



## Spring Term Newsletter – April 2026

Dear families,

As we come to the end of another busy and rewarding term, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the many reasons we are so proud of our Coombeshead community. Our students continue to impress us not only with their commitment to learning, but with their kindness, creativity, and the way they support one another every day. It is this strong sense of belonging and shared purpose that makes our school such a special place.

This term, we are particularly proud to celebrate our students' success in the *Show Racism the Red Card* competition, where Coombeshead has won for the third year running. This is a fantastic achievement and a powerful reflection of the inclusive values we hold as a school. Our students created an original song, showcasing not only their strong commitment to promoting equality and respect, but also the impressive musical talent within our community. As a result, our winners will attend a prestigious awards ceremony at a Premier League football club—an experience I know they will remember for years to come. This success is something we are incredibly proud of and speaks volumes about the diverse and welcoming environment we continue to build together.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognise our Year 11 students, who have approached this term with real determination and maturity. Their commitment to their PPE examinations, English and Maths walking-talking mocks, and their engagement with Lesson 0 and Lesson 6 has been excellent. This is a crucial time in their education, and it is vital that attendance remains high so they can continue to benefit from the support, expertise, and guidance of their teachers as they prepare for their GCSEs.

For our Year 10 students, this marks the beginning of an important phase as they move towards their GCSE year. We are very much looking forward to supporting and guiding them through this journey. From September, they too will benefit from Lesson 0 and Lesson 6, which are designed to help secure the very best outcomes and open as many opportunities as possible for their next steps beyond Year 11.

We are also delighted to introduce our newly formed *Friends of Coombeshead*, who are already working hard to strengthen our school community. One of their first projects is to establish a school uniform shop, and they would greatly appreciate any support from families who are able to get involved. Please do take a moment to read more about this in the newsletter.

As we approach the Easter break, I hope this provides an opportunity for rest, time together, and a chance to recharge after a busy term. Please do take note of the support information included in the newsletter should it be needed over the holidays. I hope you all have a safe and enjoyable break—perhaps with a well-earned chocolate egg or two—and we look



forward to welcoming students back for what promises to be an exciting and event-filled summer term, including our upcoming Open Mornings.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support.

Best wishes,

Helen Coulson  
Headteacher

### International Wheelchair Day – 1 March 2026

To mark *International Wheelchair Day* (1st March), we held a breaktime Q&A session in the Library with Elliott (Year 8), who spoke about his personal experience as a wheelchair user both in and outside of school. The event was well-attended and engaging, with students and staff in the audience asking a range of thoughtful questions. Thank you to Elliott for sharing his story and for helping our school community deepen its understanding of accessibility and inclusion.



**International  
Wheelchair Day**  
1 March 2026

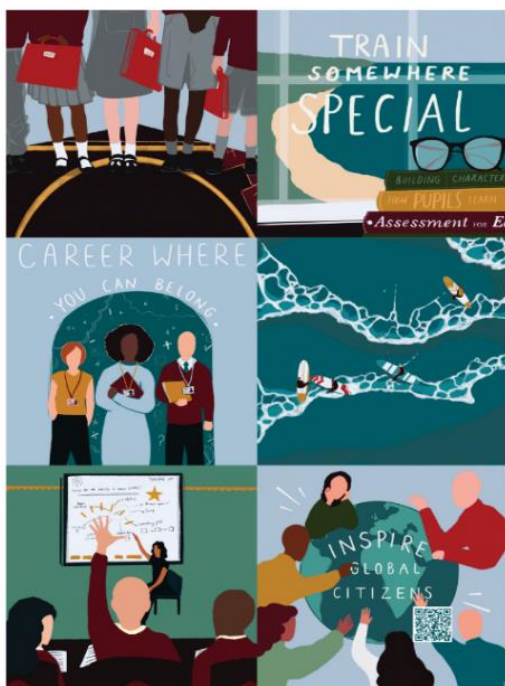




## Easter Holiday Safeguarding Contacts

If you have any safeguarding concerns during the school holiday, please be aware of the following avenues of support:

- **MASH/ Front Door referrals** - Devon County Council Safeguarding Hub. If you are worried about a child or young person in Devon and want to speak to someone, or if you are a child or young person worried about your own safety - 0345 155 1071
- mashsecure@devon.gov.uk
- Outside of office hours contact Emergency Duty Team - 0345 6000 388
- **Childline** - 0800 1111 [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)
- **KOOTH** - The Kooth team provide free, safe and anonymous online support and counselling. The whole team are made up of friendly and experienced individuals who want to help. [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)
- **SHOUT/ Crisis Text Line** - Shout is the UK's first 24/7 text service, free on all major mobile networks, for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere. It's a place to go if you're struggling to cope and you need immediate help. Free text 85258
- **Police** - 999 (emergency)/101
- **Chat Health** - Young people aged 11-19 can text a school nurse for confidential advice and support. Text 07520 631722 for advice on things like relationships, bullying, mental health, self-harm, drugs/alcohol.



## Primary & Secondary QTS / PGCE Courses

Applications to train to teach  
starting in September 2026  
are open

To find out more and apply visit  
[www.swiftteachertraining.org.uk](http://www.swiftteachertraining.org.uk)





## Friends of Coombeshead Academy – Everyone Welcome

Friends of Coombeshead Academy is a new group, just starting out, for parents, grandparents and carers who want to support the school community in simple, positive ways — and hopefully have a bit of fun along the way too.

As we're in the very early days, this is all about keeping things friendly, flexible and informal. There's absolutely no pressure to commit lots of time or take on a big role. Whether you can help once a year, once a term, or just stay in the loop, every little bit makes a difference.



Over time, we'd love to:

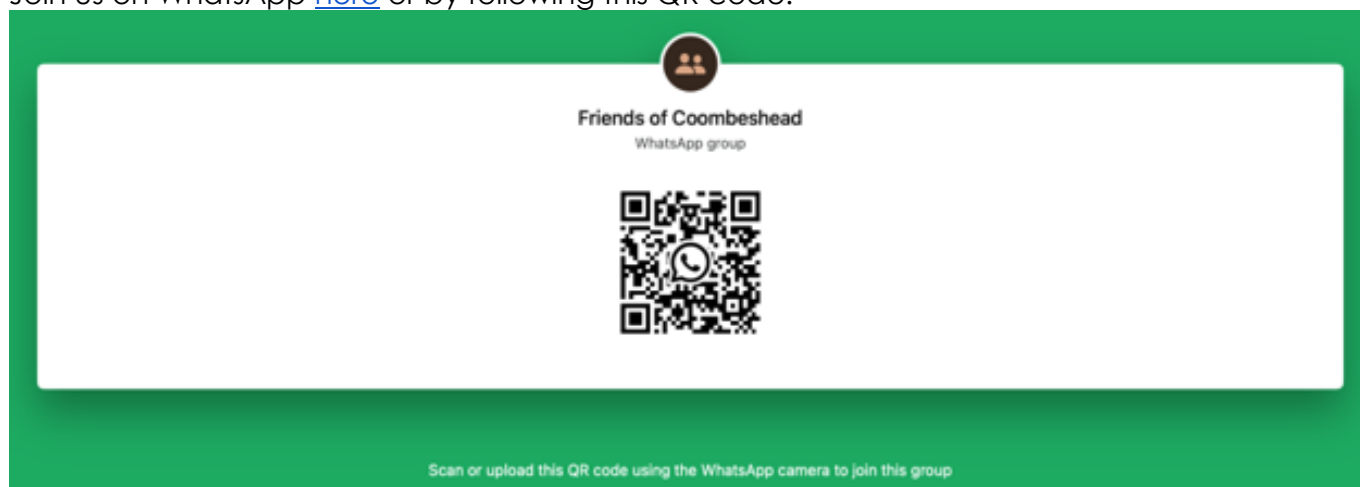
- Support the school and students in practical, helpful ways
- Build a welcoming community for families
- Raise a little extra money for activities and opportunities for students

Some people might help with small fundraising ideas, others might lend a hand at events, and many may simply enjoy being connected to what's happening at Coombeshead. However, you'd like to be involved, you'll be very welcome.

**If you'd like to be part of this new, growing group — even in a very small way — we'd love to hear from you. It's a great way to support the school and feel part of what's happening there.**

To find out more or join in, come and say hello on our WhatsApp group or drop us an email: [friendofcoomb@gmail.com](mailto:friendofcoomb@gmail.com)

Join us on WhatsApp [here](#) or by following this QR code.





# COOMBESHEAD ACADEMY

'inspiring excellence'



Coombeshead  
Academy

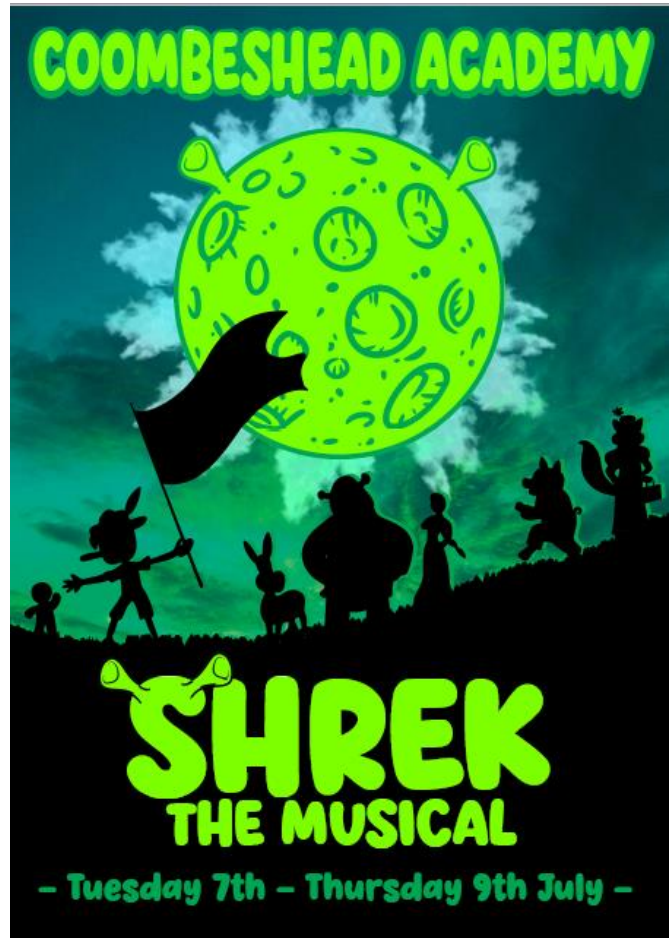
## Pre-loved School Uniforms — Needed —



Drop off at the School Office  
for the Friends of Coombeshead Academy

Pre-loved uniforms will be sold at affordable prices,  
raising money for our school.

*Thank you for your support!*



### 7L French class Pen pal exchange

Since last term, students in 7L French class (Madame Farleigh) have started an exciting pen pal exchange with pupils from a partner school in Brittany, France. The students have been very keen to work on their letters in French, using the language they have been learning in lessons since September. This project has not only developed their linguistic skills but has also encouraged cultural curiosity and built confidence in real-world communication.



*Belong, Believe, Become*



## Neighbourhood police team and Jasper the dog school visit

On Monday 9th March Coombeshead Academy welcomed our Neighbourhood Policing Team of John, Rob and Rachel who visited a range of secondary schools in Newton Abbot and Ashburton with police dog Jasper who is a passive drugs dog. The visit was purely educational, giving students the chance to see the dog in action and learn about the important role police dogs play in keeping the local community safe.

This was not a targeted search operation, the aim was simply to engage with young people, build understanding around policing, and showcase the important work of the police dog team.

Many thanks to our police colleagues who were able to give up some of their time to visit us.





## Show Racism the Red Card Music Award winners

We have received the exciting news that the judging session of the Show Racism the Red Card School competition 2026 has taken place and Coombeshead Academy students Simon, Molly, Aaliyah, Harrison, Rosie and Will (Year 10) have been selected to receive an award in the Music Category for their song 'Connected'

They have been invited to attend the Awards Ceremony which will be taking place at a Premier League football ground in May.



This is a national competition with schools all over the country taking part, so this is a fantastic achievement, massive congratulations to our Coombeshead Academy winners!



# SOUTHWEST JUNIOR CHEF OF THE YEAR 2026



Are you aged **11-16** and passionate about cooking?  
This is your chance to showcase your skills and creativity in a real chef competition!

**What You Need to Do**  
To enter, you must create:

- A **main course dish for two people (must be savoury)**
- Using **mainly locally sourced ingredients**
- Include a **full recipe and method typed up.**

🌟 **Submit your dish idea and method to a member of the Food and Nutrition team (Room F1)**

**Important Information**

- Your dish will be judged and selected students will progress to the next stage.
- You may get the opportunity to cook your dish in a **live competition setting.**
- This is a fantastic way to build your skills and experience in the kitchen!

**Key Dates**

- Entry Deadline:** Tuesday 26th May 2026

**Need Help?**  
If you:

- Want feedback on your idea, Need help planning your dish, Want to improve your chances

👉 Come along to the **support session during any break or lunch time** or speak to a member of the Food and Nutrition staff!



← Find out more here



## Music for Youth March 2026

On Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> March, we hosted a Music for Youth regional event. We are one of only 35 centres to be asked to host one of these events, from across the whole of the UK.

The day itself saw performances from a variety of ensembles from across Devon, some of which included Devon Youth Chamber Brass Ensemble, Devon Youth Jazz Orchestra and various bands from schools and music centres across Devon.



The event was organised by the Devon Music Education Hub, and we were asked if our own Soul Band would perform. Each performance was listened to and appraised by two Music for Youth mentors, who are both professional working musicians. The feedback we received the Soul Band was very encouraging and could possibly open the door to an invite to perform at the national event in Birmingham, later this year.

The whole day presented a real opportunity for enrichment for local young musicians, with over 200 people performing throughout the day.





## Education South West Student Leadership Conference

On Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> February, a group of students from Coombeshead Academy attended the ESW Student Leadership Conference held at KEVICC. Coombeshead students from a range of leadership roles including school council representatives, diversity ambassadors and mental health ambassadors attended the conference and were able to meet and share ideas with other student leaders from across our trust. The Trust CEO Matthew Shanks talked to students about the importance of the role of student leaders and why it's important to celebrate what they do. Caroline Voaden (South Devon MP, Lib Dem) also addressed the conference via video and spoke to the students about her varied career/ leadership.



Students from all schools were required to speak for five minutes about their roles and specifically, what difference/ improvements have they been able to make in their school. Aaisha, Nicole, Lidia, Emir, Lewis, Seb, Olivia and Amelia all represented Coombeshead brilliantly.

All ideas and responses from the conference will be edited and shared across schools and also shared with primary pupils at a planned Primary Leadership conference in the summer term.





## World Book Day

A class of Y8 students enjoyed a virtual school visit with author Nathanael Lessore to celebrate World Book Day on 5<sup>th</sup> March. Nathanael was entertaining and engaging as he talked about his struggles at school, how he came to writing later and how he fits his writing in around his love of football and gaming. He spoke amusingly and encouragingly about a love of reading and the value of reading stories from a variety of perspectives. He advised us not to worry about our most embarrassing moments – they'll make great scenes in our future novels!



## Year 8 football

Our year 8 football team took part in the 7 a side tournament on 3 March. The team only conceded 1 goal in 6 games. Well done to all involved.

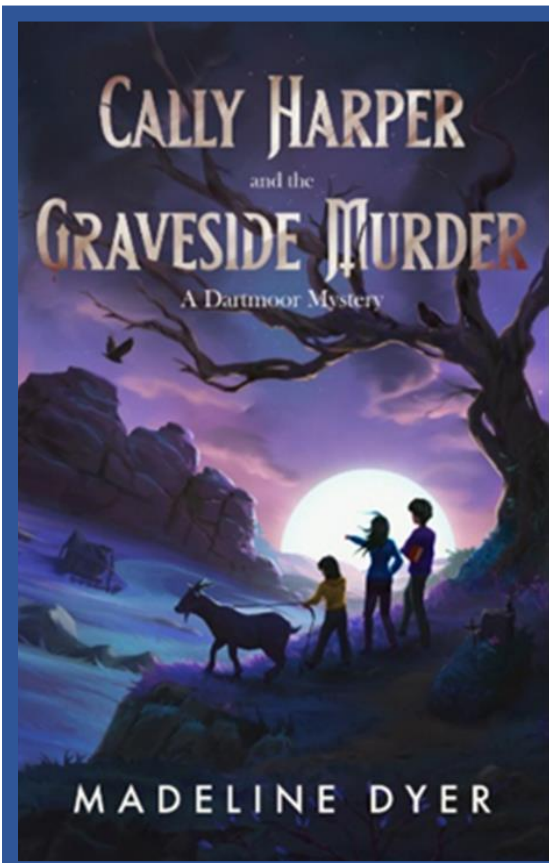
They played again in the 7 a side tournament on 24 March. The team kept a clean sheet for the whole tournament and won the tournament which is a great achievement!! Well done to all involved.





## Creative Writing with Local Author

We were delighted to welcome local author Madeline Dyer to the library in February, to talk about her new book *Cally Harper and the Graveside Murder* – a story based on Dartmoor legends. Madeline led a very enjoyable creative writing workshop for forty invited students in years 7 – 9 and was also available at breaktime and after school to meet and talk to students and to sign her books.





## Spring Concert – 25<sup>th</sup> March 2026

*A wonderful evening of performances from our students, who we are very proud of!*

On Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March, we held our Christmas Concert in the Bushell Theatre. We listened to performances from the new Girl Band, Folk Group, Soul Band, Music Theatre Group and various student led groups and solos. The students were very well received and the feedback we received from members of the audience was excellent.

A big thank you to all of the incredibly talented students involved.

Curriculum Team Leader of Performing Arts Andy Tyner said, "It's amazing to see the wealth and depth of musical talent at Coombeshead Academy. The students are full of confidence and have a great enthusiasm to display their musical abilities at school events. The support we receive from the pupils and parents is great and this helps us to give them as many opportunities as we can to perform. The highlight of our evening was a sneak preview of our summer production of Shrek!!"





COOMBESHEAD ACADEMY

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Save the date!

**COOMBESHEAD ACADEMY**

**SHREK**  
**THE MUSICAL**

- Tuesday 7th - Thursday 9th July -

*Belong, Believe, Become*



# Teign School Community Environment Engagement Event

## ENVIRONMENTAL FILM NIGHT

Thursday 30th April 2026

6pm - 9.30pm

Teign School, Kingsteignton TQ12 3JG

We are excited to be hosting our first environmental film night and fundraiser here at Teign School, supported by the Rotary Club. We hope to see you there!

Our young people benefit hugely from interactions with people they may not meet in their every day lives. Gaining the knowledge and experience from members of their community helps them to develop life-long skills.

Do you have concerns about the environment and want to help us with ways to develop change within our schools and to support schools with their Climate Action Plans? We would love to hear your ideas.

**6pm - 7pm**

We would like to invite you to Teign School to meet some students and see what actions we are putting in place for them, see what plants are on offer, enjoy some refreshments and maybe try your luck at the raffle.

**7pm - 8.30pm**

Watch *Future Council*, a film by Damon Gameau (2040, THAT SUGAR FILM) takes eight kids on the ultimate school excursion: a road trip across Europe to challenge powerful leaders and find solutions to our greatest ecological challenges.



See the film trailer here  
[youtube.com/watch?v=sLPQxANfoxo](https://youtube.com/watch?v=sLPQxANfoxo)

**8.30pm - 9/9.30pm**

Question our panel of climate change, sustainability and regeneration experts lead by Education South West Multi Academy Trust's Sustainability Lead and South West Coordinator for Ministry of Eco Education - Tom Pether



← **FREE tickets available  
via this QR code**

[ticketaillor.com/events/friendsofteignschool/2101008](https://ticketaillor.com/events/friendsofteignschool/2101008)

Supported by the Rotary Club  
and Friends of Teign School





## EHE Elective Home Education

Coombeshead Academy strongly believe the best place for students is in school, in front of expert teachers. This is not only the best option for their education but for their social skills, mental health and to help them understand the wider world and build resilience. Therefore, we strongly discourage students moving to EHE.

### Are you considering EHE – Elective Home Education?

While home education can work for some families, it may not always be the best option for your child's secondary education. The number of students being placed on EHE is rising rapidly, both nationally and within Devon. In addition, we are concerned about the number of students from Coombeshead Academy who have been placed on EHE this year.

EHE is often a response to a short-term concern such as your child falling out with friends, anxiety issues, worried about being taken through the attendance procedure or bullying. Parents often take students out of school short term to relieve the immediate issue, however, do not always have the skills or resources to formally educate their child in the wide range of areas and subjects they get at school.

Parents often plan to reintegrate their child back into their current school or, at times, a different school later in the year. This makes things much more difficult for the child as they miss significant sections of learning and then struggle when they go back into lessons as they have fallen behind. These students never fully catch up on this missed work and research shows students who have had periods of home education often do not perform well in their GCSE or A level exams. They quickly lose friendships, spend more time on social media and as a result anxiety can increase and mental health deteriorate.

**If you are considering EHE please contact us straight away.** We will do all we can to resolve your concern and even if you eventually chose to move your child to another school, its important they keep attending right up until the move.

Here are some important reasons to consider before making a decision to move to home education:

- **Legal responsibility:** As a parent, you'll be responsible for meeting all of your child's educational needs. This means delivering a well-rounded curriculum and ensuring your child reaches their full potential across various subjects. This requires a significant amount of time, energy, and effort from parents. Parents may need to cover costs for textbooks, computer equipment, sports activities, and any additional tutoring that may be needed. Additionally, exam fees for GCSEs and A-Levels can add up quickly, often totalling hundreds of pounds and **finding a centre who accepts candidates for examinations can be very difficult.**
- **Gaps in knowledge:** As a parent, you might not have expertise in every subject area, leading to gaps in your child's education and difficulty covering all necessary topics. This is especially difficult when they return to a school or sit external examinations.
- **Social concerns and limited extracurricular opportunities:** Home educated children may miss out on opportunities such as extracurricular clubs, school events, work experience, school trips and rewards for achievements through assemblies and award events. Your



child might miss out on valuable social experiences with peers, which can impact their ability to interact in diverse environments and develop important social skills.

- **Long-term educational impact:** If you intend to home educate only for a short time, it could affect your child's readiness for future education and career opportunities. A traditional school setting often prepares students more effectively for higher education or the workforce.

Choosing the right educational path for your child is a big decision. We encourage you to consider all factors carefully to ensure you are making the best choice for their long-term success.

Please speak to us if you are worried, this can be your child's Year Team Leader, Student Support Officer, Mr Balsdon our Deputy Headteacher or myself as we are very keen to support out students and their families.

Best wishes,

Mrs Helen Coulson





## Dates for the term 2025/26:

<b>April:</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> April	Year 10 Life Skills Day
	30 <sup>th</sup> April	LGB Meeting (5.30-7.30)
<b>May:</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> May	Year 7 Parent Evening
	8 <sup>th</sup> May	Open Morning
<b>June:</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> June	CREATE Open Morning
	8 <sup>th</sup> June	Sports Award Evening (6.00 – 7.00)
	16 <sup>th</sup> June	Year 13 Leavers celebration Year 11 Last Day and BBQ (3.00 – 4.00) CREATE Summer Show (4.00 – 6.00) Annual Awards Evening (6.00 – 7.00)
	18 <sup>th</sup> June	LGB Meeting (5.30-7.30) Year 6 Rising Stars Day Higher Ed Parents Evening with Plymouth University (Year 12)
	19 <sup>th</sup> June	Rising Stars Day (Year 6) Sixth Form Summer Celebration
	22 <sup>nd</sup> June	Year 6 Parent Transition Meeting (6.00 – 7.00)
	25 <sup>th</sup> June	Year 11 Prom (Dainton Golf Club)
	30 <sup>th</sup> June	Open Morning (09.30 – 11.00)
	<b>July:</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> July
3 <sup>rd</sup> July		Year 6 Step Up Day
6 <sup>th</sup> July		Year 10 Sixth Form Experience Day
7 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> July		'Shrek' Summer Production
9 <sup>th</sup> July		Open Morning (09.30 – 11.00)
10 <sup>th</sup> July		Year 11 Sixth Form Induction Day
13 <sup>th</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup> July 17 <sup>th</sup> July		Year 12 Work Experience Last Day 1.30 finish
<b>August</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> to 21 <sup>st</sup> August	The Big Step (transition programme)



# COOMBESHEAD ACADEMY

'inspiring excellence'

## Term Dates 2025-2026:

	School holidays
	Bank Holidays
	Non-pupil days - INSET
	Non pupils days from twilighted training
	Non-pupil days - occasional days

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<b>Jan-2027</b>												
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## Key School Contacts:

Issue/Concern	Staff to be contacted	Contact details
General queries	Main Reception Linda Clark	01626 201800 <a href="mailto:welcome@coombesheadacademy.org.uk">welcome@coombesheadacademy.org.uk</a>
Pastoral Behaviour support	Student Support Team SSO Manager Andy Balsdon - Deputy Head	Year 7 – <a href="mailto:Ellie.German@coombesheadacademy.org.uk">Ellie.German@coombesheadacademy.org.uk</a> Year 8 – <a href="mailto:Kimberley.Routledge@coombesheadacademy.org.uk">Kimberley.Routledge@coombesheadacademy.org.uk</a> Year 9 – <a href="mailto:Natalie.Macfarlane@coombesheadacademy.org.uk">Natalie.Macfarlane@coombesheadacademy.org.uk</a> Year 10 – <a href="mailto:Alison.Massey@coombesheadacademy.org.uk">Alison.Massey@coombesheadacademy.org.uk</a> Year 11 – <a href="mailto:Bethan.Griffiths@coombesheadacademy.org.uk">Bethan.Griffiths@coombesheadacademy.org.uk</a>  <a href="mailto:Natalie.beeks@coombesheadacademy.org.uk">Natalie.beeks@coombesheadacademy.org.uk</a>  <a href="mailto:Andrew.Balsdon@coombesheadacademy.org.uk">Andrew.Balsdon@coombesheadacademy.org.uk</a>
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Attendance	Nicky Archard – Attendance Lead	The best way to report absences is: 1. Class Chart 2. My child at school App 3. Phone call 01626 201800 and pick the attendance option <a href="mailto:attendance@coombesheadacademy.org.uk">attendance@coombesheadacademy.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:Nicola.Archard@coombesheadacademy.org.uk">Nicola.Archard@coombesheadacademy.org.uk</a>
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