

LATIMER NEWS

2025-26

ISSUE 8:
MAY 2026

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Thank you for your patience and feedback as we adjust to Compass, our new MIS. There are several improvements underway to ensure we are ready for September.

The exam season has started well and Year 11 and 13 students continue to impress with their dedication and hard work. 87 Year 11 students attended the English Masterclass last Saturday and, as a result, were well prepared for the Macbeth and Sign of Four questions, and another Saturday Masterclass is taking place this weekend.

Details of the alternative exam preparation timetable can be found on the Study Support for Students page on the website, which can be accessed [here](#). There will be some revision sessions running over half term for Maths and History. Not all Year 11 students need to attend these revision sessions, students who should attend will be informed individually.

Stay tuned for information about our 50th year celebrations, which kick off at Pride of Latimer 2026.

I wish you all a happy half term when it arrives.

Mrs Murphy
Principal

Mobile Phone Use from Summer Term 6 and into September

In line with DFE and Government guidance on phones, Latimer will be revising its phone policy. More details in an email communication to follow.

The new rules will mean **ZERO** use from gate entry until the 15:00 bell.

Phones will NOT be used in lessons for activities. Students will not be checking phones for timetables (paper versions to be issued).



If phones are seen, they will be confiscated and an after school detention issued, for repeat offences parents and carers will be required to collect the phone.

Sixth Form will have separate guidance and medical exceptions will be looked at on an individual basis.

Please discuss this with your child. This is a significant change.

There will be zero exceptions due to it being a legal requirement.

Thank you
Latimer Leadership Team

SAFEGUARDING

Alcohol and Vapes

A potential challenge facing parents and carers of students in secondary school is navigating the increasing desire for independence, including going to parties where alcohol may be present.

Every family will work through this in their own way, often setting family boundaries or rules. The charity Drink Aware shares some helpful suggestions about ways to approach this with teenagers, allowing them space to share their views while also understanding and accepting the boundaries imposed.

They suggest:

- Making clear that decisions are made with their health and wellbeing in mind;
- Giving information and facts, and sharing concerns honestly;
- Setting clear boundaries, as a vital part of their healthy development;
- Having on-going conversations about alcohol and adjusting boundaries, where appropriate, for age and stage appropriacy.

There are some helpful resources for parents and carers online:

Drink Aware: [Teenage drinking | Drinkaware](#)

TheTalkaboutTrust: [Parties | Talk About Trust](#)

NSPCC: [Underage drinking | NSPCC](#)

If you are worried about your child's relationship with alcohol, or if they have been affected by alcoholism within the family, there is free guidance available.

The National Association for Children of Alcoholics has a useful website (nacoa.org.uk) and a free helpline: 0800 358 3456.

Teen Challenge UK and NGAGE are two services that offer specific addiction support for young people:

[Welcome to Teen Challenge UK - Teen Challenge UK](#)

[NGAGE – Northamptonshire Young People's Service – Aquarius Charity](#)

If you have a specific concern about your child, don't hesitate to contact us.

Likewise, vaping remains prevalent amongst the teenage community. Vaping and alcohol obviously go together for some youngsters in party settings. We are doing some awareness raising through planned assemblies in school. Support can be found here: [Vaping: What Parents Should Know | Nemours KidsHealth](#)

We have recently received some guidance from North Northamptonshire Council on vaping and thought it would be helpful to share some statistics with you below:

How Many Children and Young People are Vaping?

Regular vaping among children and young people has increased sharply in recent years, but the latest evidence suggests this trend has now levelled off. NHS Digital reported a doubling of regular vape use in 11–15-year-olds from 2% to 5% between 2018 and 2023. Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) showed a similar pattern, with the proportion of 11–17 year olds who vape rising from 4% in 2020 to 7% by 2024, where it remained in 2025.

SAFEGUARDING

In 2024, a local survey of 35 primary schools and 10 secondary schools found that 2% of secondary school pupils reported vaping 'occasionally' and 5% 'more than occasionally' in North Northamptonshire. The number of children trying vaping also rose significantly across year groups, with up to 29% of Year 10 boys and 45% of Year 10 girls reporting trying vaping, compared with 14% and 28% of Year 8 pupils respectively (SHEU Survey). The survey also found that some Year 6 pupils are experimenting with vapes, with 7% reporting having at least tried vaping, and 1% vaping occasionally.

Why are Young People Vaping?

The growing literature on what motivates young people to vape cites several factors, such as peer influence, social image, experimentation, and perceived lower health risks of vapes compared with cigarettes. Other reasons include using vapes as a coping mechanism to support mental health, reduce stress levels and address low self-esteem. However, teens who vape for stress relief report significantly higher stress levels than young people who don't vape. These findings are similar to adolescent cigarette smoking behaviour, whereby cigarette smoking is commonly perceived as a way to relieve stress.

Latimer's approach to vaping is clear. If students are suspected to have a vape device, we reserve the right to search and confiscate. If we find one, a normal internal suspension sanction is applied. Because the law is clear on vapes, any use on site poses a safeguarding and health risk to others, therefore a suspension is applied.



We are particularly concerned about **vapes containing the synthetic drug Spice (a form of Synthetic Cannabinoid Receptor Agonists or SCRAs)**. These have become a significant, dangerous issue, particularly among school-aged children in the UK. Research from the [University of Bath](#) has found that nearly 1 in 6 vapes (and up to 1 in 4 in some areas) confiscated from school children tested positive for Spice.

These are not standard nicotine or legitimate cannabis vapes. They are black-market products designed to look like legitimate products

Please talk to your child. If they are vaping for stress, please speak to us as we might be able to support with stress management. We have mental health staff on site as well as a counsellor.

Behaviours Outside School

We have seen a number of social media posts regarding Latimer students being involved in anti-social behaviour outside school. We liaise with the local police almost weekly to ensure that dialogue is constant and information shared. The police have a good handle on individuals involved and we will challenge these individuals in school where we can.

We are now working with the local Office of the Police and Fire Commissioner, to support a scheme where local workers come into school and we refer students for a programme on tackling anti-social behaviour.

If there is specific intelligence you wish to be shared, you can email this to Mr King, Assistant Principal, and he will share directly with the local Police Officer, PC Cummings.

Unfortunately the summer always brings a tendency for individuals to push boundaries.

As parents and carers, please reinforce the message that with cameras now almost everywhere, their actions are very easy to track and that they need to conduct themselves in a manner befitting with respect for their local community.

SAFEGUARDING

Wellbeing Parent Focus Group

The School is signed up to become a Wellbeing School working with Optimus Education. As part of our work to date we have already:

- Appointed two Wellbeing Officers who are Mental Health First Aiders
- Appointed a part-time counsellor
- Established a wellbeing drop-in session for students at lunch
- In the process of recruiting student wellbeing champions
- Conducted a full parent, student and staff survey
- Reviewed our homework policy to improve student wellbeing
- And we have continued to work with Mental Health Schools Team, Souster Youth and other local organisations to provide support to our students

To further develop this, Mr King (Senior Mental Health Lead and Assistant Principal) would like to set up a parent and carer focus group on Mental Health and Wellbeing for our young people. It is envisaged that this would be a morning coffee session. Mr King is particularly looking for any parents and carers who might have experience of working in the field of mental health/health/education, but not exclusively.

If you would be willing to come in for a chat and a coffee a couple of times a year, please can you fill out this link: [Parent/Carer Wellbeing Group – Fill out form](#)

Introduction to our new Attendance Manager, Hannah Todd

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope this finds you well. My name is Hannah Todd and I am writing to introduce myself as the new Attendance Manager here at The Latimer Arts College. Having had several successful years working in similar roles in local academy trusts, I am keen to continue this work at Latimer. My role is to support students in maintaining high levels of attendance and punctuality, which are essential for success at secondary school and beyond. I specialise in mental health and school anxiety and look at bringing this to the School.

As students progress through school, consistent attendance becomes increasingly important in helping them keep up with a more demanding curriculum, build strong study habits and prepare for exams and their future after school. Even small amounts of learning can quickly impact progress and confidence.

I will be working closely with students, families and staff to monitor attendance and address any concerns at an early stage. If your child is experiencing any challenges that may affect their attendance - whether academic, social or personal - please do get in touch. We are committed to working in partnership with you to provide the right support and guidance.

Good attendance and punctuality help establish good routines that are vital for success both in school and in future education and employment.

I look forward to working with you to support your child's progress and wellbeing throughout their secondary school journey here at Latimer.

I am happy to arrange a phone call if you have any queries, please feel free to email me on Htodd@latimer.org.uk.

Thank you, Hannah

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at The Latimer Arts College

Consistent attendance is essential for success and every lesson counts. Good attendance reflects maturity, commitment, resilience, and readiness for your future.

Our minimum expected target for all students is **96%**.

If your child is going to be absent, on each day of absence before 8am either:

Send an email to: absence@latimer.org.uk

or

Add an Attendance note on the Compass App

For medical appointments, please provide evidence of this prior to the appointment day, if we don't receive evidence of appointment, we may not be able to authorise it.

If a student has three days off consecutively, a home visit may be conducted to check in with the student by someone from our Attendance Team or Pastoral Team.

We reward those students whose attendance is good or showing signs of significant improvement. Please keep a look out on our social media pages for information.

Tips to Improve Attendance

- Establish a routine
- Communicate issues early
- Minimise distractions / book appointments outside of school hours
- Stay organised
- Set goals
- Celebrate progress

The Data

100% - Attendance. GREAT!

95% - 9 Days absence in a year. Slight concern. Parents will be contacted.

90% - 19 Days of absence in a year. Considered persistently absent, very concerning and putting education at risk. Parents will be contacted and a plan put in place.

85% - 28 Days of Absence in a year. Extremely concerning, Parents will be invited into a meeting with the Attendance Manager.

As a school we are committed to student wellbeing and mental health, therefore if your child is struggling with attending, talk to me. There are always solutions we can find together.

Mrs H Todd
Attendance Manager



ATTENDANCE

Change in Attendance Communication

To improve efficiency and ensure a more responsive service, We have made the decision to remove the voicemail option from our absence communication options **after the May half term**.

By focusing on messages from our email (absence@latimer.org.uk) and our in-app service on Compass (adding an Attendance note) we aim to reduce delays associated with message retrieval and follow up. We understand that voicemails have been a convenient option for some, and we appreciate your understanding as we implement this change and remain focused on delivering a more streamline service.

After May half term, please use the absence email address above or the Compass App to **log absences before 8am on every day of absence**.

Change in Sending Students Home Unwell

As part of our ongoing commitment to support both wellbeing and development of our students, we are placing an increased focus on building resilience. Encouraging students to manage minor discomforts, remain engaged in their learning and develop coping strategies is an important part of their growth. With this in mind, students will not be sent home during the school day unless they are genuinely too unwell to be in school. We ask for your support in reinforcing this approach, helping students to understand that feeling slightly tired, unsettled or unwell can be managed without going home.

In addition to this, to strengthen our safeguarding procedures, we are updating our expectations regarding students leaving school during the day. Where parents or carers authorise their child to go home unwell, we will now require the student to be collected by a responsible adult that is already on our system. **Unwell students will no longer be permitted to leave the school site unaccompanied so we can ensure they are safe and being looked after.** Students who bypass our sickness procedures and contact parents or carers themselves will have to be collected; this will be classed as an unauthorised absence and may lead to attendance procedures starting. We appreciate your understanding and continued support.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Tuesday 19 May	Parent Forum, 6.00 pm
Friday 22 May	End of Term 5
Monday 1 June	Start of Term 6 (This will be Week 1) Year 12 Subject 1:1 Feedback Fortnight (ends 12 June)
Wednesday 10 June	Year 6 Move Up Evening 1. 5.30 pm
Thursday 11 June	Year 6 Move Up Evening 2, 5.30 pm
Monday 15 June	Year 10 Mock Exam Season (ends 25 June)
Tuesday 16 June	Year 9 SPRE, 4.30-7.45 pm
Friday 19 June	Year 11 Leavers' Celebrations
Monday 22 June	Sixth Form Induction Programme (ends 24 June)
Tuesday 23 June	Latimer Dance Show, 7.00 pm
Thursday 25 June	Year 12 UCAS Trip - University of Bedford



**More dates available
on the website**

LATIMER INCLUSION

It is May already, this year is flying by! However, we are still fully committed to the development of the understanding and provision of SEND at Latimer.

Staff Training - ADHD

Our staff took part in a really positive training session focused on ADHD, as part of our ongoing commitment to supporting all learners. In the past, we have focused on practical teaching strategies to support students. Now, with the guidance of our SENCo, Mrs Gatiss, and our Assistant Principal for Teaching and Learning, Mrs Stewart, we are building on this by exploring the science behind different needs, giving us a much richer understanding of how our students learn.

As our knowledge continues to grow, we are working hard to ensure that our teaching reflects this and helps every child to thrive. This session is just the start of an exciting journey. Over the coming months, we will be continuing our training on a range of SEND needs, developing both our understanding and our practice to support every student in our school. We are proud of the steps we are taking to create an environment where all children feel understood, valued, and successful. Every classroom should be an inclusive classroom, a place where every child feels supported, confident, and able to succeed.

Mosaic Mind Club

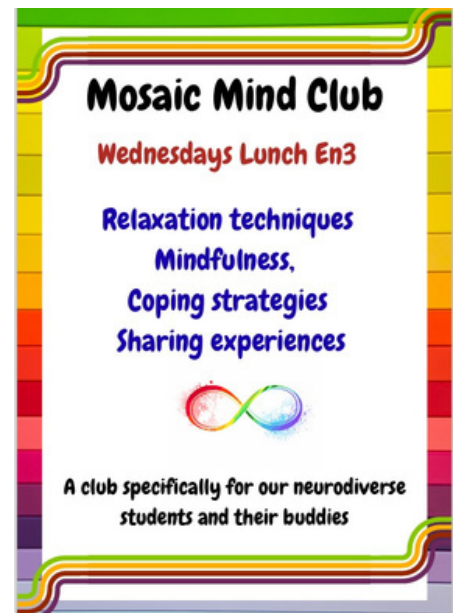
This club is the highlight of Mrs Gatiss' week! So far this term, they have been creative, musical and have danced! They are tiring Mrs Gatiss out but she says it is an honour to spend time with our neurodiverse students.

Wait a Tic

Our new supportive club for students with Tourette's Syndrome or a Tic disorder has been well attended – it has been great to hear their voice and to be able to feedback. We are enjoying getting to know about each other, our tics and how we can support each other to navigate the school day.

Assemblies – Autism Awareness Month

Mrs Gatiss delivered assemblies for all year groups earlier this term, and the focus was on Autism awareness. Students learned more about what autism is, what the school experience might be like and how we can all contribute to making the school an environment for everyone, no matter what their needs are, to feel safe and included.



Thank you for your support during this academic year so far.

Have a question? Please email: sendhelpdesk@latimer.org.uk

HOUSE NEWS

Attenborough



I want to start with an apology to all of the students in the House, who had to witness a shambolic showing from myself in the recent House Leader competitions during tutor time. Having kept Mr Hayo and Gilbert company at the bottom end of the table, I am putting out a big ask for students to step up and support the House during this term's competitions to make up for my poor showing.

With this, the sun is now shining and the weather warmer (mostly) here, it is a great time for students to be getting involved in the enrichment activities and representing the House in these.

Finally, I wanted to wish a massive good luck to the Year 11 students, both in Attenborough and across the School, as they enter the exam season. Whilst it is a difficult and daunting time, I have no doubt that they will come through it and achieve great success.

Gilbert

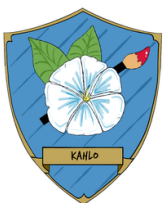


Dear Gilbertarians,

It has been a wonderful and most certainly busy term in which we have seen high engagement in house competitions with incredible zeal and determination on display. Further, a thread we have been focussing on has been respect through active listening in lessons and how politeness oils the wheels of progress. This is to ensure that as a community we have respect for one another and continue to work hard with our peers and teachers.

A massive well done to those who won a Heart subject award, it was a pleasure to announce so many Gilbert winners, nominated by our teaching staff for efforts with class and home work.

Kahlo



It has been fantastic to see students settling back into routines so positively in Term 5. Across Kahlo House, students returned focused, working hard in lessons and showing great commitment to their learning as we head into an important part of the academic year. Their attitude, effort and resilience have made for a strong start to the term.

This month also marks the launch of our exciting End to End Competition, where students will work together to complete a virtual journey from Land's End to John O'Groats through exercise and teamwork. It has already created a real buzz around the House, with students eager to contribute miles and support our House charity – Home Start Kettering – supporting new families to get the best start they can. We are looking forward to seeing the friendly competition build over the coming weeks

Tull



This term's theme is respect, and it has been fantastic to see so many Tull students opening doors, greeting people with friendly hellos, and sharing those huge smiles. The kindness you spread is infectious – keep it up!

HOUSE NEWS

Tull - continued



A new term brings new opportunities, and it would be brilliant to see you getting involved in clubs within school. This is your chance to develop new skills, show leadership, and make new friends. All of this helps build your character and confidence...and it also earns valuable points for Tull as we aim to climb up the table.

At the end of last term, we were in third place. So, as a famous supermarket says, “every little helps!”

With that in mind, I managed to add a few points to our total with my efforts in the House Leaders competition last week. A massive thank you to everyone who supported me – I really appreciate it! I have to admit, I wasn’t a big fan of the balloon challenge. Now it’s your turn – have a go! Can you beat 14 seconds?

House Competitions

A couple of weeks ago, our House Leaders took centre stage in assemblies for the second round of the highly anticipated House Leader Showdown competitions. Across four fiercely contested days, each House battled for valuable points in what proved to be an exciting and closely fought competition.

At the Year 7 assembly Mrs Turnbull delivered an outstanding performance to comfortably secure first place for Tull, setting the standard from the very start. On Day 2, Mr Tamkin responded with an impressive victory for Attenborough, narrowly edging out Gilbert in a tightly contested showdown.


Day 3 saw the competition intensify even further, with only the smallest of margins separating the Houses. However, Mrs Turnbull returned in dominant fashion, producing another exceptional performance to propel Tull back into the lead. On the final day, Kahlo was represented by Mr Woolley, whose impressive sporting skill secured a first-place finish and ensured a dramatic conclusion to the week.

After four days of determined competition, resilience, and House pride, the final standings were confirmed:

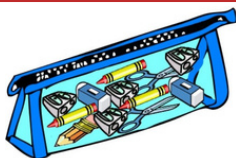
 **4th Place – Attenborough – 18 points**

 **3rd Place – Gilbert – 19 points**

 **2nd Place – Kahlo – 26 points**

 **1st Place – Tull – 32 points**

A huge congratulations to all of our House Leaders for their energy, enthusiasm, and competitive spirit throughout the week. With performances like these, the race for House glory is well and truly on.



**Equipment prices will be increasing from Term 6.
However, an entire pencil case can still be filled for less than £2!**

SIXTH FORM NEWS



Sixth Form Summer Induction Programme - Monday 22nd to Wednesday 24th June



For those students who have applied for a place in our Sixth Form in September, we will be running a compulsory summer Induction. Students will have the opportunity to take part in taster sessions in their chosen subjects, as well as attend workshops designed to provide valuable tips and advice on managing the transition to Sixth Form.

These sessions will also cover effective ways to structure independent study time. In addition, students can participate in team-building activities helping them to build confidence and form new friendships. Students should keep an eye on their emails, to receive their personalised induction timetable.

Year 12 Trip: UCAS Discovery The University of Bedfordshire



Once again, we are taking our Year 12 students to the annual UCAS Discovery at Bedford - a great place to discover all the options under one roof.

At UCAS Discovery, students can:

- chat to unis and colleges about their courses and university life
- speak to employers about what an apprenticeship is like and the options available
- listen to talks from experts in their fields
- get dedicated support from UCAS experts about all the options

If you would like to find out more about this event, click [here](#)

Year 13 Leavers Prom - Friday 19th June - The Holiday Inn Corby



- Students to arrive between 6.15pm and 6.30pm
- The festivities will commence at 6.30pm
- The evening will finish at 10.30pm

The colour scheme is Black, Gold and White.
Please kindly note that the dress code is formal evening wear.

Year 12 Work Experience Week 29th June to 3rd July

All of our Year 12 cohort will be undertaking a week's worth of work experience. We cannot express how valuable work experience is and are encouraging our students to find a minimum of 5 days (which could be spread across more than one placement).

We are aware that many employers now adopt remote working and therefore, finding a placement may be challenging and that your child may need your help. For this reason, we would very much welcome your input in guiding and supporting them through this process. Following their placement and once back in school, students will have time to reflect on their experience, participating in a robust evaluation process.

We are really pleased that the many of our students have now sourced themselves a placement, however, we do still have a number that have not yet found a suitable opportunity so, we would like to reach out to ask for your help.

Maybe you know of someone who may be able to offer a work experience placement that could enhance university and job applications. We are specifically looking for placements in the following areas:

Ideal Placement:

Accounting/Finance
Architecture
Business Management
Customer Service
Engineering
Healthcare Sector
Hospitality
Journalism
Law/Legal System
Marketing
Social Care Sector

Could Consider:

Any form of office environment
Anything with CAD Design elements
Any form of office environment

Solicitors/Estate Agents/Recruitment Consultants

If students are unable to secure a suitable work placement, they are required to inform Ms Magee, Sixth Form Centre Manager, as soon as possible. Mrs Stanbridge, our Independent Careers Advisor, will be on hand to provide guidance and advice to help them secure themselves a work placement.

OTHER NEWS

Centre Open Morning

Does your child love music and the performing arts?

On **Saturday 16th May**, children are invited to attend a **free open morning** at their local NMPAT Music and Performing Arts Centre, to experience what is on offer.

NMPAT Centres offer a wide range of fun, creative group sessions including instrumental bands, ensembles, orchestras, dance and drama. There is something for everyone! Attendees can develop their creative skills, make new friends and take part in exciting performance opportunities, all in a supportive and welcoming environment.



Centres run during term time on Saturday mornings. If Saturdays don't work, the NMPAT Towcester After-School Club runs on Wednesday evenings and they are hosting an open day on Wednesday 20th May.

Discover your local NMPAT centre and register your interest here: www.nmpat.co.uk/centreopenmornings

You can also scan the QR code in the above image.

NMPAT County Auditions 2026 | Applications Now Open

Is your child currently having instrumental or vocal lessons? If they have been learning for a while and are ready for the next step in their musical journey, this could be the perfect opportunity.

NMPAT's auditions process for their County Music Ensembles is now open for applications! Open to young people in Northamptonshire, the ensembles bring together talented musicians, singers, and performers to make music at county level.

Auditions are free to attend and take place in July at NMPAT's Northampton venue on Kettering Road. This year, there are also new group auditions available for newer applicants playing at around Grade 4 or below - a supportive, ensemble-based experience designed to feel welcoming.



Students are able to audition for the following instrument groups: Brass, Guitar, Harp, Jazz, Percussion, Strings, Voice and Woodwind. Plus, auditions are open for our theatre ensemble, Young Actors Company (13+), and Zingaresque, our folk-fusion ensemble.

If that sounds like something your child would be interested in, we encourage you to find out more and **apply before the deadline of Friday 22nd May 2026.**

Financial support is available for families in need.

Find out more and apply: www.nmpat.co.uk/auditions