



February 2025 Newsletter

Photo: with thanks to Mrs Darkins—Sunrise from the Food Room January 2025

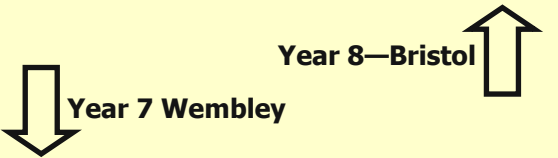
It is hard to believe that we are now half way through the academic year, although it is good to see that the days are getting longer and that the dark mornings of January seem behind us. The coming of the spring should remind us all that the GCSE examinations are coming around quickly now. Our GCSE Drama students have already taken their Non Exam Assessments (practical examinations) this week, and all excelled in these formal assessments. Parents of Year 10 students are reminded of the upcoming mock GCSE exams and that GCSEpod will be an invaluable part of the students' revision for these examinations as well.

Our Year 9 students are in the midst of a busy year. A great many of them are taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and it was a pleasure to see them training and preparing for their expeditions a couple of weeks ago. They are also looking forward to choosing their KS4 options. They have already had an assembly, the options information booklet and access to online materials and individual meetings with their tutors or other staff. The options information evening in March will provide another opportunity for students and their parents to gain valuable information before making these all important decisions.

Creativity Day saw the Year 7's enjoying a visit to Wembley Stadium with the PE department. Year 8's visited SS Great Britain, took a boat trip on the river and saw some artwork produced by Banksy in a varied day trip to Bristol, with the Humanities Department. Our Year 9s became CSI's for the day in Science. Year 10's all looked extremely smart and perhaps a little nervous and they took part in Mock Interviews. We are extremely grateful to all the visiting interviewers who gave up a morning of their time to help to provide an invaluable experience for Year 10, helping to prepare them for 6th form or college interviews at the start of their Year 11. Year 11 spent the day tackling revision and study skills, preparing them for the hard work of study and revision in the last few months of their time at Langtree School.

Trips and visits at Langtree are integral to the broader learning experience we strive to provide. I am so grateful to all the staff who organise, lead and support these days as there is no doubt that organising these trips is challenging, time consuming and stressful. Without the willingness of Langtree staff to go above and beyond, often in their own time, to make trips and visits happen we would be unable to offer such a wide range of opportunities to our students. I know the students benefit not only from the learning but also the chance to enjoy being together, outside of lessons, creating memories that will last long after they have left school.

Simon Bamford
Headteacher



Year 8 Tense Tales Competition

Last term, Year 8 completed a Tense Tales creative writing Competition in English. As a result, a number of teachers (including English and Year 8 tutors) got to read some wonderful, frightening stories, of which pupils edited and improved in order to enter our Tense Tales Creative Writing competition. Thank you to everyone who entered their story - they really were a delight to read.



The Runners up were Jamie C, Charlotte G, Bella T, Laurence C, Kayla DG, Inigo F, Oakley SW, Lucy PB, Ella N, Leven S and Tom J.

**The winning entries were Zoe Y coming 1st, Charlotte S coming 2nd, and Shayla S coming 3rd.
Very well done Year 8!**

Zoe Y—1st Place

CHOOSE YOUR WISHES WISELY

The glass was smooth and cold underneath her fingers. She could feel the wind whipping straggly strands of her hair - red like fire - against the skin of her face, scarlet blotches of cold stark against her pale, freckled face. Her thick woollen scarf did nothing to keep the harsh bite of winter at bay. Her boots, already previously plastered in mud, now sported a lingering layer of sand and stones clinging to the dirt, protecting the true dark forest-green of the plastic from view. Braving the sea to wash it off was something she hadn't dared do; in truth, she hadn't particularly cared, either.

She turned the bottle over in her hands. The glass was tinted a colour she'd never before seen, somewhere between an ominous, stormy grey, the green of her boots, and a disturbingly bloody red. Her fingers caught briefly on the fraying label, and for the first time, she noticed the words, curled in a mesmerising font that struck as both smooth and jagged to her inquisitive mind. Beneath the words, a skull and crossbones. Reluctantly tearing her gaze from perhaps the most interesting feature of yet, she began to read.

'Dri fo m cud ri

An yo sal be ri

Bey yo wis des.

BU BE-

If yo ar no pu of he-

Of ti l-e yo sal de-'

She zeroed in on the last two lines, attempting to make sense of the scratched, damaged writing. With a sigh, she lowered herself down onto the wet shingle and thought, her only company the crashing of the waves and the screeches of the gulls, far in the distance.

13th January 2000 – 10 YEARS EARLIER

I spun the bottle round in my hands, thinking to myself. The label said I would be rich if I drank the deadly-looking liquid inside. My life couldn't get any worse; a criminal record, fighting parents, a wayward sister: I was sick of being alone and sick of feeling the need to sink towards that beckoning path of self-destruction. I turned my attention back to the bottle. Anything to escape the dark thoughts crowding my head. The glass was a colour I'd never seen before. The peeling label threatened to crumble to dust beneath my fingers, flaky white paint seeming so fragile I was surprised it had lasted even a day on this death-stretch of a beach. The skull seemed next to lifelike, the hollow sockets of its painted eyes staring eerily up at me, the 'mouth' somehow pulled back into a devilish grin. Most likely someone's

sick idea of a joke. After all, the verse had said that if you drank, you'd be rich beyond your wildest dreams. It didn't take a lot of thought before with a sharp movement, I uncorked the bottle and took a swig. Anything to give me a chance at a somewhat normal life. With a nonchalant shrug, I tossed the bottle into my bag and began tripping and stumbling my way back up the slick pebbles to what used to be the path home, now a mudbath. I never once noticed the sudden gathering of black-as-night clouds that had started swirling around the exact same spot where I'd found the bottle. Nor the dramatic drop in temperature – almost as if the arctic had migrated to that tiny stretch of coastline.

26th January 2000 – ALMOST TWO WEEKS LATER

My house can't, if truth be told, be described as a HOUSE, as such. More as a shed. Or a shack. There are holes in all the walls, letting in even the slightest of breezes. Each time a bird lands on the roof, it sends a torrent of dust falling from the rafters, smothering whatever's beneath it in a thick layer of debris. I've long given up trying to fix it, and my parents are hardly ever around to actually care.

It was at midnight on the thirteenth day after I drank from the bottle that it happened... I'd woken up to a strange, other-worldly glow. It was coming from the bottle, vibrating and rattling against the wall where I'd left it – I'd been so stressed out about this decrepit excuse of a house pretty much falling down, I'd forgotten all about it, still lying forgotten on the floor where I'd tossed it on arriving home from the beach that day. To think that now.

After a nerve-racking, anticipation-building couple of minutes, the bottle almost seemed as though it was growing in size, and then—

An ice-cold wind chilled me to the bone, and the room had somehow got darker, like death himself was on his way to pay a visit. My heart was banging so fast in my chest I couldn't tell one thump from the next. I had started to hallucinate, seeing pale, tortured faces in the psychedelic light; some wailing and crying, others grinning a devilish grin that froze me to my core. With a bang, everything turned a suffocating black, and so silent the weight of it threatened to push me down. Death had stepped through my front door.

My gaze drifted to the glowing bottle in terror. On noticing that the ebony liquid inside had begun bubbling menacingly, every particle of my being became painfully aware that I had been wishing with all my might that I'd never taken that cursed gulp. Time turned to treacle as the cork flew off. I heard nothing – all around me was a silence so thick it would drive a man to insanity in minutes. It almost felt like I was being drawn towards the open rim of the object. No, I definitely was, getting faster and faster every second. A quick glance caused my brain to spin – my entire room seemed to have doubled in size. My gaze whipped back to the bottle. It wasn't my imagination – it was almost the same size as me. Was everything around me growing? It was at that moment that it dawned on me. My surroundings weren't growing: I was shrinking. I tried to yell for help but my lips couldn't form coherent words. It was almost as if my vocal cords had been ripped from my throat. Before I

could fully comprehend what was happening, I was sucked inside the bottle, landing with a painful thump onto a mound of cold, hard disks. I'd shut my eyes at some point and had opened them on impact, making me blink once or twice to soak in the sight around me. I was sitting on a mountain of gold coins, stretching way into the distance to my right, and on my left, the translucent black-green of the glass barely an inch from my face. Looking back to the endless sea of gold, I heard a voice in my mind, making me flinch. Then another. And another. More and more, joining together to form a resounding chorus of voices old and young, high and gravelly, all whispering the same thing: "You'll never get out. You're stuck for good now, kid." With a sinking feeling deep in my gut, I realised it was the truth.

For the next 10 years I sat in that same spot, surveying my home gathering dust, my family going about their life, pretending to care. They never did in the first place. Watching my future pass without me in it. Every day I would scratch a line on the glass, then set myself up to watch life go by. It was on the fifth long day of the tenth long year that I woke up, and my view wasn't the same. For one fateful second I allowed myself to hope that I was out. It was a bad idea. I'd long ago sworn to never let myself hope. I still sat on that same cursed gold, still saw the outside world larger than life itself. My new surroundings were sandy, stony; grey skies swirling restlessly above. With a pang, I realised. This was the very same spot I drank the key to my prison all those years ago. With a shuddering breath, I finally lost all residual hope of ever escaping and turned to the endless seas of gold to begin my eternity.

13th January 2010

She got up, placed the bottle in her bag and embarked on a purposeful march back towards the trail back home, fiery red hair flicking to and fro, already soaked from the heavy droplets falling from the heavens. With a weighty sense of finality, she stepped off the beach, disappearing from view.

Charlotte S—2nd Place

The Whispering Shadow

In the small, lonely town of cotewood, there was an old, abandoned house that no one dared to enter. The people were scared because there were mysterious shadows that seemed to move on their own and sometimes ghostly whispers that could be heard echoing through the town.

One dark evening, a young girl named Lily decided to explore the house. With only a flashlight and her courage, she stepped inside. The air was musty and old, and the floorboards creaked under her. As she moved deeper into the house, whispers started to reach her ears, it sounded almost as if they were calling her name.

Lily's flashlight flickered, casting long, dancing shadows on the walls. She felt a chill run down her spine. She wanted to go home but something pulled her on. She reached a room at the end of the damp hallway, its door slightly ajar. It creaked ominously open. Inside she found an old mirror covered in cobwebs. The whispers were now deafening, and the shadows seemed to close in around her.

As she wiped the dust off the mirror, she saw her reflection, pale scared looking. Suddenly Her reflection smiled at her. She reached up and touched her face. She wasn't smiling. The whispers she had heard earlier turned into a sinister laugh, and the cold dark shadows engulfed her body. Pinning her feet to the floor.

Lily opened her mouth to scream, but no sound came out. The dust was suffocating. As she stood rooted to the ground her reflection started to move. It came closer and closer and stepped out of the mirror, taking her place in the real world. The last thing Lily saw before everything went dark was her own face, twisted into a malevolent grin.

The next morning, the people noticed a change in Lily. She wasn't the adventurous girl they used to know. Her eyes were cold, and her face was set in a smile that sent shivers down their spines. The whispers of the old abandoned house had claimed another soul, and they continued to wait for more prey...



Shayla S—3rd Place

The Invisible Man

The night was a suffocating blackness, thick with mist, as if the sky had exhaled its breath and clung to the earth in a heavy blanket. The air was cold and damp with the distant groan of the wind. Above, the street lights flickered weakly, their pale yellow light casting long, quivering shadows along the empty path.

Alone in the stillness, a girl named Lila trudged home, her footsteps the only sound in the silence. She had just finished a long shift at the old diner, isolated from the rest.

All of a sudden, the air around her felt... wrong. The fog clung to her skin, seeping into her bones. She tried to shake off the feeling, but something in her gut twisted. A voice- faint, distant- whispered on the edge of her hearing, too soft to make out, but clear enough to make her heart stutter. She froze. An icy chill crawled up her spine. She glanced over her shoulder, nothing. The street behind her was empty. There was no one there, just the hollow echo of her own footsteps.

But then, another sound. A footstep. Still faint but deliberate. Lila's pulse quickened, and her head snapped round, her eyes darting down the path. The mist seemed to thicken, the fog curling tighter around her legs as though it too, were waiting. No one was there.

Instantly, there was that sound again. Closer now. A step... than another. She could feel it, the ground shaking a little each time. The hairs of her neck stood up as she hastened her pace.

Her breathing became heavy, and panic began to creep up the back of her throat. She spun around, her heart hammering in her chest. Nothing. Nothing but the oppressive darkness and mist swirling around her. Yet, as the fog swirled, there was something, someone, there.

A figure. Barely visible, as if the fog itself had given shape to a man, his outline wavering in and out of focus like a mirage. He was tall but his face was obscured by the shadows of the night, his features distorted by the eerie glow of the street lights.

Lila's breath hitched in her throat as her mind screamed for her to run, but her legs were frozen, as if the very air around her had become thick with dread.

"You are never going to run away from me." The voice whispered again. So close now that it seemed to slither inside her mind. She didn't want to stay there any longer. Her body moved before her mind could catch up, her feet stumbling in panic as she ran, the sound of her breath in her ears. Footsteps trailing behind her as if the thing wasn't trying to hide.

The whispering followed her to, curling around her thoughts, messing with her head.

"Run but you can't escape."

Her lungs burned as she pushed herself faster, the street lights flickering in and out of focus, the darkness closing in on all sides. Every time she turned a corner, every time she glanced over her shoulder, the figure was there- his face always a blur. His form shifting like smoke, never quite real, yet always present.

The whispers grew louder, maddening, pressing into her skull like a thousand voices all shouting at once, each one more insistent than the last.

"You can't outrun me." With a final desperate surge, Lila stumbled into an alleyway, her hands scraping against the cold brick walls as she tried to push herself faster, faster away from him. But when she looked up, the figure was standing right in front of her, inches away, his face just out of reach. Lila studied the thing, there was no life, no soul.

The air felt suffocating. The fog closed in tighter. The streetlights, nothing more than smudges against the darkness. And the whispers... they weren't just in her head anymore. They were everywhere. Behind her, beneath her skin, in the very air she breathed. She scrambled to reach her phone for help but no signal meant no hope. She was alone.

Lila's legs gave out, and she collapsed onto the cold pavement, the last of her strength drained from her as the figure loomed over her. His presence consumes the very space around her. His voice slithered once more into her mind, a final, chilling whisper:

"You're never gonna escape from me, give up."

High School Musical Rehearsals

Our wonderful students have been working hard rehearsing for our whole school production 'High School Musical'. With our unusual traverse staging; talented cast; live music from our student band and crew made up entirely of students, our audiences are in for a real treat! (Our cast is so huge that we had to take 2 photos to fit them all in!).

There will be over 150 of our students involved in every show!

The show will be performed on 4 nights this year:

Tuesday 18th March until Friday 21st March. Put the dates in your calendar!

Tickets will go on sale after the half term break via Scopyay.

See you there! Gill Pimm and Ben Bradley



Coming soon... to the Langtree Stage

Disney
**HIGH
SCHOOL
MUSICAL**

**Tickets
on SALE
after
Half Term**



Year 9 Stage in a Box

Year 9 students have been getting creative using some of the Stage in a Box purchased for us by the PTA. This has allowed all of our students to realise their lighting and set designs for the play they are exploring. The results were impressive and everyone enjoyed lifting their ideas off the page.

Thank you, PTA!





Year 10 Ski Trip Gstaad





UK Intermediate Mathematics Challenge – 2025

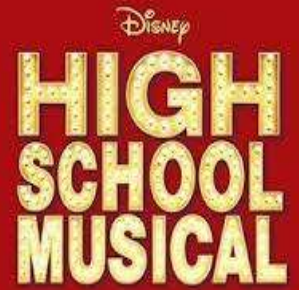
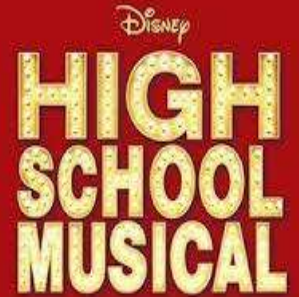
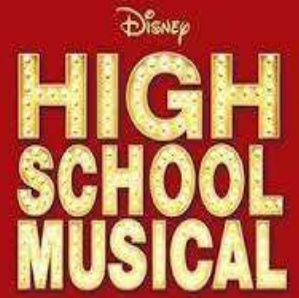
Some awesome mathematics students in Years 9, 10 and 11 entered the National Intermediate Maths Challenge competition this February, with some outstanding results.

The Challenges are run annually by the University of Leeds and over 200,000 students across the United Kingdom participated, with the top 6% receiving a gold award, the next 13% receiving silver, and the next 21% bronze.

Overall there were 10 Gold Awards, 26 silver awards and 21 bronze awards. Congratulations to all who participated!

Mr Jones

Year 9		Year 11		Year 10	
Nicholas	Gold	Aidan	Gold	Noah	Gold
James	Gold	Josie	Gold	Felix	Silver
Sophie	Gold	Harrison	Gold	Eleni	Silver
Bonnie	Silver	Gabriel	Gold	Harry	Silver
Pippa	Silver	Mia	Gold	Isaac	Silver
Lola	Silver	Dylan	Gold	Ryan	Silver
Hugo	Silver	Dom	Silver	Eli	Silver
Griffin	Silver	Melissa	Silver	Theodor	Silver
Yvie	Silver	Laurie	Silver	Bea	Silver
Ed	Silver	Adam	Silver	Emily	Silver
Juliette	Silver	Leo	Silver	Joshua	Silver
Gideon	Bronze	Olly	Silver	Anais	Bronze
Rupert	Bronze	Massimo	Silver	Adam	Bronze
George	Bronze	Betsy	Silver	Sienna	Bronze
Emily	Bronze	Hannah	Bronze	William	Bronze
William	Bronze	Beth	Bronze		
Joshua	Bronze	Louis	Bronze		
Sara	Bronze	Matthew	Bronze		
Chloe	Bronze	Murray	Bronze		
Sophia	Bronze	Isaac	Bronze		
		Amelie	Bronze		
		Oliver	Bronze		

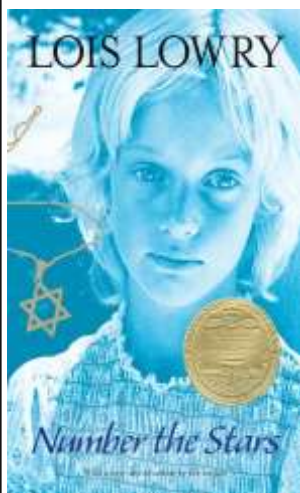


Year 7 Online Book Group with Mrs Wilford

A dystopian world where bees have become extinct and children have to spend time in "Freedom Fields" pollinating crops: this may not seem a very positive storyline but when the Year 7 Online Book Group read "Where the River runs Gold", we loved it! The main characters are a brother and sister and their journey away from home and back again was gripping.

Listening to other people choose favourite sections of the book meant we all got to relive some of the exciting and poetic moments in the book and then explore and discuss the hopeful message that the book offers. 340 pages makes this quite a long book to tackle, and not everyone got right to the end. If you are tempted to come to Book Group, don't be put off if you don't quite finish the book we are reading. By listening to the discussion you will definitely be encouraged to read on afterwards!

Please come along online next term to the Year 7 Book Group (March 31st) when we will be reading a Sci-fi book: "Drone Racer" by Andy Briggs. Please contact Ms Wilford if you are interested. mwilford@langtreeschool.com



Year 8 Online Book Group with Mrs Maunder-Hand

This term, the Year 8 Online Book Group read "Number the Stars" by Lois Lowry which was a short, yet important story set in Copenhagen during the Second World War. The group discussed the key themes and characters of the story, and began to draw comparisons between this and the class reader they are currently studying in their English lessons ("The Giver" also by Lois Lowry). On the whole, the group enjoyed the book, and recognised why it was such an important read (indeed, the final message about war and prejudice still rings true today) but are looking forward to a new kind of reading challenge next term.

Next term we will be reading the non-fiction book, "Deborah Meaden Talks Money" which is a completely different genre to those we've read so far. If you'd like to join us in reading next term's book and you're in Year 8, please contact

Mrs Maunder-Hand (kmaunder-hand@langtreeschool.com)



The Debate Team represent Langtree again! This time in the prestigious Oxford Union Schools competition.

Debate has grown significantly at Langtree over the last three years; in 2022, we entered just four brave students into a the very same competition. In 2024/25, we have entered 22 students in three competitions, progressing to further rounds.

It is of note, and huge credit to these students, that Langtree has on every occasion been the first non-selective state school in this highly academically rigorous environment amongst predominantly independent schools.

We are very proud of our debate team - for their commitment, zeal and willingness to step outside of their comfort zone.

Next up is the Cambridge schools in March. Watch this space...



Langtree student leads Christmas procession in Goring. (with thanks to the Goring Gap News for the report and photograph.)

Christmas Eve Procession

The Committee would like to thank everyone who volunteered their time, expertise and services to help our community celebrate Christmas Eve together. The sight of the torches lighting up our village streets was a welcome one and the sounds of carols being sung in Streatley Meadows is regarded as the start of Christmas for many.

We estimate that the number attending was similar, if slightly lower, than last year but the attendees still raised several thousand pounds to be split between local charities; including Goring Primary School PTA, Streatley Primary School PTA, Streatley Pre-School, Morrell Room, Goring Hub and the Heart of Streatley Charitable Trust.

We couldn't have done it without all the volunteers on the evening, and the local pubs, businesses and organisations that support us in making the special evening happen for our community. Thank you all!

If you would also like to help in some way to run the event, or have any comments about the event then please get in touch by emailing the committee at gstorchlight@gmail.com

Special thanks to: Streatley Parish Council for enabling the event to happen, Heart of Streatley Charitable Trust for use of Streatley Meadows, The Morrell Room for their power supply for the band and lights, Production Power Systems for the loan of power equipment, the 40 marshals who turned out to help make the event safe, our local pubs: The Catherine Wheel, The Miller of Mansfield, The Bull and The Coppa Club/Swan at Streatley, Warmingham estate agents, Hazell & Jefferies, Sarah Brownlee, John Beacroft, Chequers Garage Aston Tirrold, Vicar Wendy Middleton, all those who contributed bonfire materials, Peter McDonald and all the staff at Goring Hardware, Jack and Varsha Patel of Westholme Stores, Goring and Streatley Concert Band, the drummer - Charlotte Binns, the piper - Josh West,



Josh West, who led the procession

Our **Reading Buddies** have had a very successful term. A select number of Year 7 students have read to their Year 11 buddy during tutor on a Monday morning each week. As a result, they have started to grow in confidence as readers, whilst Year 11 have learned how to be a successful mentor. Friendships have

formed, as our Year 7s have relaxed into their reading, whilst Year 11 have developed skills in active listening and communication. All whilst tucking into a fine brioche!

Well done Reading Buddies - you've done me proud this term!





2024 – 2025 Term Dates

February Break – 15th February – 23th February

Monday 24th February

Start of Term 4

Friday 4th April

END of TERM 4 (As normal 3pm)

Easter Holiday – 5th April – 21st April

Tuesday 22nd April

Start of Term 5

Monday 5th May

May Day Bank Holiday - school closed

Friday 23rd May

END of TERM 5 (As normal 3pm)

May Holiday – 24th May – 1st June

Monday 2nd June

Start of Term 6

Thursday 3rd July

Inset Day - no students in school

Friday 4th July

Inset Day - no students in school

14th July to 19th July

Activities Week

Tuesday 22nd July

END of TERM 6 (Half day school closes at 12.30pm)

LANGTREE SCHOOL IS NOW CASHLESS for TRIPS / VISITS / BOOKS and EQUIPMENT

If you do not have your unique pupil code please email

the finance office: finance@langtreeschool.com

Paying online is quick and convenient and allows you to see what you have paid and any amounts left to pay, this is particularly useful for school trips.

There is a link to the online payment system on the front of the school website.



LOST PROPERTY

When lost property arrives in the school office it is checked for a name. Named lost property is then returned directly to the owner. Unnamed property is kept in the school office in the hope that it will be reclaimed. 2 or 3 times during the school year the unnamed lost property will be made available in the main hall for the students to look through. please help us to return belongings to students by clearly naming all their uniform and other belongings. Thank you.

SECOND HAND UNIFORM

The school office keeps a supply of second hand uniform for students and parents / carers to purchase. We are always happy to receive donations of good quality uniform to add to the second hand cupboard.

Absence Requests (other than for medical appointments)

Parents may not authorise absence; only schools can do this. Schools may authorise any absence they deem appropriate; conversely, they can refuse to authorise any absence. Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw students from school for a holiday, and, in law, have to apply for permission in advance. Retrospective approval may not be given. Holidays taken during term time without approval from the Headteacher will be recorded as unauthorised. Removal of your child for a holiday in term time without permission without authorisation from the Headteacher may lead to issuing of fixed penalty notice or even prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act.

What to do:

Requesting absence should be done in writing at least one month prior to the absence. If the child does not return to school after an agreed period, they may be marked as having unauthorised absence. Requests for absence should be made in writing to the Deputy Headteacher Ms S Burman, via the attendance officer: Mrs Debbie Hayward studentabsence@langtreeschool.com stating the dates of absence and the reason for the absence, the school reserves the right to seek further information about the requested absence

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