

Primary phase newsletter

Creating Tomorrow's Citizens Today

Friday 28th May 2021

All-through news

Dear Families,

We now close for the half-term holiday, after what has been a longer than usual summer term 1, coupled with extraordinarily unseasonable weather. That said, this newsletter is full of celebration as our children and young people have continued to work hard, show our values so well and re-engage with great commitment to their learning and our exciting all-through school. Signs of tiredness are now apparent (students and staff) and we all deserve a good break!

Covid-19

Whilst we are slowly returning to the normal patterns and routines, and indeed we continue to reintroduce our normal procedures, we are constantly reminded of the fact that mitigations against the Covid virus are still enforced in school with regular hand sanitising, the operation of bubbles, an emphasis upon being outdoors and restricted activities. There continue to be cases in East Hertfordshire so there is no room for any complacency.

Family responsibilities

We remind you that:

- Masks should be worn by adults in many indoor spaces
- There are rules about social distancing and indoor mixing
- Young people and children should also abide by these restrictions
- Hand hygiene is very important
- LFTs still should be used with secondary students x 2 a week

Travel

Please be aware when booking holidays that caution must be taken and risks weighed up should you be considering a foreign holiday. Quarantine rules are highly likely to change quickly, and self-isolation will be imposed. We, therefore, ask all families if booking a summer holiday abroad that they ensure that they are back in the UK by 22 August 2021, to allow for a 10-day quarantine. If children do not return to school, this is an unauthorised absence. Term-time holidays are not allowed. This, as we are sure you will understand, is beyond our control, and this message is given because we are so motivated to provide the highest quality of education for every student in our care.

Thank a teacher



Every year, teachers and others who work in schools across the country are celebrated as part of the Pearson Teaching Awards on National Thank a Teacher Day. This year it is being celebrated on Wednesday 23rd June and we would like to encourage everyone to take part. We know from the many messages we have received over the last year that lots of our school community are really grateful for the way we have worked together to ensure the students have continued to receive high-quality learning experiences.

Simon Balle All-through school

The Thank a Teacher campaign recognises **ALL** staff working in schools; school leaders, teachers, teaching assistants, and all support staff such as lunchtime supervisors, caretakers and cleaners. We thought it would be a lovely surprise on Thank a Teacher Day for lots of the people who make our school such a special place to know how much of a difference they are making to the lives of our young people and how much they are appreciated. Anyone can send a card; children, students, parents, grandparents and colleagues can all say thank you.

There are a number of ways you can get involved but the easiest way is to send a card by completing the form on this link

<https://thankateacher.co.uk/thank-a-teacher/thank-a-teacher-form/> and Pearsons will send a card to the person you nominate.

We hope that as many of you as possible will join us in taking part in the celebration this year. In previous years our teachers have really appreciated receiving the cards, but I think this year they will be even more appreciative.

Yvonne Adshead
Assistant Head



Student leadership

Work with our all-through student leadership continues. This week we are delighted to announce our soon-to-be Year 6 student leaders as follows:

Larch librarians:	Sports ambassadors:	Music ambassadors:	Digital ambassadors:	Eco leaders
Lola Zachary Holly Summer Ethan Eva O Jenson	Orla Harry T Deputies: Dylan Xavian	Henry Erin Heidi Holly Summer	Sammy W Miles Deputies: George Sophia	Lily Ziva Deputies: Edith Lucia

On June 30th, all children in Year 5 will also be trained to be sports leaders so they can support their peers on the playground.

After a brilliant assembly on Monday led by the Simon Balle Head Boy and Head Girl, Ewan and Amelie, and their deputies Harry and Emily, applications for our first ever Larch Head Boy and Girl are open for Year 5. Responsibilities will include being role models to peers by modelling all the school values, representing the school at various events, communicating with staff, secondary student leaders and children in the Larch and showing visitors around the Larch, plus more exciting opportunities. Application information is available on Google Classroom, on Go4Schools and hard copies are available from Miss Hesketh and Miss Boyce. The closing date is Monday 14th June. Good luck to all who apply!

We are busy planning too for the re-launch of our all-through student parliament. More news to follow.

Finally, we congratulate 20 Year 3 - 5 children who have been successfully appointed as Anti-Bullying Ambassadors. Joining together with 20 children in Key Stage 3, they will have important roles in our school.

Simon Balle All-through school

Their training, with other primary schools and as part of The Diana Award programme, will take place on 8th June 2021. Congratulations to:

Year 3: Megan, Cara, Harrison M-H, Zoe, Rosey, Summer, Layla and Isaak

Year 4: Oliver, Thomas, Seraphina, Annabel, Lucas D, Zach, Jazz and Jessica

Year 5: Harry O, Abbie, Brody and Sam J

Travel to and from school

Governors have been reviewing site safety and site security. One of the joys of this campus, compared to many in the inner cities, is the wealth of green space that we have. Unfortunately, at this current time, the campus is being abused by a minority and this is resulting in vast expense which we believe should be used for children's education. We are seeing daily local dog walkers using the site, and out of hours visits by young people. And perhaps in terms of safety, parents who are still picking children up, parking on-site and driving carelessly, where we have explicitly been clear that driving to Simon Balle is not possible. Added to this we have recently received a number of complaints from local residents about parents parking with little or no consideration, particularly around Balls Park. Please use the car park in Old London Road and walk to the school, as we have asked for so often. We ask you to please, please support us! It is so important that our own community shows respect - a value that we promote so clearly with our young people. Thank you in anticipation of your consideration.

Vacancies

Please remember to look at our vacancies tab on the school home page. These are updated regularly and you or someone you know may be interested in applying.

Hertford Trail

Hertford Town Council has organised two free half term trails for children to enjoy; please see the [posters](#) and the [additional information](#) attached.

Primary news

Teaching and learning celebrations

There has been much to celebrate in the last fortnight! I have been overwhelmed, and delighted, with so many children visiting me to go into our Larch star book. This half term, your children have shown such a commitment to pride and enthusiasm in their learning. Here are some highlights:

- Year 4 children visited me today sharing some **exceptional writing**. Much of this writing was the children's best writing this year! They were inspired to write explanation texts about how a fridge or toaster or television works! As well as using all of the important features needed for an explanation text, they were supported to be wonderfully creative and I read all sorts of ideas from fairies in my fridge to fire-throwing genies in my toaster!
- I was fortunate to be able to give out many **music certificates and badges** today, from Year 2 all the way to Year 5. In a year where music ensembles and concerts have necessarily been curtailed, it has been inspiring indeed to see the great efforts made by so many individual students to make such fantastic progress on their instruments. Many more certificates and badges are on their way; please do look forward to us celebrating Larch music next half term with parents too; more news to follow!
- I have been privileged indeed to visit Year 2 and 3 during their **swimming** lessons this half term. Whilst I am sure that children, parents and staff were delighted to see swimming return in April, it was with a little trepidation by many as it was clear that children had missed out on so much in the last year. This was not evident when I visited the pool on Tuesday! Confidence in the water was shown by absolutely all, and measurable progress was also clear to see. Please see below for updates for summer 2.
- Our **club offer** has been so well received this half term and we are delighted to see children engage in extra-curricular learning. From Busy Lizzies (and all of their varied offer) to KS1 clubs to Explorers, it has

Simon Balle All-through school

been a busy half term. Do look out for social media posts in celebration, as we have some lovely photographs to share. As we begin Summer 2, please look forward to a broad offering including mindfulness to crafts, cycling and orienteering to rugby, rounders to football, myths/legends to continuing orchestra and choirs. Our extra-curricular offer extends all within our main curriculum, so a huge thank you to parents for supporting the importance of this. We will write later in Summer 2 in relation to our offer for September: just a reminder here please that we will need parents to please sign up **before the allocated deadline**. With the numbers involved, and indeed another 60 children in September, it is becoming impossible to allocate spaces once the deadline has passed. Thank you for your understanding.

- **Timings of the school day.** Following the email sent earlier this week, just to confirm the times of the school day for the Larch from Monday 7th June (following half term):
 - 8.40am - 8.50am soft start. Children of all year groups may come straight into class within this 10 minute window (allowing parents to drop children of different ages too). Please note that any child arriving after 8.50am will be late and will miss the start to their morning learning.
 - 3.15pm - 3.20pm. We have allowed a 5 minute period at the end of the day just to allow parents picking up children of different ages from different places to do so. Please arrive for 3.15pm.

We are excited about this change to timings, as it will ensure a purposeful start to learning for all, and allow us to maximise teaching times through the school day. Please do ensure that you are punctual to drop off and to pick up.

- **Uniform.** We have completely understood the challenges with children's school uniform this year, for example - with shoe shops closed! As we enter this final half term, please can we remind you of our expectations for uniform, found here: <https://www.simonballe.herts.sch.uk/daily-life/uniform/> Trainers are needed for PE, and for use on our trim trail and playground treehouse. However, school shoes (black) must be worn to and from school and for most of the school day. It is important too to remind parents that the **Simon Balle rucksack is only for Year 3 +**. We do understand that it is tempting to purchase this for younger children, but it is a privilege which all children will gain in time! In the younger years, we need easy access to support children with changing their reading book, and all of their items must fit on a cloakroom peg. Thank you for your support.

- **Lunches.** Please see one or two changes to our menu here: <https://www.simonballe.herts.sch.uk/daily-life/canteen/>

We are pleased to welcome a new 'pick and mix' cold option lunchbox next half term. We welcome the children's feedback, through our daily 'lunch inspectors'!

- **Staffing.** We are pleased to announce the safe arrival of Miss Emery's baby, Jemima Bobbie Mead. Born a little early but Mum and baby are both well and home now. Congratulations to all!
- **Swimming.** We are really excited to let you know that we are going to continue with swimming for Year 2 and Year 3 children after half term. These year groups missed their swimming provision last year and we felt it was important while the children were making progress and we have this opportunity to continue this for another 6 weeks. We know this will really support the children in their swimming journeys and ensure that the children have vital life skills which we all know are so important to keep our children safe in the outside world. Please can we ask Year 2 and Year 3 parents to kindly make a voluntary donation of £10 to support with the upkeep of our swimming pool which we are so lucky to have at school. In order to make a donation please find on parent pay the correct year group with swimming next to it. I am sure you agree this is extremely reasonable for the opportunity the children are receiving.

Year 1 parents will have seen a letter go out this week as they will be starting their swimming lessons after half term as well.

Simon Balle All-through school

To confirm days for swimming:

- Year 1 and Year 2 will swim on Tuesday afternoons.
- Year 3 will now swim on a Friday afternoon.

We will continue our swimming provision with other year groups in the Larch in the Autumn term and will let you know more information regarding this nearer the time. Our aim is for all children in Year 1-Year 6 to have the opportunity to swim for at least one half term within the academic year.

● **Dates:**

- **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.
- **Parents' workshop for Year 1:** Phonics, Thursday 10th June, 5pm. Please join here: meet.google.com/kee-csdo-bvt
- **Parents' week** is the week beginning 5th July. All meetings will be virtual and via school cloud. Booking information will follow.
 - Monday 4-7pm & Wednesday 2-5pm for Reception and KS1
 - Tuesday 4-7pm & Thursday for 2-5pm for KS2
- A high profile and exciting **Art week** will also take place during the week beginning 5th July. This is fully integrated into the children's Art curriculum for this term, but will result in what we anticipate to be some high quality, polished pieces to be truly celebrated! We thank our Art department in the secondary phase as we enjoy a true opportunity to work across the all-through.
- **Sports' week:** week beginning 12th July. We are aiming for a very exciting end to the academic year!

Wishing you all an enjoyable and restful half term, with hope for a little more sunshine!

Best wishes,

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