturday 29th June 2024 evening all tickets £6 for more information visit <https://www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk/productions.php> or contact General Enquiries: info@oasthousetheatre.co.uk



Woodville Theatre Gravesend Legend the music of Bob Marley Saturday 12th October 2024 7:30pm Standard Ticket £30 Concession £28. For more information contact Box Office on 01474 337500 or visit [Legend - The Music of Bob Marley | The Woodville](#)

SPELLING BEE REGIONAL FINAL COMPETITION

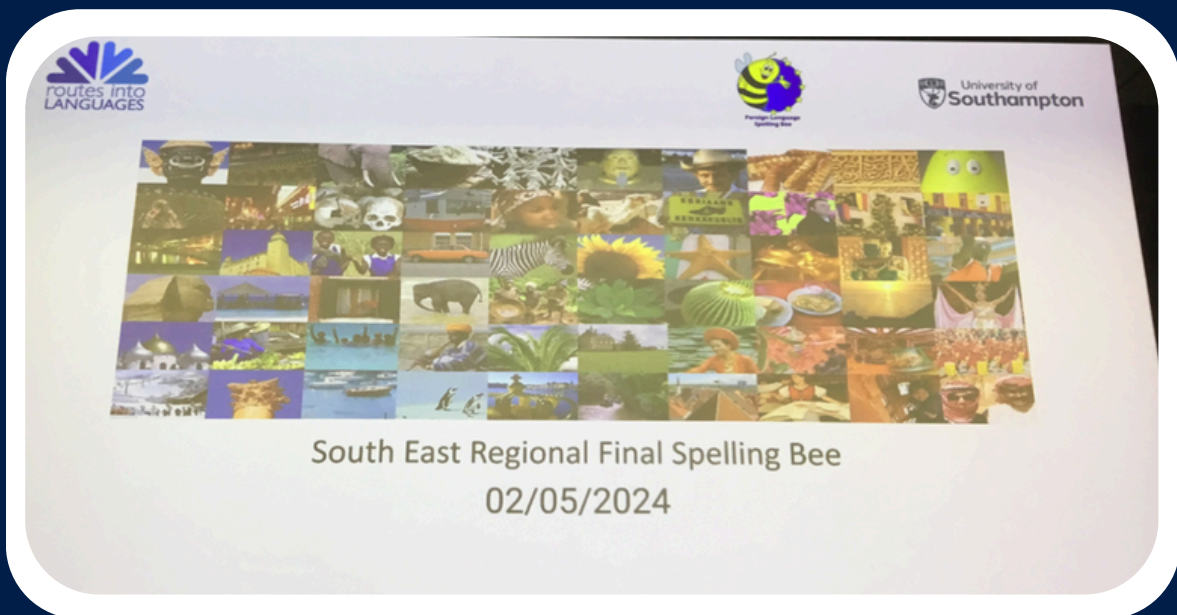


By Mrs Ortega

Keyaan Saber and Alex Schiopu in year 7 were both school finalists for the Regional Final competition of the Spelling Bee hosted by the University of Southampton.

Competition was fierce as they both competed against the Spanish and French Spelling Bee finalists of the entire Kent region. They did not win but they had a tremendous experience as they were able to use their communication skills and public speaking in front of other students.

Well done to Keyaan and Alex.



CHESS TOURNAMENT



Over the course of two weeks, over 60 games were scheduled, re-arranged, moved, replayed and battled, to win a place in the Grand Master final for the annual Holcombe Chess Tournament, where winners will get to play for the Magni-Reader shield.

Players have played before school, break times, lunchtimes and after school, all in a controlled environment, with adjudicators from Year 13, all of which were avid volunteers and were happy to be involved in what was their last event before they went on study leave to prepare for their A-Levels. Miss Bloomfield and Adam Magni (Year 13, SCT and Chess Tournament Creator) would like to express their gratitude to these volunteers and all the students that arrived on time, showed impeccable manners and outstanding sportsmanlike conduct throughout - including the staff that battled for the Staff Tournament.

Game photos are available on request, as there were so many games, if you would like to see if your child/ward was photographed please email Miss Bloomfield on donna.bloomfield@holcombegrammar.tsat.uk

Year 7 final, Year 8,9,10,11 final and KS5 final have all been played, the Grand Master final is still tbc due to exams.



CHESS TOURNAMENT - KS5 FINAL



Tension between the KS5 competitors was very evident throughout the heats, with surprise wins, shocking losses, but always good humour. Showing early on that it does not matter how good you "normally" are at chess, the tournament itself has it's own agenda. Players with high ratings were knocked out against a timer, or from someone who made a lucky move, proving that the Holcombe Chess Tournament is for everyone and anyone who would like to play.

Year 12 Sam Hall SCT played Year 12 Al Arian Islam in a rescheduled match that both were gracious enough to agree to, at a lunchtime on a dreary day. With support standing back and trying to remain quiet, the timer was started. Al put up a good fight from the off, but Sam had a plan, and outplayed Al quickly and ended the game in just two minutes. Ever the gentleman, Al took the defeat with good grace, and both young men shook hands with huge smiles. Congratulations Sam, see you in the playoffs.



DofE TERM 5 UPDATE

By Mr Phillips



It has been yet another busy term for the students enrolled in the DofE Award at all levels as they continue to work towards completing their Volunteering, Physical and Skills sections.

Next term will see the current Year 9s begin their preparations for their practice expedition that will be taking place on either Tuesday 9 July or Thursday 11 July dependent upon their group. The students have spent the last week getting themselves into their expedition groups in readiness for starting the afterschool expedition training sessions that will be running next term. These sessions will be taking place in B21 on either a Tuesday or Thursdays from 1515 – 1600. The programme for the sessions is as below and are compulsory for all students who wish to attend the expedition as the training is mandatory as part of DofE 20 Expedition Conditions. A letter will be emailed to the parents of the current Year 9 cohort over half term involved in these sessions with more information about the practice and qualifying expeditions.

Week Beginning	Topic
3rd June 2024	Introduction to DofE Expeditions (The 20 Conditions) and The Countryside Code
10th June 2024	Navigating using a Map and Route Planning
17th June 2024	Clothing and Equipment
24th June 2024	Route Planning
1st July 2024	Emergency Procedures and First Aid

eDofE Drop-in sessions are taking place every Thursday lunchtime in B15 for any student can come along to these if they need any help with their eDofE online account.



YEAR 10 AND 12 COMPUTER SCIENCE STUDENTS

Forecast currently states highs of 19 lows of 10, so prepare for a warm day.

Remember: those who have signed up, we will be visiting Bletchley Park on Thursday 6th June.



Make sure you bring lunch with you and that you wear comfortable shoes, as we have lots of walking around the historic site to do!

KS3 COMPUTER SCIENCE REVISION SKILLS

Students in KS3 Computer Science classes have been preparing ahead of their end of topic tests at the start of Term 6.

Students have explored topics including famous Computer Scientists alongside the architecture of the CPU.

We have seen some fantastic revision resources being created.

Keep up the great work!





**"EVERYONE HAS A
DIFFERENT STORY"**

IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN KENT

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AND JOIN
US ON**

THURSDAY 30TH MAY

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LASER
TAG**

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NEW
FRIENDS**

**Kent
County
Council**
kent.gov.uk



FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN KENT AND MEDWAY AGED 11-17

ELECTRIC MEDWAY. YOUNG HACK

AND **TECH31**
KENT



Scan here to
book your
free place

Develop new skills in creative technology and storytelling using virtual reality (VR), animation, augmented reality (AR), 3D models and sound effects.

Digital Camp
for 11-16 yr olds
28 + 30 May 2024

Tech House
for 16-18 yr olds
29 May 2024

Animation Bootcamp
for 11-16 yr olds
31 May 2024

The Clocktower, University of Kent
The Historic Dockyard Chatham, ME4 4TE
electricmedway.org

