



# PARENT BULLETIN

20 FEBRUARY 2026

## PARENT VOICE

We would be grateful of feedback from our parents/carers. Please click on the link to access a parent survey, which closes for responses at 9pm on Sunday 1st March. [CLICK HERE](#)

## KEY MESSAGES

**Year 11 Update** – only 7 school weeks to go before we start the GCSE exams. We have been delighted with the fantastic turnout at after-school revision sessions and the mock exams conduct. Teachers have been awarding tickets to students who demonstrated exceptional engagement with revision. This morning, we held a special celebration assembly for Year 11, during which several students received prizes — some generously donated by members of our local community businesses. A huge thank you to the following local businesses who have supported our Y11 Special Prize Draw; Spark Sport, Saks Guisborough, Goddess Beauty, and TNT Fitness for kindly donating prizes in recognition of the hard work and commitment shown by our Year 11. We hope the year group enjoys their reward trip to Billingham Forum this afternoon, where they are celebrating the end of mock exams with an ice-skating session!



After school revision starts again after the February holidays – please see below the schedule which will be shared with students and also in form time after the holidays.

<b>Tuesday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>French (MFL rooms)</li> <li>Spanish (MFL rooms)</li> <li>Chemistry combined in S6 (IFA)</li> <li>Art catch-up R10 &amp; R11 (KBL/JCU)</li> <li>RE in G3 (KDI)</li> <li>History (DHE)</li> <li>Geography (G rooms)</li> </ul>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English Language and Literature</li> <li>Voc Business coursework catch-up A16 (CRD)</li> <li>Chemistry Triple in S11 (LTY)</li> <li>Physics combined in S4 (ABU)</li> <li>PE in SC2 (RBK)</li> </ul>
<b>Thursday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maths foundation M11 and M10</li> <li>Maths Higher M9 and M8</li> <li>i-media coursework catch-up L3 (DSM)</li> <li>Biology combined &amp; triple in S3 (ATO)</li> </ul>
<b>Friday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physics triple in S13 (NCR)</li> <li>Business in A16 (CRD)</li> </ul>

**KS3 Core Home Learning** – Sparx Reader was set for wb 2nd March. The MFL task is due in the first week back after the holidays and History by 12th March. No Sparx Maths was set this week.

Students will continue to consider these key questions.

**Key Questions to help you PLAN your Core Home Learning this week:**

1. What things do you have on outside of school this week that you'll need to work around?
2. What times do you have 'spare'? (these need to be your 'Home Learning slots')
3. Where will you write these times down?
4. What Core H.L. are you going to do in these slots? (write them down) Remember to consider whether you have any outstanding work due in this week that you haven't yet completed.
5. Where can you put your plan at home so that you'll see it everyday?

**Key Questions to help you PERSIST this week:**

1. Which HL tasks this week do you think you'll find trickiest? (try and give yourself more time this week for those)
2. Have you tried 'chunking' these tasks across the week (little and often) or do you prefer to get them done and out of the way?
3. What will you do when you get stuck that will still allow you to complete the tasks?

**Key Questions to help you reflect on your PROGRESS:**

1. How is your accuracy rating doing in Sparx Reader? What new vocabulary have you come across?
2. Can you think of a specific example of a type of calculation you have improved on from your work in Sparx Maths?
3. How is your work with Educake helping your recall in Geography and Science lessons?
4. How is your flash card work for MFL supporting you in French lessons?
5. What are you most proud of from last half term?

All students will be reminded of the below after the holidays:

<p><b>The following Home Learning Tasks are due in this week:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sparx Reader (Today)</li> <li>• MFL (in a specific lesson)</li> <li>• Science Educake</li> <li>• Geography Educake</li> </ul>	<p><b>New Home Learning Tasks set this week:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sparx Reader and Science Educake (set TODAY)</li> <li>2. Sparx Maths and Geography Educake (set Wednesday)</li> </ol> <p>ALL DETAILS OF WHAT YOU NEED TO DO WILL BE ON CLASS CHARTS</p>
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**WORLD BOOK DAY 2026** – to celebrate **WBD this year**, Year 7–9 will experience a story narrated by our senior team across the school day and in assemblies. Students will receive a free national £1 book token and we will encourage all students to consider entering National Book Token Design a Book Token Competition – details linked [here](#). There will be activities for students to access all week in our school library too.

To promote the **National Year of Reading**, we are sharing another non-fiction article with Year 7-10 for February. We are challenging students to read the article and learn at least one new interesting fact. You can take part by reading this article yourself: 'Fascinating Army Ants' (page 2/3) You can also discuss with your child which facts you found most interesting and try to generate some questions and research the answers with them.



**New running club** is starting Tuesday 3rd March led by Mr Pinchbeck – all year groups are welcome! You can find an overview of current extra-curricular clubs on our website.

We also have a **KS3 Educake Science Club** on a Thursday after school from Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March - Y7 8 and 9 students are welcome.

**Explore, Enrich, Excel** is now on Class Charts for all KS3 students and the final deadline for submissions is 22nd May. For your child to see this, please filter Home Learning by date, the task will appear at the bottom of the list and it will have the furthest away deadline. The document will also be emailed to students.

**Fidget tools** - We have noticed an increase in students bringing fidget toys into school, particularly in Year 7. These tools are only permitted in lessons when they are part of a student's agreed support plan. Please ensure that these items remain at home unless your child has a documented need for them. This helps us maintain a focused and distraction-free learning environment for all students.

**UPCOMING DATES:-**

- Friday 20<sup>th</sup> February Last day of term
- 23<sup>rd</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> February School holidays
- 2<sup>nd</sup> March Students return
- 6<sup>th</sup> March National career week
- 12<sup>th</sup> March World Book Day
- 23<sup>rd</sup> March Year 8 Parents Evening
- Year 10 revision conference

**'Fascinating Army Ants'**

A terrifying force moves through the Amazon rainforest, tearing down trees and all other barriers in its path. Animals flee. Even jaguars, the apex predator ('top predator') of the jungle, run away as fast as they can. Flocks of parrots and a rainbow of screeching songbirds dart from the trees. Spider monkeys jump from branch to branch, as fast as their limbs and prehensile tail will carry them.

Humans also run through terror, emptying remote villages along the river, as the destructive force bears down upon them.

And the force that has all the residents of the jungle trembling and racing in fear?

**ARMY ANTS!**

The description above is the view of army ants from books and movies. In the 1954 adventure movie "The Naked Jungle," people fight the marabunta (a Spanish word for a plague of army ants) that are invading villages and farms in the Amazon rainforest.

**FROM FICTION TO FACT**

Real army ants are much less scary, but even more interesting than the movie monsters they inspire.

**1. ARMY ANTS DON'T HUNT HUMANS**



Army ants in movies like "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull" hunt humans. In real life, army ants are fierce predators and a deadly threat ... if you are the size of a grasshopper or termite.

Real army ants mostly eat other insects and invertebrates. They are not capable of taking down a large vertebrate animal that is moving away from them.

Animals that cannot move away from army ants, like baby birds, beetles, other ant species, or even scorpions and spiders, could become army ant meals.



## 2. THERE ARE 200 TYPES OF ARMY ANTS



Close-up of the jaws of a soldier army ant.

*Eciton burchellii* is an ant species that lives in the rainforests of South and Central America. It is one of about 200 army ant species found worldwide. *E. burchellii* ants live in colonies with a queen, worker ants, and soldier ants. The soldier ants have large heads with sharp mandibles for attacking and slicing up prey. It's the soldier ants that give army ants their fearsome reputation.

An *E. burchellii* colony has hundreds of thousands of worker and soldier ants and a single queen who lays millions of eggs in her lifetime.

## 3. ARMY ANT COLONIES MOVE AROUND



Army ants like the *E. burchellii* do not have a fixed home like most other ant species. They are always on the move, which also contributes to their fearsome reputation.

For about 20 days, the colony will stay in one area while the queen lays her eggs. Soldiers and workers go out and raid the local area every few days to catch food for the queen and the workers attending the eggs. The army ant colony can eat tens of thousands of prey animals per day!

After the egg-laying cycle, the whole colony moves to a new location in the forest. For 15 days, the ants become an invading army. Long trails of workers and soldiers swarm, looking for any food items that stray into their path.

The ants surround their prey and bite it fiercely until it dies. They slice it apart and carry it to the hungry brood of baby ants that hatch from the eggs the queen laid.

These ants do not build a physical nest, but form a nest from the hundreds of thousands of individuals in the colony. This [living nest is called a bivouac](#).

## 4. ARMY ANTS KEEP PREY IN CHECK AND HELP THE RAINFOREST STAY HEALTHY



Army ants like the *Eciton burchellii* are considered to be keystone species, members of their rainforest ecosystems that play important ecological roles. Army ants are major predators among arthropod species: insects, spiders, and their relatives. By hunting and reducing prey numbers, army ants stop their prey species from dominating the ecosystem.

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Army ants create a lot of leftovers when they bring food back from their raiding patrols. These refuse piles are full of pieces of beetles, worms, and every other creature the ants feed to their hungry baby ants. The refuse piles are important food sources for many species of insects and other animals — army ant leftovers feed an ecological army themselves!

## 5. SOME ANIMALS ARE ATTRACTED TO ARMY ANTS



In movies, all the animals in the path of army ants run away from them. But in real life, the exact opposite happens. Many birds, lizards, and other animals follow the army ants and eat the insects and other prey running from the ants. An entire group of birds, called antbirds, is adapted to following army ants to eat what escapes them.

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If you are a few centimetres long, then army ants are the fearsome monsters of legend. But if you are a predator looking for a good meal — and you can stay out of the army ant swarm's way — then you might get to eat instead of being eaten.