



# WILLOW DENE SCHOOL

Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2023

## Head Teacher's Message

Welcome back to a new school year. We are very excited to see both children and adults back in the school and to have all the excitement of the Autumn term beginning.

During the summer holidays we had a successful two weeks of summer play scheme. We had lots of positive feedback from parents and the play scheme team. The summer was also an opportunity for us to do some work around school. We completed a tactile wall at Swingate Lane celebrating the work of Herve Tullet who is one of our favourite authors. This wall is a new concept because it encourages children to get physical and interact with display itself.

Also, during the holidays, we were delighted to receive notification that we have been awarded the Gold Arts Mark Award by Arts Council England. This award recognises the creative strengths of our children, skills of our teachers and our commitment to working with other organisations to provide our children with rich cultural experiences.

Before we knew it the holidays were ending, and we were back in school ready for a whole new term. Before the children returned, we had three days of training this included, training from speech and physiotherapists, positive handling and safeguarding

training as well as all of our mandatory medical competencies.

There were also three whole school briefings to set the scene for the year and an exciting Compass Schools Conference. We very much enjoyed the powerful and inspirational speeches from Tracy Campbell from Transforming Behaviour and our very own John Camp. We finished our three days of training feeling well prepared and very excited for the term to come.

We are busy planning our first Power Day of the year which will take place at the end of this half term. These exciting days which focus on different areas of the curriculum give children and young people the opportunity to try new things and develop their interests which we can take forward as they move through the school. Our first Power Day will focus on the theme of 'Let's Care, Create and Collaborate' as we explore social relationships and communication themes.

We hope you have a lovely weekend.

**Rachel**

## IMPORTANT DATES

**Nasal Flu Vaccination**

**27<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

**Half Term**

**23<sup>rd</sup> October 2023 to 27<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

**Pupils return to school**

**30<sup>th</sup> October 2023**





Within the first few days of school, we welcomed many of our new starters who have surprised us by how quickly they have started to recognise Willow Dene as their school. This is always very exciting for us as we can very quickly start to see children's potential. If you are a new parent to Willow Dene, we would like to warmly welcome you to the Willow Dene community. We are looking forward to the journey ahead.

### Splash Shorts for Swimming

Splash Shorts are to ensure that the water quality in our pool remains of the required standard. They act as a barrier similar to pads preventing leaks into the pool.



If your child wears pads in school they need to wear splash shorts for swimming. If you need to buy these, please write a note in your child's home schoolbook and a member of your child's class will try on the sample sizes and let you know the correct size to purchase. You can purchase these via your MCAS (My Child at School account).

## Oxleas NHS Trust National Childhood Vaccinations

Our annual Nasal Flu Vaccination will be taking place in school on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> September. This is offered to all children from N1 through to Sixth Form.

We ask you to carefully consider protecting your child against winter flu. This is to help protect your child during the winter months and because of the additional threat of a winter spike of COVID-19. The nasal flu vaccination protects against 4 different strains of the flu virus. The vaccination is offered once yearly as a simple spray up each nostril. **Please refer to page 12 of the leaflet that was emailed to you with information about 'Protecting your child against flu' for further information regarding the use of Porcine Gelatine.** Please ensure you read the information that was emailed to you and complete the online consent by **Monday 25th September.**

Please use the link or QR code below to access the School Screener Parent Portal.



<https://app.schoolscreener.com/Portal/#/imms/Oxi2324Flu/143595>



## Willow Dene School 6th Form

It wasn't all plain sailing for us during the holiday as we were informed that our much-anticipated 6th Form building was delayed and would not be ready for the start of the new term. We very quickly put in a contingency plan which would mean that our young people could return on our planned date and that their educational provision would not be affected. Until the building is ready, Meadow and Moorland will be accommodated in the living space and dining hall at Oakmere Road, which have undergone something of a transformation! We are very much hoping that the building will be completed early in the second half of the Autumn term. Much to our delight the building structure was delivered last weekend and overnight we acquired the shell of our building. Work will now begin in earnest for the project team to complete the inside and outside in the shortest time possible.

We were very lucky to recruit Kate Northwood to the role of 6th Form Lead and she has spent the first few weeks getting to know staff, children and young people across the school. Kate now joins our Leadership Team to provide additional capacity.

One of the most important part of our Key Stage 5 Curriculum Model is the introduction of our business ventures. Each young person and staff member will spend a proportion of their week on one of our three business ventures. This year they will be a café at Swingate Lane, a horticultural group and a group making pet products.

Over this half term the groups will be naming their businesses and conducting all the research that is needed to get them off the ground after Autumn half term. You will be hearing a lot about our ventures in the year to come including how you can support them or get involved. We were delighted to welcome our 6th Form for their first day on Friday 15th September. Everyone looked incredibly smart and grown up in their new school uniform. 6th Form parents, you have been amazing, and we know it was a long wait for the first day of term, but it helped us more than you can imagine.



Willow Dene School @Will... · 6d  
\*\*\*LIVE TWEET \*\*\* @Kingswood\_on  
the zip wire and ready to go!



## KINGSWOOD TRIP

We have already started to plan out our term with some exciting events. During last week a group of

young people from Oakmere Road paid a follow up visit to Kingswood Learning Centre after our school journey in the Spring term.

Kingswood had promised an additional visit so that some of our children could experience zip wire and other adventure activities. Our group kept us up to date with some live tweets which you can see

@willowdenesch.

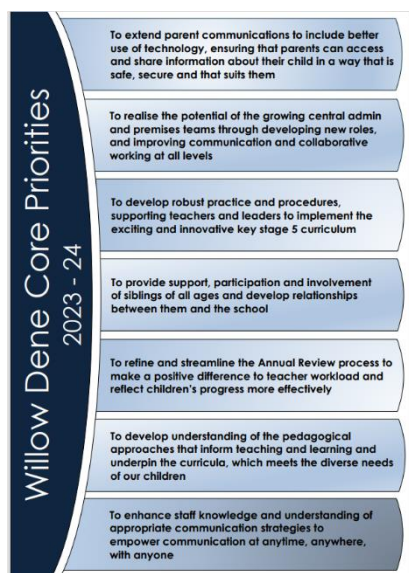


## LESNES ABBEY WOODLAND FESTIVAL

In keeping with our focus on community, we were delighted that our own Lisa Parascandolo was asked to judge the

poetry competition at the Lesnes Abbey Wood Woodland Festival on Saturday 16th September.

Lisa has been driving forward lots of our work with local community groups and organisations including the Greenwich museums. We are looking forward to developing our friendship with the Lesnes Abbey Wood team.



## CORE PRIORITIES

As part of our commitment to our Core Priorities related to family during the last two years, we have thought carefully about how to make sure all children have a breadth of enriching experiences from visitors into school and educational visits out of school.

Over the course of the year all children will receive one of these opportunities each term. In the Autumn term children will experience a visit from a Theatre group or other performer or educational group. In the Spring term children will have an educational visit in their local area and in the Summer term our visits will be further afield. This graduated approach means that for children who find new experiences difficult can be supported in a carefully considered way. It also means there is equity across the diverse groups in the school.

Of course, we always want our visits to support the curriculum so some groups may have additional opportunities of the terms in which these take place may vary. Since COVID we have committed to keeping the costs to parents for educational visits as low as possible because we recognise the impact of the cost-of-living increases. Last year, regardless of the location of the visit we asked you for a voluntary contribution of £5.00. We have committed to this continuing during 2023/24. The maximum and only contribution towards educational visits will be £5.00. We have taken on board some feedback about wanting more notice for these payments. As a result, we are looking for a system where you can make a payment of £5.00 at any time in advance of the trip. We will keep you informed of our progress. Of course, this will not apply to residential school journeys, but we will always let you know what financial help is available with these.

We have started the year with our seven new Core Priorities for 2023/24. These priorities form the basis of our School Development plan and will drive school improvement forward for the year. You can see these on our website [www.willowdene.compassps.uk](http://www.willowdene.compassps.uk).

We will be continuing our work with siblings this year after such positive feedback last year. This year we will additionally be looking at how we can work with adult siblings and those studying away from home. We will also be looking more closely at our parent communication after the success of our trial with the EFL parent app last year. We know that some of you were impacted negatively through the Annual Review system last year, so a remodelling of the content and organisation of these is the basis of another Core Priority. If you have any questions or would like to find out more including how you can help, please do ask any member of the Leadership Team.





## PHEASANT CLASS

It is great to hear the children's opinions and thoughts about their work and activities at school;

**Harry** — I cut the cheese and it was fun. I cut the cheese too thick. Tyrese buttered the bread and George put the other slice of bread on top. I like cheese but George and Tyrese don't like it, but Tyrese likes it on pizza.

**George** — I did writing and adding and I rolled the dice.

**Rayah** — I rolled the dice, I was red, Shatu was yellow, and you were green. I worked hard. Then I sat in the circle.

**Tyrese** — Tyrese clearly appreciates Alison's toothpaste choices! Mary, can you tell me where you get the toothpaste we use because I really like that toothpaste and would like it for home.

It's always lovely to hear how happy children are at school, and the impact being here has;

**Emma** — Today I feel happy because today we have snack, playtime, circle time, group table, dinner, brushing teeth and party!

**Shatu** — Oh yeah Mary! I'm feeling okay! Whoo!

Social skills have been evident in Pheasant Class, and the awareness and excitement of seeing their peers is great;

**Anthony** — I want to go to Redwing and say hello to Jameel.

**Mehrish** — My friend Rayah was running late!

Many of the children in Pheasant Class have great imaginative play skills;

**Callum** — The baby wants to bounce! Boing boing boing! The baby wants to get down! Are you okay, do you want the ball?



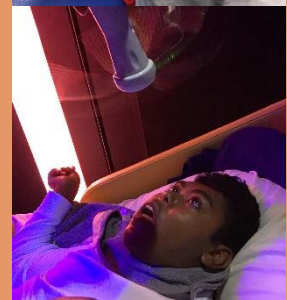
## HEDGEHOG CLASS

Hedgehog Class have had a lovely start to the new school year!

We have welcomed new friends and have spent time getting to know each other. The whole class has been exploring all the facilities at Oakmere Road including the soft playroom and dark room where we have enjoyed the multisensory lights.

Autumn has been a theme running through some of our lessons and we have been exploring the changes in season through a wide variety of props and sensory experiences.

We have spent time working on our physical needs too, through using the medi-motion bike, stretching through yoga and using the play equipment outside to keep us healthy, inside and out! We are looking forward to all fun the rest of the term has to offer!



# WHAT'S ON



Charlton Park  
Academy

## OPEN DAYS

Saturday 16th September 10.00 - 14.00

Saturday 23rd September 10.00 - 14.00



To guarantee there will be enough staff available to show you around, we kindly ask that you book your space on the tour by contacting either :

Gail Tippet - [gtippet@charltonparkacademy.co.uk](mailto:gtippet@charltonparkacademy.co.uk)

Sara Johnson - [sjohnson@charltonparkacademy.co.uk](mailto:sjohnson@charltonparkacademy.co.uk)

[www.charltonparkacademy.com](http://www.charltonparkacademy.com)

### Specialist Services

Secondary-aged (11-17 years)

#### All Kids Can

Shooters Hill College

Weekends

School Holidays

Summer

#### What do they offer?

**Saturday Clubs** - Our Saturday clubs run during term time between school holidays. The sessions consist of various types of on-site and off-site activities such as cooking, arts and crafts, sensory activities, multisport sessions, music and performing arts as well as trips out to places such as zoo/farm trips, bowling, trampoline parks, museums, parks and seaside trips (weather permitting!).

**Holiday Club** - Our holiday clubs take place during school holidays throughout the year including February, Easter (2 weeks), May and October half terms. Activities are similar to the Saturday clubs with guaranteeing two trips off site per week (minimum).

**Summer Clubs** - Our Summer holiday clubs typically run throughout the month of August in the school/college summer holidays for 4 weeks back-to-back. Activities include those similar to the holiday clubs above as well as trips to different seashores every week!

**How can they help your child?** AKC is a trusted, specialist provider of Shorts Breaks with over 10 years of working with disabled children and adults. They have a vast range of skilled consistent staff to support a range of SEN children with a wide variation of needs and disabilities. Whatever the needs of your child, AKC will endeavour to provide the opportunity to experience an array of activities in a safe environment. All courses are designed specifically for the needs of the group at the time so all can be included.

**Session Length:** 5 hours; 100 hours equates to 20 sessions per year with AKC.

**Cost:** £20 per session. Transport to and from home can be purchased for an additional £20 per session.

**The ideal short break for:** Young people aged 11-17 years old with all types of needs and disabilities who require higher levels of support and that are looking at accessing a range of on-site and off-site activities and trips. Specific needs of our students typically include ASD, learning difficulties and/or complex medical/health needs.

#### Contact Details:

Email: [shortbreaks@allkidscan.co.uk](mailto:shortbreaks@allkidscan.co.uk)

Tel: 0208 836 8906

Website: [www.allkidscan.co.uk](http://www.allkidscan.co.uk)



WILLOW DENE  
SCHOOL

## speakeasy

healthwatch  
Greenwich

Spring term 2023

A weekly Coffee Morning for Willow Dene parents & carers  
A safe space to talk, listen, share, encourage and make friends.

**Tuesday 3rd October 10.30 - 12pm**

On Tuesday 3rd October **Kiki Bourcher**, the **Engagements Manager of Healthwatch** is joining our Coffee Morning. Kiki would like to talk to parents about Healthwatch and the services they offer.

Healthwatch Greenwich is the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in the Royal Borough of Greenwich. There is a local Healthwatch in every area of England. They find out what people like about services and what could be improved, and they share these views with those with the power to make change happen. Healthwatch also helps people find the information they need about services in their area. Come along to find out more.

For more information please contact Vicky House Family Support Worker on **0208 854 9841**

The school day begins at 9.15am and ends at 3.15pm. This totals to 30 hours per week

Autumn term 2023	September	Mon 4 <sup>th</sup>	INSET Day – School closed to children
		Tue 5 <sup>th</sup>	INSET Day – School closed to children
		Wed 6 <sup>th</sup>	INSET Day – School closed to children
		Thurs 7 <sup>th</sup>	First day of autumn term
	October	Fri 20 <sup>th</sup>	Last day of 1 <sup>st</sup> half autumn term
		Mon 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Half-term holiday begins
		Mon 30 <sup>th</sup>	First Day of 2 <sup>nd</sup> half of autumn term
	November		
	December	Thurs 21 <sup>st</sup>	Last day of term
		Fri 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Christmas holiday begins
Spring term 2024	January	Mon 8 <sup>th</sup>	INSET Day – School closed to children
		Tue 9 <sup>th</sup>	First day of spring term
	February	Fri 9 <sup>th</sup>	Last day of 1 <sup>st</sup> half of spring term
		Mon 12 <sup>th</sup>	Half-term holiday begins
		Mon 19 <sup>th</sup>	First Day of 2 <sup>nd</sup> half of spring term
	March	Thurs 28 <sup>th</sup>	Last day of term
		Fri 29 <sup>th</sup>	Easter holiday begins
Summer term 2024	April	Mon 15 <sup>th</sup>	First Day of summer term
	May	Mon 6 <sup>th</sup>	Bank Holiday
		Fri 24 <sup>th</sup>	Last day of 1 <sup>st</sup> half of summer term
		Mon 27 <sup>th</sup>	Half-term holiday begins
	June	Mon 3 <sup>rd</sup>	First Day of 2 <sup>nd</sup> half of summer term
	July	Tues 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Last day of term
		Wed 24 <sup>th</sup>	INSET Day – School closed to children
		Thurs 25 <sup>th</sup>	Summer holiday begins



# Willow Dene Core Priorities

2023 - 24

To extend parent communications to include better use of technology, ensuring that parents can access and share information about their child in a way that is safe, secure and that suits them

To realise the potential of the growing central admin and premises teams through developing new roles, and improving communication and collaborative working at all levels

To develop robust practice and procedures, supporting teachers and leaders to implement the exciting and innovative key stage 5 curriculum

To provide support, participation and involvement of siblings of all ages and develop relationships between them and the school

To refine and streamline the Annual Review process to make a positive difference to teacher workload and reflect children's progress more effectively

To develop understanding of the pedagogical approaches that inform teaching and learning and underpin the curricula, which meets the diverse needs of our children

To enhance staff knowledge and understanding of appropriate communication strategies to empower communication at anytime, anywhere, with anyone