

Primary phase newsletter

Friday 5th November 2021

Creating Tomorrow's Citizens Today



All-through news

Welcome back from half term. We hope that most families managed to have a good break as the weather changes.

Being outside and enjoying the seasons is so important for our wellbeing and at this time when unfortunately covid is still with us, the outdoor meetings and events take on a greater significance. Over the next fortnight, our assemblies continue to focus upon our value of "wisdom". Before half term we looked at the role of the "United Nations" as 24 October is the international day. This week, we recall the meaning of Diwali, and learn how Hindus throughout the world, including those within our own Simon Balle Community, celebrate. Armistice Day is a key date in the all-through calendar and once again this year, our Larch children as well as secondary students will show their respect and remember. As families, do talk together and share experiences to enrich your children's understanding and knowledge, so that they can then share their stories with others.

Poppy Appeal

We will be holding our traditional Remembrance Service on Thursday 11th November, both for our secondary and primary phases. For secondary students, we will be selling poppies in the canteen at lunchtime. We would like everyone to be wearing a poppy at our service so do remind your child to contribute to the poppy appeal.

In the Larch, please send in a contribution in a named envelope if your child is in Years 3 - 6. We will give them a poppy which they can tuck into their button hole (we won't be giving out pins but feel free to add a safety pin at home if you wish). For children in Reception - Year 2, please buy a poppy from Mrs Harding's office if you wish to do so, or send in a contribution for the appeal; however, we won't be delivering poppies as we fear they will be lost all too easily! Thank you for your support for this important time of year.

Music news for November 2021

We are delighted that so many students are taking part in music each week, learning an instrument or to sing, and in our ensembles. Having live music back throughout the school is wonderful, and soon we will have concerts returning as well. Details are being sent to those involved, so we can safely enjoy hearing our musicians perform.



Last year, singing was often the hardest hit, with the restrictions. Choir numbers were limited and

singing was a challenge. It is therefore brilliant that our choirs are back in full force. We have so many amazing singers. We believe that everyone can sing, and it is great that our musicians agree! I have written a blog all about our singing - do have a read.

[A Blog about our singing - 'Singing Once Again!'](#)

The Carol Services return to All Saints' Church in the last week of this term. We will have a Larch celebration, where our Larch Orchestra, which now consists of the String Orchestra and the newly formed Larch Wind Band will provide music along with the choirs. The secondary service will be once again led by the Concert Band, as well as the choirs and other ensembles.



This month we will be holding our second Piano Day, where many of our pianists will come together to showcase their work through performances, a masterclass and evening recital. It is lovely to hear and see our pianists perform throughout the school and students can support each other in the Library recitals that have started on Monday lunchtimes. It is so lovely that students are once again creating music around the school.



We are also once again supporting our musicians through supervised practice before school from 7.50am. This is where students can come and practise, being supported as they need. We know that for some musicians, regular practice at home can be a little harder, so we have this facility available each morning. Practice is so important in making progress - otherwise musicians forget and go over the same thing in lessons.

Well done to all our musicians this term throughout the school. Anyone who wants to join in with music should get in touch! Learning music is gradual and takes time. When the time is taken, magical things can be achieved.

Mark Taylor

Director of Music

<https://twitter.com/simonballemusic>

<https://www.simonballe.herts.sch.uk/music/>

Children in Need

We will be supporting Children in Need this year and students across the school will be encouraged to support this worthy cause on Friday 19th November by donating £2.00. They will be able to wear socks of their choice and trainers along with their school uniform.

Anti-bullying Week

Ask if someone's ok. Say you're sorry. Just say hey.

In a world that can sometimes feel like it's filled with negativity, one kind word can provide a moment of hope. It can be a turning point. It can change someone's perspective. It can change their day. It can change the course of a conversation and break the cycle of bullying. Best of all, one kind word leads to another. Kindness fuels kindness. So from the playground to Parliament, and from our phones to our homes, together, our actions can fire a chain reaction that powers positivity. It starts with one kind word. It starts today.

We will be focussing on the active promotion of anti-bullying during Learning for Life lessons as well as assemblies across our all-through school.

School Parliament News

Ewan and I had the pleasure of leading our first Student Parliament Meeting, with every year group from the primary to the secondary. We were excited to be discussing topics brought from every year council meeting including: gender neutral bathrooms, redesigning school PE kit, canteen food and display boards.

Everyone in the meeting contributed brilliantly to the conversation to ensure we formulated concrete next steps to achieve our long and short term goals. As a result of this meeting £120,000 is being invested in building new gender neutral bathrooms. These bathrooms will have floor to ceiling cubicles, an open door and central sinks with cameras. In the interim refurbishments of the existing toilets will be taking place. Additionally, the PE kit is in the process of being redesigned to become more in line with the discussed vision of staff and students.

Among other things many students were vocal about better promotion of healthy food and refreshing display boards around the school. On top of this we also heard feedback from the leaders of our brand new diversity, environment and literacy groups. Everyone was impressed with their clear passion and dedication when reporting on their meetings. Definitely watch out for some of the exciting plans they plan to implement soon!

Thank you to everyone who got involved with student voice, we were blown away by both the quantity and quality of contributions from every year group. We look forward to keeping you updated on more of Student Parliament's future successes.

Amelie and Ewan
Head Boy / Head Girl

Christmas lunch

Our Christmas lunch will take place on Wednesday 15th December in the Larch (Reception - Year 6) and Thursday 16th December in the secondary phase. This is always a special occasion which our students (and staff) really enjoy.

In the secondary phase, tickets must be bought in advance and payment (£3.75) should be made via ParentPay. There will be a two course traditional Christmas lunch with a vegetarian option.

Payments must be made by Friday 19th November so we can place our food order in plenty of time. Please note that there will be no other lunch options on the 16th and the canteen will be closed on the 17th December, the last day of term.

In the Larch, all children who normally have a school lunch on a Wednesday will automatically have a Christmas dinner. If your KS2 child would normally have a packed lunch, and instead wishes to have Christmas lunch, please pay £2.50 on parent pay before 30th November 2021. We hope that all children will be looking forward to this annual festive occasion!

School Emergency Closure

The school may have to suddenly close for a number of reasons including no heating, no water but the most common reason is severe weather. The Headteacher, members of SLT and Premises staff assess the situation in terms of health and safety. We also consult with other local schools. If conditions pose a significant risk, the school or parts of the school will close. There is a robust system for notifying families which includes:

News of any school closure or part school closure will be made available to parents via the school website, www.simonballe.herts.sch.uk. We will also send email notification to parents and students via the regular 'InTouch' communication system as well as updating our [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) pages.

HCC has a School Closure Notification System in place that lets parents know when the school will be closed. To receive these messages by SMS or email, parents need to register using the following link:

<https://member.everbridge.net/index/892807736725489>

You will be directed to the "Sign Up" page where you should click on the "sign up" button located at the top right hand side of the page on the grey strip and from there follow the instructions. It should take no more than 5 minutes to register and you can edit your information at any time should you change your mobile number or email address.

Each contact within the system can have 2 devices added for each communication type if they wish to – this means that in addition to adding your own mobile number and email address, you could include the mobile number and email address of a partner or a grandparent in your registration process. They too would then receive any messages in relation to the school's closure. Alternatively, interested parties could register themselves separately. If you have children at more than one school you can register for those schools too in a single registration process by selecting all schools at which you have children. Once signed up you will receive messages relating to the status of your child's school.

If a substantial amount of snow falls during the day senior staff may decide that the school day should be shortened so that staff and students can leave the site in order to get home safely in the daylight. School day times may alter – open later, have a shortened lunch and leave earlier. When we remain open risk assessments will be undertaken to ensure the health and safety of staff, students and all site users. Our premises staff have formulated an action plan which includes clearing and gritting paths and walkways.

There are a number of options which may be adopted, in the case of severe weather, to ensure continuity in teaching and learning for example:

- On the first day of closure students will have pre-recorded lessons – google classroom - to complete at their convenience. We do understand that children (and parents) may well want to go and play in the snow!
- Subsequently there will be a blend of both pre-recorded and live lessons:
 - Y3 and above – google classroom
 - Y1 and Y2 – Go4Schools
 - Reception - Tapestry
- Certain classes or key stages may be asked to stay at home
- The school is closed and all students will be given online learning.

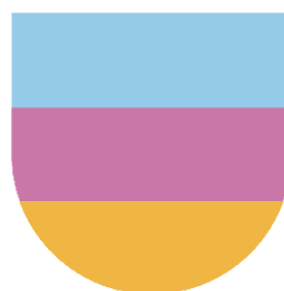
- School is open but there is a reduced number of staff. Classes may be reorganised with priority being given to exam classes and our primary students in the Larch.
- For students not on site e-learning may be used. In advance departments will prepare work which can be delivered virtually.

The decision to close the school is complicated and not taken lightly. Hopefully the above will show some of the strategies which will be used in the event of a school closure.

'Closing the school may be the right decision where the judgement is that students or staff face significant risk of serious injury in school or travelling to school. But remember that every lesson counts and consider whether it is reasonably practical to keep open.' (DFE)

'Unless specifically told otherwise, staff will be expected to use their best endeavours to attend work without putting themselves or others at risk. When the police and motoring organisations, such as the AA, recommend that motorists undertake only essential journeys this is considered to include travel to work and school.' (HCC)

T-Cup launch, 16th November



**Health
Happiness
Success**

Physical and emotional wellbeing are key to leading a happy successful life. We educate all of our students on the importance of taking individual responsibility for we believe that active engagement in emotional wellbeing (prevention) is better than intervention.

We are continually looking at different ways to support our students in becoming more self aware.

The 10 keys to happiness programme is a model that all of our students are familiar with and have worked on in learning for life lessons and PSHE in the primary phase.

As previously communicated, we are using some of the funds raised from the Fun Run to launch a new wellbeing app. We are working alongside an organisation called T-Cup (Thinking calmly under pressure) to focus on self reflection and what components impact on personal wellbeing.

The T-Cup team will be visiting the school on the 16th November, to launch the app to students in year 5-13. This will include a presentation from Lee Mears ex England and British rugby player. The app will be used in school and at home to reflect and empower students to make good decisions surrounding their wellbeing.

[Launch flyer](#)

Primary News

Teaching and learning

We were pleased to welcome our primary Hertfordshire Improvement Partner to school on Monday 1st November. He spent the whole morning in school scrutinising our curriculum for mathematics: talking with leaders, teachers, teaching assistants and children, and visiting lessons from Reception - Year 6.

We were delighted to receive so much positive feedback in relation to curriculum design, to support and challenge in learning; from how well children could explain their learning across all classes, to staff knowledge of children's individual strengths and needs. The culture and ethos across the Larch was particularly noted, and especially so for our Reception children who showed such independence and maturity in sustaining their play in so many purposeful child-initiated activities. A big thank you to Xander, Charlie and Lily in Year 4 who explained their mathematics learning so well, as well as welcoming our visitor to the Larch. A big thank you to all for such a positive start to this half term; our next step was on focussing on the 'exceptional' moments of teaching and learning that happen in the Larch - a great next step to receive!

Each week in celebration assembly, we enjoy 'live' music - an important part of our celebrations from the week. Sometimes this is performed by our sixth form musicians who do so much to inspire music in the Larch. This week, though, we were delighted that Wally was able to perform on the clarinet - a great piece called 'After Hours.' I enjoyed playing with you Wally, and the Larch were so impressed with your musicianship and performance - well done!

Bright and beautiful day

Apologies for the confusion in the previous newsletter, but Bright and Beautiful Day in the Larch will be on Friday 12th November! (As Children In Need is our focus on Friday 19th November). Please see attached posters - we are asking each child to wear a coloured accessory - the colour of their class - as well as to bring an item or two for our Christmas hampers in the same colour. We thank you for your support - these hampers looked just wonderful last year.

Accent catering

It has been a busy week in the Larch kitchen! Children have provided very positive feedback about the range of paninis (tuna melt, BBQ chicken, ham and cheese, for example) and salad bar available each day, as well as the continued meat and vegetarian main meals. For bonfire night day today, a special menu was in place: a delicious range of fillings with jacket potatoes, not to mention the sweet treats! Thank you to our kitchen staff, and indeed to our children for continuing to enjoy such a range of food.

PSA News

The PSA have arranged a number of exciting fund-raising events that are taking place over the next few weeks.

Bright and Beautiful Day Friday 12th November

DATE CHANGE: On Friday 12th November, Larch children are invited to come to school wearing full school uniform, but wearing an accessory in their class colour. See poster for more information. Please bring in a donation or gift, matching the class colour. Donations will be made into beautiful rainbow hampers and these will be added to our Winter Raffle.

Doughies Pizza and Cookie Event 25th November

We look forward to Doughie's returning to Simon Balle with their regular and vegan home pizza making kits.

These artisan kits are of exceptional quality and you can now add pepperoni as an optional extra to your kits.

Doughies have launched bake at home cookie dough kits too. Choose from: Chocolate Chip, Chocolate Brownie and or Oat and Raisin.

Please note, cookie kits are not vegan.

Orders need to be submitted via their [website](#) no later than **20th November**. We are able to offer this to all Larch families, plus Year 7 students and welcome you to order kits to take for friends and family too.

Order here-----> [Doughies kits](#)

Frost Fair and Festive Market 4th December

We are looking for a number of helpers to support set up, during the event as well as post event clearing away. Without your offers, we will not be able to run this year's fair. If you could spare even an hour of your time, please [click here](#) and let us know. Thank you in advance.

We are busy sourcing prizes for our Winter Raffle, this year is proving to be challenging. If you are able to make a contribution, please do get in touch. We have previously been able to offer spa days, afternoon teas, experiences and more.

Raffle tickets will be sent home to each Larch family very soon. Tickets for secondary families will also be available.

SANTA RUN for Herts Young Homeless 5TH - 12TH DECEMBER



<https://www.hyh.org.uk/hyh-santa-run>

Dates

Wednesday 10th to 11th Nov	Y11 geography field trip to Walton-on-the-Naze Remembrance ceremony in school (all-through)
Thursday 18th November, Monday 22nd November, Wednesday 8th December	Larch open afternoons at 4pm. Please phone to book your place.
Wednesday 24th Nov	6th form open evening
Friday 26th Nov Monday 29th Nov	Occasional day 1 - school closed Occasional day 2 - school closed
Wednesday 1st to 3rd Dec	Y12 geography field trip to Manchester
Monday 13th December Tuesday 14th December	Secondary carol service, 7pm (All Saints Church) Years 7 and 8 at the carol service, 10am (All Saints Church)
Tuesday 14th December Wednesday 15th December	Primary carol service, 6.30pm (All Saints Church) Reception - Year 6 at the carol service, 10am (All Saints Church)
Wednesday 15th Dec	Primary Christmas lunch
Thursday 16th Dec	Secondary Christmas lunch
Friday 17th Dec	End of term - early finish
Wednesday 5th Jan	Start of spring term

Wishing you all an exciting and fulfilling fortnight ahead!

Best wishes,

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



CHARITY CHRISTMAS TREE SALE

SIMON BALLE SCHOOL
FROST FAIR

SATURDAY 4TH DEC 1-4PM



5FT-8FT

LOCALLY
SOURCED

RESERVE YOUR TREE

EVENTS@MUDLARKSGARDEN.ORG.UK

 **Mudlarks**
Where plants and people grow



FROST FAIR AND FESTIVE MARKET
4TH DECEMBER, 1-4PM

Helpers needed!

We are looking for a number of helpers,
from our entire all-through community,
for set up, during the event and after the
event - can you help?

Please register by completing the Google Form - link
in Newsletter

Thank you in advance.
Without your
wonderful offers of
support, this event,
this event couldn't
happen..



Bright & Beautiful Day

Class colours:

- Red - Hedgehogs
- Orange - Squirrels
- Yellow - Badgers
- Green - Rabbits
- Blue - Foxes
- Purple - Deer
- Pink - Wrens
- Brown/Bronze - Robins
- Black - Kingfishers
- White - Doves
- Silver - Swans
- Gold - Mallards
- Any Colour - Eagles
- Any Colour - Owls

Friday

**12th
November**

**Wear a coloured
accessory to
school in your
class colour**

**Bring in a
coloured
donation or gift
in the same
colour**

**Donations will be
made into
beautiful class
hampers**

**Hampers will
feature in our
Winter Raffle**



SIMON BALLE PSA

Frost Fair

&

**Festive
Market**

SATURDAY 4TH DECEMBER, 1-4PM

£1 ADULT ADMISSION, CHILDREN FREE

**LIVE MUSIC, XMAS TREES, CRAFT STALLS, RAFFLE,
GAMES, LICENSED BAR, FOOD, CAKES, STUDENT
RUN STALLS & MORE!**

simonballepsa.org.uk

facebook.com/simonballepsa

JOIN US FOR A DELICIOUS,

Christmas LUNCH

TRADITIONAL ROAST TURKEY CHRISTMAS DINNER WITH ALL THE TRIMMINGS!

**WEDNESDAY 15TH
DECEMBER**





Christmas LUNCH

Traditional Roast Turkey

or

Vegetarian Wellington

(G,Mk,E,Su)

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Pigs in Blankets

(G,Mk)

Cranberry and apricot stuffing

(G,E,Su,Mk)

Homemade cranberry sauce

(Su)

~~~~~

Crispy roast potatoes

Garden Peas

Sweetcorn

~~~~~

Christmas Shortbread

(G)

Ce = Celery  
Cr = Crustacean  
E = Eggs  
F = Fish  
G = Cereals

containing Gluten  
L = Lupin  
Mk = Milk  
Mo = Molluscs  
Mu = Mustard

N = Nuts  
P = Peanuts  
Se = Sesame Seeds  
So = Soya  
Su = Sulphur Dioxide

