

# Secondary 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 8<sup>TH</sup> 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 8<sup>th</sup> 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 student 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.

### Antarctica Flag Competition

The response from the students to the Antarctica Flag Competition was outstanding. With over 200 entries all representing and raising awareness of how special Antarctica is. As we are only allowed to send 1 flag to Antarctica, we have combined 8 together to make 1 flag, which is currently on its way to Antarctica with a research scientist.

Well done to all of the students who took part. Congratulations to the following students whose entries are off to Antarctica. Dominic Yr9, Oliver Yr7, Megan Yr5, Rico Yr5, Alba Yr4, Emilia Yr2, Ruairi Yr2 and Rihansh Yr2.



### 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>



## Secondary news

### Christmas Lunches

The secondary Christmas lunch will take place on Tuesday 20th December. Tickets, priced £3.75, are on sale now and must be bought before Thursday 1st December so we can place our food order in sufficient time. The Christmas lunch is a very special event and last year more than 750 students enjoyed a traditional Christmas lunch, with the hall and dining room decorated, staff serving and festive music being played. Vegetarian and gluten free options are available. Please pay via ParentPay. The canteen will not be serving any other food on this day.

### Message to students who use Reg's coaches

Just to inform you that Reg's coaches will be running a half day service on 21.12.22, (the last day of term). They will depart Presdales School at 1pm so will be at the London Road bus stop to collect our bus pass holders at around 1.05pm and Mill Bridge at around 1.10pm.

### Poetry Writing Competition

The theme for the poetry writing competition was 'the environment'. The poems were judged anonymously by the author Alice Hemming and Miss Iles. Well done to the five secondary school winners and runners-up.

Here is Ruby's winning poem:

#### *I Close My Eyes*

*I close my eyes  
And drift away,  
To a place of awe and wonder,  
Where nature blankets the land  
And the sky is clear for days.  
I close my eyes  
And dream of a world,  
Where wise trees stand giant and proud,  
Reaching up to high-five the scorching sun,  
And protect their enchanting home.  
I close my eyes  
And imagine a place,  
Of a lake, serene and calm  
Where fireflies dance into the night.  
Swirling into stars.  
I close my eyes  
And visualise a land,  
Where sharp mountains kiss the heavens,  
Delicate flakes of snow fall like icing sugar sprinkled over  
fresh pastries,  
The winter crisp air filling my nose.  
But then they open,  
To a world of hatred and destruction,*

## SIMON BALLE PARENT STAFF ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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

**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/Cqy5Z4onfejv3uF07>

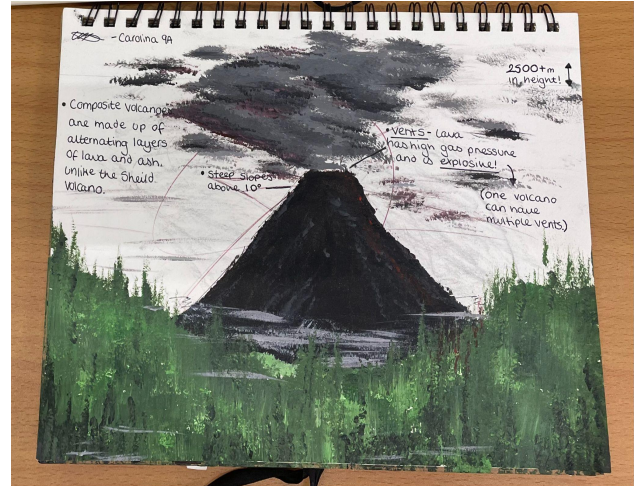
psa@simonballepsa.org.uk  
simonballepsa.org.uk  
Facebook.com/simonballepsa



Oceans poisoned with plastic,  
 And our air, tainted by pollution,  
 Why are you ruining such a beautiful world?

**A Level Geography Fieldwork trip**

Last week the Yr13 Geographer spent 4 days on the Dorset coast. Students spent time investigating different coastal environments and developing their understanding of physical processes. Students also conducted fieldwork which focused on the rebranding of the Dorset coast line. Next week Yr12 students are going to Manchester to look at regeneration.



Form Group	Cakes	Explosion	Art work	Model
A	Ellie	Luca	Carolina	Fearnley
B	x	Dominic	Nick	Oliver
L	Oliver	Charlie	Bobby	x
M	Freddie	Kia	Ruby	Ben
N	Lola	Martha	Carline	Robin
R	Harry	Reilly	Evie	x

**Volcano day**

The entries for the volcano day competition were outstanding, making it very difficult for the Geography department to decide who our winners would be. Well done to all of the year 9 students, below is a list of students who won and will be receiving house points.



# Kids Kit

## A workshop for parents focusing on: Routines & Boundaries



FUTURE LIVING

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

For more information  
contact:  
info@futurelivinghertford.co.uk  
01992 537344

Registered charity Number 1165145

## What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

# TIKTOK

AGE RESTRICTION  
**13+**

(certain features are restricted to over-18s only)

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 cameos and can be a creative, fun platform for teens to enjoy. Now available in 75 languages, it has more than a billion active users worldwide (as of spring 2022) and is most popular with the under-18 age brackets. 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.

### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

#### AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

While TikTok's "Following" feed only shows a stream of videos from users someone follows, "For You" is a stream of clips based on their previously watched content. Most videos on a child's "For You" feed will therefore be light-hearted and amusing, but it could potentially surface something inappropriate. TikTok's guidelines prohibit the sharing of illegal or inappropriate content, but the sheer volume of uploads means they aren't routinely monitored and vetted.

#### DANGEROUS CHALLENGES

Due to TikTok's immense popularity, some young people have (unintentionally) been influenced by some challenges that are harmful, criminal or even deadly. One extreme example was the "blackout" trend, which encouraged users to hold their breath until they passed out from a lack of oxygen. It led to two fatalities. Beware of "challenges" that are over the top or dangerous.

#### CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

With around 11 billion users globally, the potential for contact from strangers on TikTok is high – especially on accounts created by teens. If (or if not) someone using a fake or "throwaway" account can see your profile is visible to everyone on the app. It also has their videos be suggested to others and enables anyone to comment on them or download them.

#### IN-APP SPENDING

TikTok is free, but users have the option to buy TikTok coins, which can be used to purchase emojis in the app. These coins are then sent as rewards (retaining their monetary value) to other users for videos they've created. Coin bundles range from £6.99 to an eye-opening £120. TikTok's policy is that they aren't bought by under-18s, but it's possible to bypass this with a fake birthday.

#### ADDICTIVE NATURE

Like all social networking platforms, TikTok can be addictive. Figures show that young people are spending increasing amounts of time in it. In the UK, children with TikTok spend on average 102 minutes per day on the app, versus 53 minutes on YouTube. This compulsive repeated use can interfere with their sleep patterns – leading to irritability – and distract them from other activities.

#### TIKTOK NOW

Introduced in late 2022, the "TikTok Now" feature lets users post a daily video or photo of the exact same time on their friends. Users receive a personalised notification at a random time of day, giving them three minutes to take a video or real-time photo. This addition can not only be a distraction to young people but could lead to them inadvertently sharing private content, such as their location.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

#### ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING

Family Pairing allows parents to link their TikTok accounts with their child's and control their settings. Parents can, for example, turn on Restricted Mode (reducing the chance of a child seeing inappropriate content), set screen time limits, and manage their child's ability to send messages (and to whom). Children can't alter these settings without parental approval.

#### MAKE ACCOUNTS PRIVATE

Although under-18s will have their TikTok account set to private by default, bypassing this setting is relatively easy. 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 alter 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 making 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 realise 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. Increased irritability and a loss of concentration are potential red flags, as are failing to complete homework or regularly not eating meals.

#### Meet Our Expert

Carly Page is an experienced technology journalist with a track record of more than 10 years in the industry. Previously the editor of tech website The Inquiry, Carly is now a freelance technology journalist, editor and columnist.



#WakeUpWednesday

