



NEWSLETTER – 9th FEBRUARY

MESSAGE FROM MRS HILLCOAT-HYDE, ASSISTANT HEAD

Embracing Our Uniqueness: Nurturing Self-Esteem in a Society of Pressures

In a world where conformity often seems like the norm, Oscar Wilde's timeless advice to **"Be yourself because everyone else is taken"** resonates more strongly than ever.

However, navigating through the maze of societal expectations, especially for teenagers, can be challenging. Recent statistics shed light on the pervasive issue of low self-esteem and body image concerns among young people, highlighting the urgent need to foster self-acceptance and confidence.



The pressures to follow to a certain standard of beauty and behaviour stem from various sources, including childhood experiences, societal norms, media representations, and interpersonal relationships. Society, encompassing the myriad individuals and influences in our lives, often dictates unrealistic standards of beauty, leading many to perceive themselves in a negative light. The quest to meet these standards can erode self-esteem and perpetuate a cycle of self-doubt and comparison.

Acknowledging and embracing our uniqueness without succumbing to the pressures of conformity is essential for cultivating genuine self-esteem. As Albert Einstein famously remarked, **"Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing it is stupid."** Each individual possesses inherent talents and qualities that contribute to their uniqueness. Embracing these strengths and refraining from comparisons are crucial steps toward building a positive self-image.

Central to improving self-esteem is the power of self-talk and self-perception. As the saying goes, **"Be careful how you are talking to yourself because you are listening."** Our internal dialogue plays a pivotal role in shaping our beliefs and actions. Choosing to cultivate positive thoughts and filtering out negative self-talk is essential for nurturing self-esteem. While negative thoughts may seem pervasive, consciously shifting focus to affirming statements like "I am" and "I can" can empower individuals to overcome self-limiting beliefs.

In celebrating Boost Your Self-Esteem Month, it is imperative to reflect on the origins of negative self-perception and actively challenge them. Rather than internalising external criticism or comparing oneself to others, individuals are encouraged to embrace their inherent worth and uniqueness. Recognising that self-esteem is a journey, not a destination, allows for growth and self-acceptance among imperfection.

“A person who has good thoughts can never be ugly. You can have a wonky nose and a crooked mouth and a double chin and sticky out teeth, but if you have good thoughts they will shine out of your face like sunbeams and you will always look lovely.” *Roald Dahl*

Roald Dahl's words remind us that true beauty comes from within, transcending physical appearances. Cultivating good thoughts and embracing one's authenticity radiates an inner beauty that transcends outward flaws.

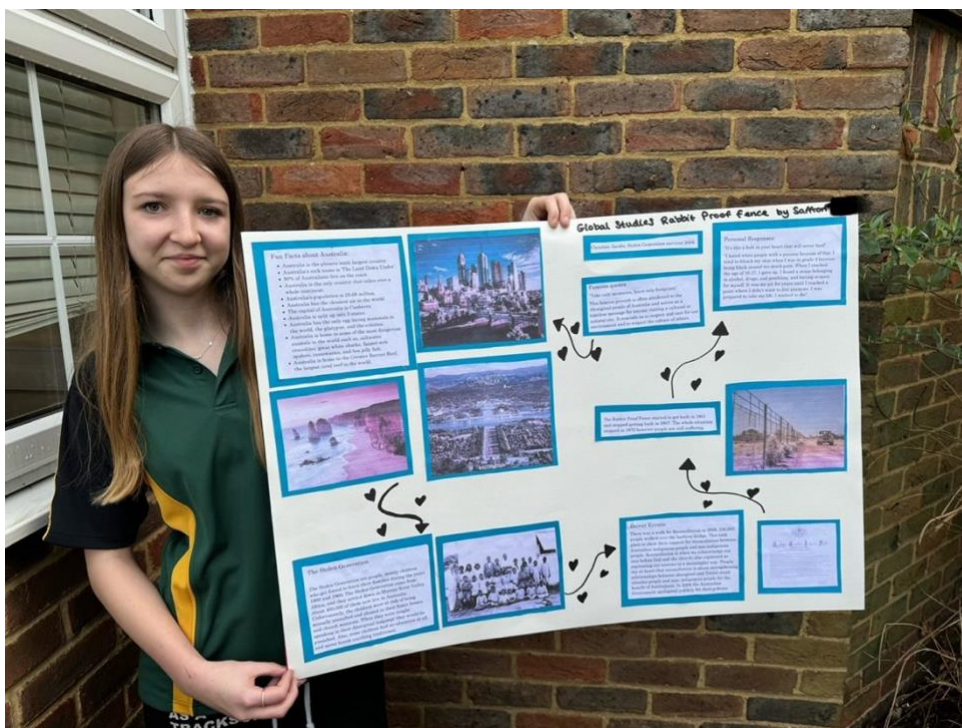
As we embark on the half-term break, let us fill our days with positive thoughts and self-affirmation. Embracing our uniqueness and nurturing our self-esteem empowers us to navigate life's challenges with resilience and grace. Remember, we are a work in progress, and every step towards self-acceptance brings us closer to our true potential.

GLOBAL STUDIES

Great work from Saffron (year 9) who completed a mini project in Global Studies on 'Rabbit Proof Fence', the story of three aboriginal girls who were forcibly taken from their families in the 1930s to become domestic servants as part of an official Australian government policy. The aim was “assimilation” where the government hoped that the children would adopt white culture and forget about their Aboriginal language and heritage.

Aboriginal families still feel the grief of what happened today, and the students explored all the issues raised with this policy.

The Australian government made a formal apology to Australia’s indigenous people in 2008.



Saffron presented her research and notes from the class discussion on the issues raised with this policy.



NEWS FROM THE MUSIC DEPARTMENT

Year 10 GCSE music students have submitted their Fanfare compositions for the 'Proms at St. Jude's' competition. I try to run this project for a couple of weeks each spring, as it embeds a lot of the principles required for the GCSE music syllabus. They have worked enthusiastically and can all expect feedback from the judges soon, hopefully with one of their compositions being a winner.

Year 7 music students are learning their spring class performance piece. This time each child has the opportunity to choose their instrument. I'm delighted to see so many of them eager to practise during lunchtimes. I am pleased to say that there is a great buzz about the music department right now.

Mr Whitehouse

NEWS FROM THE ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT

This half term, our lower sixth Economics students have been exposed to many practical situations which the UK economy is currently facing. Students have been learning about economic growth with Mrs Wong and have used this knowledge to discuss the UK economy now being in recession. Students have been discussing about the impacts of this recession and what this may mean for their future purchases. They are seeing their learning become more relevant to their lives outside of school.

With Mrs Ansari, students have been learning about the various ways the production and consumption of goods creates both negative and positive effects for society. Students discussed pollution laws, pollution tax, and how a good thing for one person can be a bad thing for another. There have been interesting conversations regarding the negative impacts of smoking and vaping, and how embedded it has become as part of youth culture.

In year 13, the lessons have been focused on the cost-of-living crisis, the financial markets and stock trading. With our cohort interested in trading, cryptocurrency and the stock market, the lessons have been really engaging and have resulted in some fascinating conversations about how volatile financial markets really are. There has been a lot of conversation about the 2008 recession and how the stock market contributed to this. We also referred to the film *The Big Short* and how it perfectly depicted the global economic downturn. After A-Level exams, we may arrange a viewing of the film to celebrate the end of the course!

Ms Ansari

OUR SCHOOL'S SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

Mr Cooper, Mrs Hillcoat-Hyde, Mr McCormick, Mrs Trickey and Mr Crosby are our amazing SLT and here we outline their roles at school and spill the beans about their professional and private lives. Which of them loves *Traitors*? Which fosters cats? And which loves to sing along to Tina Turner in the car? Read on and you never know, you might find out something new about them...

MR COOPER

What is your role in the school?

Senior Deputy Head. I have oversight of the day-to-day operations of the school and the academic life of school. Much of my work is with the staff and focused on their development so we can best inspire and provide for the students.

When, how and about what should parents contact you?

To celebrate or with queries relating to the curriculum.



What are the other communication options / lines for parents?

Heads of Year are a good starting point in conversations about curriculum alterations, or potentially the team in The Hive. Their oversight of a student's pastoral need alongside academic progress can answer many of the individual questions and set out plans of action. Where subject specific, often the classroom teacher and/or Head of Faculty will be the best person to answer questions and give the detailed insights into course material and a student's progress in their area.

My career at Mount House

I joined Mount House in April 2022 after 12 years at my previous school. Having previously worked in much larger schools, I was struck by how well students are known at Mount House. It is nice to know each student and be able to quickly and effectively get a holistic understanding of how they are and where best to support their progress. Some core things I have worked on include the move to a six period day, the curriculum offer including at Sixth Form, and a focus on continued development in teaching and learning. The students often see me in and out of lessons, asking them what is going on. My background was focused in pastoral care and so I often find myself sitting with individuals supporting them in that sphere - old habits and all that!

My career / education before Mount House

I began my teaching career at The Portsmouth Grammar School. After a few years I moved to Redmaids' High School in Bristol and there held a series of roles including Head of Years

10 and 11, Assistant Headteacher (Co-curricular and Operations), and Assistant Headteacher (Sixth Form, Partnership and International). There I also ran the schools International Baccalaureate Diploma programme and was a member of Senior Team for the merger of Redmaids' with Redland High School.

When people ask me what my subject is I officially say History because my MA is in History, but I have taught History, Global Politics, Economics and Theory of Knowledge. I have also spent time in my career focused on leading change and this has been recognized as being a Chartered Leader in Education. One thing I am most proud of is being part of the group that formed the charity United World Schools where I sat on the Council, working internationally and across sectors since 2009 - with a young family and a move across the UK when I joined Mount House I am on a sabbatical from UWS at present but remain proud of helping us go from teaching our first class in rural Cambodia to now educating over 100,00 children across the globe.

My hobbies outside of school



The emotional rollercoaster of supporting the best team in North London - Tottenham Hotspur. Come On You Spurs! I also love running and take part in trail runs and long distance runs, including some ultra-marathons. Age is catching up with me a bit now though!

My favourite recent holiday

Anything that is spending time with my family. Last summer we did lots of camping, which my boys adored, and I love being outside. They are both active little boys and so anything where we can put them into some sporting activities such as the different facilities at Centre Parcs and similar are currently the most successful holidays in my household!

My pets We have two cats (Winston and Lizzie) and a Gecko (Gilbert). The whole family is desperate for a dog although full time work has meant we have resisted the urge...so far.

Do As I Say, Not As I Do

I don't really get to watch much on TV. When people recommend Netflix series I have to sit quietly as I am usually about three years behind the trend. Currently I have just completed Series 1 of Ted Lasso (love it!), but my real pleasure has been Traitors. I missed the first series but got so into this series with my wife - although she is out on Wednesday evenings and so I spent most of Thursdays avoiding the news until we could sit down and watch it together.





MRS HILLCOAT-HYDE

What is your role in the school?

Assistant Head (Deputy DSL, pastoral team, SENCO, Director of Sport & Co-curricular Activities, also in charge of D of E).



When, how and about what should parents contact you?

- When - as and when needed
- How - via email or by calling the main school line.
- About what - when parents have a safeguarding or pastoral concern/to check on progress of their child/any queries related to SEN and learning support, any specific related sport queries, DofE queries.

What are the other communication options / lines for parents?

- Contact Mr Crosby (safeguarding)
- Contact TAs (individual students working with TAs)
- Contact Learning Support Team (Mrs Wiltshire)
- Contact members of the PE Department
- Join us for SEN coffee mornings (usually invite only but if you see on the calendar and would like to join, please contact and we can confirm details).

My career at Mount House

I joined Mount House in September 2019 as Assistant Head. I have been fortunate to gain experiences and develop my knowledge in a variety of other areas within the school including DDSL, Head of Lower School, Co-Curricular coordinator, D of E co-ordinator and most recently SENCO.

My career / education before Mount House

Following completion of my degree in Leisure and Sports Management and PGCE in Physical Education at the University of Brighton, I started my first teaching job at Baston School whilst undertaking my Masters in Sports Development. Following this I taught at Farringtons School and Immanuel College, holding the role of Head of Department. I worked at Hockerill Anglo-European College in Bishop's Stortford where I was of Head of Year 11 Girls Boarding, Acting Head of PE and Duke of Edinburgh Co-ordinator.

My co-curricular clubs

I love running the Baking Clubs on Tuesday & Thursday after school, supporting students to develop lifelong skills whilst working in the kitchen making and creating their bakes. I also love spending time with students who join me for Wellbeing Baking Club, finding out about how their week is going and what they have been up to, watching them working and supporting their peers.



It has been great to lead the trampolining club this year, and amazing to watch the progress being made. Students have rapidly progressed through the basic skills and are making sound progress with some of the more complex skills. Come along and bounce for fun. A small turnout for Running Club on a Monday morning, but a great way to start the week - I hope that more students will join us as the weather improves.



My hobbies outside of school

I love to ski with my family.

I love to swim outdoors.

I love going on holiday, experiencing different cultures around the world.

I love exploring all that Cornwall has to offer.

My favourite recent holiday

Skiing in Alpendorf with my family.



Do as I say, not as I do

I love listening to Tina Turner, having a sing along in the car with my children.

MR MCCORMICK

What is your role in the school?

I am Assistant Head Academic, I look after three Faculties in the School, co-ordinate all operational elements of academic life at the School. I also run the university and apprenticeships admissions process.

When, how and about what should parents contact you?

Email me on mccormickc@mounthouse.org.uk in the first instance. My inbox usually acts as my "to do" list.

What are the other communication options / lines for parents?

You can also call in; my office is right by Reception. A phone call is always more efficient than an email chain.



**My career at Mount House**

I have been Head of Sixth Form, Assistant Head Pastoral, and have deputized as Deputy Head Pastoral in the past. I jointly ran Academic with Mr Phillips while we waited for Mr Cooper to join us. The only senior role here I have not done is that of Headteacher. I am now happily back in my box as Assistant Head Academic, and have no desire whatsoever to ever replace Mrs Richardson should she win next week's Lotto and disappear off to retirement in sunny climes.

My career / education before Mount House

I taught at Dame Alice Owens for two years prior to my arrival to what was then St Martha's in 2015. Before that, I spent six years at a comprehensive state school serving East London and Essex. In Canada, I taught undergraduate level courses at a university. My own school experience involved Gordonstoun (everything the King says about it is absolutely true) and King Edward VI Upper. From there, I attended the University of New Brunswick (older than Canada itself), completed a Masters degree at Brock University, where I held a Fellowship and conducted my teacher training at the University of East Anglia.

My co-curricular clubs

I run the Varsity Club, a discussion forum which covers a wide area of topics. Last week, we started talking about the idea of the cult of personality in North Korea and ended with talking about the role of the jaebol in South Korea. Things move fast there! Additionally, Scrabble Club is held each Thursday night. The first student to beat me in a competitive game will not only win the honour but a prize and Scrabble Club is becoming a bit of a training ground for my own defeat.

My hobbies outside of school

I play competitive Scrabble; I was active in local politics until a few years ago and sat on the Borough Council for six years. I foster cats for a local animal charity and spend the holidays in Bulgaria, where I own a home, haplessly attempting to converse with the locals in my very basic Bulgarian.

My favourite recent holiday

I've been quite lucky to travel this past year. A close friend and his partner emigrated to New Zealand just before the pandemic, and although I visited just months after their move, the pandemic put a brake on the second visit. In the interim, they now have two children; and my family and theirs spent Christmas together this year. Last summer, I spent three weeks in South Africa, which I loved and cannot wait to return to! Some of this itinerary was planned by students at this School!

My pets

I don't have my own pets, so the foster cats are as close as I get. In Bulgaria, we have been adopted by two local cats who know we are a boundless source of food. We have named them George and Mildred.


Do As I Say, Not As I Do:

Most people believe that I surround myself with intellectual pursuits, and indeed, I love the Times Crossword and am an active member of Mensa. Additionally, no weekday night is complete without an episode of EastEnders. It's pure chewing gum for the mind and a reassurance that no matter how difficult I may sometimes find life, at least I don't have to live the lives of the inhabitants of Albert Square.


MRS TRICKEY
What is your role in the school?

Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) as maternity cover for Ms Smyth, and I deal with matters relating to student wellbeing, support and wider pastoral care as well as overseeing the PSHRE and SMSC curriculum.

When, how and about what should parents contact you?

The quickest and most efficient way to contact me is via email at trickeys@mounthouse.org.uk – I always aim to respond within 24 hours of an email.


What are the other communication options / lines for parents?

You can call main school reception and ask to be put through the pastoral office to speak to me.

My career at Mount House

I joined the school in 2022 as Head of Technology (a role I still do alongside assistant head!), overseeing Computer Science and more recently Food Technology & Product Design which are exciting new subjects being offered here.

My career / education before Mount House

I began my teaching career in 2004 in Leeds where I taught ICT & Business Studies for two years before moving to Milton Keynes to become Subject Lead for IT. I spent 6 years in Milton Keynes before venturing further South to teach at a school in Chigwell, initially as the Head of IT, and later the Head of Computing. After this I spent time at a school in Cheshunt as the Pupil Premium Lead and later 3 years at a school in Luton as the Head of Business, Computing & Media Studies and the Lead for Initial Teacher Training (overseeing 20 trainee and newly qualified teachers!)

My co-curricular clubs

I run the extremely popular and very cool Retro Gaming club on Wednesday after school where students can come and learn how to play some of the original computer games on our Nintendo, Super Nintendo, Mega Drive, Master System and xBox360! I also oversee the Anti Bullying Ambassadors.

My hobbies outside of school

I enjoy baking (as do the lucky people who then get to eat my cakes/bakes!) as well as reading, spending time with my family and building Lego!

My favourite recent holiday

My favourite recent holiday was a family holiday to the island of Lanzarote, in particular taking a bus tour through the volcano on the island and visiting the underground lagoons which formed in between the seams of lava underground.

My pets

I have two cats – one very large tortoiseshell Persian cross called Steve and a small grey exotic shorthair (think grey Garfield) called Macey.

Do As I Say, Not As I Do:

I love binge watching true crime docuseries on Netflix and watching gory horror films!

MR CROSBY

What is your role in the school?

Deputy Head Pastoral.

When, how and about what should parents contact you?

My email is crosbyg@mounthouse.org.uk. You can email me anytime. Ideally parents should contact tutors as their first port of call, then escalate it to the Head of Year and if there are still ongoing concerns it should come my way, please.

What are the other communication options / lines for parents?

Feel free to phone school reception and arrange a suitable time to talk to me.

My career at Mount House

I only joined in September, but feel like I have been here for years and have enjoyed getting to know Mount House students.



**My career / education before Mount House**

I worked for 17 years Finchley Catholic High School, performing various middle-leader roles including Head of Department, Head of Year, Head of Gifted & Talented, Head of Student Voice, followed by senior leadership roles for ten years including Head of Continuing Professional Development from 2013-16, Head of Sixth Form 2016-22, Head of Catholic Life from 2022-24 and Head of Curriculum 2022-23.

My co-curricular clubs/activities

I am often in Homework Club on Thursday (an opportunity to clear any excess homework for the weekend ahead) and am sometimes involved in football on a Wednesday afternoon.

My hobbies outside of school

I am a keen sportsman; I also like visiting exhibitions at museums and going to the theatre (I recently saw HadesTown and am now planning a school trip). Whenever I get the chance, I go for a jog or enjoy hot yoga (although my flexibility is limited!).

My favourite recent holiday / event

My family and I love visiting the North Norfolk Coast, so much so that we married in Wells-next-the-Sea. We now go regularly every year alongside our three children and often camp during the summer holidays.

My pets:

I would love one, but have three young children to contend with and they are feral enough!

Do As I Say, Not As I Do: I love Lewis of London Ice Cream! As soon as I open a tub, I have to eat the rest!



HOUSE COMPETITION UPDATE



POINTS: 2088

1891

1858

1485

Top-scoring students:

Year 7	Vivi B (204) Oscar R (161) Isabella B (152)
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Year 8	Purity S (222) Isabella D (160) Yaquab F (82)
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Year 9	Florence S (80) Lizzie J (61) Thomas G (60)
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Year 10	Nick D (200) Junio G (119) Harvey T (92)
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Year 11	Tiger H (60) Lillie H (52) Emir Y (34)
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Sixth Form	Joba J (60) Aoife T (40) Jessica Y (40)
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WORK EXPERIENCE

We are excited to be launching the Work Experience programme for our year 10s this year as part of our Careers curriculum. With around half the year group enrolled on this programme during Activities Week in July, our students are looking for placements in many industries such as veterinary, law, politics, interior design, finance, medicine, and general businesses that expose our students to a professional workplace.

We would really appreciate if you can help us secure placements for our students. If you are able to take our students on or guide them using your contacts, please get in touch with our Head of Careers Ms Ansari on ansarik@mounthouse.org.uk. Our students will be very grateful to get this professional experience and build up their skills and CV. We thank you for your support.

FOOD TECHNOLOGY

GCSE students have been focusing on international dishes and how culture can alter a person's dietary requirements/choices. Students were asked to create an international starter and main course.

We had a variety of dishes from nachos with homemade salsa and guacamole to spinach and cheese frittatas for starters. For mains we had a range of dishes from spaghetti bolognese, butter chicken curry and sweet chilli tofu.



Year 12s have been looking at food wastage. The students deboned a whole chicken then made meals for each section.



CO-CURRICULAR

Baking Club:

Creativity and culinary prowess collided this week as students unleashed their inner chefs. With aprons tied and oven mitts at the ready, they created their very own star bakes, resulting in an array of mouth-watering treats that tantalized the senses.

From the moment the ingredients were measured out, a symphony of aromas filled the air, promising delectable delights to come. Among the standout creations were tantalizing cinnamon swirls, irresistible rocky roads, classic chocolate cookies, and indulgent chocolate caramel brownies. Each treat was a testament to the ingenuity and skill of the young chefs behind them.

The booklet for next term's Baking Club will shortly be available on the website [here](#).

MOUNT HOUSE PTA

We would like to thank the parents, teachers and friends who came out last Friday evening to support our Quiz Night. It was great fun and competitive as always with Snacks United (Teachers/Staff) and Simple Minds battling it out sudden death style for the Teachers to take the win. We were able to raise £310.



Is there anyone who can beat the staff team? Three years in a row may mean the school needs to purchase a new trophy cabinet... We look forward to all challengers coming forward at the next quiz night!



Join us for what promises to be a hilarious evening of Stand-Up Comedy at Mount House School on Friday 8th March.

Your host and MC will be **Mark Maier**. We have three incredible and very different acts:

- **Shazia Mirza** – an award-winning British Asian comedian from Birmingham with numerous TV and film credits. * * * * *EVENING STANDARD* “A fearless comedian... thoughtful and thought-provoking... funny and illuminating.”
- **Dan Evans** – a stand-up comedian for more than 20 years as well as being a sought-after comedy writer.
- **Steve Best** – a great visual comedian who harnesses a mind-boggling array of gadgets and gags within his act.



Dinner is included in the ticket price provided by Apna Punjab – authentic Indian cuisine prepared by their food van, including vegetarian and vegan options.

A cash bar service is available with an array of alcoholic and soft drinks.

Parking available at the school.

Ticket price £25.00 per head including dinner www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/stand-up-comedy-night-tickets.

Over 18s only please!

STAND UP COMEDY!

Join us for a hilarious night of ****Stand Up Comedy****

Featuring

Shazia Mirza

Steve Best

Dan Evans

Mark Maier (MC)

FRIDAY, MARCH 8TH 2024
Mount House School, Camlet Way, Barnet, EN4 0NJ
DOORS OPEN AT 6:45 PM FOR DINNER.
INDIAN FOOD PROVIDED BY APNA PUNJAB
SHOW STARTS AT 8PM.

Tickets £25 per person (includes dinner)
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/stand-up-comedy-night-tickets-810085426317>

*over 18s only.
 **Onsite Parking available

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