



WILLOW DENE SCHOOL

Friday 21st October 2022

Head Teacher's Message

Welcome to the last newsletter of the first half of the autumn term. Time has flown by and we can't believe that holiday time is already here. We hope that you have been able to watch the parents briefing video that was released yesterday. You should have received a text message from Willow Dene with a link for you to access this. Within this briefing you will find further information about lots of things which I will give a summary of in this newsletter.

With holidays approaching, along with the colder weather, we have sent home a foil blanket for all children who may experience issues getting warm or staying warm. The blankets are excellent help with this and we use them often in school. If you didn't receive a blanket and would like to, please contact the school office.

As always during holiday time, we will be available through the emergency phone line if there is anything that you need help with, would like advice with or need to tell us. The sticker with the phone number will be in your child's home schoolbook. You can phone or text the phone line anytime and leave a message. A senior leader will then return your call.

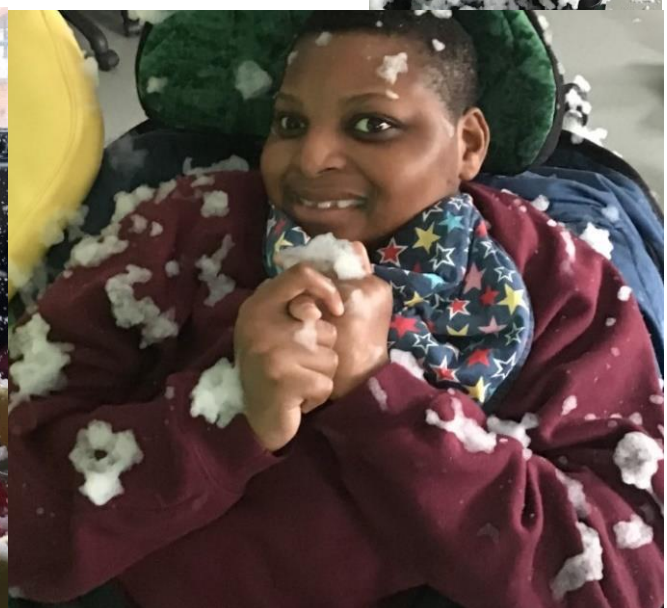
We are preparing for public consultation on our plans for having a sixth form at Oakmere Road. After half term we will be holding meetings including a parents meeting where everyone will have the chance to ask questions and give feedback. As soon as we have a confirmed date for this we will let you know.

During the last two weeks we have been celebrating Black History Month all the way through the school. Our celebrations have permeated every aspect of our curriculum with all teachers planning at least one black history related lesson in each subject area. We have seen some amazing artwork, beautiful books and poetry, sensory exploration and learning about recent and more historical events and people. You will be able to see some of these on our Twitter feed @willowdenesch

At Oakmere Road we enjoyed working with ELEVATE who introduced mentoring to our Key Stage 3 and 4 children, helping our children think about their future career pathways, our strengths and what opportunities we have in school to develop these. We think ELEVATE enjoyed coming to Willow Dene and are looking forward to working with them more.

All that remains is for us to wish you a happy and safe half term. We will look forward to seeing you all in a week's time, ready for a brand new half term!

Rachel



Chaffinch Class

In Chaffinch we have been enjoying settling in and getting to know our new friends and staff members. We have enjoyed collecting resources in the sensory garden for our Andy Goldsworthy art sculptures.

We have also explored some interesting sensory resources to help us learn all about Egyptian Pharaohs; going on classroom archaeological digs for treasure, wrapping mummies and examining how the Pharaohs used pictures rather than words in their writing.

The children had lots of messy fun when making our own papyrus using strips of paper soaked in water and glue. Next, we will be printing our names on them in hieroglyphs, just like the Pharaohs did.

In Design & Technology we are enjoying making our own hand puppets based on characters from The Gingerbread Man. We have been making choices in different methods to fix and fasten with lots of pinning, sewing and gluing keeping us busy. The children are really enjoying seeing their puppets near completion now and we are so proud of all their hard work.



An Autumn Afternoon with Early Years Foundation

This week we welcomed EYFS parents in for an autumn afternoon to enjoy some seasonal activities. It has been a busy week for EYFS as we have also welcomed EYFS teachers from other Compass schools to come and look around and to see what we do and how this is the same and different to mainstream EYFS.

NUT FREE SCHOOL



At Willow Dene we have several children and staff who have severe nut allergies and who are at risk of anaphylaxis. Because of this we are a nut free school and are reminding parents and staff not to send any food into school which contains nuts or nut products. We really appreciate you helping with this as it makes sure we can keep everybody safe.

Woodlark Class

We are Woodlark class. Welcome to our green fingered newsletter contribution!

We are an easy class to find...we are the first class next to the office at Swingate Lane. You may know already that we love our balcony garden. You will often find us outside, playing and learning. We care for our plants, water, tidy and recycle all the way through the year.

During the last year we made a video for Gardener's World and planted all sorts of growing things. We have attracted birds, bees, butterflies and a cat! We loved learning and relaxing outside in the warm weather and we celebrated the Platinum Jubilee with a balcony party. JJ plants bulbs in our garden and takes photographs of the flowers to turn into postcards. You can buy these on reception if you would like. All the money he earns goes towards the cost of his next crop of bulbs. At the moment he is choosing spring bulbs to plant before it gets too cold. Crocus, Allium, tulip? What to choose!

The Dahlia's we planted in the summer are still flowering and we have used them as gifts to take home and give to people who help us around the school. In September we harvested the last of our tomatoes and used them to make tomato cous-cous with our freshly grown basil! Abubaker is our sensory chef and made sure that we were mixing and adding the ingredients properly. We also harvested and dried our sunflower heads. We planted our sunflowers outside our balcony and Jodie and Isabella checked on them every day until they were ready to pick. We also sent one home for a sunflower growing competition. It was fun finding out what happened to the baby sunflowers we sent home. Eividas's sunflower grew to 127 cm tall and Tilly's one got stolen by a fox!

Now we have harvested our seeds and they are stored ready to make bird food for the winter. Inspired by Autumn Watch, and the idea of 'fake autumn' we have been collecting acorns, conkers and other tree seeds and fruits. JJ & TJ planted these with Cathie so hopefully they will start to grow in spring. Ezra collected and sent his Mum home some cuttings from our sensory garden and this inspired us to try growing our own cuttings in recycled plastic bottles and to collect fruit seeds from the fruit we eat to see if we can get them to grow. You will see our planting experiments on the windowsill in class.

This half term we have been collecting autumn leaves and tried some autumn art, making dreamcatchers to hang on our balcony tree and leaf animals. There are also lots of different pumpkins and squashes to explore (Jesse likes the tiny munchkin squashes in his standing frame bowl!). Eventually these will be added to our winter bird food so that our bird friends still visit when the weather gets cold. What next we hear you ask? We have been planning an extension to our balcony since the summer term...Our city garden will be a peaceful place for people to sit and look at our balcony and to hear us playing. We planted flowering plants including roses and jasmine. Dave helped us build and paint a bench and we chose cushions and an outdoor rug. Cathie helped us choose a birdbath and Joanna is making us some stained glass to help us remember some of our friends. When it is finished we hope people will come and sit and think and relax.

What next? Lily will be joining us in class after half term. We are looking forward to showing her our balcony, planting our winter tubs and using natural materials to decorate our tree. People visit all the time to see what we're up to outside. We have made a lots of friends and received some amazing ideas of what to plant and gifts of seeds, plants and garden ornaments. You are welcome any time if you would like to visit us.





Parent Briefing

If you do get chance to watch the briefing it will be your first introduction to Milo our school dog. He is making a regular appearances around school now and is usually much better behaved then he was in the briefing video!

He has joined the Dog Mentor team who visited us in school this week to support us with Milo's ongoing training and to give us some ideas of how he will be able to support children's learning and well-being moving forward. If you would like to say hello to Milo when you are in school, we would like you to ask first and then his handler will give him permission to say hello! He is a very friendly, lovely boy.

School Nursing Team



We hope that you all are settling back in to school life and want to say a special 'hello' to all of the new starters. The Nursing Team are looking forward to getting to know you all.

There have been a few changes over the summer and we have a few staff changes to advise you of.

A few of the nurses are now commencing maternity leave and some have left the service because of new jobs or retirement.

Our present Nursing team is as follows:

- **Jill Standing** is our new Band 7 Nurse. Jill has a wealth of experience in nursing and in special needs.
- **Judy Le** is our new Band 5 nurse. Judy is on rotation and currently working within the special schools.
- **Jules Willshire** is our new Band 5 nurse whom is currently covering maternity leave and working across the special schools.
- **Heather Gray**, Band 8, remains as the Team Lead.
- **Brogan Willis** and **Grace Setford** remain as the Band 6 School Nurses.
- **Lesley Carey**, **Zoe Visser** and **Hayleigh Mackay** remain in post as Health Care Assistants and work across the special schools.
- **Nancy Williams** and **Natalie Troy** are the two Nursery Nurses that work within the special schools. Natalie has an extra role as the 'continence adviser'.

Nursing remain available for advice and help with health concerns that may arise. Our direct phone number is 0208 316 1516.



Following your feedback, and the change in the school logo, our plan is to gradually change the colour of the primary school uniform from light grey to dark grey over time. This change will be implemented slowly and therefore there is no need to rush to purchase dark grey uniform tops at this time.

As you know at Willow Dene school uniform is not compulsory and sweatshirts with logos are also not compulsory. We do have some spare stock in particular sizes of the light grey uniforms and we are happy to give these away free of charge in order to make way for the new colour. Please do phone the school office if you would like to know more. Similarly, we have a good stock of second-hand school uniform cardigans and sweatshirts which we would like to go to good homes. Please let us know via your child's home book or by phoning the office if you are interested.

Transport



If your child is travelling to school by bus and you live in the Royal Borough of Greenwich and are moving within the borough, please make sure you reapply for transport as soon as possible as the process can take a minimum of 28 days.

If you live in the Borough of Bexley and you are moving within the Borough, you will need to contact Bexley SEN on 020 3045 4431.

If you are moving out of the Borough please contact the school office, so we can talk you through the process.

Please ensure that you inform the school office of any change of address or contact numbers so we can update our systems.



The My Child at School (MCAS) is a website where you can pay for school dinners, school trips, school clubs and buy school uniform. You can also check attendance, other information and send a message to the school office if your child is absent. If you haven't signed up for or used your child's MCAS account, please contact the school office for an invitation code.

WHAT'S ON

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2022 AT 9 AM – 11 AM

SEN Breakfast with Santa

The Morgan • Belvedere



Cost £10 per child

Location: 1 Clydesdale Way, DA17 6FD

Special SEN breakfast with Santa complete with gift! This event is specially designed for SEN children where there is NO AGE LIMIT!

The Venue will be calm, no bright lights and calm staff.



In partnership with:
Lewisham and Greenwich,
Oxleas and Kaleidoscope



TRANSITION Webinar

25
OCT 2022
6:00PM

In healthcare, we use the word "transition" to describe the process of preparing, planning and moving from children's to adult services.

Transition is about making plans with you – and not about you.

We understand that moving away from a team of doctors and nurses that you have been with for many years may feel scary. Most young people find that by getting involved in the transition process early, they feel more confident and happier about the move.

To support families and young people with complex medical needs and learning disabilities through the transition period, health professionals from Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust and Oxleas NHS Trust are working together with leads from Education and Social Care.

Do you have a young person between the ages of 14 to 18 who currently attends a special school in the boroughs of Lewisham, Greenwich or Bexley? If so we invite you to join us online on **Tuesday 25 October at 6pm** to hear how the transition process is run for health, education and social care and what you can expect from your teams during this time.

This event will be a webinar and those who register will be sent a link.

We ask families and carers to register their interest using the Eventbrite link below so that we can contact you with joining details closer to the time.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/transition-lewisham-greenwich-and-bexley-special-school-webinar-tickets-429119025557>

Apply for or renew a Freedom Pass –
Royal Borough of Greenwich

Contact Mobility Team Second floor,
The Woolwich Centre, 35 Wellington
Street, London, SE18 6HQ.

Telephone: 020 8921 2387 or email:
mobility-duty@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk

IMPORTANT DATES

Last day of Term
Friday 21st October 2022

Half Term
Monday 24th October
To
Friday 28th October 2022

Return to School
Monday 31st October 2022



High quality care for every patient
every day