



THE VIEW FROM HERE

As I write this, the sun is shining and it feels, at last, that we are being treated to some spring sunshine. Covid continues, unfortunately to dominate the agenda and so I feel the need once again to pay tribute to all colleagues who are doing everything you can to keep things going and as normal as possible for the students. Many of you have been unwell yourselves and even more have gone the extra mile to cover for and support absent colleagues. Thank you for all you are doing.

Another person I wish to thank is Emma Fielding. Emma is principal of Richard Huish but has been a long standing governor, trustee and member of the Trust. Emma has given time generously and freely to help Uffculme School and the wider Trust to develop and improve. She has been an exceptional volunteer but unfortunately has now decided that it is time to step away from the Trust. As principal of Huish, she will maintain her connection with our secondary schools and will always have a keen interest in our students. We will miss Emma enormously but remain grateful for everything she has given us.

There are lots of exciting developments taking place at all of our schools in the coming months. I was lucky enough to be invited to the “breaking ground” ceremony at Holyrood which is an age old tradition to celebrate the start of the process of creating a brand new building. We are not quite as far on with our other building projects but all of the schools are going to see some significant site improvements in the coming months. Those of you who know me well, will be aware that I am very fond of new buildings – improving the facilities for children and young people is always a lovely privilege.

Finally as we all try and come to terms with and make sense of the terrible events in Ukraine I want to thank everyone for giving pupils a safe space to talk about their fears and an outlet for them to raise money, donate essential products and come together as a community to show their support.

Lorraine Heath
Chief Executive Officer, Uffculme Academy Trust



LORRAINE HEATH





The last few weeks have passed in true super-busy Axe Valley style. The students have been enjoying many enrichment activities. As I write this, 25 of our Year 10s are on a practice walk for their Duke Of Edinburgh Bronze awards. The rest of their year are at the National Apprenticeship show in Exeter. Young musicians from local primary schools are here for an 'Orchestra in a Day' experience. Meanwhile, there are some very tired staff and students who returned to Devon in the small hours from a trip to Wembley to watch England play the Ivory Coast.

We were delighted to welcome Matthew Maslen from AECOM to talk with our Year 9 groups on their STEM day. The students listened intently as Matthew talked through the variety of careers associated with the construction industry. Our budding architects, designers and engineers designed work and leisure spaces in groups and then were 'put on the spot' to present their ideas back to their colleagues.

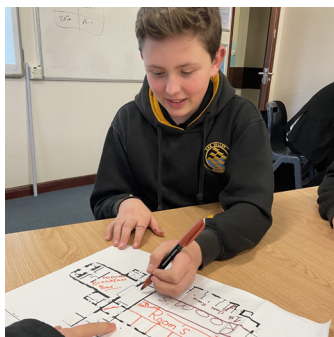
Year assemblies briefly resumed and it was so lovely for me personally to reconnect with the students in this way. I think everyone thoroughly enjoyed my famous one-handed toilet roll unravelling and pea blowing challenges!

Some new clubs have really started to take off. The 10x Challenge club, this week reveals our most successful entrepreneurs. Mr Irvine has been quite astounded by the silky sales skills of our KS3 students. Personalised wooden bookmarks are a big money spinner here.

Fashionista Club attracts a creative group of fervent upcyclers. We have been gifted some amazing fabrics and accessories from a local costume maker. The students plan to show off their creations to our full cohort of September Year 7s, who will be joining us for transition events over the coming term.

Our approach to transition is really gaining us a good reputation within our catchment area. Current Year 5s receive postcards from current Year 7s which gives them a flavour for all the wonderful things they can expect at AVA. Our new welcome brochure for Year 7s has been really well received. This brochure puts all that every child needs to know about our school, in one place as they prepare for their new start in secondary education.

Our library held a poetry and art competition for students, with the gold award winner, Faith Boxer having the opportunity to meet and perform her poem with Simon Armitage, the poet laureate. A special mention to Lola who won Silver prize for her stunning painting, which is on display in St Andrew's church, Colyton.



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Sporting success has been dominated by cross country running in recent weeks. The Grizzly is a road and beach run across the glorious East Devon coastline and the major event in the calendar of Axe Valley Runners. We were very proud to have had so many well-placed runners in the Junior Grizzly. We were also delighted to hear that after finishing our students encouraged much younger primary school children in their own races.

Notably, Innes Fitzgerald, Year 11 has had incredible success and is now right under the radar of English Athletics and Team GB. For the Nationals she made the long journey to Kent. Only to discover she'd forgotten her spikes. She appealed on social media and was loaned a pair. With these things in mind, it is truly astonishing that she led for 3/4 of the race and was only pipped right at the end to finish 2nd. The following weekend, as she ran as an international competitor. Her performance in the Schools International Athletics Board – Cross Country International event in Carmarthen, can only be described as superhuman. She finished in 14.41 (4000m) an amazing 27 seconds in front of the next runner. What a fantastic competitor she is. An inspiration to us all. We are very proud to have her as member of the Axe Valley Academy community. Her fellow students are especially encouraging and proud of her. We hear this as we have been taking her out of classrooms for photoshoots. Her peers always have words of encouragement for her. This spirit is all that we strive for as a school community.

Finally, we were truly humbled by the generosity of the students, their families and the staff of this school as we collected supplies for Ukrainian refugees. Mary Cleare took seven very full car loads to the Polish shop in Chard. Supreme acts of kindness were shown by our students who helped load the goods and made incredibly generous donations of their own.

Laura Jenkins, Headteacher



LAURA JENKINS





It has been quite the term at Holyrood and we end it feeling proud of what we have achieved together. There have been so many opportunities for students to join in with the wider life of the school and to make new friendships along the way.

The performance of Grease was amazing and I would like to thank everyone involved in 'Team Grease' for their commitment, passion and skill in delivering a set of performances to remember. I was really struck by the confidence and talent of our students, which was brought out by the fabulous staff team who arranged this show - thank you all.

A real highlight for me was the recent round of English teacher interviews we conducted, ending with the appointment of Emily Evans (pictured at the Top of the Rockefeller Centre in New York on a Holyrood Sixth Form Trip). Emily's answer to the first interview question blew Katie Wilson and I away. In response to 'why have you applied to be a teacher here?' she explained that she was the first in her family to go to University, having been a PP student in our school. She went on to tell us that her school experience had changed her life chances and that she wanted to come back and give that chance to other children. This is a lovely example of what we strive for every day in action and we look forward to welcoming Miss Evans onto the staff!

As all our schools have, the students and staff at Holyrood have worked hard to gather as much money and supplies as possible to send to help the relief effort in Ukraine. I have been proud of how our school has pulled together on this, shown by the sheer volume of supplies that came in, were taken to our local Polish Shop and then transported to Ukraine from there. Well done, everyone!



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There have been so many wonderful things to celebrate and be proud of at Holyrood: our Rugby teams' performances at Rosslyn Park Sevens, Ski Trip, Year 10 girls as state school County Cricket Champions, Graphic Design Club volunteering to redo the MFL displays, a high-quality performance of Josephine at Holyrood and much, much more. I am looking forward to seeing what the summer term brings for our school.

Last week, it was lovely to welcome back and show off our amazing school to Mr Roland Chant. Mr Chant was the Headteacher at Holyrood between 1985 and 2000.

Colleagues from other Trust Schools are always welcome to visit and if there is something on which you would like to collaborate, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Dave MacCormick, Headteacher



DAVE MACCORMICK





This half term at Neroche has been all about trying to re-establish enrichment opportunities and increasing our parental engagement post COVID restrictions. Our Year 5 and 6 children were lucky enough to attend the dress rehearsal of Holyrood's performance of Grease. The Neroche children were wowed by the scale of the production and it inspired them to join in with local drama groups with many now aspiring to perform in similar shows when they transfer into Year 7 and beyond.

External school enrichment visits are planned for the remainder of this and into next term and children are excited to be able to once again venture out as a class group to widen their experiences and enrich their History, Geography and Scientific skills with visits to Carymoor environmental centre, The Roman Baths, a local small holding and Paignton Zoo.

We are thrilled to announce that Neroche were successful in the recent inter school local Young Voices public speaking competition. We were very proud of all of the children that put themselves forward to take part. After an internally run school competition, 4 of our children were selected to represent the school at the main evening event. We secured first and second place in the younger category and first place in the older category. Our children spoke with passion and conviction about their chosen topics which included environmental themes and small acts of kindness, topics that were important to them. The children were thrilled with their certificates and prizes of poetry books.

We have been enjoying re-establishing our Scrap Store, loose parts, Play Pod approach to lunchtimes. We have used the initiative for a number of years at Neroche but have had to restrict its use recently. The combination of the good weather and the whole school ability to mix and work across year groups has resulted in us opening the Play Pod doors once again and it has been wonderful to see the children working together developing their imagination and teamwork at lunchtimes once again. The current trend is making carts and hammocks alongside the ever popular den building. Year 6 Playleaders are enjoying working with the younger children sharing their ideas.

Sport sessions for KS2 at lunchtimes have also increased children's awareness of different sports and encouraged participation and it has been wonderful to see children from across year groups playing and enjoying sport activities together in their social time.

We have held online parent consultations recently and combined these online meetings with opportunities to come into school to view their child's work. We have found an increase in the number of parents attending by holding these consultations online and an increase in the number of both parents being able to attend, with some parents joining the conversations from



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work. Parent workshop/meetings about Year 1 phonics, Year 4 multiplication and year 2/6 SATs have increased the number of parents coming into school. Parents who attended were able to find out more about the standardised assessments their children will be involved in this academic year and the approach to these assessments at Neroche.

We have developed a Parent Family Support Advisor (PFSA) drop in service where our PFSA is on our school site for parents to meet and ask for support and advice in an informal way before a referral is submitted.

We have also been able to alter our Pre School drop off arrangements to enable the parents of our youngest children more access to the setting and staff by utilising the main school playground at the start and end of the day rather than their own separate entrance.

The Ukraine situation has played a big part of fundraising efforts in recent weeks at Neroche. Many of our children have been deeply moved by the situation. Year 6 House captains led and organised an impressive day at school ending in an after school fete in the hall. The care that they showed and their organisational skills were impressive. The local pub approached the school to see if we could combine our efforts into a joint community approach and the House Captains really enjoyed working alongside a business to develop their fundraising efforts. They enlisted support from other classmates and looked at strengths across the group to allocate roles. The joint fundraising amounted to over £2,000 something that our House Captains are very proud of.

Ali Collins, Headteacher



ALI COLLINS





UFFCULME PRIMARY SCHOOL

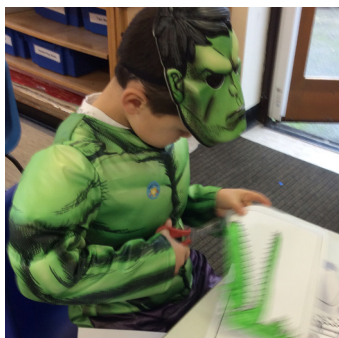
I would like to begin by thanking everyone within the school community, including parents, governors, staff, and children, for their continued support during what has been a very difficult term with Covid cases within the school. Although it feels we are nearing the end of the pandemic, as a school, this past term has been the most challenging since the beginning of the pandemic. However, due to the efforts and support of everyone involved with the school, especially our amazing staff team, the children have remained relatively unaffected by all these challenges and during such times, we have seen the very best of kind and nurturing staff.

We are delighted to announce that Alice Hughes, our Year 1 teacher, gave birth to a beautiful baby girl called Narla Alice Hughes on 21st March. Alice and Narla are both doing extremely well, and Alice is loving being a family of three. I am sure you will join me in wishing Alice all the very best as she enjoys these precious first few days of motherhood. We have appointed Lauren Tomkins-Smith as the Year 1 maternity cover teacher. We are also saying goodbye to Anna Lee who is moving to Bovey Tracey Primary School which is much closer to home. We would like to congratulate Anna on her appointment, and we will ensure she has a lovely send off. For the Summer Term, we have appointed Vanessa MacCormick to replace Mrs Lee until the end of the year and we look forward to welcoming her to the Uffculme family.

On the 3rd of March, we celebrated Word Book Day. It was a brilliant celebration of books and writing, and all the children and staff enjoyed their day... but we did have some very strange characters around the school for the day! Every class took part in a range of activities and competitions promoting a love for books, including the Whole School Story, where each class created a different part of a story, beginning with Reception Class, and ending with Year 6.

Last week, we raised a total of £233.81 for Red Nose Day where children dressed in clothes that made them happy, donating £1 to this worthy cause. The school will also be raising more funds next week, when we partake in a sponsored Run for Ukraine. The children will aim to run the collective distance from Uffculme to Ukraine, which works out around 6-7 miles per child. This is something the school feels passionate about and is in-line with our No Outsiders work.

There have been numerous sporting events held over the last few weeks, starting with the Year 4 children taking part in a Tag Rugby Festival. The festival was non-competitive, but the children learnt many new skills which they were able to apply. During the festival, all children showed excellent effort and their behaviour was exemplary. Having reached the next round in the East Devon Netball competition, our school netball team reached the quarter finals, being narrowly knocked out of the competition at this stage. This was an unbelievable performance, and the team showed excellent team effort. In fact, we were one of only two teams to be awarded the Fair Play award for sporting conduct. We are immensely proud of this achievement and typifies our children's attitude to others. The cross-country squad took part in the second Culm Valley meeting with 13 other local schools. We had several first, second and third place finishers individually, but most impressively, the team finished first overall.



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This year has marked the first time that the school has entered the Year 3&4 and Year 5&6 East Devon Girls' Football competition. The Year 3&4 team finished second overall, and the Year 5&6 team finished first, progressing through to the Devon Schools Finals. We would like to congratulate every child who represented the school and the way they conducted themselves – well done everyone, we are proud of you all!

We have been working hard on our new school vision over the past few weeks, in preparation for a launch event towards the end of the Summer Term. We look forward to sharing this in more detail at a later date, but the central image to this vision is the acronym HEART. Anita Heale, our Trust Marketing, PR and Communications Officer, has worked incredibly hard on the branding of this new vision and has even given up her time to paint some hearts by the entrance to our school, as well as helping to orchestrate all of our children into a heart shape on the school field, showing what great collaboration looks like. Please see the photographs above showing Anita at work, with help from some fabulous assistants.

Finally, we are delighted to announce that we have been granted permission to construct a modular building on our school site which will include two new classrooms and a set of toilets. We are incredibly excited for this project, which is long overdue, and we are grateful for the support of the Trust who have been instrumental in ensuring this project comes to fruition. The groundwork is due to begin in July and should be completed by October Half Term. This new building will have such a positive impact on the school, not only on the academic side, but also pastorally, as we will now have the space to create a sensory room.

Fraser Wallace, Headteacher



FRASER WALLACE





As a school we have always believed it is important to help students understand the wider world in which we live and provide opportunities for them to respond to global events as they arise. We wanted to show our care and compassion for all those whose lives have been impacted by the situation in Ukraine and the human tragedy that is so evident, so on Monday 14th March, the entire school community took a short time out of our day to come together and undertake a Walk for Ukraine. Between us all we achieved our aim of walking a distance equivalent to that between Uffculme and Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine. We also used it as an opportunity to fund raise for UNICEF to help offer practical support, in particular to the children and young people of Ukraine who have had to leave their lives behind in their search for safety and shelter.

Our student community have also been supporting a number of other charities this term including through a non-uniform day with cake sale and other activities for Red Nose Day, the collection of Easter Eggs to be given to children who will spend this Easter in Devon hospitals, as well as the 'Great Uffculme Charity Cycle Ride' in aid of the Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Charity that UAT has been supporting this year.

A major highlight of the school year was the performance of West Side Story. For the past 12 months or more the Performing Arts Department, ably led by Emma Luing-Holmes, has worked with a large team of students from all year groups towards the shows which were put on in the week before half term. Despite all the challenges presented by rehearsing and staging a performance during a pandemic, the result was a triumph and a credit to all those students and staff who contributed, both on stage and off. The last night even went ahead to a full house despite storm Eunice having closed the school during the day!

Luckily our moorland walking teams haven't experienced quite such bad weather in their various training events recently. 105 Year 7 students have prepared for the Exmoor Challenge and even though only a limited number will be able to take part in the actual event all those who have trained did so with enthusiasm and determination. Ten Tors training is also underway with over 40 students in Years 10 and 11 taking up the challenge of either the 34 or 45-mile walk. On their second practice camp there were bitingly strong northerly wind and even some snow, but it made for some stunning views of Dartmoor.



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Students in the Aspire group (for gifted and talented pupils) have been lucky enough to take part in a couple of fascinating trips recently, aimed at those interested in careers in politics and law and in zoology and veterinary science. One group spent a day in London, touring the Houses of Parliament and talking with our local MP, Neil Parish, and his parliamentary assistant who happens to be an ex-student of Uffculme School. A second group went to Paignton Zoo where the students were treated to a classroom and hands on session, helping to put the career options in context.

Congratulations to all the students in Years 9 and 10 who took part in the UK Intermediate Challenge in February. We were delighted that 14 students achieved certificates and particular congratulations to Daniel Barker-Maslin and John Merrick and who were awarded gold certificates, putting them in the top 6% of participants in the Challenge.

Alan Blackburn, Headteacher



ALAN BLACKBURN





I am writing this newspaper article on the way home from Haringey Education Campus in London where I have been fortunate to work with 19 other educators across the UK on the 'Walk Thrus Train the Trainer' programme with Tom Sherrington. Through this programme, we will build our capacity to support schools with implementing CPD programmes or instructional coaching systems using the Walk Thrus PD materials. With the Trust schools and other SWIFT schools increasingly making use of the programme and resources, this is a very exciting opportunity.

Initial teacher training

Our School Direct trainees are on the cusp of finishing their Spring term placements and are heading into their contrasting placements after Easter. Our School Direct distance trainees will shortly be returning to their main placement schools. They have all fully immersed themselves in the teaching and learning, pastoral and extracurricular lives of their schools and their commitment and hard work have been very positively evaluated. Several of the trainees have recently secured jobs and congratulations go to Millie who will be heading to Exeter School, Katie S who will be joining the Holyrood Maths department, Katy L heading to Woodroffe, Pieter to Exeter College and Eleanor to The Castle School. Uffculme School have recently appointed Rob Jarman to the position of new Computer Science teacher from July onwards and Rob joins us at Uffculme for the remainder of his initial teacher training practice. Our Trust and partner schools have really valued WCTSA as a recruitment pipeline and it's great to see so many of them joining the schools who we work closely with and to work with many of the trainees as ECTs and beyond.

ECTs and RQTs

Our ECTs are continuing to make great progress in their induction periods and are currently exploring how to use assessment and feedback to greatest effect. The use of hinge questions has been a real focus and it's great to have seen this area of pedagogy integrated into practice in their lessons enabling them to make valid formative inferences and adapt and respond accordingly. Thank you to our team of mentors for their highly valued instructional coaching, support and generosity of time which has been so integral to our ECT's development and happiness. Our RQTs are focusing on adaptive teaching this half term, exploring strategies to meet the individual needs of the students they teach through work with subject/phase specific facilitators.

Upcoming courses/CPD opportunities

Reformed NPQs:

The next round of NPQ applications will open after Easter for a September 2022 start. Fully funded scholarships are available for interested teachers and leaders employed in state funded schools. In addition to the current suite of specialist and leadership NPQs, two further NPQs will be launched in the Autumn term:

- NPQ for Leading Literacy
- NPQ for Early Years Leadership



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Please discuss with your teaching and learning lead/headteacher if you are interested and get in touch if you have any questions about the content or delivery. Further information can be found on the Leading Schools South West website:

www.leading-schools-south-west.org.uk where you can express an initial interest.

OTHER CPD

Primary:

Kelly Ashley – Developing Reading Fluency | Friday 1 April 2022 and Friday 6 May 2022 | 11:45-13:00 | FREE | **Book here:**

<https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=P4eit5LJfEOfEopE9ezfFas-g5gGSAJdMmxv6woYBuy5UQINIR1NQVzc2Qk1QQjVLQ0I5SkxJMTJYWi4u>

English Hub networking event: Accurate assessment: Preparing for the phonics screening check | 27 April 2022 | 15:00-16:30 | Online | FREE | **Book here:**

<https://englishhub.education/networking-events-2021-22/event/38/Accurate-Assessment--Preparing-for-the-Phonics-Screening-Check>

Secondary:

OCR Cambridge National in Sport Studies showcase | Monday 4 April 2022 | 16:00-17:30 | Online | FREE | **Book here:**

<https://teach.ocr.org.uk/cambridgenationalsshowcase>

OCR Cambridge National in IT showcase | Monday 4 April 2022 | 16:00-17:30 | Online | FREE | **Book here:** <https://teach.ocr.org.uk/cambridgenationalsshowcase>

OCR Cambridge National in Health & Social Care showcase | Monday 4 April 2022 | 16:00-17:30 | Online | FREE | **Book here:** <https://teach.ocr.org.uk/cambridgenationalsshowcase>

Outstanding Quality of Education in Maths (Secondary) | Thursday 28th April 2022 | 08:45-15:00 | FREE | **Book here:** https://sw-iftcpd.org.uk/courses/bookings/c_detail.asp?cid=10446



JEN KNOWLES





Building Excellence

I am conscious that an article setting out the developments in our support functions this year may cause some to skip swiftly to the next section, so I shall get straight to the main point – a huge thank you to everyone involved in this very significant programme, particularly our support staff teams who are working tirelessly to help implement these developments across the Trust. The changes are designed to help us work more effectively together and ensure we provide great places to both work and learn.

Developments include:

HR

- Simplifying our payroll process and consolidating from two payroll providers to one in April.
- Reviewing our HR systems and policies to ensure they are consistent across the Trust.
- Using technology to streamline our recruitment, onboarding and personnel record keeping processes.
- Offering improved training opportunities for new managers and leaders.
- Obtaining staff feedback regularly and improving reporting on this and other key HR indicators to the Board.

Catering

- Improving the level of professional support for our catering teams.
- Appointing new catering contractors after undertaking a highly competitive procurement process. Holyrood and Neroche will move to our new catering contractor, Innovate, at the start of the Summer term with Axe Valley following in September.
- Providing Uffculme Primary with a catering service supplied by Uffculme School at the start of the new academic year.
- Updating all our cashless catering systems and providing cashless tills for Axe Valley.

Estates

- Commissioning a de-carbonisation and energy reduction plan for all schools and preparing bids for the next round of public sector funding.
- Surveying the condition of all our schools to ensure that we can accurately prioritise our capital funding and planned maintenance.
- Managing increasing student numbers at Holyrood and minimising any disruption whilst a new classroom and dining hall block is constructed.
- Enabling the provision of two new classrooms at Uffculme Primary School.
- Investigating opportunities to increase the learning space available at Neroche.
- Aligning our H&S systems and improving compliance reporting.



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IT

- Implementing a new management information system, Bromcom, in all schools.
- Rolling out the Bromcom parent portal, MYCAS, to all our families.
- Bringing our email and Office 365 setups into a single network to facilitate sharing of information.
- Enhancing our cyber security measures and obtaining external verification of their capability.
- Building a staff portal to simplify access to key information for all staff.

Finance

- Moving to a new financial management system in September to manage our £23m of income more efficiently. Enabling budget holders to quickly place orders and access details of their spending. Implementing the DfE's chart of accounts to simplify reporting.

Marketing

- Providing support to ensure we can celebrate our successes widely across our communities.
- Developing recruitment materials to attract the best candidates and showcase opportunities across the Trust.

A short bullet point doesn't really do justice to the time and energy that so many have put into each of these activities or hopefully the benefits that they will provide. However, if you made it through to the end of the list, thank you. These changes inevitably come with teething problems and adjustments to how we are used to working, but I believe that when they are embedded, we will have strengthened our foundations ensuring we remain a great place to work and learn.

Ben Brook, Director of Finance & Resources



BEN BROOK



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MENOPAUSE MATTERS:

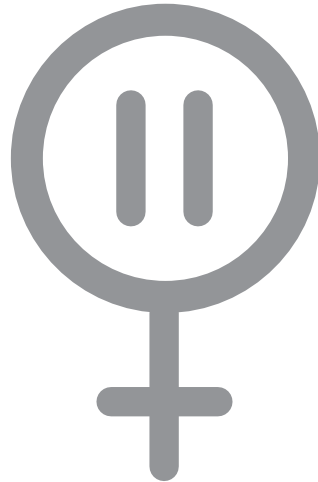
The population of females in the world is estimated at 3,904,727,342 (3.905 billion) representing 49.5% of the world population. Of those that survive to the relevant age, ALL will go through the Menopause – it's not a choice, it's a fact.

I often wonder how important/discussed/addressed/accommodated it would be if the other 50.5% of the population experienced it...

We are a dynamic and forward-thinking group of people at UAT who are becoming much more aware of how important good physical and mental health is, both to us as individuals and as a group of colleagues. I believe that we should be as aware of how Menopause affects us.

I would like to set up a group of 'Menopause Mentors' in each of our schools. The idea will be similar to that of Mental Health First Aiders – an understanding and empathetic colleague with a desire to listen, share, help and encourage.

I would love to hear from anyone who feels that they could be helpful in this role.



Amanda Woodward, Director of Wellbeing



AMANDA WOODWARD





www.uffculmetrust.org