

Primary phase newsletter

Friday 26th May 2023

Creating Tomorrow's Citizens Today



All-through news

A warm welcome to this end of half term newsletter!

It is truly wonderful to end this term with some wonderful news! I am absolutely delighted to tell everyone that we have been successful in two bids that we have submitted for capital funding, totally £4 million.

The "big" news is that Simon Balle All through School will have a sports hall (at last!) We have been awarded funding to construct a four court hall, with changing rooms. This will be erected at the front of the campus.

To enhance this, we shall be spending some of our reserves on remodelling our existing changing rooms. We are well aware of their limitations currently and have consulted student voice.

The successful second bid is to replace four of our mobiles, which quite frankly are in a poor condition.

Both of these projects are incredibly exciting, especially the sports hall, which will completely transform the face and entrance to the school as well as what we are able to offer our students and local community.

These changes to the site are the biggest projects for over twenty years and require a formidable feat of logistical planning.

This will inevitably come with some significant disruption but we will do everything possible to keep this to a minimum and, whatever the inconveniences. We will also try to keep you informed as the projects progress. For the time now, let's all celebrate!

One way in which you can support the school at this time is to support our fund raising at the summer fair- "A slice of summer". Please ask your child to collect

raffle tickets, volunteer to help or simply save the date. It will be a great day.

Another privilege this week is to announce the School Presidential Group. Y12 were invited to apply and congratulations to the following students:

Dylan A
Alexis B
William C
Sophie R
Jen P
Ashton S
Sophie H

Staff recruitment

I am indebted to parents passing on the news of vacancies and this has brought several successes in appointments. We continue to advertise on our own website and in addition, jobs are posted on a new platform for us- mynewterm.com

Important change of date to note:

All children and young people will start the new academic year on Tuesday 5th September (a day later than was previously advertised)

Finally can I wish everyone a safe and enjoyable half term break.

Zebra crossing

We are delighted to let you know that Hertfordshire County Council are planning a zebra crossing to be built to aid the crossing across Mangrove Road. This, we know, will ensure safer routes to school for all of our students, which, together with our recent changes with barriers to the car park and gating around the site, will support all of our families in very positive ways. We will stay closely in touch with all stakeholders in relation to the positioning of the zebra crossing and timescales.

Parking

We have been contacted by Hertford cricket club

regarding parents parking across the access gate into the cricket club. The gate in question is right next to the swimming pool, on the edge of the cricket field. We ask if you are dropping students off to school or picking up please refrain from parking across this gate.

SEND

If you would like to speak to a member of the SEND team, and your child currently attends Simon Balle all through School, you can book a virtual appointment of up to 15 minutes with a member of the SEND team, please use the following booking link: [Booking link](#)

Larch Mini Farm - Volunteers

The Larch Mini Farm houses guinea pigs, chickens, rabbits and tortoises. During term time, staff and children look after the animals, ensuring they have enough food and water as well as helping to clean out the enclosures and groom the animals, where needed. This is a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate so many of our school values too.

To continue caring for the animals, over the weekend and school holidays, we are looking for a number of volunteers that could be added to a rota. This opportunity is open to families of **both phases** of the school. You will receive a short induction should you be able to help us. Thank you in advance, we are very fortunate to have animals on site and your support with their care is greatly appreciated. Please email larch@simonballe.herts.sch.uk for more information.



Dates for the diary

WHOLE SCHOOL	
29th May to Friday 2nd June	Half term
Tuesday 6th June	A Piano Evening (Mr Lovell & Mrs Iles' Y6 & 7 students), 6 - 7pm
Saturday 1st July	Slice of summer
Monday 3rd July	Inset Day
Sunday 9th July	Saffron Hall, 5pm
Monday 10th July	Stevensons 'pop up' shop 3pm to 8pm
Thursday 13th July	Year 6 Transition day
Monday 4th September	This is now an INSET day
Tuesday 5th September	All students return to school
SECONDARY	
Monday 5th June - Friday 9th June	Year 7 assessments week 2
Monday 5th June - Friday 16th June	Year 8 assessment Weeks
Wednesday 7th June	Ms Fitch's Singing Evening, 6 - 7pm
Monday 12th June - Tuesday 27th June	Year 12 threshold exams
Monday 19th June - Thursday 29th June	Year 10 mocks
Tuesday 20th June	Mr Lovell's Piano Evening (Y8 & 9 students), 6-7pm
Thursday 22nd June	Guitar Platform Evening, 6 - 7pm
Wednesday 28th June	Mr Stevenson's Drum Evening, 6 - 7pm
PRIMARY	
W/C 22nd May	Y1,3,4,5 and 6 parent consultations (Y2 after May half-term)
Monday 5th June	Larch class photos
Mon 12th-Wed 14th June	Y6 residential to Sheringham
W/C 19th June	Y2 parent consultations
Tuesday 20th June	Year 4, 5 & 6 String Showcase, 6 - 7pm
Thursday 29th June	Year 2 & 3 Strings + Year 2/3 Choir Showcase, 5.30 - 6.30pm

PSA news

1st July Slice of Summer - Volunteer Opportunities

We are still very short of volunteers for this year's Slice of Summer. It's a wonderful day packed full of games, stalls, music, food and drink - a real community event and we need you to make sure it happens.

Did you know that money raised at the Slice of Summer is spent on children in the secondary and the primary phases?

This year alone, money raised by us has been spent on renting a minibus, funding towards the Y11 and Y13 leavers' events (and will fund Y6 leavers), new lighting for the hall, shelving in the library and so much more! Our school needs us to raise funds more than ever. Please spare just 90 minutes - this could be on the day or in advance. [Simply sign up here](#). Why not grab some friends and help as a group, before enjoying a glass of pimm's or a beer in the sunshine?!



FROZEN FRIDAY

ALL ITEMS £1

Each Friday, after the May half term, the PSA will host an ice cream and ice lolly sale for Larch families, in the playground. Weather permitting!!

All items cost £1. While cash is preferred, card payment can also be accepted (please note this is a slower option).



While our selection does not contain whole nuts, we can not guarantee they are nut free. Please ask to check ingredients, original packaging will be available.



Doughies Pizza Kits - Orders and Competition

Would you like to win a FREE Doughies pizza kit? Simply design a poster to advertise our next Doughies event, using some of the information below to guide you. Submit your artwork by Monday 5th June to the Larch Reception and one winning poster will be chosen to advertise the next event plus will receive a FREE pizza kit. Please do not forget to include your name and class/form on the reverse so that house points can be added for participation.

We have teamed up with Doughies for a fun family night in. Order your pizza and cookie making kits and you will receive everything you need to make artisan pizzas (regular or vegan), and warm gooey cookies in your home oven.

Pizza kits cost £6.50 and make 1x 12" pizza. Cookie kits cost £4.50 and make 5x cookies.

[Orders can be placed directly on the Doughies website](#) until Saturday 24th June and orders will be delivered to Simon Balle on Friday 30th. Important information: Named Larch Centre orders will be distributed via classrooms. Named orders from across the secondary phase are welcome but **MUST BE COLLECTED** from outside the reception office immediately after school on Friday 30th.

Please set a reminder, as any unclaimed kits will be assumed unwanted if not collected by 4.30pm.

<https://doughies.co.uk/products/simon-b>



PIZZA & COOKIE EVENT Friday 30th June

We've teamed up with Doughies for a fun family night in. Order your pizza & cookie making kits and you'll receive everything you need to make artisan margherita pizzas (**regular or vegan**), and warm gooey cookies in your home oven.



Primary news

To begin, just a reminder that Larch class photographs take place on Monday 5th June straight after half term. Please can children all be in full summer uniform with school shoes, not trainers, ready for both these photos and the half term ahead. Thank you!

This week has been a very important week in relation to inclusion and diversity, across our all-through school and in particular, as shared here, in the Larch. Mrs Raven (Primary SEND lead) led an inspiring assembly on Tuesday in relation to the inspiration of so many important figures who have diverse strengths and needs. These included:

- Lucy Illingworth - blind and autistic pianist at the Coronation concert
- Greta Thunberg - what superpowers in relation to the compelling messages given for the environment and our children's futures
- Lewis Hamilton - an alumni of Simon Balle and what an inspiration!
- Who knew that Albert Einstein was dyslexic?!
- What do Ed Sheeran and Joe Biden have in common?
- Rose Ayling-Ellis and her silent dance in particular is an inspiration for us all...
- And who knew Daniel Radcliffe (Harry Potter)

struggled with dyspraxia?

There are so many more messages of diversity and inspiration to give, but Mrs Raven focussed on our Simon Balle values - of kindness and respect to all, but also of resilience, in the amazing ways that people can overcome difficulties and turn challenges into superpowers. We are fully committed at Simon Balle in celebrating this for all students.

Walking bus

Today was the last day of the walking bus! It was a celebratory walk in the sunshine, with balloons on the lollipop stick! A final huge thank you to all parents and secondary students who have volunteered. A particular thank you to Jo Brown for her tireless energy, organisation and commitment.

Parent consultations

Thank you for your engagement in parent consultations this week for Year 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6. We hope the consultations have provided valuable opportunities for us to come together, discuss your child's progress, and share insights into their learning journey. We firmly believe that strong parent-school partnerships are essential for a child's holistic development. As always please contact us if you have any questions about your child's learning and don't forget our curriculum maps are on our website to refer to.

Year 2 parent consultations will happen after half term.

After school on transition day (Thursday 13th July), we will be inviting parents/carers into the Larch straight after school to visit your child's class to see some of the work they have been doing this year as a chance to celebrate their learning, and also a chance to visit your child's new classroom.

Learning in the Larch!

It has been an exciting two weeks within our primary phase, filled with engaging learning experiences across all year groups.

Our learners in Reception have been exploring the outdoor classroom. They have been pond dipping and releasing their butterflies- such awe and wonder through outdoor learning!

In Year 1, our students have been immersed in learning about time and how to tell the time. They have been making clocks and working very hard to explore this tricky concept! Any support you can provide at home with learning how to tell time will be greatly appreciated! For example, what time is it now? What is the hour hand pointing to?

Year 2 blew me away with their knowledge in computing as they applied their coding skills in Scratch to make a sprite move in different directions

across a background- they were able to clearly articulate what they were doing and why. In Year 3, our enthusiastic learners have welcomed Mrs Collins, one of our creative parents, who has worked with the children in creating high quality mosaics- they were so proud of their creations!

Year 4 have been applying their sewing skills and were proudly showing me some of their creations- watermelons, cacti, doughnuts and much more! The value of patience and resilience was greatly applied during these lessons.

In Year 5, our mathematicians have been tackling percentages; also developing their reasoning skills to use them in contexts. They were working hard to work out tricky percentages of amounts.

Year 6 students have been engrossed in learning about the Ancient Greeks. They have been bringing together all that they have been learning about this half term to try and answer the question 'What did the Ancient Greeks do for us?' They have explained in detail a range of things from democracy to architecture to the olympics to language and more!

We're incredibly proud of all our students for their hard work, enthusiasm, and dedication to learning.

Gold School Games Mark

We are delighted to announce that we have achieved the School Games Gold Mark Award for the . third year running. The School Games Mark is a Government-led award scheme launched in 2012, facilitated by the Youth Sport Trust to reward and recognise school's engagement in the School Games. This award is against a national benchmark and celebrates keeping young people active.

We are extremely proud of our pupils for their dedication to all aspects of physical activity and school sport, including those young volunteers, leaders and officials who make our events possible. We believe in the power of physical activity and school sport as a school and give opportunities to our young people from being a participant, leader, official or volunteer.

Year 5 chromebook scheme

Please look out for more information coming in the next few weeks regarding the Year 6 chromebook scheme. Every student in Year 6 brings their school chromebook each day to enhance their learning and help with the transition to Year 7.

We are pleased to inform you that we are offering exciting opportunities for your child to apply for

various student leader roles for the upcoming academic year. These roles provide a chance for students to showcase their leadership skills, foster teamwork, and contribute to the overall development of our school community.

Mrs Boyce led an assembly to Year 5 on Thursday to launch the application process and your child should look out for applications on Google Classroom for Larch president, librarians, sports leaders, eco leaders, music leaders and farm leaders. Our sixth form Presidents will also be part of the process to support the children.

We believe that these leadership roles will allow students to develop essential skills such as communication, teamwork, and responsibility. Participating in these positions can also foster self-confidence and provide a platform for your child to contribute positively to our school community. We wish all applicants good luck!

Term Time Leave

At Simon Balle All-through School, our aim is to prepare students for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents/carers to observe the school holidays as prescribed. It is strongly recommended that holidays are not taken during term time (in line with recommendations to the 2006 Pupil Registration (England) Regulations – 1st September 2013) and will only be authorised by the Headteacher, up to a maximum of 10 school days, in exceptional circumstances once written permission has been sought. Any requests for leave during term time must be made through the schools centralised system on the school website and will be considered on an individual basis and the student's previous attendance record will be taken into account. The form can be found at the bottom of the front page of the school website (Leave of Absence Request). The application needs to be completed well in advance of the absence and will be reviewed by the Attendance Team.

Sports Day

Larch Sports Day will be Wednesday 5th July- more details to follow after half term.

Scratch

We are aware that once children are introduced to Scratch as part of our Computing curriculum at Simon Balle, they are keen to go home and explore the site themselves in their own time. We completely support this and love the idea of children extending their learning from school to home; however there are a couple of things we wanted to clarify and support our families with to ensure children are using the technology safely:

- Scratch is a brilliant tool to teach children coding and programming. It allows them to fit 'blocks' together to move and animate different 'sprites'. We start this from Year 2, giving them school usernames and logins to allow them to have an area to save their work and develop each week throughout certain units.
- Scratch is a community based website where it allows users to comment, share and communicate with each other through the projects they create. We as a school are aware of the dangers of this therefore we do not encourage children to share their projects online as this avoids outside users commenting and communicating.
- Comments can be turned off. If you are happy for your children to share projects when working at home, the comment option can be switched off so they are protected from other users.
- As a school, we suggest monitoring the use of Scratch just like any other games or apps at home, as although it is something we introduce at school, we use it in a controlled environment with lots of monitoring to ensure children are following our eSafety rules.
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- Scratch employ people solely for moderating the content that is published by users and removing any that break the [guidelines of the community](#).

Useful links:

<https://scratch.mit.edu/parents>

<https://scratch.mit.edu/help/parents/>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

FAMILY FUN RUN WELWYN 10K at Panshanger PARK

Sunday 25th June 2023

Organised by Garden City Runners in support of the Welwyn Festival charities



2k family fun run
9.40am start for
ages 4-14.

Medal for all finishers.
Kids' Nature Activities.

Refreshments
available.



Venue: Panshanger Park, Hertford Entry Fee: 2k £3
www.welwyn10k.org.uk