

Primary phase newsletter

Creating Tomorrow's Citizens Today

Friday 14th May 2021

All-through news

Dear Families,

This week has been an important one in terms of the national roadmap out of “lockdown”. We awaited the updates for schools and whilst there are some important alterations, the mitigations and the need to continue with many of our established practices continues.

The end is now so much insight but we urge you all to:

- Pay attention to hand hygiene. We expect all children and young people to continue to wash and sanitise their hands regularly
- Keep to bubbles and agreed groups. As families, this too must continue
- Be in well ventilated indoor areas or be outside
- Keep your social distance
- Masks- On May 17th, in secondary, students need not wear face masks if they choose not to. Staff need no longer wear masks in classrooms but should continue to do so in communal areas
- In secondary, all students and indeed, all of our staff should continue to carry out their lateral flow tests twice weekly

The Government is signalling to us to start to think again about re-introducing some of our normal activities, which occur outside of the bubble structure, and further guidance is being produced.

Student leadership

And so as we return to reconnect as the Simon Balle All-through Community, we are able to get back into the normal routines and rhythms of our school life. One such pleasurable activity is the selection of our Senior Student Leaders, our Head and Deputy prefects. This year we were delighted to receive a large number of applications from a range of Year 12 students who wanted to not only put back something into their school community but also make a difference. Ben Morris, our Head of Sixth Form, along with his team, devised a series of selection activities, from which a final shortlist was produced. These finalists were then interviewed by members of the Senior Leadership Team. A huge thank you and well done to all applicants as the standard was so high this year. It is therefore with great pleasure that I can announce our team for this year:

Amelie D- Head Girl

Ewan C - Head Boy

Emily C - Deputy Head Girl

Harry C - Deputy Head Boy

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These applicants have already a proven record of leadership both within the local community and in school and shared with us their ideas and passion for social justice. We look forward to working with them and wish them success and happiness in their role. One of their first tasks is to assist Rachel Kirk to appoint our very first Student leaders in Y6. Our first Year 6 cohort can look forward to a range of roles, from ambassadors in music, sports, eco and digital technologies, to our own Larch Head girls/boys and their deputies.

An all-through student leadership responsibility currently open to applications in Years 3 - 5, with secondary applications now received and training begun, is ***The Diana Award - Anti Bullying Ambassador programme***. Supported by HRH The Duke of Cambridge, The Diana Award Anti-Bullying Campaign engages young people, parents and teachers to change the attitudes, behaviour and culture of bullying by building skills and confidence to address different situations, both online and offline. We very much look forward to working with our young people on such an important initiative, fully in line with our Simon Balle values.

Year 5 Maths challenge

Simon Balle All-through School entered its very first "Hertfordshire school's Y5 Maths challenge team" earlier this month. The students are to be highly congratulated on their successful outcome. Well done to Summer L, Csongi F, Dylan W and Chloe P.

Appointments for September

We continue to appoint staff for the next academic year. We are currently advertising for English posts in secondary and also Learning Support Assistants. Please look at our "vacancies" section on our website as we will also be posting other roles later this month, including a lead for our Library which is of course linked so closely to delivering our literacy strategy.

In the Larch, we look forward to welcoming the following members of new staff in September 2021:

- Mrs Sutton (class teacher, who will be working across many year groups in the Larch)
- Mrs Peters (teaching assistant)
- Miss Ponder (whom many of you will know well, and who will be joining us as a teacher)
- Mrs Gibbins (teaching assistant)
- Mr Peters (class teacher, who will begin working in the Larch from the beginning of July 2021)
- Mrs Swords (midday meals supervisor, who will begin working in the Larch in June 2021)

We will be writing to parents on Friday 2nd July to share our full and exciting staffing structure for the new academic year, as the children look forward to their transition day on Thursday 8th July.

Research Projects for the University of Hertfordshire

This week is Mental Health Awareness Week and the University of Hertfordshire is running a research project that aims to study if physical exercise is an effective treatment of depression in children aged 13-17 years old. They are looking for a parent/carer of a teenager (who doesn't have to be experiencing depression) to join the steering group of the study. Time commitment is only for two hours, 2-3 times a year to join the group virtually, to give a parent/carer's perspective on raising teenagers and their thoughts on the study. A £20 voucher for each session would be given as an acknowledgement of their kind contribution.

[View the leaflet here.](#)

Secondly, a research project also being run by the University of Hertfordshire is analysing selective eating during the Covid-19 lockdown. Research has been undertaken to look at how the Covid-19 lockdown has affected the general population's eating habits, but in particular, how has it impacted our children with Autism Spectrum Disorder? This study is looking for parents and caregivers of children with ASD to share what they have observed and experienced during the Covid-19 lockdown. Interviews will take just 45 minutes of

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your time and you could contribute to some valuable research supported by the University of Hertfordshire. If you would like to take part please register your interest via the link here:

https://herts.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_72IPgqs0hyESgNo

Primary news

Teaching and learning

We have begun learning about our Simon Balle value of trust in assemblies this week, and I have been so pleased to hear children's insightful reflections on being a good friend. Here is a poem that we have shared and have been talking about; I have explained to the children that this poem is just as true of adults as children!

A friend is...

A friend is someone you can rely on

A shoulder to cry on

A friend is someone who cares.

A friend is someone who shares.

A friend is someone who won't let you down

Someone who sticks by your side

A friend is someone who listens to you

And in whom you can confide.

A friend is someone who won't force you

To do things you don't want to do

A friend is someone who will always

Keep their promises to you.

A friend is someone you can trust

A friend is loyal and true

Someone you can depend on

Who is always there for you.

I have been inspired by a wide range of learning this week! Many Year 4 children have visited me to share their creative art home learning linked to the Great Wave by the Japanese artist Hokusai. It was wonderful to see the pride they have taken in their learning, and also the ways in which they have combined art knowledge and skills - for example, creating their piece in the style of a range of other artists, and particularly focussing on colour mixing and tones. When I visited Year 5, they were fully immersed firstly in their arithmetic weekly challenge (a fantastically high pitch of learning combining calculations with decimals and fractions in all four operations) and secondly in PE where they were mastering a very wide range of rolls to a high standard. The learning behaviour in Year 1 has been so impressive this week and children are showing us just how well they are engaging in their learning, taking responsibility for selecting the right challenge for themselves, and concentrating throughout lessons. In mathematics, they have been focussing on division - please help with any practical tasks at all at home, like laying the table and sharing out food in your family. Year 2 violinists wowed me as I passed the music room - a special recording is being sent to parents, including singing and using the bow to play open strings. Despite a rainy day, the butterflies were out in Reception! Children were busy re-telling and acting out the story of the Hungry Caterpillar, making symmetrical patterns for their wings, and using butterflies to help with doubling in maths. Year 3 have also been focussing on one of their texts from the Literary Canon and some wonderful adapted versions of The Tunnel (Anthony Browne) are on their way!

- **Larch environment and photographs.** We have been working hard to celebrate all that life in the Larch has to offer and we have printed a whole new set of framed photographs positioned around the primary

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phase building. The children are already enjoying these - from class learning, to lunch, to music, to sport, to outdoor activities and much more! We look forward to showing you all and visitors too when it is safe to do so. A huge thank you to Miss Ridley and our Edutech team for their hard work.

- **Larch class photographs.** These will take place on Thursday 10th June. Please ensure that all children are wearing smart, summer school uniform on this date (including cardigans/jumpers). We will be back in touch nearer the time in relation to how you can view and purchase photographs through the PSA.
- **A message for the current Year 4 and the current Year 2.** Just pre-warning of exciting uniform/equipment changes for September 2021! When children move to Year 3, they are able to have a Simon Balle rucksack instead of a book bag (these being easier to carry and fit into their new locker). We now have two sizes of rucksack to purchase from Kids Connection, and it is entirely up to you which size you prefer. These rucksacks are only for Years 3+ please - book bags only for younger children (due to space, and management of our systems for changing books). For the current Year 4, we have a Simon Balle PE top for all children to wear as they progress into Year 5, instead of the house-coloured T-shirt for PE. These tops are great for PE, any sports club your child will attend, and also so important to prepare for the children representing Simon Balle, as we hope for matches, festivals, fixtures and more to begin once again! These can be purchased from Kids Connection as with all other uniform.
- **Accent catering - an addition to the menu!** We are pleased to let you know that from after May half term, we will be adding an additional option to the lunch menu - a cold 'pick and mix' lunch box. This will be open to all Reception - Year 2 children, plus those children in Years 3 - 5 who have school lunches (either Monday and Friday or for the full week). This will not change all of the hot options available, as well as the salad bar. The 'pick and mix' option available will include: a bread item (at least two available of a tuna sandwich, roll or wrap; ham sandwich, roll or wrap; cheese sandwich, roll or wrap; egg sandwich, roll or wrap); a savoury item (at least two available of bagged nachos, bagged popcorn, quiche or a sausage roll); a fruit/salad option (including whole fruit, raisin box, grapes bag, carrot sticks, cucumber sticks) and a dessert option (for example cookie, cake, yoghurt, jelly). All of these items are made in the kitchen, in line with Accent's commitment to us, not pre-bought. If you would like to change your child's lunch option - for example, changing from Monday and Friday to the whole week, or from packed lunch to Monday and Friday school lunches - just email Mrs Harding. We look forward to even more exciting variety!
- **Lost property.** We have so much! In fact, 10 boxes of unnamed uniform with Mrs Harding/Miss Maycock at this time. With any day of fine weather, we will be putting out tables of lost property just by the bike racks in front of the Larch. Please do check and help yourself to lost items, but please also ensure social distancing and wearing of masks. We will have to dispose of any unclaimed items by May half term so please do make sure you check and claim what is yours!
- **Snacks.** We completely understand that when children are picked up at the end of the school day, they may be hungry! However, a request has come to us from some parents, and we agree, that giving children snacks is saved until leaving the school site. This means that parents can decide upon their own appropriate snacks (which will differ from family to family), and that the initial conversation between children and parents will be about their day in school. Thank you in anticipation.
- **Walking bus (possible!).** As previously discussed last year, we are interested in starting a walking bus for the children in the Larch Centre, only for when year group bubbles may be removed. Could you please complete the google form (link below) if you are interested in your child joining the walking bus and if you would like to volunteer. <https://forms.gle/jtGd89gk8X1L8GcUA> Further information can be found on our website by following this link: <https://www.simonballe.herts.sch.uk/daily-life/walking-bus/> Any further queries or questions please add to the comments section at the bottom of the form. We will let you know further details in due course.

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- **Spellings and learning at home.** We are so appreciative of all of the work that you do to support your children learning spellings at home. From Year 2 - Year 5, we ask children to show us their learned spellings in a dictation (sentences combined in a short paragraph, with the spellings practised/the rule, taught and learned included). This is shown by research to help children apply their spellings, and to make sure that they are focussing on all spellings in the dictation, not just the most recently learned words. You may have noticed that last week we moved to completing this dictation in children's home learning book. Our aim is that you can therefore see how well they have retained the spellings they have been practising and so that you can continue to support them at home. We welcome any feedback!
- **Dates:**
 - Parents' week is the week beginning 5th July.
 - A high profile and exciting Art week will also take place during the week beginning 5th July.
 - Sports' week: week beginning 12th July. We are aiming for a very exciting end to the academic year!

Wishing you all a happy and fulfilling fortnight ahead!

Best wishes,

Mrs Alison Saunders (Headteacher) and Mrs Rachel Kirk (Vice Principal)