

# SIRIUS ACADEMY WEST

Teaching and Learning Magazine

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THE  
CONSTELLATION  
TRUST





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# H

## HEAD OF SCHOOL MESSAGE



As this is the final issue of our Teaching and Learning magazine, I have become somewhat reflective of the last year, a year very much unlike any other.

Whilst the circumstances of this year could lead us to focus on missed opportunities, or things that we were prevented from doing, instead, I choose to change my perspective. Although I do not want to mirror some awful 'motivational Instagram' post, or brief – but empty – pinterest, I do think it is important that we consider the things we have done - despite the pandemic - rather than the things we could not do because of it.

This year, because of your hard work:

- **Our Year 11s are heading off to some outstanding destinations, 100% of the students have a plan for next year, and regardless of the pandemic, will be able to do some genuinely amazing things.**
- **Our Year 10s have enjoyed a catch-up programme including trips, visits, academically developing sessions and a level of focus unlike that they would receive in any other year.**
- **Our Year 7s, 8s and 9s have all developed, they have built skills of resilience, they have tried, failed, and succeeded in equal measure, all such effort providing them with life lessons and armoury for any challenge which may follow**
- **We have supported each other, found it hard, but come through and at the end of the year, we are still standing ... just about.**

Another important thing to recognise is that, although some of our students may not have had the classroom experience of a normal year, they have something which I believe could be equally, or perhaps, more important. They have lived history. Many of us will have read the works of famous authors reporting times of great social turmoil: the Pepys' diaries recounting the Great Fire of London, Barry on the Spanish Influenza, or Hugh Trevor-Roper on WW2 and National Socialism. When we read these infamous books, we are – of course - separated by time and experience. As a result, they sometimes become devoid of tangible impact, they read as fiction, the impact reduced by ensuing generations. Whilst my comparisons do not intend to advance any measure of scale or damaging impact, I do feel that, once we have moved past this period, our students will be able to describe to future generations their experience during this period in similar ways. They will have their own individual tales of a period that will become a significant historical event, and you will be a part of their experience. Through the online lessons, the welfare check ins, the additional activities – baking, creating and engaging – that featured widely on our social media, their memories will be intertwined with your involvement. Your impact will be remembered, perhaps not only for your skills in pedagogy, but for your humanity and dedication.

So, whilst developing skills for teaching is important, the learning is more important. This year and in the various editions of this magazine to date, we have seen the countless ways in which our young people learn. The ways we have had to innovate to encourage their learning and the product that results. This magazine will reflect this time and its articles will refer to a period where we had to do things differently, but to great cause and better end.

Have a lovely summer.



# R

## ROSENSHINE'S

### THE PRINCIPLES OF INSTRUCTION

#### Key points before you read the article:

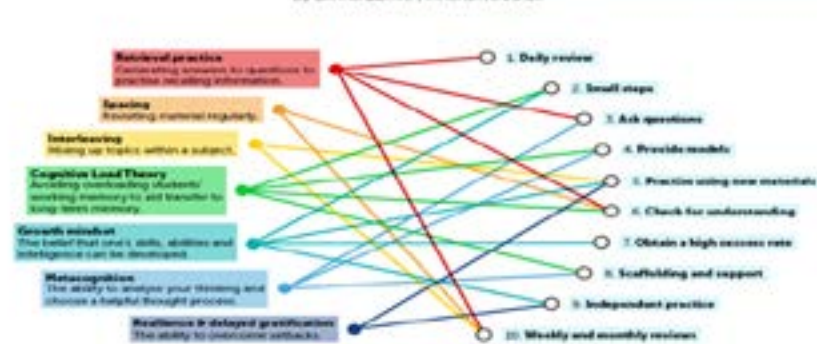
1. This is not a check list and absolutely not a lesson plan.
2. This principles will vary in departments but still be present.
3. These principles do not provide an answer to all things education.

The principles of instruction is a research based educational theory that all teachers would describe as common sense teaching. However, they are also principles if honed effectively will aid learning and long term memory. The simplicity of these strategies not only mean these are things we can all do but also make the most impact for our students.

Rosenshines principles are grounded from a varied range of evidence obtained from the following 3 key aspects:

1. **Cognitive science. How we learn and how we can use this knowledge to aid learning.**  
It delves into how we can reduce cognitive overload to ensure we are freeing up working memory. (figure 1)
2. **Observations of 'master teachers'. That is teachers that have the best outcomes.**
3. **Cognitive scaffolds and building blocks that allow our students to learn complex tasks.**

The cognitive science behind Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction  
by @limer\_Drive | innervibe.co.uk



These principles were initially 17 instructional procedures that were then condensed into 10 principles. These principles that will have different degrees in lessons dependent upon the lesson being taught and the students understanding. There will even be varying degrees of each principle in different departments. What will be consistent however, are these 10 key principles, underlying the way in which we teach effectively.

1. Daily review- What do your students need to know in order to access the lesson? By gauging their current understanding you are able to effectively build on it and remove any misconceptions. Whilst also alleviating the hold on working memory. 2. New material in small steps- For complex tasks, consider how you would chunk the information to prevent cognitive overload. Do you have check points before moving on to the next step to confirm you are all at the same point?

3. Ask questions – Not only do you need to ask questions you need to ask lots of them. Involve the full class in questioning and probe them. If they respond with 'I don't know', ask them something they will know. Help to build their confidence and resilience.

4. Provide models- Model key concepts and have students active during the modelling process. Narrate your thought processes when completing questions and tasks. So students can observe why you do what you do.

5. Guide student practice- Do not immediately set your students onto a task after explaining a concept. Most times you will find that you will be re explaining the content again to the students as you are circulating. Put scaffolds and practice in place so you can guide them through it. This is a great opportunity to use whiteboards to guide them through examples. Partially complete problems or put in misconceptions and ask the students to complete/correct them. Practice, practice, practice. Think of it like training wheels!

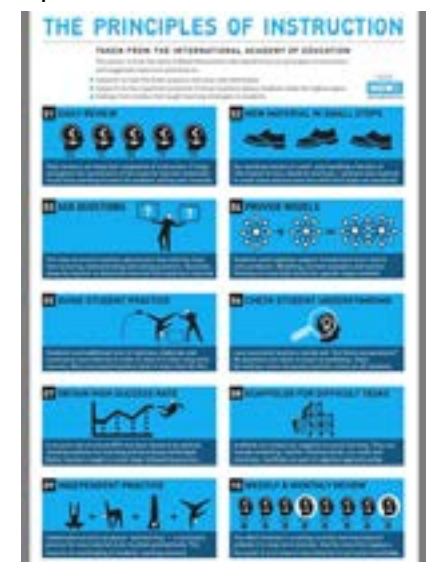
6. Check student understanding- Again this links to a lot of the principles. Questioning, whiteboards or any means of checking understanding should be done regularly. Most importantly, diagnostically.

7. Obtain a high success rate- If the other principles are in place and used effectively. The outcome will be a high success rate. This ensures all students in a class are ready to move on to the next step in the topic and also prevents students from taking any misunderstandings in to their future learning.

8. Scaffold for difficult tasks- Vygotsky suggests that guided practice should enable students to work through the zone of proximal learning. Whereby the lesson is too challenging for the student to complete independently however with the aid of a teacher and the scaffolds in place they are able to do it. As their competency grows, you will gradually release all responsibility and students can then fluently complete tasks.

9. Independent practice- Following guided practice, students should be competent with the content or skill and then they can complete the task independently without all scaffolds.

10. Weekly & Monthly review- If retrieval tasks are spaced and interleaved well, you will find your students will strengthen connections among the material they have learnt. Recalling prior learning should ideally be automatic after carefully planned retrieval of content/skills. This is from overlearning content/skills.





# UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOUR



Understanding the root cause of the child's behaviour is essential, as without this it is unlikely that any behaviour strategy will be sustainable. There are five basic models in understanding child behaviour.

## These include:

- biological
- behavioural
- cognitive
- systemic
- psychodynamic.

## Biological

Children have a tendency to interact with the environmental influences around them and this interaction informs their behaviour. Research evidence has come from studies around twins separated at birth and early infancy. This goes to show that both nature and nurture are involved in our development, although when dealing with behaviour attention needs to be paid to creating a positive environment and experiences to promote good behaviour.

## Behavioural

Behaviour can be modified through 'conditioning'. This is achieved by another event following an action. There are two types of 'conditioning':

**Classical conditioning** – a behaviour is connected with a certain stimulus, for example a child feels happy and excited on a Friday afternoon.

**Operant conditioning** – a behaviour is connected and repeated by rewarding the positive behaviour and issuing sanctions for the negative behaviour.

## Cognitive

The cognitive approach helps the child judge and reason effectively and have a perception of their surroundings. This means that the way in which we behave is influenced by our thinking. The cortex is the conscious, rational-thinking part of the brain and determines the child's response to certain situations. Research has shown that if a child is constantly being subjected to negative situations, for example experiencing domestic violence and/or neglect, then the connections that form the cortex to help deal with situations in a rational way are limited. In situations such as this the child is left to rely on the limbic system which is the body's alarm system. So, when a child is faced with a mild situation, for example the person sitting next to them takes their pencil without asking, instead of the rational-thinking cortex being engaged the limbic system is triggered displaying the flight/fight reaction.

## Systemic

The systemic approach looks at targeting the individual's behaviour within the system. These systems can include:

- their family
- their friends
- their school
- their classmates
- their community
- their outside school clubs, e.g. sports teams.

The quality of these systems is a great influence on the child's behaviour. For example, a child living in a family where domestic violence takes place will naturally struggle within another system, i.e. school. The behaviour the child experiences at home, for example shouting, violence and/or aggressiveness, will not work in a school context which can cause problems for the child. In situations such as this, working with the family to understand the environment in which the child lives is paramount in finding solutions to help their behaviour.

## Psychodynamic

The psychodynamic approach is one used in a clinical setting as it focuses on understanding and intervening by unravelling past conscious and unconscious experiences in order to help the child deal with them.

## Teacher Tips To Support The Behaviour Theories

- A child will repeat a behaviour if it is being rewarded.
- A child will be less likely to repeat a behaviour if sanctions are issued.
- If there is no consistency with rewards and sanctions then it is likely the child will continue to display the unwanted behaviour.
- Behaviour can be learnt and practiced.
- Positive relationships are essential
- The need to understand the child as a whole is crucial
- Systems and processes are an essential framework for children - it gives them security
- It is absolutely necessary to ensure all systems, processes, routines and procedures are consistently adhered to every lesson, every day

# OUR VISION

At Sirius Academy West we aim to be the best version of ourselves.

Our Values are RESPECT

Respect

## STAFF WELL-BEING HEALTHY BODY, HEALTHY MIND

At Sirius Academy West we recognise that staff well-being has a direct impact on our students' experiences therefore it is important that we prioritise this.

In the summer term we held our 1st staff meeting in which we discussed ways in which we can come together as a staff body away from classroom or meeting environments. This social aspect of building relationships with work colleagues is crucial in ensuring everyone has a big of a support network around them as possible.

In July we will be inviting all staff to enjoy an outdoor Inflatable session to relax and enjoy each other's company. These opportunities are a fantastic way to meet staff who you generally do not spend time with or perhaps haven't met before due to the restrictions we have faced this year.

We will be meeting again when we return from September to discuss ideas and how we can continue to develop support systems at Sirius Academy West. Please take the opportunity to view The Constellation Trust 'Staff Well-Being' policy which can be found on Sharepoint.

As we head towards a well-deserved summer break, it is important that staff take this time to unwind and relax. Below are some ideas from Mental Health England about supporting our own well-being:

1. **Do things with others.** Spending time with family or friends, meeting new people and getting involved in activities can make a difference to how you feel.
2. **Do something creative.** Activities or hobbies can keep you distracted, have a positive impact on your sense of mental health and wellbeing and can help increase your confidence and self-esteem. This could be building something, playing an instrument, gardening, art, doing a puzzle, painting, cooking, writing etc.
3. **Invest time in relationships.** Connecting with people and investing in good relationships are important for your mental health. Get in touch with people who you trust or feel good around. Give them a call, send them a message or organise to catch-up with them.
4. **Focus on strengths.** Having positive thoughts can help you feel better.
5. **Take time out.** When you relax, you give yourself permission to let go of worries for a while. Relaxing gives your mind and body time to recover from the stresses of everyday life. Try some relaxation apps to guide you on how to relax.
6. **Sleep well.** We cannot function properly without sleep. Sleep helps us to repair and restore our bodies and minds.
7. **Keeping active.** Your physical health plays a key role in keeping you mentally healthy. Being physically active can improve your mood and reduces stress.
8. **Eat well.** Nutrition and eating well can make a difference to the way you feel and in-turn may improve your mental health.
9. **Mindfulness.** Mindfulness can help you feel better and reduce stress. It is easy to fit into your day.





# SUN CREAM SAFETY



Sunburn! Huh, yeah, what is it good for?  
Absolutely Nothing!

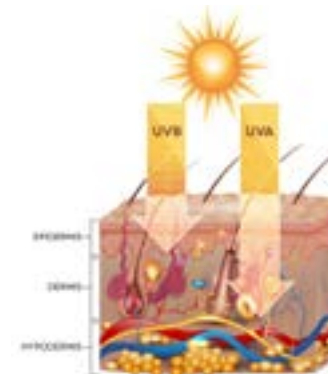
We all know sunburn is bad, who hasn't forgotten to apply sun screen and suffered later that night, but perhaps we would take sunburn more seriously if we could see what a UV camera can see! This camera is showing the invisible damage caused by exposure to the sun.

So what is sunburn? The sun emits three kinds of UV radiation which affect our skin, UVA, UVB and UVC. UVC has the shortest wavelength and is mostly absorbed by the earth's atmosphere, UVB reaches us and can penetrate the top layer of our skin (epidermis) where as UVC has the longest wavelength and can penetrate deeper. It's this penetration that causes the harm to us.

The effect of this penetration is damage to our skins proteins and membranes, as well as DNA. Photons from the UVB radiation are absorbed by DNA and can cause the DNA to not link up correctly, this in turn causes DNA errors, when the Keratinocytes in our skin detect these errors they attract immune cells which causes leakage of fluid between cells and swelling, it's this we experience as sunburn as our skin turns red and sensitive. More concerning is the more damage we do, the greater the risk of skin cancer we experience.

So how to protect ourselves and enjoy the sun? While the safest amount of sun damage is none, in reality a sun tan (caused by melanin production in the skin, a natural defence against the sun) is sought by most of us. It's the unfortunate side effects none of us enjoy.

A good sunblock is the best way to both protect your skin long term against damage, and enjoy the sun without worry of burning. A sunscreen/block with a SPF of over 50 will offer great protection from the sun. The SPF (sun protection factor) is a measure of protection compared to the skins normal ability to protect itself. So a sunscreen with a SPF of 10 would offer ten times the normal skins ability to be exposed to the sun before burning. But note this relates to amount of exposure not time, the sun is strongest during mid-day so less exposure time is needed at mid-day to reach your limit and burn.



Modern "fake tan" products are so good we can have our cake and eat it, wearing sun block to protect from the sun, and fake tan to achieve sun tan we desire.

Our eyes and head are also often overlooked, a good quality pair of sunglasses and ideally a hat to offer protection to our head and help prevent sun stroke and shade for our eyes, sunglasses should be from a reputable brand and ideally be specifically rated to protect against UV radiation, cheap sunglasses can often cause more harm than good as the darkened lens causes our pupils to dilate and if the lens does not filter out UV radiation the increase in pupil size allows more UV radiation in than if we weren't wearing sunglasses at all. Light coloured loosely fitting clothes that cover arms and legs are the best way to stay cool in summer and provide some protection too.

## Key points.

- 1 Avoid the mid-day sun if possible.
- 2 Wear a good quality sun screen.
- 3 Wear light coloured clothes and a hat.
- 4 Wear sunglasses.
- 5 Don't ignore your body, if you feel you're getting burnt or overheating, move in to the shade or indoors.



# BEST PRACTICE SUPPORT FOR LEARNING DIFFICULTIES



As teaching staff we always have so much to think about, a multitude of things to consider. Some of those things take place outside of the classroom: will I have time to grab a coffee?! Where are all of the glue sticks? Is it acceptable to eat my lunch at break?! However, much of our consideration takes place within the classroom: how do I differentiate my lesson? Am I supporting the Pupil Premium students? Am I challenging effectively? Is every child a learner? Our job in the classroom is to ensure that we are meeting the needs of all students, that no child is left behind, that all feel valued and that each and every student achieves success. So how do we do that? How do we cater for students with learning difficulties?

The important thing to remember is that every student is entitled to an education, to an equal opportunity to learn and grow, but not all students learn in the same ways. As a teacher at Sirius Academy West, you are provided with a Pen Portrait. Use these! It is an individual set of strategies that can be used to help to ensure that you are able to deliver your lesson successfully. You should also have a look at the provision map for more detailed information. There are experienced staff within school for you to speak to about strategies and ways forward. Some of the more generic strategies are:

**Make learning participative.**

**Encourage peer learning.**

**Break tasks down into smaller steps that will incrementally build into the task objective.**

**Use learners' own words, language, materials and personal context.**

**Be clear about activity purpose and how it relates to the skills needs of the learner.**

**Give learning value- discuss the 'why?'.**

Get to know the students in your class, have a comprehensive understanding of their needs. What can you do to bridge gaps, to remove barriers, to ensure that every student in your class feels valued, feels successful and achieves their goals? Think about your classes. Think about your teaching practice. How will you move forward to ensure that your classroom is inclusive and demonstrates learning opportunities for all?





# BE HER LEAD AT SIRIUS!

## Be Her Lead

Over the past year I am sure we have all struggled at some point with our mental health, whether that was due to not being able to see family, suffering a loss or simply struggling with the lack of social interaction. However hard we have found this trying time as adults it was had a huge effect on teenagers, particularly young girls between the ages of 10 and 15. UK Children are said to have the lowest happiness levels in Europe with the gap between boys' and girls' happiness concerning. Almost one quarter of young girls admit to struggling with their wellbeing with the Coronavirus exacerbating this problem.

We are experiencing a crisis amongst young women and their mental health with rates that are surging for self-harm, depression and eating disorders. This is something that needs addressing now.

During the last term, we have collaborated with Be Her Lead. This non-profit social enterprise helps to build resilience, foster wellbeing and raise aspirations of girls and non-binary students in schools. Over the last term, four female members of staff have taken part in a variety of training sessions covering a wide range of topics and issues that the young women in our academy face. Topics such as gender identity, racism, gender equality and body image were covered while also learning how to develop the (sometimes very sensitive!) conversations that could arise regarding these.

Half term 6 saw the first cohort begin their Be Her Lead journey. A group of year 10 girls were invited to attend on a Wednesday afterschool. These girls were identified by their teachers and head of year, to help them build their confidence and raise their aspirations for the future. Sessions covered this half term included finding your skillset, cultivating ambition, financial empowerment, an SLT interview and a celebration event where students were given a goodie bag to congratulate them for their attendance and participation. It was a privilege to get to know our students better and build a strong, positive relationship while also seeing their confidence improve.



Our aim in the next academic year is to continue the programme with a variety of different year groups looking at a number of different areas such as Caring for our bodies and minds, Exploring issues and activism, and building confidence and relating to others. Hopefully, working with the girls in the academy will help them during their time with us and beyond to strive to be the best versions of themselves.

## Be Her Lead

# LITERACY FRONT LOADING

## What?

Front loading is when you allow students to go through their work before handing it in, giving them the chance to check that they are happy with their spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) and that all work is completed to a high standard. Front loading puts the onus back onto students to proof-read and make changes before having their work marked by you.

## Why?

With so many qualifications now awarding marks for the quality of students' SPaG, it's more important than ever to be literacy marking their work. This said, students often make mistakes that are more akin to 'typos' than to genuine error. This means we as staff spend time getting students to correct capital letters and put in full stops that they missed out but how much does this actually impact on their progress? This is where front loading comes in and it's beneficial in many ways.

**Time saving** – we spend less time marking mistakes that students know are incorrect.

**More independence for students** – they have to take more responsibility for the quality of their work

**High standards** – over time, high quality writing will become the norm in lessons

## How?

Here are some front-loading strategies that you can use in your classroom to save you time and to foster independence and high expectations in students.

Providing key vocabulary/challenging spellings on the board for students to use while they are writing. This minimises the chance of them getting the key terminology incorrect.

**Peer assessment** – getting students to 'mark' one another's work before you do. They could use the same literacy codes that we do to identify any errors and allow their partner to make the changes before you see their work.

**Dictionaries** – there are now a number of dictionaries in every classroom for you to use and direct students to during lessons. If a student is struggling with a spelling, or you notice an error while circulating, get students to independently look up their errors. They are more likely to remember the spelling in future than if they are given the correct spelling straight away.

**Whole class feedback** – if, while you're marking, you notice that there are commonalities appearing, jot these down and make it into a starter for the coming lesson. For example, if multiple students are using apostrophes incorrectly, stop correcting these in books and make your starter a mini grammar task on how to use them properly. Then get students to look at their own work and identify and correct anywhere they have used apostrophes incorrectly.





# SUMMER 2021

## READING LIST



### **Zakiya Dalila Harris. The Other Black Girl**

Get Out meets The Devil Wears Prada in this electric debut about the tension that unfurls when two young Black women meet against the starkly white backdrop of book publishing.

Twenty-six-year-old editorial assistant Nella Rogers is tired of being the only Black employee at Wagner Books. Fed up with the isolation and the micro-aggressions, she's thrilled when Hazel starts working in the cubicle beside hers. They've only just started comparing natural hair care regimens, though, when a string of uncomfortable events cause Nella to become Public Enemy Number One and Hazel, the Office Darling. Then the notes begin to appear on Nella's desk: LEAVE WAGNER. NOW. It's hard to believe Hazel is behind these hostile messages. But as Nella starts to spiral and obsess over the sinister forces at play, she soon realises that there is a lot more at stake than her career.

### **Paula Hawkins. A Slow Fire Burning**

The author of the bestselling phenomenon The Girl on the Train returns with another white-knuckle thriller awash with unbearable suspense and jaw-dropping misdirection, as three women are brought into conflict through a brutal murder. Laura has spent most of her life being judged. She's seen as hot-tempered, troubled, a loner. Some even call her dangerous. Miriam knows that just because Laura is witnessed leaving the scene of a horrific murder with blood on her clothes, that doesn't mean she's a killer. Bitter experience has taught her how easy it is to get caught in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Carla is reeling from the brutal murder of her nephew. She trusts no one: good people are capable of terrible deeds. But how far will she go to find peace?

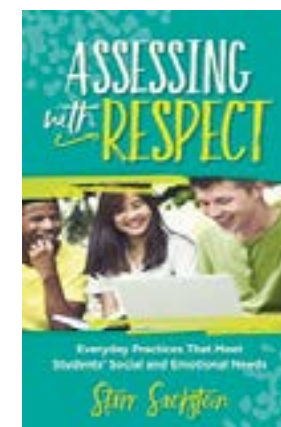


### **Steven King. Billy Summers**

Billy Summers is a man in a room with a gun. He's a killer for hire and the best in the business. But he'll do the job only if the target is a truly bad guy. And now Billy wants out. But first there is one last hit. Billy is among the best snipers in the world, a decorated Iraq war vet, a Houdini when it comes to vanishing after the job is done. So what could possibly go wrong?

How about everything.

This spectacular can't-put-it-down novel is part war story, part love letter to small town America and the people who live there, and it features one of the most compelling and surprising duos in King fiction, who set out to avenge the crimes of an extraordinarily evil man. It's about love, luck, fate, and a complex hero with one last shot at redemption.



### **Starr Sackstein. Assessing With Respect (Pedagogy)**

In this timely and thoughtful call to action, author and educator Starr Sackstein examines the critical intersection between assessment and social and emotional learning (SEL), particularly as it affects students of color and other marginalized groups. The book addresses the five SEL competencies identified by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)—self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making—and explains how teaching students to develop their abilities in these areas can help them improve their learning and assessment experiences.

### **Ruth Coker Burks. All The Young Men (Non-fiction)**

In 1986, 26-year-old Ruth Coker Burks visits a friend in hospital when she notices that the door to one of the patient's rooms is painted red. The nurses are reluctant to enter, drawing straws to decide who will tend to the sick person inside. Out of impulse, Ruth herself enters the quarantined space and begins to care for the young man who cries for his mother in the last moments of his life. And in doing so, Ruth's own life changes forever.

As word spreads in the community that she is the only person willing to help the young men afflicted by the growing AIDS crisis, Ruth goes from being an ordinary young mother to an accidental activist. Forging deep friendships with the men she helps, Ruth works to find them housing and jobs, and then funeral homes willing to take their bodies - often in the middle of the night. She prepares and delivers meals to 'her guys,' supplementing her own income with discarded food found in the dumpsters behind supermarkets. She defies local pastors and the medical community to store rare medications for her most urgent patients, and teaches sex education to drag queens after hours at secret bars. Emboldened by the weight of their collective pain, she fervently advocates for their safety and visibility, ultimately advising Governor Bill Clinton on the national HIV-AIDS crisis, and in doing so becomes a beacon of hope to an otherwise spurned group of ailing gay men on the fringes of society.

Ruth kept her story a secret for years, fearful of repercussions within her deeply conservative community. But at a time when it's more important than ever to stand up for those who can't, Ruth has found the courage to have her voice - and the voices of those who were stigmatised, rejected and abandoned - heard.





# SUMMER TERM 2021

## CAPA/ENGLISH JOINT PROJECT

CAPA and English were given the task of coming up with a fun, engaging event for the Year 10 students to participate in.

As always we took the bull by the horns and went **HUGE!!!**

The Plan was to create an English curriculum (GCSE set text: Macbeth, An Inspector Calls, A Christmas Carol and Poetry Anthology) themed mural.

Students would be grouped in their English classes and the project would run over the course of a week with different groups rotating between English and Art activities culminating in a mural sized masterpiece for the whole Academy to enjoy.

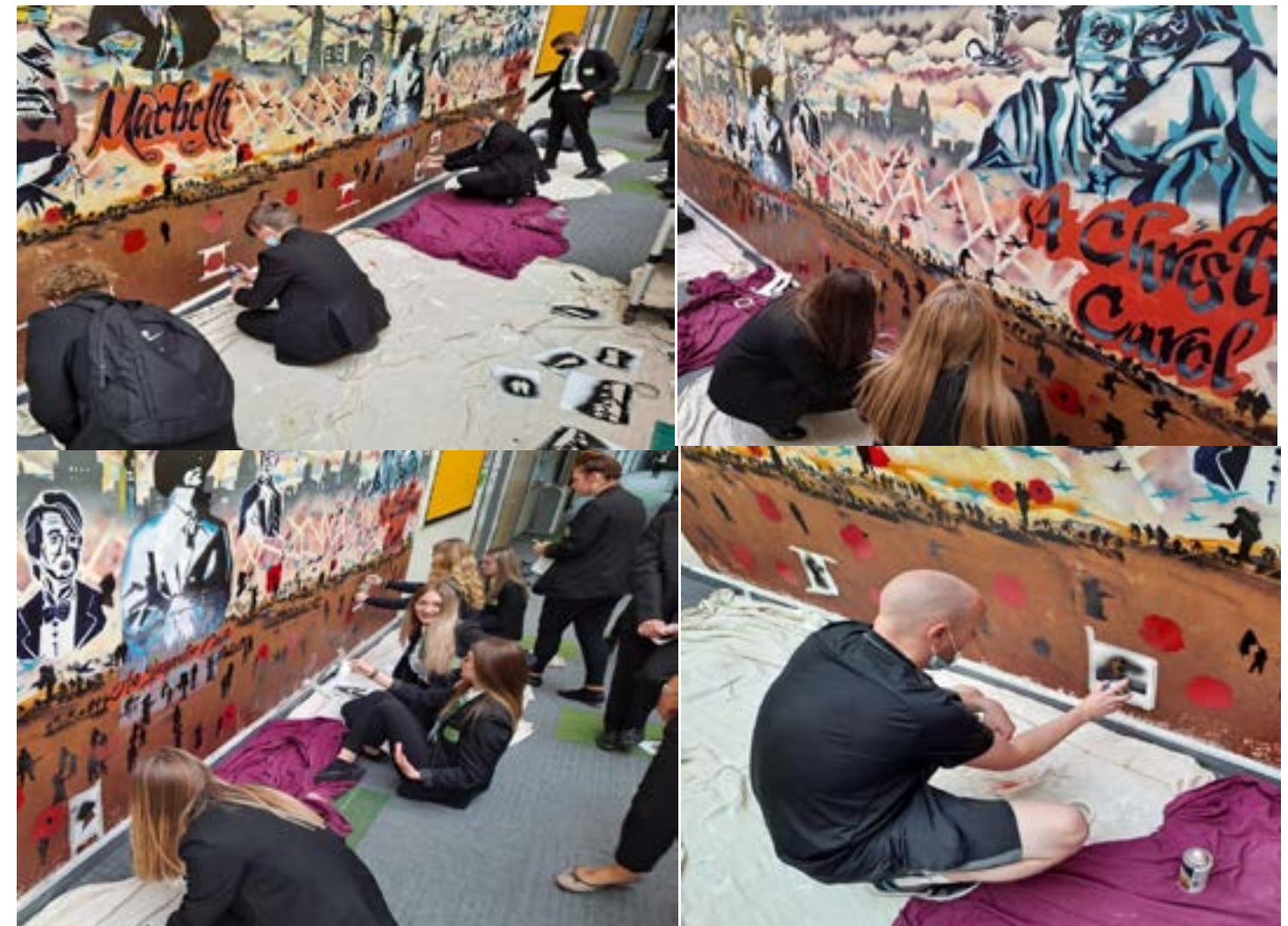


A number of really positive workshops took place between both departments with the Year 10 students cutting their stencils, then adding spray paint soldier silhouettes to the mural.

The Year 10s conducted themselves in a mature manner and enjoyed the tasks. Even a few members of staff got involved adding their own figures, claiming a piece of Sirius history! There's a horse to the bottom left that Miss Willis is particularly proud of, "the detail in the tail is incredible".

The big vision is to have a wall which can be used as a living resource, for all subjects. English classes could use the wall to read out parts of the text and illustrate with the visuals engaging some of those more difficult students.

Whilst we have been working on it we have had lots of interesting conversations with students, about both Art and English so it looks like it's a winner with the students.





# ENGLAND

Some things don't change, and sometimes they change without warning. English weather is inconsistently erratic. Sunshine only reveals itself in glimpses. Take it when you can. The same could be said about joy. This spontaneous emotion, most keenly experienced only in the present moment, was seemingly lost in the past 18 months of lockdowns, social isolation and COVID-19 cases. Joy hibernated under the snow.

However, joy arrived when the nation needed it most. Euphoria has swept Shakespeare's sceptre'd isle, thanks to the England football team reaching its first major final in 55 years.

Failing at the very end doesn't make the whole endeavour a failure. Far from it. England's Euro 2020 campaign has united the nation and given us hope, joy and an enormous shared experience at a moment when we really needed it.

This England team and this England manager have been fresh, humble and likeable. Above and beyond that it's also a team near the start of its cycle, not the end, and that's tremendously exciting.



# EURO 2021





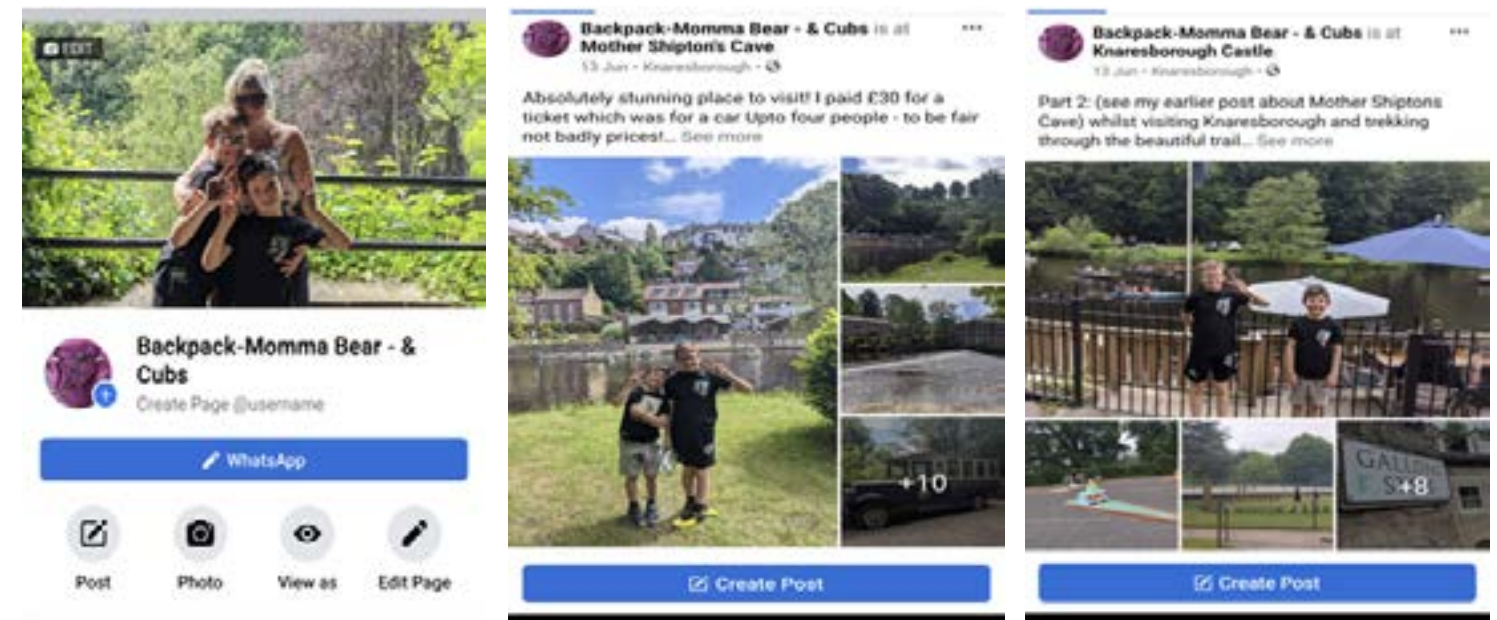
# S TAYCATIONS



## “Found it. Visited it. Blogged it”

Everyone experienced the first lockdown differently: for me, for many different reasons, I chose to see it as a glass half full. As a teacher and single parent, I struggle to try and establish the long sought after ‘work/life balance’. I often feel guilty for not spending enough time with my own children and then I feel guilty that I am not spending enough time working and lockdown helped to give me the clarity that things had to change. Not only for my children who were missing time with their mum, but for my own health and mental well-being. Because of this, my idea for ‘Backpack Momma Bear & Cubs’ was born (Facebook based).

I always share pictures of days out with the kids and people ask me for suggestions so I decided a central blog would be a better way of sharing our experiences and recommendations. There are lots of similar blogs available and I think this is one of the best things to come from lockdown. As a family we build it each week, making sure that we have at least one quality family day together and thanks to the temperamental weather the boys have decided we need to be as creative about days in as we are days out!



The main focus of the blog is ‘cheap as chips’ and ‘free as possible’ days out. If you have not visited before I would recommend Knaresborough for a day or two. Mother Shipton’s Cave is lots of fun, the canal walks are always bustling and Knaresborough Castle is beautiful to visit (and free!) and kept my two entertained for a couple of hours so it has a solid thumbs up from me! I would recommend parking in one of the public car parks and paying walking in entrance fees to make it cheaper. It can get very busy so arrive as early as possible!

We are doing ‘Park hikes’ and visiting lots of local parks, we had one recommended on the weekend in Beverley called Deer Way Park, an absolute hidden diamond!. There are many parks around and Hull City Council has some details of them on their website <https://www.hcandl.co.uk/sport-and-leisure-and-parks/your-local-park> but I would recommend the best thing is to pack your backpack and go out and explore!

If you want to stay closer to home and plan adventures it is surprising how much Hull has to offer! One thing I would definitely recommend doing is completing some of the trails that are available. The website (<https://www.hcandl.co.uk/sport-and-leisure-and-parks/health-and-wellbeing/walking-hull>) contains some information on the trails and there are free PDFs to download with maps and areas to tick off if you want to print. (I have a booklet copy if anyone would like it emailed). My boys chose the infamous ‘Fish Trail’ to complete first so we got our trusty backpack (best investment EVER!), filled it with all sorts of food delights, drinks, hand sanitiser, wipes, hats, sun cream, (First Aid Kit for Mum!) and a pen! It took us four hours in total to complete but can be completed faster depending on little legs and hungry tummies! There are some challenging finds but the kids loved ticking off each one off their list and were so proud of themselves for finding them!

There is so much to do that doesn’t have to cost the earth but it can be difficult finding the motivation to look and know where to start. I struggled and looked closer to home and having little walks out really helped. My blog has only been running for a short while but please feel free to visit or let me know if you want or have any suggestions! There’s also lots more on Facebook such as ‘Kids Days Out’ that looks further afield than Yorkshire. At the end of the day, adventures are what you make of them and memories are what last and the main thing that children will cherish.

Happy adventures! Here’s to a much needed Summer recharge! #makingmemories





# A TTENDANCE



Teacher effectiveness is the strongest school-related determinant of student success, but chronic student absence reduces even the best teacher's ability to provide learning opportunities and make progress. We need the students here to make a difference. In recent years, the academy has worked extremely hard to raise the profile of attendance and limit absence. In a three year period from 2016-2019 we were able to increase the academy's cumulative attendance by nearly 2%.

However, the recent pandemic, and enforced lockdown and isolation periods, has had a significant impact on our capacity to maintain the positive momentum from previous years.

It is more important than ever that we uphold our good habits and strive for all students to attend regularly. We must assume a relentless approach. Our biggest asset at the academy, and our best chance to increase attendance, is you. Our staff. The relationships you develop with the students, the interest you show, and the rapport you build, can all contribute to regular attendance. We need you more than ever.

## KEY FACTS:

90% attendance is the same as having half a day off a week at the academy. Students with 100% attendance will receive six months more education, support and guidance, than students with attendance of 90% in their time at the academy 80% attendance is the same as having a full day off a week at the academy. This equates to a full year lost by the end of Year 11.

Students with an attendance of over 96% achieve more than three times the amount of 4/5+ grades at the end of Year 11 than those with an attendance of less than 90%



The link between regular attendance and better outcomes leads to a greater chance of employability when students are older. On average it can earn students over £140,000 more in their lifetime.

There are 365 days in a calendar year. A maximum of 190 of these days are spent at the academy. That still leaves 175 days where students are not required to be at the academy. Let's make every day count!

## STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE:

Evidence has shown that tackling absence can be most effective when a number of different approaches are adopted.

These will be dictated by a number of factors including the age of the student, parental interest, and social and economic circumstances.

**POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS** – Students that know you care about them are far more likely to come to the academy. Make them feel important, accepted and cared for. Take time to talk with them outside the classroom, show an interest in their lives and genuine empathy for things they are going through.

**PARENTAL CONTACT** – Communicate frequently with parents about positive achievements and improvements. Emphasise the responsibility and role of parents. Encourage parents to consider when they take holidays and make medical appointments. Make them aware of the impact of absence.

**USE AVAILABLE DATA** – Cloud School provides outstanding reports to allow us to track and monitor students. These reports are available to all staff. Use this to inform any conversations you have with the students, or their parents and carers, and assess for any patterns of absence.

**SPEAK TO OTHER STAFF** – The needs of our students are very complex and the barriers they face to regular attendance are just as complicated. Speak to the Attendance Team, Year Teams and the Safeguarding Team to gain a better understanding of a student.

**PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT** – Students are more likely to attend classes when they feel connected to the academy. These activities nurture pride in the academy and provide additional opportunities to forge stronger relationships with students outside of the classroom.





# ABSENCE

What happens when your child is absent from the academy?

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**1** Should your child be unavailable to attend the academy it is important that we are aware of the reason for absence. Contact can be made by ringing the Attendance Team on **(01482) 352939** or **975548** by sending a Text Message to **07624806336**.
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**2** If the academy is not aware of a reason for absence, it will initiate a First-Day Text Message alert that is sent directly to parents. Contact with parents and carers will be attempted to identify the reason for absence.
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**3** Absence will only be authorised should it be deemed appropriate. Absence will not be authorised if students have a pattern of regular absence. Parents and carers may need to provide medical proof for absence. <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>
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**4** The parents and carers of students that have recorded 10 days of unauthorised absence in one academic term face a possible **Fixed Penalty Notice** and a subsequent **fine**.
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**5** The Local Authority class all students with an absence of below 90% as **Persistent Absentees**. This equates to a student missing one day every two weeks. This can negatively affect the chances of employment and enrolment on Further Education courses after Year 11.
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**6** The Local Authority may pursue further prosecution should the number of unauthorised absences not be reduced significantly. This can result in an additional fine of up to **£2500** and a **custodial sentence**.
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**7** The academy employs a **Home School Liaison Officer** to support families and will attempt to build relationships between parents and the academy. This may include **daily visits** to absent students to establish reasons for absence.
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**8** All holidays that are taken with term time will not be authorised, and thus, will result in a fine for each child that is absent.


# ATTENDANCE


What happens when your child regularly attends the academy?


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**1** Registers are completed at the start of every lesson. Students are authorised with two attendance marks during an academy day; one at **8.30am** in Tutor and one at **1.20pm** in Period 5.
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**2** Students will carry their individual attendance record throughout their time at the academy. It remains available to all future employers and/or Further Education providers.
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**3** The academy is keen to reward positive attendance. Regular incentives include; Weekly 100% Chocolate Fridays, 100% Tutor awards for chocolate, breakfast and pizza, Tutor Attendance of the Month competitions, celebratory attendance letters, and 100% badges.
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**4** Regular attendance at the academy provides students with the best platform for success in the classroom. Students with 100% attendance will receive **six months more education**, support and guidance that students with attendance of 90% in their time at the academy.
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**5** Students with an attendance of over 96% achieve more than three times the amount of 4/5+ grades at the end of Year 11 than those with an attendance of less than 90%.
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**6** The link between regular attendance and better outcomes leads to a greater chance of employability when students are older. On average it can earn students over **£140,000** more in their lifetime.
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**7** There are 365 days in a calendar year. A maximum of 190 of these days are spent at the academy. That still leaves 175 days were students are not required to be at the academy. Let's make every day count!
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**8** Absence due to **Medical Appointments** still results in a reduction of a student's attendance. Please limit this by looking to arrange appointments outside of the academy day or at a time that allows your child to return to protect their morning and afternoon mark.



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## EACHING AND LEARNING STAR AWARD



Cally is a teaching and learning superstar as she always ensures her students receive engaging, well-planned and challenging lessons delivered with her unwavering energy and enthusiasm. She is able to develop excellent relationships with students and supports them both inside and outside of the classroom, particularly with her tutor group who have massively reduced their logs since she took them over. Cally is also a supportive colleague and highly respected within the CAPA team and is always willing to share her ideas and her time for the betterment of the department. Cally's love for her subject is infectious and this passion is always clear to see in her supportive and productive classroom environment.



# T HE LAST WORD



## Why I Teach at Sirius

For me, teaching is and will always be about what is best for students and I believe that young people are at the heart of everything we do at Sirius Academy West.

The students here are brilliant. In every class there are interesting, thoughtful and creative young people who have high aspirations to go to university or to make a name for themselves in an industry. Sirius supports these students.

However, in every class there are also students who – while equally passionate and considerate – lack the self-belief of their peers. These are students who don't know what they want to do when they leave school or who perhaps don't have the same high expectations of themselves. This is where being a teacher at Sirius really is different to other schools. The support provided to these students is consistent and visible – there are individual members of staff building the resilience and confidence of these students in their lessons day-to-day and an extremely hard-working pastoral team behind the scenes, ensuring that students are in school, safe and looked after. On top of that, there is a layer of interventions (both academic and external) to provide experiences for students that allow them to see the options that are available to them and what can be achieved with a little hard work and determination. Over the last two years, I've seen how much staff are willing to go the extra mile for our students – whether that be delivering revision materials to front doors, delivering period 7 and Saturday lessons or planning bespoke lessons for remote teaching - there are so many who go above and beyond every single day to ensure that those who attend Sirius Academy get the best deal possible.

The saying goes that it takes a village to raise a child and I see SAW as a huge part of that for our students – a whole team of people working to improve the lives of the students we serve and it is for this reason that I am proud to teach at Sirius Academy West.

**If you'd like to have The Last Word in next term's Sirius T&L Magazine please email Abbey Preece**

