

# Secondary phase newsletter

*Creating Tomorrow's Citizens Today*

Friday 18th June 2021

## All-through news

Dear Families,

We welcome you back to a very short half term! Whilst the weather over the past 10 days has helped everyone to look forward and feel good, the news earlier this week in delaying the full opening-up has emphasised yet again the need for everyone in our community to understand that we must still keep to the mitigation rules that are in place, in order to keep everyone safe. Indeed this week, Hertfordshire County Council has informed all primary and secondary schools that the traditional Year 6 transition day (when Year 6's visit their new secondary schools for induction) will not happen for the second year running.

Covid cases are on the increase in Hertfordshire, after a very low rate. We hope by now all parents, obviously along with grandparents, will now have taken up the offer of at least their first vaccine. This along with their own vaccinations is a great comfort to our staff.

Therefore we are continuing **with bubbles, hand sanitisation, twice-weekly lateral flow tests for staff and secondary students, separated breaks, along with using outdoor travel routes. Staff still wear masks in public areas.**

We ask you to:

- Keep to the rules of social distancing and indoor numbers
- Keep reminding children at home to practice hand cleanliness
- Wear masks in areas where they are expected

Hopefully, by the end of this term, we will have some more positive news.

Thank you.

## Holidays

May we remind all parents that holidays are not permitted in term time: children have already lost many school days. This year, unlike other local schools, we end school on Friday, July 16th; returning the first week of September. This is a long 6-week summer break. We ask you to carefully consider the placing and destination of your holiday. If you are planning to travel abroad, and with sudden changes to "green countries", if students do have to isolate at the start of term, this will cause difficulties for everyone. Isolation, if it is a risk, needs to be factored into the 6 weeks. We thank you in anticipation for your support so that we can best focus on the wellbeing and educational needs of all students.

## Assessment news

The changes to national assessments affects both primary and secondary children this year. Parents of children in Year 11 and Year 13 will be very pleased to hear that we received this week notification from the exam boards that our Centre Policy has been accepted. The next step will be our allocated exam board to ask for sample work, to carry out quality assurance. The amount of work that schools have had to carry out this year has been immense, carrying out most of the work usually carried out by the exam boards.

## Simon Balle All-through school

In the primary, whilst statutory national testing (KS1 SATs, the Year 4 times tables check, the Early Years foundation stage profile, the Year 1 phonics screening) has been removed, our practice has been to continue as we normally would in order to give every child the best opportunity to show all they have learned. Where we identify gaps or support needed, this will inform our planning and our practice and our careful transition and handover to next year. Thank you to all parents for their continued support with home learning, as phonics, spelling, times tables, reading and more will be particularly important over the next few weeks of term. We look forward to talking with you all during parents' week.

### **Simon Balle All-through School Mini Farm.**

I wanted to write to say thank you to all parents for their wonderful contributions and support with the mini-farm. Animals certainly have their moments, and both Cookie (the white long-haired rabbit) and now two of the tortoises (Flash and Zippy) have learned how to do good disappearing acts! The students - both Larch and particularly the Year 9 farm leaders - have learned really well how to carry out their responsibilities - cleaning out hutches, picking out poo, as well as food and water and handling and more. But we do really understand that these are big jobs that we pass to the community during the holidays and we are incredibly grateful for all that was achieved at half term - we especially appreciate parents providing vegetables for the animals, as they are used to lots of school leftovers (the tortoises particularly rely on a main diet of spring greens, and the chickens are much happier and lay more eggs when they eat lots of fruit and vegetables - whole cabbages and apples are particularly loved!). We are very grateful to you all - thank you. The feedback that we have received from parents shows that children are loving the visits too - all animals are settled and enjoying being stroked and held. We would love to ask for help during the summer holidays: whether in the Larch or the secondary phase, if you are not already signed up to the rota, please email [Larch@simonballe.herts.sch.uk](mailto:Larch@simonballe.herts.sch.uk) if you would like to help. Please just specify dates that you can or cannot do during the summer and Mrs Harding will allocate slots. I am happy to do a training session for families new to the rota in July. Thank you again all - we are so pleased with the importance of the farm, within the curriculum, relating to our values, and adding much to students' personal growth.

### **Vacancies**

Busy Lizzies at Simon Balle are looking to recruit a breakfast and afterschool playworker to join our team. The successful candidate should be a good role model to the children, be reliable, punctual, positive and enjoy working with children. No experience necessary as full training will be given, including level 2 food hygiene and safeguarding. Hours are 7.30 am-9 am and 3 pm-6 pm Monday-Friday with various shifts available. For parents of children at Simon Balle, their children can attend free of charge. For an application form and further information, please contact Liz or Tony on 01992 304477 or email [BusylizziesSB@gmail.com](mailto:BusylizziesSB@gmail.com)

Simon Balle is currently advertising for the following positions :

Art technician  
School Librarian  
Cover supervisor

We are eager to recruit people who both have the skills needed and understand and promote the school's values. Full details are on the school website. In addition, if you feel that you might have the skills and experience to work with us and want to be part of this exciting journey, even if there are no appropriate jobs at this time, do email in and we can meet you to have a chat.

### **Sports Days**

We are excited about all-through sports day opportunities planned for this half term. Following the announcement shared by the government earlier this week, we are sorry that we won't be able to invite parents, but we can ensure that children from Busy Lizzies Nursery all the way to Year 12 have an exciting sports' day to look forward to. Whilst maintaining bubbles, students will be able to participate in collaborative events and compete in exciting year-group races. We will share as much as we can via photographs and social media! Dates:

- Secondary phase: Friday 9th July 2021
- Busy Lizzies Nursery and Reception: Tuesday 13th July 2021

Simon Balle All-through school

- Years 1 - 5: Wednesday 14th July 2021

## **Secondary news**

Despite Covid restrictions, we found a suitable way to celebrate with students the end of Year 11 and Year 13, by holding formal assemblies and outdoor events. Feedback was highly positive. We now look forward to our sixth form induction for both our own students along with those joining us from other local schools.

Keeping to bubbles has been a challenge but we are managing to run many events, some virtual, for example, this week has seen the Y12 careers fair. The P.E department is not only able to run practices but last week our students were successful in local athletics events, with more in the calendar.

Throughout the pandemic, music lessons have continued to run, initially virtually and now face to face. We look forward to returning hopefully soon to experiencing performances and concerts.

The Year 9 have now started their GCSE option programmes; we have been really impressed with their engagement and attitudes towards learning.

## **Uniform**

Several gentle nudges and a thank you! Thank you as uniform standards are improving as we move back into a sense of normality. Please be aware that we do insist that girls skirts are not rolled up. There are still a number of students wearing incorrect footwear and we have reintroduced the wearing of school plimsolls. A nudge that uniform may need to be bought over the summer and that black polishable school shoes need to be worn, both now and in September.

## **Accent Catering**

Please find the menu for the next four weeks attached [here](#)

## **CHIPS Playschemes are looking for volunteers!**

CHIPS have groups in Hertford, Ware, Hoddesdon, Cheshunt and Bishops Stortford and are looking for individuals aged 12 and upwards who can volunteer regularly on Saturdays for 2 ½ hours or during the school holidays. Please find the advert attached [here](#).

*Wishing you all a happy and fulfilling fortnight ahead!*

*Best wishes,*

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