

Primary phase newsletter

Thursday 24th November 2022

Creating Tomorrow's Citizens Today



All through news

A warm welcome on a chilly day- the seasons at last seem to be changing! With only 4 weeks until we break up for Christmas, now is the time to remind parents of some key dates.

- Friday 25- Tues 29 November (inclusive)
Student mid half term break (Tuesday is a staff training day)
- Simon Balle Frost Fair-Saturday 10 December
- Wed 21 December - finish at lunchtime (tbc)
- Thursday 5 January- School starts for all students
- Year 11 mocks start on December 5th.

If you have visited the site recently, you can not fail to see the preparations for our new flexible space- "the Jubilee Suite". As a school desperate for creative spaces, once installed this will offer opportunities for staff and students alike to take a more creative approach to rooming and events. We trust that this will be functioning, early in the new year.

Whilst the calendar is already filling up with pre Christmas events, we continue to celebrate other opportunities. Since the publication of the last newsletter we were all impressed with the wonderful Armistice Day reflections; two events, every student except Reception in our primary phase (380 children) and followed by 1200 older students plus staff and governors, moved by readings, the choir singing so sensitively, the last post played, the laying of wreaths and then two of our Ukrainian students reciting their national anthem, whilst we all reflected on the horrors of war.

In contrast, we thank you for your amazing support for all of our musicians (this must now total over 500 young people across the school) playing in a variety of concerts, and also Y6 in the national Shakespeare Festival (Art Depot- Finchley)

Sports events have been equally popular and I know that recently Mr Brennan has outlined to you the

many opportunities, matches and events that our students rightly take part in. Tonight (Wednesday) is our annual "Sixth Form Open Evening" and I expect to see many parents there. Remember if you have families and friends who are looking at sixth form provision, we are always eager to hear from them.

We are well aware that life continues to throw many challenges to our students and their families as well as our staff. This is why we always emphasise the importance of community- how we listen and help. However, it is with sadness that I must ask that some parents are reminded that we can not solve the whole world's problems. Equally, we can not simply drop everything and deal with issues now. We need all of us to work together; can I remind parents that it is perhaps better not to write a lengthy emotional email late at night or to shout at staff when they simply need to listen. We know that other professional bodies display notices as polite reminders about this- I am sure that a gentle reminder to the very few is sufficient, as we all want the best for all of the children.

To end; wishing everyone a relaxing mid half term break.

Christmas jumper appeal



Save the Children

CHRISTMAS JUMPER APPEAL – THURSDAY 8TH DECEMBER

In the UK and around the world, the Save the Children charity makes sure children keep safe, healthy and learning.

- They have helped 45 million children across the world get the medicine, good food and education they need

- They have over 600,000 supporters alongside families, nurses, teachers and other workers
- They believe in a world where every child has a chance of the future they deserve. With children, for children they change the future for good

DOUBLE THE FUN

For the first time ever, the UK government has promised to match all donations. All of this 'match funding' will go to an amazing cause - helping mums and babies in Kenya.

Every year in Kenya, 74,000 children die before reaching the age of five. Yet, most of these deaths are the result of preventable causes, such as diarrhoea, malaria and pneumonia. Half of under-five child deaths are associated with malnutrition.

The match funding from the UK government will increase the quality and availability of essential new-born and child health and nutrition services in Kenya. It aims to benefit 200,000 vulnerable people. Our donations raised through Christmas Jumper Day will go towards supporting Save the Children's vital work in the UK and around the world, enabling the charity to make lasting change for those who need it most.



Students and staff will be able to wear a Christmas jumper on Thursday 8th December with their normal school uniform. Please use this link <https://christmas.savethechildren.org.uk/fundraising/madeleine-harman-christmas-jumper-day> to make your donation and to benefit from the government match funding. Thank you in advance for your support.

Children in need

Thank you to all those who donated to our Children in Need appeal. We raised £1055.50 which will help to make a difference to young lives.

Dropping students off

You must not drop off/park outside While Lodge or on the bridleway. Drivers are blocking the driveway

and the residents are unable to enter or leave their property. This is unacceptable. Thank you in advance.

Vacancies

We are looking for a TA to work either in KS1 or KS2 in the Larch centre. This is a full time post (32.5 hours per week over 5 days). For full information and an application form please visit <https://www.simonballe.herts.sch.uk/?s=vacancies>

PSA news

Frost Fair - 10th December, 12-4pm

You will soon receive a Frost Fair Newsletter, providing you with lots of information relating to this special event. From the Winter Raffle, Year 7 House Hamper Competition (w/c 5/12) and Larch Accessory day (9/12), to the pre-loved primary and secondary uniform sale, crafty stallholders and even our very own Simon Balle Festive Gin - there is something for everyone.

We are still looking for a large number of volunteers to make this event a success. We especially need help in these areas: Welcome Desk, Raffle Station, Refreshments and the staff run Secret Shopping Room (2-4pm slots). We have limited volunteer opportunities left on our games stalls.

Students, parents and staff, please consider supporting this event by signing up to a volunteer slot: <https://forms.gle/dAQP3S7oFbM4Z397>

Simon Balle PSA

Frost Fair & Festive Market

Saturday 10th December
12-4pm

£1 admission, children free
Simon Balle All-through School
Mangrove Road, Hertford
SG13 8AJ

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SIMON BALLE PARENT STAFF ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

5th December w/c **5th December** Y7 House Hamper Competition. Drop off your house coloured donations to your Form Tutor.

9th December Larch Accessory Day. In exchange, bottle or sweet treat donations can be dropped to Larch.

10th December Frost Fair and Festive Market. 12-4pm. Join us for an afternoon of festive fun and shopping.

FROST FAIR



We have so much to offer at this year's Frost Fair! From traditional games, face painting and a giant inflatable snow globe, to over 30 external stallholders selling a variety of top quality items, many hand made. Performances from Take Note, Larch Choirs and dance groups will bring festive cheer while you enjoy a mulled wine, vegan sausage roll or supersized pig-in-blanket style roll. The popular staff run Secret Shopping Room returns, where children/students can independently shop for a seasonal gift for their grown up. Please note this will only feature at the Frost Fair and will not run during the school day this year. We are excited to share that for the first time, tickets for the Winter Raffle will be available to ALL students and staff of the school. Back for this festive season, Spirit of Hertfordshire have released this year's Festive Gin. Order in advance and collect at The Frost Fair.

Frost Fair Volunteers
We need a good number of student, parent and staff volunteers, from both phases of the school, to assist with this year's magical event. Students that sign up AND attend their slot(s) will receive house points. Please check with your family before signing up.
<https://forms.gle/Cqy5z4onfejv3uFo7>

psa@simonballepsa.org.uk
simonballepsa.org.uk
Facebook.com/simonballepsa

*There was once a crab called Jerome,
Who needed to find a home.
The beach wasn't clean,
Some people had been mean.
Their rubbish had been carelessly thrown!*

It has been such an enriching fortnight, with so many opportunities and so much to celebrate in the Larch. I would like to begin by thanking parents/carers for your support with **home learning** - there have been some wonderfully creative homeworks to share and it is always notable how these consolidate children's knowledge and skills - for example, geographical models in Year 4 showing longitude/latitude/equator and more, and excellent instructional writing in Year 3 showing all of the success criteria for great instructions.

At this busy point within the term, it is important too to celebrate the **breadth of our curriculum**. Year 2 are showing precision in their developing sewing skills within DT, Year 5 are asking excellent questions due to their engagement with science learning related to the solar system and our literary canon texts continue to inspire active learning and brilliant writing - do ask any Year 1 child about Beegu!

Primary news

Poetry Writing Competition

This term we ran a poetry writing competition. The theme for the competition was 'the environment'. The poems were judged anonymously by the author Alice Hemming and Miss Iles. Well done to the winners and runners-up.

Here is Felix's winning poem:

The environment

Sea animal and littering limericks

Title: Animals HATE rubbish!!!

*There once was a turtle named Bob,
who floated around with a sob.*

*All the rubbish in the sea,
tangled up round his knee.*

To clean up, it was a big job!

Once lived a starving seal,

He ate some plastic he thought was a meal.

His belly felt sore,

He didn't want any more,

Oh it was such an ordeal!

A special newsletter will follow next week to highlight our **extra-curricular** offer as an all-through school - too much to highlight here! I wanted, though, to draw your attention to Mr Leonard's lunchtime leagues - with certificates awarded for tag rugby last week and the basketball league now begun. The children's enthusiasm is infectious! Fully inclusive, and providing an opportunity to take part in active sport at lunchtime, the children are showing great sportsmanship and collaborative skills, as well as developing physical skills - and always with an emphasis on our Simon Balle values. Thank you Mr Leonard!

Also a huge thank you to our amazing music department and over **130 Larch musicians** for the concert in school last Wednesday. I know that the music team have been celebrating this on social media platforms, but a huge thank you from me to all involved - from junior to senior Larch choirs, from strings to wind and brass - the musicianship, professionalism and smiles were great to see. As always, an enormous thank you to parents/carers for all your support and commitment for children's practice at home - the results are clear! Onwards to Christmas - please see the Larch Carol Service dates below!

This week it was the time for **Year 6** to shine in their

wonderful **Shakespeare performances of Macbeth** in the ArtsDepot theatre in London with all of the benefits of a real theatre - from lighting to costumes, from the staging and the technical departments - it was a supportive audience and an incredible atmosphere. The depth of children's understanding of the characters, the narrative and the language was clearly evident in their convincing and professional performance. We were so proud of all - well done!

At the other end of the age range in the Larch, **Reception** are working hard to prepare for their **Nativity performance**. There is something magical and exciting in the air when we hear young voices sharing Christmas songs once again. With a brand new performance this year, we are already so impressed with the way different children are shining and thriving with the opportunity to perform. We look forward to welcoming parents to this very special event.

Finally, anti-bullying week last week was a very important opportunity to focus on the **value of kindness** in the Larch. In our assembly on Tuesday children's voice, including our anti-bullying ambassadors, was so powerful. Many, many kindness calendars are in the process of being completed and submitted. Google forms to seek children's views were completed from Years 3 - 6 - we will feedback in our next newsletter. We are so proud daily of the way in which your children are kind to one another - this is the foundation of the calm and happy learning ethos in every class.

With all good wishes for a wonderful long weekend, Rachel Kirk (Vice Principal)

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about TIKTOK

AGE RESTRICTION 13+
Content features are restricted to over 13s only.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?
TikTok is a free social media platform that lets users create, share and watch short videos ranging anywhere from 15 seconds to 10 minutes in duration. The app gained notoriety for its viral dances, trends and celebrity comes and can be a creative, fun platform for teens to enjoy. However, available in 75 languages, it has more than 1 billion active users worldwide (as of spring 2022) and 15 million popular videos in the under-18 age bracket. In fact, a 2022 Ofcom report found TikTok to be the most-used social media platform for posting content, particularly among young people aged 12 to 17.

AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT
While TikTok's "For You" feed only displays videos from users who are 13+, the app is a mix of content based on their geographical location, interests, search history and a variety of "For You" feed algorithms. It is possible to find inappropriate content, such as explicit language, sexual content, and hate speech. The app also has a "Restricted Mode" which allows parents to restrict their child's feed to content that is appropriate for their age group.

DANGEROUS CHALLENGES
Due to TikTok's algorithm, it is possible to find dangerous challenges. These are often promoted by influencers and can be very risky. Some challenges involve dangerous stunts, while others involve self-harm or eating dangerous substances. Parents should monitor their child's feed and discuss any challenges they see with them.

CONTACT WITH STRANGERS
With around 13 billion users globally, the app is a vast network. It is possible for children to come into contact with strangers. While the app has a reporting system, it is not perfect. Parents should encourage their child to be cautious and not to share personal information with anyone they do not know.

ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING
Family Pairing allows parents to link their child's account with their own. This allows parents to manage their child's account remotely, including setting screen time limits, restricting direct messages, and enabling Family Safety Mode. Parents can also use Family Pairing to monitor their child's account activity and to help them understand the risks of using social media.

MAKE ACCOUNTS PRIVATE
Although under-18s will have their TikTok account set to private by default, sometimes this setting is relatively easy to change. However, parents have the ability to manually set their child's account to private - meaning that their videos won't be visible to strangers and they won't be able to exchange messages with people who aren't on their friends list.

LIMIT IN-APP SPENDING
If your child is using an iPhone or Android device to access TikTok, you can use the settings to prevent them from making in-app purchases. We'd recommend that you enable this feature as it's quite easy for a young person - without realising what they're doing - to spend a significant amount of real money buying TikTok coins so they can unlock more features in the app.

DISCUSS THE DANGERS
If your child wants to use TikTok and you're happy for them to do so, it's crucial to talk about the potential risks in this type of app. For example, ensure they understand not to share any identifying personal information - and that they realize they could be exposed to inappropriate content. Thinking critically about what they see on TikTok can help children become generally more social media savvy.

READ THE SIGNS
If you're concerned that your child might be spending too much time on TikTok, or that they've been emotionally affected by something inappropriate or upsetting that they've seen, it's important to know how to spot the possible signs. Unexcused irritability and a lack of concentration are potential red flags, as are failing to complete homework or regularly not eating meals.

Advice for Parents & Carers

Meet Our Expert
Carly Pope is an experienced technology journalist with a track record of more than 15 years in the industry. Previously the editor of Tech Radar, Carly is now a freelance technology journalist, author and columnist.

NOS National Online Safety
#WakeUpWednesday

www.nationalonlinesafety.com | [@natonlinesafety](https://twitter.com/natonlinesafety) | [/nationalonlinesafety](https://facebook.com/nationalonlinesafety) | [@nationalonlinesafety](https://instagram.com/nationalonlinesafety)

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Kids Kit

A workshop for parents focusing on:
Routines & Boundaries

What will I learn in this workshop?

- Why we need to structure routines and create boundaries
- How this can make your child feel safe
- How to take back control of your relationship with your child

Together, we can build a tool kit for the hardest job in the world!

FREE session
10:00 - 12:00
12th December 2022
Vale House, 43 Cowbridge, Hertford SG14 1PN

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