



FIFA
WORLD CUP
2026

“Every student has a story. Every story deserves to be heard.”

Issue 1 - 08th July 2026

STORIES THAT MATTER WRITTEN BY US. FOR US.



**READING
HEATWAVE
CLOSES
SCHOOLS**

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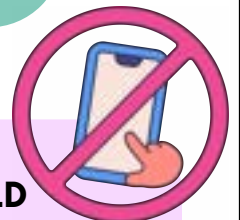
**FIFA WORLD CUP
BRINGS
COMMUNITIES
TOGETHER**

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**WHAT WOULD
WE DO
WITHOUT
SOCIAL MEDIA**

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WELCOME!

MEET THE TEAM BEHIND THE RIVER CURRENT

We are a team of young journalists, illustrators, photographers and interviewers who care about the things that matter to you.

Every fortnight, we will bring you real stories, important issues and the voices of our school community.

Thank you for reading and supporting your student newspaper.

This is just the beginning...

OUR TEAM



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Watch this
space for
upcoming
roles

Reading Swelters Under Summer Heatwave

By Saanvi and Jacinth

What is Happening in Reading?

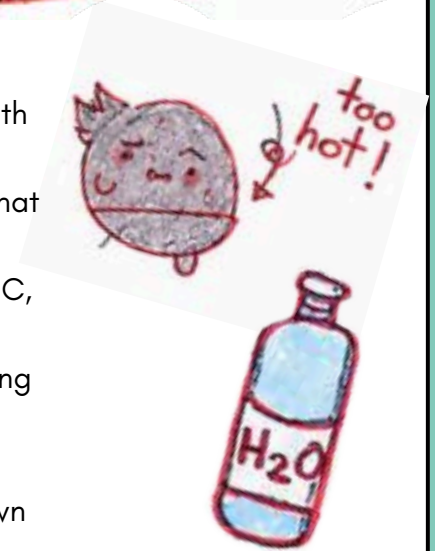
Reading is currently experiencing a heatwave as temperatures rise across the UK. The prolonged period of hot weather has affected daily life for many residents, including students and staff in schools. With health warnings being issued and temperatures remaining high, people across the town are taking extra precautions to stay cool and safe.

Why have schools decided to close?

Schools in Reading, like ours, have been closed or shortened due to the Red Weather Warning. When temperatures outside rise to 30–40°C, indoor conditions can become even more uncomfortable, making it difficult for students to focus and potentially unsafe for long periods. This is to ensure the safety of not only students but staff from risks that threaten human life, such as dehydration, heat exhaustion, and overheating.

What temperatures have been recorded this week?

In Reading this week, temperatures have reached 30 degrees Celsius, with the hottest days climbing to around 38°C locally. It has been predicted that temperatures on Wednesday and Thursday would reach as high as 40°C, which is the highest the UK has ever experienced. The heat has been strong enough to make streets feel much hotter due to reflected heat from buildings and roads, especially in town centre areas.



Illustrations by Elizabeth

Dr Dukinfield explains the Causes and Impact of the Heatwave

Many parts of southeast England are under a red weather warning, causing schools such as River Academy to close due to dangerous temperatures. Dr Dukinfield explained that heatwaves are becoming more common because of climate change, stating, "Heat waves are becoming more common due to climate change, which itself is being driven by the increase in atmospheric greenhouse gases."

Although the heatwave has disrupted lessons, some teachers see benefits, with Mr Clare stating that "students can learn from each other's ability" during indoor PE activities. Overall, the heatwave highlights the importance of both safety and responsibility.

Reading Swelters Under Summer Heatwave



By Saanvi and Jacinth

What Causes a Heatwave?

According to the Met Office, a heatwave is “an extended period of hot weather relative to the expected conditions of the area at that time of year, which may be accompanied by high humidity.”

The Met Office explains that heatwaves are most common in summer when high pressure develops across an area. These high-pressure systems move slowly and can remain over an area for days or even weeks. In the UK, this can happen because the jet stream is usually located to the north during summer, allowing high pressure to develop and bring long periods of hot, dry, and settled weather.

Are Heatwaves Becoming More Common?

Climate scientists have found that extreme weather events, such as heatwaves, are already becoming more frequent worldwide and are likely to become even more common in the UK. Professor Ed Hawkins, a climate scientist at the University of Reading, told the BBC that “Today’s heat events are emerging earlier, intensifying faster and occurring across a much warmer background climate.”



Looking Ahead: What Can We Learn From This Heatwave?

This heatwave has shown the importance of being prepared for extreme weather. Simple actions such as staying hydrated, following safety advice, and checking on vulnerable people can make a significant difference during periods of intense heat.

What Can People Do to Stay Safe?

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), people should avoid going outside and doing strenuous activities during the hottest parts of the day, as temperatures in direct sunlight can feel 10-15°C higher.

The WHO advises spending 2-3 hours in a cool place each day and drinking water regularly, aiming for at least 2-3 litres daily. Wearing light, loose-fitting clothing, taking cool showers, and keeping homes cool by closing windows and blinds during the day and opening them at night can also help people stay safe.



Illustrations by Elizabeth

INTERVIEWER
Likitha

Thank you to everyone
who shared their thoughts
and helped with this
article



FIFA: BRINGING COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

By Alicia

As the FIFA World Cup captures the attention of millions across the globe, football fans are proudly supporting their favourite national teams. Whether watching at home, in school, or with family and friends, the tournament continues to unite people through a shared love of the beautiful game.



After speaking to a fellow student, it was clear that France has become one of the teams to watch.

They admire France's young and exciting squad, praising their determination, strong defence and fast-paced attacking football. Players such as Kylian Mbappé, Michael Olise, Désiré Doué and Ousmane Dembélé have all impressed supporters with their performances throughout the tournament.

France's impressive form has continued in the knockout stages. They recently secured a 1-0 victory over Paraguay, earning their place in the quarter-finals and keeping their hopes of lifting the World Cup trophy alive.

FRANCE'S LATEST MATCH

FRANCE VS PARAGUAY

France secured a 1-0 victory over Paraguay and have reached the **QUARTER-FINALS!**

FRANCE'S STAR PLAYERS

MBAPPÉ OLISE DOUÉ DEMBÉLÉ

MORE THAN A GAME A WORLD UNITED

BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER

The World Cup brings friends, families and communities together to share amazing moments.

UNITES CULTURES

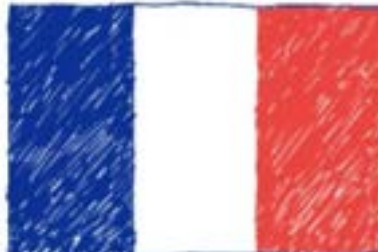
Fans from all over the world celebrate cultures but all enjoy the same game.

CREATES MEMORIES

The excitement, the highs and the lows create memories that last a lifetime.

INSPIRES FUTURES

Young people dream big when they see their heroes play on the world stage.



Meanwhile, one of our teachers is proudly supporting England.

They enjoy watching the matches with friends and family and believe football has a unique way of bringing people together, regardless of culture, language or background.

England also gave their fans plenty to celebrate after an exciting 3-2 victory over Mexico in the Round of 16. The dramatic win means England will also compete in the quarter-finals, keeping dreams of World Cup glory alive.

ENGLAND'S LATEST MATCH

ENGLAND VS MEXICO

England fought back to beat Mexico 3-2 in the Round of 16 and have reached the **QUARTER-FINALS!**



Photos by Kevin

Student reporter Kevin proudly shows his hand-made World Cup predictor after following every match of the tournament!

Illustrator: Harvey

A WORLD WITHOUT SOCIAL MEDIA:

A CATASTROPHE?

By Aaiza, Ariya, Sumaya and Rushda



Imagine a world without social media. What would life look like without mindless scrolling, trends and instant validation? Would we be able to cope without it? How would it feel to be taken away from your daily apps you spend most of your day on? In this article, we will explore the answers to those questions.

Now, before any controversy arises, I would like to clear something up. I know this is a very cliched topic, but we don't dwell on it enough or reflect on how damaging social media can be. However, I will delve into a different and more intriguing perspective.

At first, life would feel empty and quiet without social media. You wouldn't be able to post selfies and receive instant validation and immediate gratification. In a society where people rely on the number of likes they have for happiness, one can argue that we have become even more detached from each other.

Can you imagine? Our attention spans would improve if we did not scroll. Some people might even miss the constant notifications, although they might have found them annoying before. Others may be relieved but lonely at the same time. On the one hand, people would stop endlessly scrolling without thinking; on the other hand, life would seem boring to many young people.

At lunch, students might have a conversation about their weekend rather than discussing the latest TikTok trend. Also, it may teach people to appreciate the nature around them and be more aware of what's going on in real life.

Perhaps, some people would stop being insecure about their lives and start focusing on themselves. This would make everyone happier in the long term and more content in their lives as they aren't comparing their lives to the seemingly perfect lives online.

After school, young people wouldn't scroll on Instagram or turn to TikTok out of habit, and many of them would be quite bored. To pass the time, some might develop hobbies like reading, doing some sort of sport, painting, or maybe just relaxing. Before social media, people's days were spent in this way, learning new skills, playing games, and constantly making a conscious effort to achieve their dopamine, rather than the inconsistent dopamine rushes social media gives us now.

Either way, most of us would have more productive lives, and over time, we might even find it refreshing and fulfilling. For others, it could feel uncomfortable, like something is missing.

Furthermore, without social media, many memories would fade more quickly. People often rely on old photos, videos and posts to remember moments from years ago. Without them, memories would become more personal and private, but perhaps easier to forget, with less time to look back on these memories.

Additionally, many communities would naturally lose their popularity as they have nowhere to spread awareness about clubs and events. People would socialise with each other more, and neighbours would start bonding over small things. However, they could increase their attendance by putting up posters around their local area and sending flyers through people's doors. This could mean that communities become more popular but have slower growth since information wouldn't spread as quickly as before. School events could get more attendance as people start focusing on activities rather than wasting their time.

News would travel much more slowly. Many people now discover major events through social media before hearing about them anywhere else. Without it, people are likely to rely more on newspapers, television and word of mouth.

However, there is a negative side to losing all social media overnight. Thinking practically, many employees who use social media as a form of business or a job of some sort would suffer financially, and their businesses would be affected negatively. Others who use social media platforms for communication with faraway relatives, friends and family would no longer be able to stay in touch with their loved ones. Lots of plans would be cancelled, businesses would fall apart, and for some people, it would make a drastic change to their lives. For others, it might just be a trivial shift.

A WORLD WITHOUT SOCIAL MEDIA

By Aaiza, Ariya, Sumaya and Rushda

SCHOOL VIBES

GOODBYE SOCIAL MEDIA

If social media disappeared, all the time we spend scrolling through Instagram, sending snaps on Snapchat, or watching endless TikTok videos would suddenly be free. Instead, people around the world could spend more time discovering new hobbies, learning new skills, and taking part in activities they may never have considered before.

Without constant notifications and endless scrolling, many people might find themselves reading more, being creative, spending time outdoors, or simply enjoying life away from a screen.

LESS BULLYING

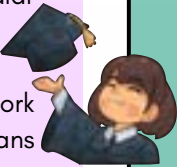
One of the biggest advantages of life without social media could be a reduction in cyberbullying. Many people experience unkind comments or online harassment, which can have a serious impact on their confidence and mental wellbeing.

Sadly, bullying will not disappear completely, as some people may still choose to hurt others in person. However, removing social media could significantly reduce online bullying and help many young people feel happier, safer, and more confident.

ZERO MEDIA BIG FUTURES

Without social media, children and teenagers may have more time to focus on their education and future ambitions. Spending less time online could allow students to read more, study harder, and take part in extracurricular clubs that help them develop valuable skills.

Adults could also use this extra time to work towards career goals, whether that means becoming a lawyer, a scientist, an engineer, or another highly skilled professional. Success comes from the time and effort we invest in ourselves, and replacing screen time with learning could open many new opportunities.



SOCIAL MEDIA, GOOD OR BAD

If social media suddenly disappeared, it would be a huge change for everyone. At first, many children and adults would probably miss it, especially because it has become such a big part of everyday life.

However, over time, people might discover new hobbies, spend more time with family and friends, and enjoy living more in the moment. Although life without social media would be challenging at first, it could also bring many positive changes.

