EMBARK FEDERATION

Every Child Known
Every Lesson Counts
Every Future Unlocked

Aldercar High School

Proud Headteacher: Mr P Smith

Weekly Newsletter 20th November 2026

Dear members of the Aldercar High School Community,

Another busy and positive week at Aldercar draws to a close, and once again there has been so much to celebrate across our school community. Our values of Ready, Respectful and Responsible continue to be evident in the way our students approach every aspect of school life, from their learning in the classroom to the way they support and encourage one another.

This week, I would like to particularly recognise our Year 11 students, who have approached their mock assessments with maturity, determination and resilience. They have demonstrated exactly what it means to be ready for success. Their commitment to preparation, attendance and effort reflects the high aspirations we have for all our students and the bright futures they are working towards.

As Headteacher, I continue to be incredibly proud of the many moments each week when our students demonstrate exactly what we want an Aldercar student to be. Through hard work, resilience, kindness and ambition, they are not only achieving today but developing the skills, character and confidence that will serve them well in the future. Our job is to keep raising expectations, opening opportunities and ensuring that every student understands that success comes through consistent effort and a belief in what they can achieve.

Year 10 Parents Evening – Thursday 3rd December

We look forward to welcoming Year 10 parents and carers to our Parents' Evening on **Thursday 3rd December, from 4:00pm to 7:00pm**.

This is a valuable opportunity to meet with your child's teachers, discuss their progress and find out how best to support them as they continue through Year 10. **Student books will be available to view** during the evening, giving you an opportunity to see the work they have been completing.

All meetings will take place in classrooms, and appointments should be booked in advance through **School Cloud**.

We look forward to seeing you there.

To book your appointments please visit: https://aldercar.schoolcloud.co.uk/



Fantastic Start to the Year for Attendance!

We are incredibly proud of the commitment our students and families have shown towards attendance since the start of this academic year.

Across the school, attendance has remained strong, with many tutor groups and year groups regularly achieving attendance figures above national expectations. Excellent attendance is one of the most important factors in supporting academic achievement, wellbeing, confidence and positive relationships, and our students have demonstrated a fantastic commitment to being in school and ready to learn each day.

We would like to thank all parents, carers and students for the support they have given in ensuring that pupils attend school regularly and arrive on time. Every day in school really does matter, and the positive attendance figures we are seeing reflect the value our school community places on education.

While there is much to celebrate, our attendance data has highlighted one area that we would like to improve together. Friday attendance continues to be lower than attendance on the other four school days. Across all year groups, we see a noticeable drop in attendance on Fridays, meaning some students are missing valuable learning opportunities at the end of each week.

It is important to remember that a Friday is just as valuable as any other school day. Lessons continue as normal, new learning takes place, assessments are completed, and students benefit from spending time with their peers and teachers. Missing Fridays can quickly add up over the school year and have a significant impact on achievement and progress.

As we move through the remainder of the academic year, our challenge is simple: let's make every day count. We encourage all students to aim for excellent attendance from Monday through to Friday and help us ensure that every school day is a day for learning, achievement and success.

Thank you for your continued support.

December Activity Day – Celebrating Positive Choices!

We are delighted to announce our first Activity Day of the academic year, taking place on Wednesday 16th December!

This special day is an opportunity to recognise and reward students who are consistently making positive choices, demonstrating our school values of Ready, Respectful and Responsible, and contributing positively to our school community every day.

All students who achieve 95% or above will be eligible to take part in this reward day, with three exciting activities to choose from:

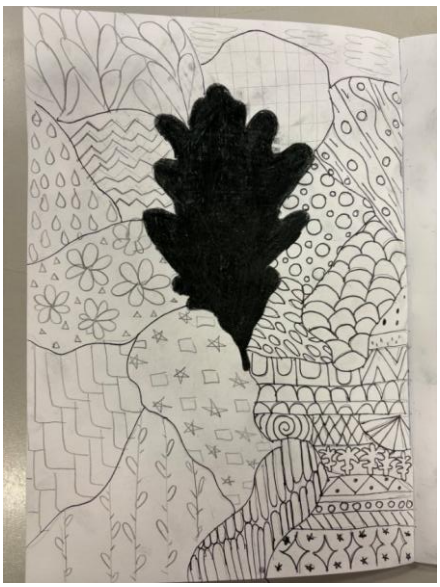
- Nottingham Christmas Markets (KS4 only) – enjoy the festive atmosphere and explore the Christmas markets.
- Rollerworld – an opportunity to get active, have fun and enjoy time with friends.
- Cinema – sit back, relax and enjoy a film with friends.

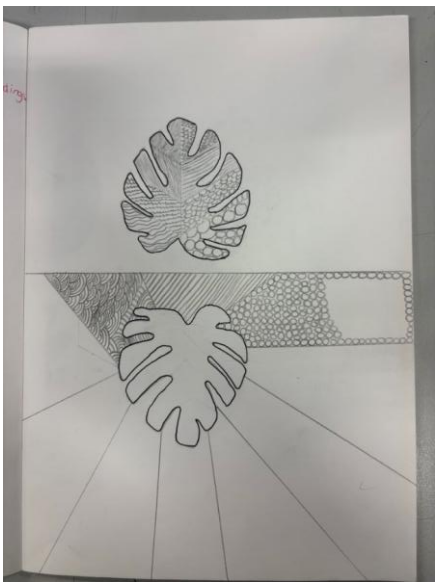
We strongly believe in recognising and celebrating students who consistently make the right choices. Being ready to learn, respectful towards others and responsible for their choices makes a real difference, and we want to make sure these positive contributions do not go unnoticed.

This Activity Day is our way of saying thank you to those students who demonstrate our values every day. We look forward to celebrating their success on 16th December!

Curriculum Captures: Art and Photography

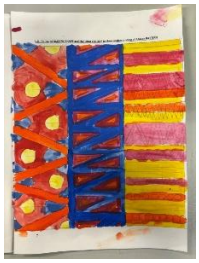
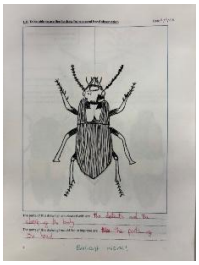
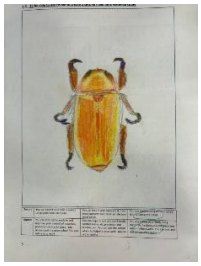
This week, **Year 7** students have been developing their understanding of the formal elements through Zentangle artwork, experimenting with positive and negative space to create contrast and striking patterns.



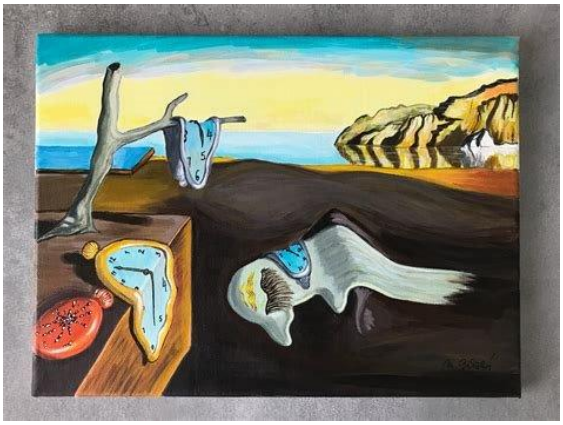


Year 8 students have been exploring African-inspired art by studying traditional patterns, natural colour palettes and the intricate forms of beetles. They combined these influences to create vibrant prints, using press printing and watercolour techniques to capture the rich colours, textures and visual style of African art.



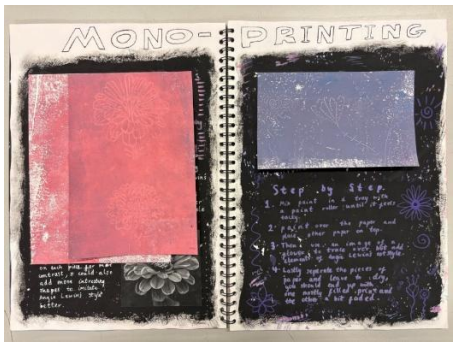

Year 9 students have been introduced to photography through the theme of Surrealism Photography, inspired by Salvador Dali. They have practiced collage and digital editing techniques and are designing their own ‘surreal dream’, which they will take their own photographs and produce a collaged final piece.

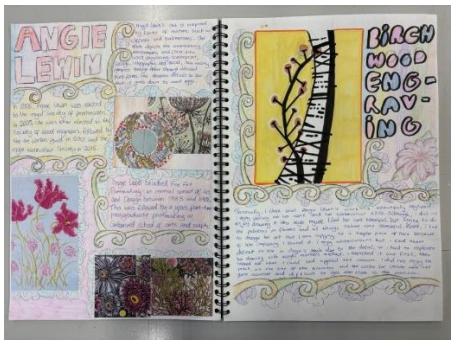




Year 10 students have been developing the practical skills needed for GCSE Art by experimenting with a range of media, including pencil, clay and printmaking. This term, students have taken part in printing workshops, exploring etching, monoprinting and press printing techniques to build confidence and showcase a variety of creative skills.







Year 11 Art students have been preparing for their mock examination on 2nd December through the theme of Confectionery. Students have explored the work of artists inspired by sweets, chocolate and confectionery packaging, using this research to develop creative ideas and refine their practical skills in preparation for the exam.

Year 11 Photography students have started their mini project- Re-Creating a Movie Poster. This project will test the students' problem-solving skills as they have been challenged with re-creating the poster as accurately as possible, which will lend itself to thinking outside of the box with props and effects! The students' focus is to develop their digital editing skills through layering images and filters using Photoshop and PowerPoint edits.









Key Stage 3 Technology

Our KS3 students have been busy creating some spooky Halloween treats in Food Technology!

Year 7 made delicious Spider Cookies





Year 8 created green Rice Krispie Monsters





Year 9 designed their very own Hooting Halloween Owls.

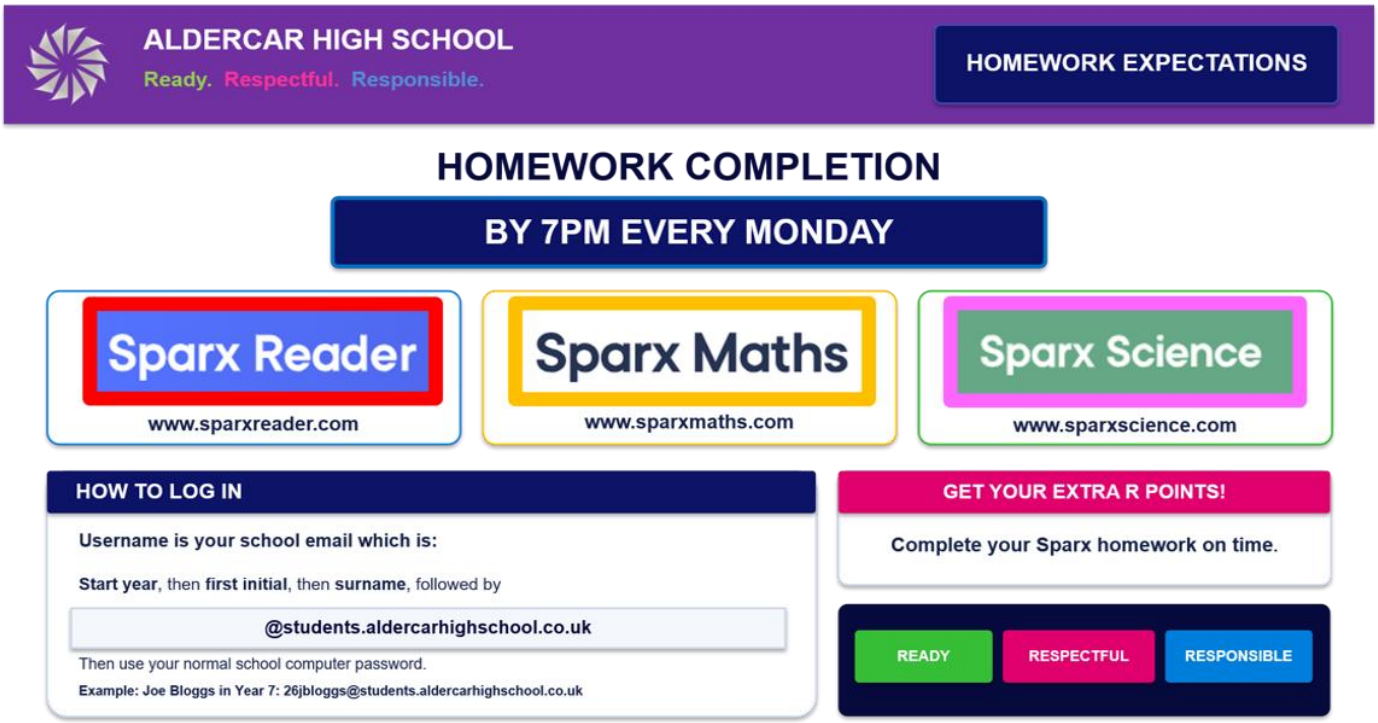


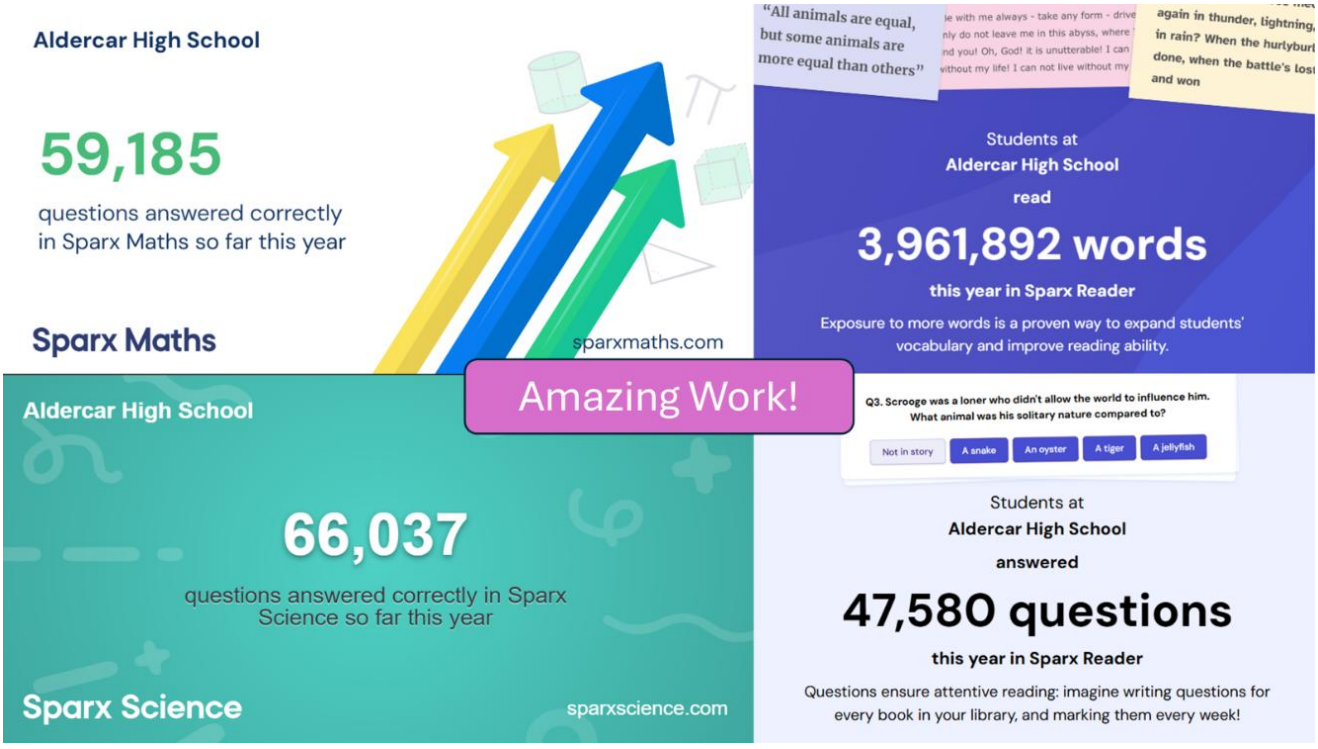

All students worked brilliantly in their lessons, demonstrating great enthusiasm, creativity and practical skills. They particularly loved getting creative with the decorating, producing some wonderfully spooky and imaginative designs!

A huge well done to all our KS3 students for their hard work and fantastic efforts. We are so proud of what you have achieved!

Sparx Homework

We have seen an amazing amount of student work on the Sparx Homework platform. Thank you for supporting your children at home with this. If you are still struggling to log in - please ask your child to come to the drop-in session every lunchtime in the computer room. We can offer advice and give them a space to complete work if needed. Students have been receiving 50 extra Aldercar R Points for each subject each week which is brilliant!





Derby County Community Activity

A group of Year 8 students continued to enjoy their sessions with Derby County Community Trust this week. The challenge involved stacking and climbing crates, requiring students to work together, communicate effectively, and support one another throughout.

Students were initially set a target of reaching **10 crates high**, but through excellent teamwork, determination, and encouragement, they exceeded expectations by reaching an impressive **14 crates high**. It was fantastic to see students overcome their fears, step outside of their comfort zones, and successfully rise to the challenge.

The session was a great success, with all students demonstrating resilience, confidence, and outstanding teamwork skills. They should be very proud of their achievements.















Year 8 and 9 Futsal Competition

A huge well done to our footballers who represented the school at the Amber Valley Futsal Tournament held at Alfreton Leisure Centre.

Competing against strong opposition, our mixed-age squad showed fantastic commitment, teamwork and resilience throughout the evening. The boys played with great determination and did the school proud.

Results from the tournament were:

Won 1-0 vs Ripley

Lost 4-0 vs Heanor Gate

Lost 2-1 vs John Flamsteed

Lost 6-1 vs Ecclesbourne

A special congratulations goes to Year 9 students, Ollie M and Billy B, and our Year 8 players Ronnie B, Charlie W, George J, and Alan D for their excellent efforts and positive attitude throughout the competition.

Well done, lads. You represented the school brilliantly! ⚽ 👏



Anti Bullying Week: 16th-20th November 2026

For Anti-Bullying Week this year, students took part in assemblies focused on the national theme **" Break the Silence"**. The assemblies explored why young people sometimes choose not to speak up when they witness bullying, unkind behaviour or situations that do not feel right, and highlighted the important role each of us can play in creating a safe and inclusive school community.

Throughout the week, students reflected on the barriers that can prevent people from reporting concerns, including fear of being judged, peer pressure, worrying about making things worse, or believing that nobody will listen. Through discussion activities and real-life case studies, students considered the impact that silence can have and how even small actions, such as checking in with a friend, reporting concerns or seeking support from a trusted adult, can make a significant difference.

A key message from the assemblies was that tackling bullying is everyone's responsibility. Students explored the concept of the "bystander effect" and discussed how positive change often begins when one person chooses to act. The assemblies reinforced that speaking up is not about dealing with problems alone but about helping people access the support they need. https://richardsonderbyshire my.sharepoint.com/personal/jpowdrill_aldercarhighschool_co_uk/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc={7256FA26-4857-4330-BC2B-FB03BD87CC26}&file=Anti Bullying Week Nov 26.pptx&action=edit&mobileredirect=true

At Aldercar High School, we are committed to ensuring that all students feel safe, valued and respected. We encourage students to speak with their form tutor, Head of Year, safeguarding team, wellbeing staff, parents, carers or another trusted adult if they are worried about bullying or the wellbeing of themselves or others. The most important message from Anti-Bullying Week is simple: **you do not have to deal with things on your own.** https://richardsonderbyshire-my.sharepoint.com/personal/jpowdrill_aldercarhighschool_co_uk/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc={7256FA26-4857-4330-BC2B-FB03BD87CC26}&file=Anti Bullying Week Nov 26.pptx&action=edit&mobileredirect=true



NOAH'S DIARY The Making of Music

Guitar Assembly

"From across the Atlantic to Aldercar… one guitar, a box of components and a big musical adventure!"

A VERY SPECIAL ARRIVAL

Something exciting is happening in Aldercar! A very special guitar has travelled all the way from America and is now ready for a brand-new chapter. The instrument was generously donated by someone who collects guitars, giving our school the chance to bring this fantastic project to life.

MEET THE MAKER: NOAH K

Noah K has taken on the challenge of carefully assembling the guitar, piece by piece. This is no race to the finish line. Noah is taking his time, patiently working through all the components and making sure each part has its place. From the smallest fittings to the larger sections, every piece matters when you are building an instrument.

THE JOURNEY	THE PROJECT	THE MAKER
America → Aldercar	**A guitar built piece by piece**	**Noah K**

THE DIARY STARTS HERE

As the build progresses, Noah will keep a diary to record what he has worked on, which components he has assembled and what he has learned along the way. There may be tricky stages, new discoveries and plenty of satisfying moments as the guitar gradually takes shape.

FOLLOW THE BUILD — EVERY WEEK!

Noah will share an update each week in the Aldercar High School newsletter, so everyone can follow the guitar's journey from individual components to a complete instrument. Keep an eye out for the next instalment: we'll be cheering Noah on as this American guitar finds its sound here in Aldercar!

ONE GUITAR. MANY PARTS. ONE EPIC BUILD.

WATCH THIS SPACE IN THE AHS NEWSLETTER!

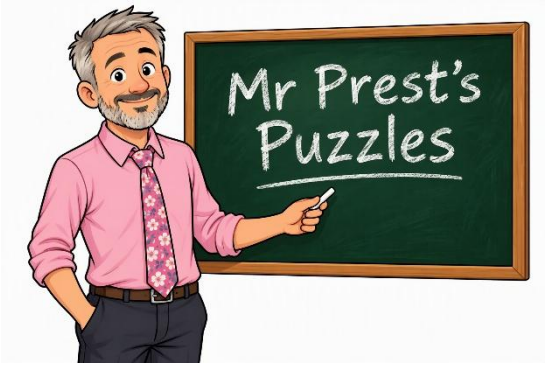








Mr Prest’s Puzzle



Last week’s Solution

Mr Brigg's was out for a walk last night and unfortunately he fell down a deep well. The well was 30 metres deep. Mr Briggs could manage to climb up 3 metres every hour but then he needed a rest, whilst resting he dropped back down 2 metres. The same thing happened every hour, he climbed 3 metres and dropped back down 2 metres.

How long did it take Mr Brigg's to escape from the well?

Everyone correctly realised that Mr Briggs goes up 1 metre per hour in total. But, it did not take him 30 hours to escape, because after 27 hours he had climbed 27 metres, then in the next hour he climbed his next 3 metres and escaped the well before he slipped back so he took **28 hours** to escape.

This week's Puzzle

Mr Smith lives on a street with 100 houses numbered 1 to 100.

The postman delivers a letter to Mr Smith's house by mistake as the address has become smudged.

Mr Smith can see that the letter belongs to someone whose house has a number 5 on it.

How many houses on Mr Smith's street have a 5 on it?

When you have an answer, please write it on a piece of paper with your name, year group and the answer on it and put it in the box in Mr Prest's room.



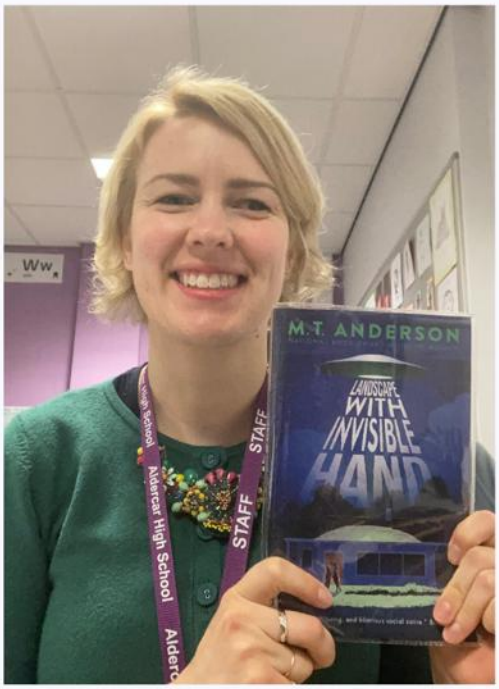
BOOK REVIEWS

Miss Bell recommends....

These are some of my favourite books in the library.

Landscape with Invisible Hand by M. T. Anderson

Adam has just broken up with his girlfriend Chloe, and now they hate each other. But they have to pretend they're still together because the aliens occupying earth find human dating entertaining, and the aliens watch earth like it's television. A bit like how people watch Love Island even though it's all staged.
The thing I really liked about this is that Adam is not your typical teenage hero; he has a chronic bowel condition that lands him in plenty of embarrassing situations with the "girlfriend" who doesn't think it's cute anymore.



The Prince of Mist by Carlos Ruzs Zafón

Over half term I listened to the audiobook of *The Prince of Mist,* read by Dan Stevens (who played the Beast in the extremely inferior live-action version of *Beauty and the Beast),* because I'd never read it before and it's a Year 8 set text. I really enjoyed it. Although it's set in a seaside town in World War One, it feels strangely unmoored from a specific time and place, just like the shipwreck. The relationships between the three central teenagers feel real and recognizable. I was really impressed by it.



Got an opinion about something you've read? See Miss Bell in the library

20th November 2026

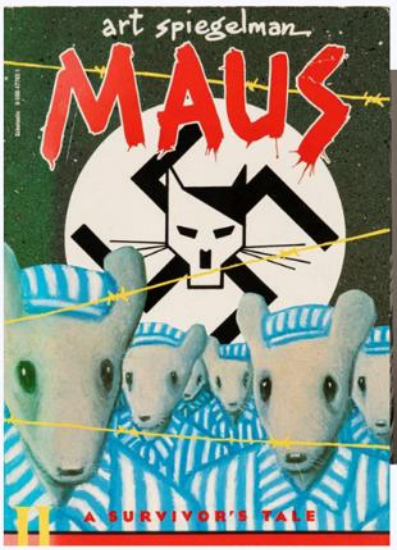
BOOK REVIEWS

Smile by Raina Telgemeier

When the author was in high school, she fell over and knocked her front teeth out. Horror! This is a funny, warm-hearted graphic novel about life, friends, and braces.









MAUS by Art Spiegelman (YA)

Sometimes people ask, 'Why has that book got Kitler on it?' The reason is that during the Holocaust, the Nazis referred to the Jews as 'vermin'. The author takes this idea and turns it into a metaphor, so the Jewish people are mice and the Nazis are cats chasing them. Based on the story of the author's parents, this two-volume work is a powerful memoir you will never forget. It's the second most frightening book I've ever read. The author says he never wants his books to be made into films, so the only place you can find this is in print.

ALDERCAR HIGH SCHOOL

Every child known, every lesson counts, every future unlocked

Understanding demand avoidance

Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA): signs and support

Understanding needs, without a label

PDA describes a proposed profile of intense demand avoidance, often discussed alongside autism. It is not a recognised standalone diagnosis, and evidence is still developing. We focus on understanding difficulties and offering support.

Everyday demands

Starting work, getting dressed or answering a question may feel overwhelming. Even a favourite activity can become difficult when it feels expected. Look for patterns of distress affecting everyday life.

What you might notice

A young person may delay, negotiate, change the subject, withdraw or say they cannot begin. If pressure builds, they may become panicked or distressed. Avoidance can look different from one situation to another.

Pressure & autonomy

Some young people describe demands as a loss of choice or control. Anxiety and uncertainty may play a part. Repeating instructions or adding pressure can make engagement harder when someone already feels overwhelmed.

Look beneath the surface

These signs alone do not identify PDA or autism. Ask what makes the task difficult: is it unclear, too demanding or happening in an uncomfortable environment? Listen to the young person before deciding what might help.

ALDERCAR HIGH SCHOOL

Every child known, every lesson counts, every future unlocked

Helping students feel able

Practical approaches to try together, at home and at school

Reduce the pressure

Prioritise what is essential for health and safety. Pause less urgent requests and avoid giving several demands at once. If distress rises, use fewer words, a calm voice and space to recover. Revisit the task when the young person is calmer.

Use gentler language

Try an observation or invitation instead of repeated commands. For example: “The first question is on the board; I can help when you’re ready.” Allow thinking time. Be honest about what needs to happen and where there is flexibility.

Share the decisions

Offer genuine choices about how to approach a task. For example: “Would writing or talking through your ideas work better?” Plan together when calm and offer to work alongside them. Review praise or rewards if these seem to add pressure.

Notice, adapt, review

Keep brief notes on the request, surroundings and what helped. Share patterns between home and school. Helpful approaches vary, and research is limited, so review them together. If difficulties affect learning, wellbeing or daily routines, contact the SEND team.

Let’s work together

You do not need a PDA label to discuss support. Tell us what your child finds difficult, their strengths and what helps.

SEND@aldercarhighschool.co.uk

Further reading: National Autistic Society: Demand avoidance - PDA Society: Support approaches

General information and suggested support for families • November 2026

RAPHIC NOVELS - COMICS - MANGA - ANIME - GRAPHIC NOVELS - COMICS - MANGA - ANIME - GRAPHIC NOVELS - COMICS



COMIC CLUB

NEW!

ALL AGES WELCOME

A NEW Comics Club: for fans of manga, anime, comics, graphic novels, and more.

Starting in October, Thursdays 3–4pm in the library

- *write and draw your own comics*
- *how-to videos*
- *reviews and recommendations*
- *games and crafts*
- *fan fiction*
- *tasting parties*
- *author profiles*

マンガエル

THURSDAYS 3-4PM IN THE LIBRARY

TELL Miss Bell in the library
if you want to come

MANGA - ANIME - GRAPHIC NOVELS - COMICS - MANGA - ANIME - GRAPHIC NOVELS - COMICS - MANGA -

READY | RESPECTFUL | RESPONSIBLE

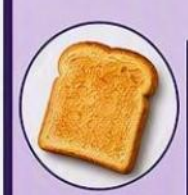
Aldercar HIGH SCHOOL

BREAKFAST CLUB

FREE BREAKFAST EVERY MORNING

IN THE PHOENIX BUILDING

INCLUDING:


TOAST


BAGELS


JAM


CHOCOLATE SPREAD



BISCOFF SPREAD


JUICE


FRESH FRUIT



THE BEST WAY TO START THE SCHOOL DAY

EVERY CHILD KNOWN

EVERY LESSON COUNTS

EVERY FUTURE UNLOCKED

Diary Dates

Thursday 3rd December – Year 10 Parents Evening 16:00-19:00
Friday 4th December – Inset Day
Monday 7th - Friday 11th December – Rewards Assemblies
Thursday 10th December – Christmas Talent Show
Wednesday 16th December – Activity Day 1
Friday 18th December - Last Day of Term
Monday 21st December- Friday 1st January – Christmas Break
Monday 4th January – Inset Day School closed to students
Tuesday 5th January – Students return to school

Kind Regards

Phil Smith

Proud Headteacher Aldercar High School
'Every child known, every lesson counts, every future unlocked'
Chair of the Inclusion Strategy Group

Daltons Close, Langley Mill, Nottinghamshire, NG16 4HL
Tel: 01773 712477 Email: info@aldercarhighschool.co.uk
www.aldercarhigh.co.uk

Aldercar HIGH SCHOOL

EMBARK FEDERATION

INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP
Because school means more