

20/12/24

# High Oaks Newsletter

## Dates for the Diary

Monday 6th January—INSET day school closed to students

Tuesday 7th January—Students return

Dear Parents and carers,

I can hardly believe we have come to the end of the Autumn term. It has been a very busy one and all of the students have been working hard and making lots of progress.

It was so lovely to see so many of our students participating in the Christmas service yesterday, I am very proud of each and everyone of them.

We have had many parents in school for various coffee mornings this term and it is great to see so many of you attending. Muna will be sharing the events for the Spring term. Thankyou as well to all the parents who replied to our RSE questionnaire. We will be holding a parents event on Friday 10th January to talk to parents about the RSE curriculum, what it covers and how it is taught to your children at Oaklands. We will also take this opportunity to address some of the concerns that were raised by parents in the feedback.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a peaceful holiday and a very Merry Christmas to all our families who celebrate.

Mairead



## Kew 3' DT project (Make and sell)

As part of their Design Technology lessons this term, Kew 3 students designed and created Christmas cards and crafted unique decorations inspired by our school environment. This project promoted self-expression, enhanced social skills, and fostered a sense of accomplishment.

We invited parents and guardians to support this initiative by purchasing Christmas cards. The fund will go towards improving resources for the Kew department.

Thank you to the parents and guardians, the head of the school, the assistant head (Kew department), and the Kew 3 staff who supported the Kew 3 class in making this project successful.



# Syon Department trip to Pizza Express

A group of students from the Syon Department had an enriching outing to Pizza Express, where they took part in a pizza-making workshop. This hands-on experience allowed students to roll out dough, spread tomato sauce, and add their favorite toppings, creating their own delicious pizzas.

The workshop was a fantastic way to build cultural capital, giving students the opportunity to learn about food preparation, develop independence, and explore the skills involved in the hospitality industry. These meaningful experiences contribute to their understanding of the wider world and help prepare them for life beyond school.

A big thank you to Pizza Express for hosting us and to all the staff who supported this valuable experience!



# Richmond department



In the Richmond department this term, we have focussed on connection and making new friendships. We have worked on our vocational projects such as setting up Harvest donations for a local food bank. We gave out Christmas cards we made to the local community. Have a happy holidays from the Richmond Department.

# Syon 4

Syon 4 class had an exciting class trip to Santa's Grotto, filled with festive cheer and memorable experiences. They met Santa Claus himself, shared their holiday wishes, and even got to see his reindeer up close. Adding to the adventure, the children enjoyed a delightful train ride through a winter wonderland, making the day truly magical and one to remember!



# Oaklands School Therapy Team

We are excited to share some updates about the Therapy Team at Oaklands School.

Our team currently consists of Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists, and Therapy Assistants. Together, we work closely with school staff to ensure that therapy strategies are integrated across your child's entire school day, supporting all students in their learning and development.

We are pleased to announce that a new Speech and Language Therapist will be joining our team in January. We are excited to welcome her and look forward to the valuable expertise she will bring to the school.

At the same time, we will be saying goodbye to one of our wonderful Occupational Therapists, Esneri Venter. We want to thank her for her dedication and the years she has spent helping our students thrive. We wish her all the best as she embarks on an exciting new chapter.

A reminder that our therapy team holds parent coffee morning sessions every term. These sessions are designed to provide guidance and strategies to support your child's development at home. They are also a great opportunity to meet and speak with other parents in the school who may share your questions. Please keep an eye out for letters sent home with details about upcoming topics. We love seeing you at these mornings and encourage you to join us.

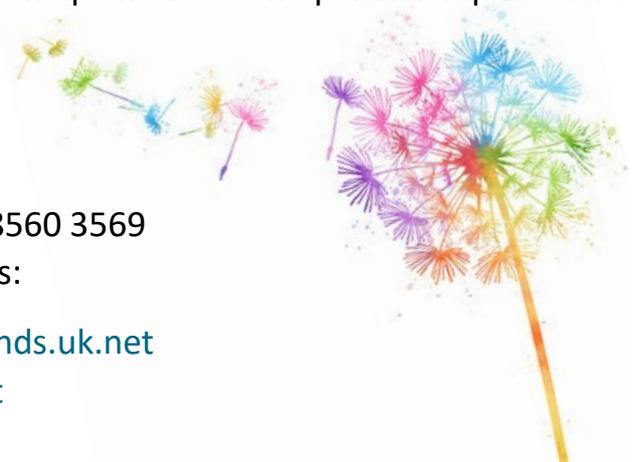
If you have any questions about the therapy team or the support we provide, please do not hesitate to reach out. We are here to help and value the partnership we have with our students' families.

## Contact Us:

You can contact our Therapy team on 020 8560 3569 or email us at the following email addresses:

Speech and Language Therapy: [salt@oaklands.uk.net](mailto:salt@oaklands.uk.net)

Occupational Therapy: [ot@oaklands.uk.net](mailto:ot@oaklands.uk.net)





# Thank You & Goodbye

Dear Parent(s) / Carer(s)

It has been an honour and a pleasure to know and work with you and your child.

Thank you for taking my advice, strategies, and recommendations onboard. Thank you for allowing me to serve you and your child and support where I can.

I am, leaving my position as Occupational Therapist at Oaklands School, at the end of this term. But I have learned a lot from all the children here, as well as from you, their families. I will treasure the lessons learned and memories made.

I wish you and your child the best for the future and would like to commend you on caring so well for your child.

Sincerely,  
Esneri Venter  
Occupational Therapist



# Osterley @ the Arts Centre

Our Osterley classes visited the Hounslow Arts Centre this week to see their Christmas pantomime, Robin Hood. It was wonderful to go on an outing together and we all enjoyed the silly jokes and funny dancing.

Thank you so much to Hounslow Arts Centre for welcoming us!



# The Great Oaklands Growing Bee



We are very excited to share that in the spring term we will be running the Great Oaklands Growing Bee — a cross school Daffodil growing competition—in conjunction with the London Children’s Flower Society .

All classes across Primary and Secondary have been given daffodils to grow, as well as every school council rep and our students studying horticulture.

We will be looking after them until the end of the spring term, when we will have a visit from an LCFS judge.

There will be certificates and prizes for the best Daffodils, and we will be sharing photographs of our growing efforts along the way so keep an eye on future editions of the newsletter to see how we are getting on.

Happy growing!

Sara and Nina



# Jack Petchey Celebration Lunch

Our Autumn term Jack Petchey award winner Luke chose to take his classmates out for a lunch at the local Harvester as part of his grant.



Osterley 2 went to The Royal in Hanwell and enjoyed a great lunch and conversation with friends. It was a great way to start the end of term celebrations.

Well done Luke, and thank you!



# 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators SAFETY OVER THE FESTIVE SEASON

The holiday season, marked by Christmas and New Year, brings joy and togetherness but also presents unique safety challenges for children, families and educators. From busy holiday shopping, traveling and family gatherings to managing digital activity during school breaks, staying safe during this period requires heightened awareness. This guide offers practical tips to help families and educators maintain a more secure and fulfilling festive period.

## 1 MONITOR DIGITAL ACTIVITY

Children spend more time online during school holidays, increasing exposure to potential dangers such as cyberbullying, inappropriate content and online predators. Balancing screen time, avoiding harmful websites and ensuring children engage positively online can be difficult without proper monitoring tools. Set clear boundaries, encourage open discussions about online safety and use parental controls to manage content exposure and screen time effectively. Regular check-ins and positive reinforcement around digital habits encourage safe online behavior.

## 2 PRACTICE FIRE SAFETY PROTOCOLS

The incidence of house fires increases during Christmas due to greater use of candles, heaters and electrical decorations. Open flames, electrical overloads and the need for quick response plans can make fire safety challenging. Ensure smoke detectors are operational, keep fire extinguishers on hand and teach children how to respond in case of a fire emergency. Avoid leaving cooking unattended and use fire-safe services to prevent mishaps.

## 3 CREATE TRAVEL SAFETY PLANS

More families tend to travel during the holidays, resulting in busier roads, increased traffic accidents and weather-related hazards. Weather conditions, road rage, fatigue and busy airports can all compromise travel safety. Peak emergency kits and vehicles to combat issues. Plan routes in advance and allow extra travel time to avoid rushing and mitigate risks on busy roads.

## 4 BEWARE OF ALLERGIES

Holiday meals often involve many foods that may contain allergens. Cross-contamination, unclear labeling and lack of allergy-friendly options can lead to severe reactions. Communicate any allergy needs to hosts, provide safe food alternatives and carry necessary medications like antihistamines or EpiPens. Teaching children how to advocate for themselves and recognize dangerous foods also contributes to safer celebrations.

## 5 PREVENT THE SPREAD OF ILLNESS

Cold weather and seasonal socializing can increase the spread of viruses like flu and COVID-19. Crowded gatherings, schools out of session and frequent travel can lead to higher infection risks. Emphasize hygiene, encourage vaccination, disinfect surfaces and isolate symptomatic individuals. Communication with children about proper hygiene practices is essential to reduce the spread of illness.

## 6 STAY VIGILANT ON THE ROAD

Increased holiday traffic heightens the risk of accidents for both drivers and pedestrians. Distracted driving, pedestrian safety and inclement weather can complicate road safety. Encourage pedestrian safety practices, avoid distracted driving and never drive under the influence.

## 7 MAINTAIN SAFE DECORATIONS

Festive decorations such as Christmas lights and candles can pose electrical, fire and choking hazards if misused. Frayed wires, toppling Christmas trees, small ornaments and open flames can be difficult to control, especially in busy households with children. Inspect and maintain decorations, secure Christmas trees, place fragile or small items out of reach and ensure candles are never left unattended. Testing smoke alarms and using flame-retardant decorations can significantly reduce risks.

## 8 SET BOUNDARIES FOR GIFTS

Some toys and gadgets can present choking, sharp-edge or safety risks, particularly for young children. Ensuring that gifts meet safety standards and are age appropriate can be complex with so many options available. Inspect all toys carefully and ensure any tech devices have parental controls. Setting expectations around safe gift use and discarding packaging that poses a risk also helps to prevent accidents.

## 9 ADDRESS STRESS & FATIGUE

Holiday pressures can lead to burnout, which affects both physical and mental health. Overpacked schedules and a lack of downtime can cause stress and fatigue, leading to accidents or poor decision making. Incorporate rest, maintain regular routines and seek support to reduce stress. Encourage activities that promote relaxation to create a healthier, happier holiday experience for everyone.

## 10 DRINK RESPONSIBLY

Alcohol is commonly present at holiday events, raising concerns about safety and supervision. Excessive alcohol consumption can lead to accidents, impaired judgment and lack of supervision for children. Designate responsible adults, limit consumption and provide transportation alternatives for guests. Teaching moderation and modeling responsible behavior in front of children ensures that celebrations remain positive and secure.

### Meet Our Expert

James Whelan is a chartered health and safety consultant with 10 years of experience in promoting family and community safety. Specialising in risk assessment and preventative strategies, he has worked with educational institutions, public health organisations and community groups.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College