



'DIGGING DEEP TO AIM HIGH'

17TH NOVEMBER 2023

NEWSLETTER

Primary Site office@thelinkschool.co.uk
Secondary Site admin@thelinkschool.co.uk
Satellite Site enquiries@thelinkschool.co.uk

020 8688 5239
020 8688 7691
020 8176 9440

Dates for your Diary

Wednesday, 29th November -
9.30am

Parent Information and Coffee Morning - 'Early Communication'
Being held at the primary site.

Thursday, 7th December

CHRISTMAS JUMPER DAY
raising funds for **MENCAP**

Monday, 11th December - 1.30pm

THE LINK SCHOOL CAROL SERVICE - Wallington United Reformed Church, Stanley Road, Wallington - 1.30pm

Tuesday, 12th December

PANDA Christmas Party

Wednesday, 12th December

Parents' Evening - Secondary Site

Thursday, 21st December

School Breaks for Christmas
Early finishes as follows:
Satellite Site - 1.00pm
Secondary Site - 1.00pm
Primary Site - 1.15pm

Do keep an eye on your emails for details of festive events that are site specific.

Here at The Link School, we understand our essential role in supporting our young people's wellbeing. Students who feel safe, supported and listened to will have the basis to flourish.

A question we often ask ourselves as professionals when working with our students is, 'Do we know our students?'

Understanding the background and educational needs of our students provides us with a basis to know them and then implement support to allow each one of them to reach their potential.

Detailed below are the ways in which each site ensure we do our utmost in this respect.

Primary Site

Child-centred, personalised learning is at the heart of The Link School. It is our aim that every child is well-known and well-understood, that their strengths and achievements are celebrated, and that they feel our support in overcoming their challenges. At times, children demonstrate behaviours which challenge, but we don't want to just tackle the 'behaviours' of concern. We recognise that many of our children have sensory needs which can also cause dysregulation. Our teachers, therapists and support staff work closely together to build relationships and nurture each child on their own individual journey at The Link.

Regulation is so important to wellbeing and we know that when children are regulated, they do their best learning. We use the Zones of Regulation across all the primary classes, at the level which is appropriate for each student. Children learn to link the basic emotions to their colours. For example; happy - green, sad - blue, angry - red, excited - yellow. If and when they are ready, we move on to other emotions e.g., worried, frustrated and proud.

'Special Moments' assemblies are a celebration of children's achievements at home and we always look forward to the stickers coming into school so we can share in their successes. 'Golden book' assemblies focus on celebrating children's achievements at school. 'Sensory assemblies' create a sense of Awe and Wonder, and 'Sing and Sign' assemblies are a source of real pleasure and enjoyment for the children. We use every opportunity to focus on those things which are priorities for children as they grow and develop.

Each child has a Personalised Wellbeing Plan. This details what the child 'looks like' (i.e what we notice when we observe them) when they are in the green, yellow, blue or red zone. We identify triggers which can dysregulate the child and work together to find strategies

which support them to regulate again. We aim to build on their self-confidence, independence and resilience, providing them with the tools that will enable them to recognise and regulate their emotions in the ways that best suit them.

Wellbeing refers to a state of being healthy, happy, and comfortable, both physically and mentally.

This is what we want for all the children.

They are all amazing!

Secondary Site

The whole staff have a good understanding of the needs of our students via staff meetings, tutor team meetings and access to information sharing documents such as EHCP Summaries, Wellbeing Plans and Pupil Profiles.

A particular strength of The Link School is our high staff:student ratio which ensures that if required, students have access to staff to express concerns and guide them through their emotional regulation. Students at the secondary site may be encouraged to use Zones of Regulation to aid their expression. Therapists also play a significant role in promoting a culture of positive wellbeing

through their individual support. In addition to OT and SALT provisions, the school has access to creative therapies such as drama and music therapies.

By working in partnership with parents, we can give our students every chance to ensure behaviour is positive and develop their sense of self-esteem to ensure they have the basis to prepare for adulthood.

Satellite Site

Wellbeing for our students is at the heart of our curriculum due to the high levels of anxiety that our students experience daily and we follow the mantra:

REGULATE-REACH-TEACH

Our team is currently working on developing the implementation of ALSUP as a support system for our students and families. ALSUP works as a system to get to the heart of our students' barriers related to their wellbeing. It delves deeply to find what skills they may be lagging in and unsolved problems that we can work collaboratively with the students to solve.

More information can be found about the approach online at www.livesinthebalance.org/our-solution/

Connecting with students is a key priority and staff come alongside students in their interests to build trusting bonds in order to support them when situations become difficult. The relationship of trust and feeling of commitment allows our students to relax and feel supported to discuss their emotions and barriers. Wellbeing games are available to students and the office is always a "safe space" for students to access to help with their journey to regulate and resolve.

More about the games can be found at

www.thelinkschool.co.uk/satellite/satellite-therapy/wellbeing/wellbeing-games-2/

This year the School Council have highlighted the support they can give each other related to wellbeing and we have a dedicated student wellbeing representative who wants to run a regular wellbeing games club for all students to access. Students have developed co-regulation relationships and look to support each other with advice or distraction when needed.

The School Council, alongside our enrichment lead Siobhan, are working to develop increasingly more enrichment activities which nurture our students' wellbeing.

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AT THE PRIMARY SITE?

Beech Class have been enjoying the ever popular children's story 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. At the beginning of the week, Catherine (with the help of Aaima) read the story, which was met very enthusiastically by the pupils. That interest provided a context to put learning into and so many activities were enjoyed over the rest of the week, all linked to that very hungry caterpillar!

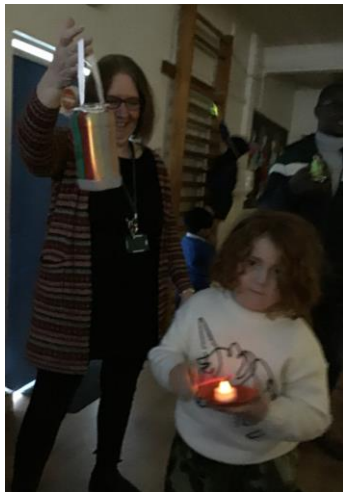


As part of their 'Helping Others' topic, Beech Class have also been collecting gifts for the Samaritan's Purse annual Shoebox appeal and this week they all decorated their boxes ready to be sent off for another child to open on Christmas morning.



With Diwali celebrations happening all over the world at the weekend, we took time this week to celebrate the festival of lights.

Our own 5 day celebration started with a wonderful attention activity led by Puneet in Willow Class and culminated in a sensory assembly, embracing the power of light over dark and good over evil.



WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AT THE SATELLITE SITE?

Apollo had a drawing competition this week, which was opened up to all classes! Children picked out what they had to draw from a tub of ideas and helped each other to add finer detail to their drawings including what colours to use and what shapes to draw.



Apollo had a tasting challenge this week, trying new foods and different types of sour foods such as lemons! Children described how it tasted and felt on their tongue. Children said it was 'sharp' and 'stingy'! We made lemonade with the leftover lemons.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND AND ABOUT?

With Christmas on the horizon, a reminder that there is still time for your child to enter the OHCAT Christmas card competition. The winning entry will become the official OHC&AT Christmas card.

Guidelines:

- Designs can be presented landscape or portrait but need to be the equivalent size to A4 paper
- Ensure each design is titled with the student's name, age and school/college centre

A local artist will independently judge the winning design. The winner will be presented with a framed certificate, a £50 Amazon voucher and a box of cards printed with their winning design.

So if your child wants to be artistic at the weekend, get them to design a Christmas and send it into the school offices on Monday to the school offices, where they will be scanned across to OHCAT Marketing Dept.

We look forward to receiving lots of festive designs.

We know that a lot of ex pupils and their families still regularly read the newsletter and they may be interested to learn that Orchard Hill College are now running a monthly accessible and inclusive club night for young people aged 18+. The next club night is being held on:

Tuesday, 21st November
(7.30pm - 10.30pm)
at Sutton United Football Club.

For more info, please visit our website: <https://orchardhill.ac.uk/event/sutton-club-house/>

AND FINALLY

As Anti-Bullying Week draws to a close, all sites have talked about the importance of being kind to each other. This is something The Link embraces all year round, not just during a specific week. The primary site all chose to wear odd socks on Friday. This is not a fashion statement, it's a symbol of solidarity against bullying and discrimination. By wearing mismatched socks, we aimed to highlight the importance of accepting one another for who they are. Thank you to those who sent in a donation to the Anti Bullying Alliance.

How do we change the world?
One random act of kindness at a
time.
(Morgan Freeman)