



Newsletter

Autumn Term 2021

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A Message from the Head Teacher

This term has been a positive return for many of our young people and our attendance is hovering around 88%. Our curriculum offering continues to flourish and we have been able to return to our off-site educational visits which truly enriches the experiences for our young people making them excited to come into school. These visits bring some of the abstract concepts to life and allow them to implement their learnt skills in a variety of different contexts. It has been wonderful to see all the activities so far this year focusing on learning, developing emotional resilience, purposeful and effective communication, developing creativity and functional skills for the future.

It has also been great to see our social enterprise, careers and employability initiatives start up again. It has also been wonderful to collaborate with our partners at the Malthouse Activity Centre and Challenge Academy to provide opportunities for Team Building, Problem Solving, Rock Climbing and Archery.

I am acutely aware of the impact of closing class groups due to the spread of infection. This has disrupted young people and their families, particularly when it is done at such short notice, however these decisions have always been in the best interests of keeping everyone safe and in collaboration with our Public Health colleagues. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support and co-operation during these challenging times.

We anticipate the government guidance to schools changing as we approach January 2022. We will update you when we have more detailed information about the specifics when they come through. Although we are a little apprehensive about the prospect of COVID-19 and the Omicron variant we will limit the impact and disruption to the education and wellbeing of our young people as we go into the new calendar year. We need your continued support to test your children by completing regular (at least twice weekly) lateral flow test in order to pick up any potential transmission.

I hope you all have a safe and well-deserved break this holiday.

Mr O M Flowers
Head Teacher



COVID 19 - Important

If your child has any of the following symptoms, however minor:

- High temperature
- Loss of smell/taste
- Persistent cough

Please do not send your child into school. Please ring 119 to organise a PCR test or go to www.nhs.uk to book a PCR test online.

COVID vaccinations for young people aged 12-17 are now available to book online at <https://bit.ly/3xFTtQv>

TEST TEST TEST!!

PLEASE ENSURE A LATERAL FLOW TEST IS COMPLETED ON MONDAY 3 JANUARY 2022 BEFORE RETURNING TO SCHOOL ON TUESDAY 4 JANUARY 2022.

Work Experience

Students are continuing to gain valuable life and employment skills at their work experience placements. We try to celebrate students' achievements whilst they are on placement on our Facebook page each Wednesday.

Post 16 student Rachel is undertaking work experience at Bee Creative and Craft in Blackheath. Rachel has been selling products students have made during social enterprise sessions in school, and has also helped to change shop displays ready for Christmas. Rachel has gained confidence and is now able to serve customers and work the till. Well done Rachel!



Volunteering

Well done to Marshall, Maqadas and Jaydyn-Lee for volunteering to clear up the litter on the school playground.



Children in Need

Thank you to everyone who donated and took part in our Children in Need fundraising day on 19 November. So far, we have raised over £200.

This year's theme was "Together, We Can" and classes decided on activities and dressing up themes (eg a colour, pyjamas, superheroes etc) that they would do together on the day.



Macmillan Coffee Morning

Students took part in coffee morning to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Care on Friday 22 October.

Students served drinks and cakes in the Post 16 Café, learning money handling and hospitality skills, whilst raising over £400 for Macmillan.



SMILE Days

When we returned to school in September, pupils took part in a range of wellbeing activities during our SMILE days. Sessions included martial arts, team building, yoga, cycling and poetry sessions with poet and performer Dreadlock Alien.



John Muir Award

This term Hazel class have been visiting Saltwells Nature Reserve completing their John Muir award. They have been learning how to travel to using the bus, follow and explore routes around the Nature Reserve. Best of all, they had lots of fun.



Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Haden class have also been visiting Saltwells Nature Reserve to do voluntary work as part of their Duke of Edinburgh's Award. They have been helping with the maintenance of the reserve, as well as exploring the surrounding woodland.



Malthouse Outdoor Activity Centre

Students have been visiting Malthouse Outdoor Activity Centre in Tipton this term. The Centre offers a range of activities including archery, climbing, canoeing and kayaking. Taking part enables students to develop their confidence and team working skills, as well as giving them an opportunity to try activities they may not have experienced before.



Frank Chapman Centre

Students from classes including Olive, Willow, Mulberry, Clent and Cedar have been visiting the Frank Chapman Centre in Bewdley.

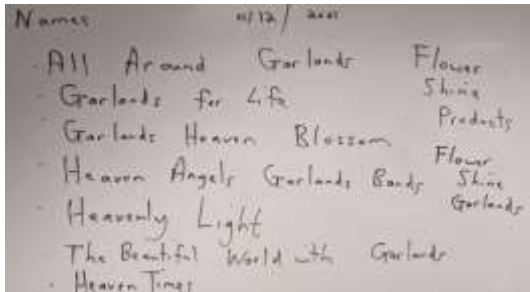
They have been taking part in activities centred around bush craft and environmental education, and visits are planned throughout the Autumn and Spring Terms.

Students have been maintaining the grounds of the Centre, including tidying leaf litter using leaf blowers.



Prince's Trust - Social Enterprise

Post 16 students have been working on social enterprise projects, developing companies and products to create and sell. Miss Payne's group decided to make flower garland headbands. They then came up with ideas for a company name and decided on Flower Shine. Peter designed and produced the company logo and Owen and other students designed and created the garlands.



National Citizen Service

Students from Haden Class are taking part in NCS in conjunction with the Albion Foundation this year. NCS is a national personal and social development programme for 16-17 year olds, funded by the Government.

Students took part in team building activities at Woodlands Adventure and Outdoor Centre in Walsall to develop their communication and team work skills through some team building activities. This was in preparation for carrying out their social project action, developing an area of the school playground.



Great Grandpa's Escape

Maple class have been reading the story Grandpa's Great Escape. In the story Grandpa used to be a pilot and fly Spitfire planes. The class explored the features of a Spitfire and created their own Design Plans, and then built their own Spitfire models! A huge well done to Archie and Riley who won "Best Spitfire Model".



My Creativity

In My Creativity sessions this term, pupils have been able to choose from a range of activities to get involved with. They've had lots of fun, whilst learning and developing new skills.

Options included hair & fashion, jewellery making, textiles design, wood design, photography, disco dancing, video editing, sensory art and making music.



Contacting the School Leadership Team

If you have any questions or queries, please do email us on headteacher@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk. This is the quickest way to contact the Head Teacher, the Deputy Head Teachers and Pathway Leaders. We will respond to all emails as soon as we can.



Evidence for Learning is our school's chosen platform to capture and record evidence of your child's learning. This is used by all teachers throughout the school to evidence their achievements across all subjects.

Parent View Portal

The Parent View Portal can be accessed by any Internet-connected device (iOS, Android, PC, Mac, etc.)

This enables us to share evidence of your child's learning with you. We share the evidence with parents via the Parent View portal. To access the Parent portal, you will be sent login details via two emails, the first email will contain your unique link to a secure webpage (please save it to your favourites or save the email for future reference) and the second email will contain your password.

If you ever need your password resetting, please email services@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk requesting a reset of your Evidence for Learning Parent View account. You will then receive a password reset email from TheTeacherCloud alternatively please let your child's class teacher know by providing them with your email address and we will ensure this is sent across to you.



We're now registered with [easyfundraising.org.uk](https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk), which means you can help us for FREE. Over 4,000 shops and sites will donate to us when you use [easyfundraising.org.uk](https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) to shop with them – at no extra cost to yourself!

All you need to do is sign up and remember to use [easyfundraising.org.uk](https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) whenever you shop online. It's easy and completely FREE! These donations really mount up, so please sign up to support us at <https://bit.ly/31qQhJR>

Updated COVID Guidance

The government has implemented new isolation rules for schools:

From Tuesday 14 December, a new national approach to daily testing for contacts of COVID-19 is being introduced (including until the end of this term).

All adults who are fully vaccinated and children aged 5 to 18 years and 6 months, identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19 - whether Omicron or not - should take a lateral flow device (LFD) test every day for 7 days instead of self-isolating.

Daily testing by close contacts will help to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Daily testing for contacts of COVID-19 will help protect education settings by reducing transmission and will also help keep pupils in face-to-face education

