



The Chiltern School

Where we learn and achieve together, where we dare to be different.

Happiness, Kindness, Respect, Courage, Curiosity, Humour, Resilience

July 2021

Dear Parents, Carers and Families,

I want to start this letter with a genuine thank you for your support and patience over the academic year, this is a year that none of us want to repeat! With my own children being of school age, I have experienced the worries and frustrations of the last year as a parent and as a Headteacher of one of the largest special schools in the region during the most significant pandemic in the last 100 years.

Since September all schools have been balancing a range of fluid demands, from COVID-19 risk assessments, enhanced cleaning, classroom redesign, track and trace, remote learning, virtual open evenings, virtual transitions days, enhanced welfare checks, on site mass testing, and frustrations of having to send pupils home to self-isolate.

I will be honest, there have been times when as a team we have lurched from one set of government guidance to the next, when we didn't know if the school was partially or fully reopening or what we would be asked to do in the next set of DfE guidance. This compounded by the knowledge of the impact for pupils not being able to attend school, has been nothing short of heart-breaking.

Hopefully, the easing of restrictions in the summer and the changes to government guidance will mean we come back to a much higher degree of normality from September when we will be welcoming everyone back to an exciting new chapter of our school journey.

This newsletter, as always, demonstrates how amazing your children are, it highlights that despite the last 18 months they have continued to thrive, to be happy and have all shown bucketfuls of courage and resilience. They really are shining stars and we are tremendously proud to be part of their lives.

In the meantime, I hope that everyone has a wonderful summer and let's hope the next academic year is a bit smoother than the last one.

Kind Regards.

See you in September!



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Communication with class teachers and staff over the holidays.

The school will be officially closed for the summer holidays, which means class teachers and staff all deserve a well earned rest. Please can we ask that you do not contact them via Class Dojo or email at this time.

Any immediate concerns or sharing of information can be sent through the SIMS Parent App, please sign up if you haven't already done so. The only email that will be checked regularly for emergencies is the school@chiltern.beds.sch.uk

Staffing Changes

We have had some staffing changes due to internal promotions. Please join us in congratulating the following staff. They will take up new roles in September.

Louise Clarke - Assistant Headteacher
Kasia Stern - Assistant Headteacher
Rebecca Harris - Communication and Interaction Lead
Nina Stolikidou - Cognition and Learning Lead
Mark Bodsworth - Formal Curriculum Lead
Lauren Walmsley - Semi-formal Curriculum Lead
Rachel Farrow - Physical and Sensory Lead
Sally Davidson - Acting Early Transitions Leader

Don't worry, our existing Pathway Leaders, Michaela and Lauren continue to have leadership responsibilities across the school, enabling us to embed outstanding practice throughout all pathways. We'll be sharing further information in relation to roles and responsibilities in September.

We are sad to be saying goodbye to a number of staff at the end of this academic year, they all move onto exciting new roles and we wish them every success.

Co-production Video

In case you missed this amazing piece of work. We were really proud to have worked closely with external colleagues and to share with you and this impressive video developed with colleagues in health and social care as part of Central Bedfordshire's SEND co-production work. It certainly made us very proud to see how empowered and engaged our young people were.

[Click here to access the video](#)



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We are proud to share that Rachel Sawford, our inspiring Speech and Language Therapist has just had her first book published, written with a colleague who has had a long career working as a teacher in special schools. 'Communication at the Heart of the school' is absolutely what we do and are proud to be part of the journey.



Message from the Chair of Governors - Mark Cattle

First and foremost I hope this note finds you safe and well. I couldn't let the end of the school year pass without writing, on behalf of all the school governors, to express our deep and sincere thanks to all pupils, staff and parents for their amazing support of the school during the past academic year which was, of course, dominated by the pandemic.

You may recall from previous notes from me that whilst I am relatively new to school governorship, I am an experienced Chair through my roles with Bedfordshire Police and Active Luton and in my 40 working years in business I never experienced an environment like the one we have seen. In my opinion you have all, and I absolutely mean all, pupils, staff and parents not only coped with the host of unprecedented challenges the pandemic has created but risen above them.

Notwithstanding the pressures of the pandemic the school, under Lisa's passionate and determined leadership, has continued to make very good progress with its plans for the future on various fronts. In terms of educational provision that has seen the embedding of assessment through Evidence for Learning including, in my view, a unique opportunity for parents to really see the progress their child makes. This sits alongside the redesigned Personalised Learning Plans and Goals underpinned by each EHCP to support the aspirations for every pupil. Discussions have continued to progress with the Local Authority to consolidate the school onto a single campus with all the advantages that this will bring alongside an revised organisational structure that will support the school continuing to be able to deliver to all its community recognising the expected future growth in pupil numbers.



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The remote learning that was achieved was, I believe, the epitome of the supportive and collaborative working partnership between pupils, staff and parents. I can assure you that the governors do not, in any way, underestimate the huge collective effort this required. This on-line provision was undoubtedly a steep learning curve for everyone and improved both with experience and your feedback. This provision was also reviewed very positively by the School Improvement Partner who observed a number of "lessons".

So I'll finish by once again expressing the deep and sincere thanks of myself and my fellow governors to each and every one of you. I very much hope that you are all able to enjoy the summer break, have time to rest and enjoy some, hopefully, sunny weather before returning fully refreshed for the new school year in September

Take care, keep safe and again thank you.

School Uniform

Thank you for your responses to our consultation on the adaptations to our school uniform which were overwhelmingly in favour of these. 98% of you thought the adaptations were a good idea.

We know the summer holidays can be hectic so we will take a phased response to the introduction of this and we also want time to consider some of the very sensible suggestions you have made. The proposed uniform will be as set out below but if you have already purchased new uniform please do not feel you need to buy anything else until it is needed.

It is important that we continue to teach young people to wear the right attire for different activities particularly as young people get older, therefore we will still encourage a separate PE Kit for where this is appropriate. There are no changes here.

We will be looking at the sourcing of some of the more bespoke items and send further clarification as we move into the colder months.

- Suitable outdoor shoes/wellies
- Suitable indoor shoes (Black Trainers/plimsolls)
- Black Leggings or jogging bottoms
- Black Shorts in warmer weather
- School Polo Shirt (White/gold)
- School Sweatshirt (Navy blue)
- Warm base layer (For winter)
- Waterproof trousers
- 3 in 1 Jacket



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School Meals

This term we launched The Chiltern School catering service and restarted school meals for our Phase 1 and Early Transition pupils. The meals were well received as one pupil said

Lunch was brilliant! The jacket potato was lovely. He was raving about it.

We even used our home grown produce. The strawberries tasted amazing.



This term was a trial period and we have encountered barriers along the way however we continue to work with our service providers to improve the ordering and payment experience in readiness for September. More information will follow via our home school communication platform Parent App prior to school returning. Please do remember to sign up to SIMs Pay and Parent App in readiness.

If you have any queries or require support to access the service please do contact communications@chiltern.beds.sch.uk

Thank you for your understanding and continued support

Dates for your Diary

Dates	Events
Monday 6th September	Early Transitions pupils and Phase 1 pupils return
Tuesday 7th September	Phase 2 and Phase 3 pupils return
Tuesday 28th September	Parental Engagement Workshops (TBC)
Wednesday 29th September	Parental Engagement Workshops (TBC)
Thursday 30th September	Parental Engagement Workshops (TBC)

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Early Transitions

In Early Transitions we follow the children's interests. Some children asked to learn about space, so we read the book 'Man on the Moon'. We pretended to be astronauts and tried to identify mysterious objects inside the feely box. We enjoyed sitting under the space umbrella and looking at the stars and planets.



Many of us are interested in sand, so we have been learning about the beach. We have made sand castles, gone fishing and fed the sharks as part of our Attention Autism activities. One of our favourite activities was exploring different textures on our beach-themed sensory walk.



Early Transitions children had lots of fun during Sports Week. Our activities included bowling, throwing water balloons, hook a duck and parachute games.





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During our pre-phonics lessons we have been exploring musical sounds. We have been using Write Dance to develop our motor skills ready for writing, and we have been developing our self-awareness through dressing up.



Children in Dragonfly class explored natural materials and made natural art.





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Physical and Sensory

We are so proud of the students in Pine and Lavender for all of their achievements over the academic year. Even whilst needing to self-isolate this week they have shown resilience and curiosity to still learn and have engaged in remote education beautifully with the support of their family members. Watching them all grow and develop over the year has been fantastic and they have definitely earned themselves a well earned summer holiday! We wanted to share below a stand out achievement for each student from the year :)

A special goodbye to Tom who will be moving onto Heywood House; we wish him all the best in his next adventure!

Pine Class

Hannah has made great progress using photographs to communicate and Amber has become more consistent in anticipating things and expressing a like or dislike through facial expressions and gestures. Tom has developed his social skills and has increasingly enjoyed social interactions with others and Harry has made amazing progress learning to stand this year and hold his own weight! Edward has been showing us all how kind he is all year and is the social butterfly of the pathway! Marley has been incredibly resilient following surgery recently and still smiles and gives everything his all.





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Lavender Class

Om has had a fantastic year developing his intensive interaction skills through song with those around him, building confidence within his environment and small group settings and improving exploring sensory items through touch.

Romeo has had a wonderful year, increasing his communication skills and really enjoying sharing his space and interactions with peers in his group, giggling when participating in shared interactions and reaching out to touch his peers.

Lyra has enjoyed building up her tolerance of touching sensory items and sharing music and interactions to get to know the adults supporting her and peers in her class throughout this last term. Lawrence has had a wonderful year developing and showing us his amazingly cheeky nature. He has taken a real shine to taking a toy or adult's item, giggling and hiding behind another adult or in another room within our area with it. He will bounce up and down laughing and squealing with excitement and delight at being caught in the act!

Lily has shown us even more of her wonderful social skills this year, initiating interactions with her peers and adults around her, locking eye contact and using her vocalisations to call people over to her. She has been using her hands to reach out for desired items and pull them closer to her and has shown clear favourites throughout the school day.

Junior has really shown his resilience during turbulent times. He did a phased return back to school and has come back showing very clearly who he enjoys supporting him most and what he likes and does not like very clearly.

Re'On has had an incredible year and shown that he loves being in school full time now. It was a big step for Re'On to make, but he has been thriving and really shown the impact of this with the fantastic progress he has made with his communication.





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Communication and Sensory

Communication and Sensory Phase 1 have been experiencing the Circus!





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Cognition and Learning

Elephant class has been getting into the swing of Summer this week. We have been learning about subtraction in maths, making postcards in English. We have done some fun creative activities with bubbles and decorating ice lollies.



Keller class enjoyed the 'Let me Entertain You' topic !





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Tiger class had lots of fun during Sports week!





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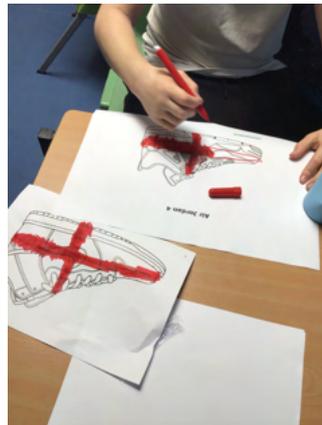
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Communication and Interaction

Pupils in Leopard class engaged and enjoyed lots of activities this term such as, reading, role and sensory play, fun parties and communication opportunities in every part of their day.



Kahlo Class have enjoyed taking part in projects such as graffiti art and creating their own bespoke, personalised trainers. Forest School has been a BIG hit with the class especially having an opportunity to safely create their own fire.



Wolf class have been thinking about their talents, in preparation for the Semi Formal Talent Show. Pupils explored a variety of activities including dance, music, signing, drama and sport. Morgan amazed the class with his spontaneous and beautiful keyboard playing. Well done Wolf Class!





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Bear class enjoyed all things messy this term. We have enjoyed reading lots of Peppa Pig books, exploring outside spaces, practicing adding to 10 and lots of end of year celebrations in class. The children have worked hard and are looking forward to a well earned rest over the summer.



Simmonds Class were so happy to attend Forest School again. They enjoyed learning new things, exploring and playing with nature.



Einstein Class have really embraced our topic 'Let me Entertain you', we particularly enjoyed the story 'The Fabulous Foksett Family Circus', we even enjoyed juggling with eggs during Stage 3 of Attention Autism! We have worked on skills throughout all lessons that require; social communication, working together and being curious and communicating using colourful semantics/ communication boards to support, extend and initiate language. Our favourite game this half term has been 'Pig goes Pop' where we have enjoyed the anticipation and surprise!





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Camel Class have had a fantastic term of being entertainers. We have worked hard on our communication and interaction skills, by sharing, taking turns and trying to make our peers happy. We've had great fun being entertainers and trying out a range of different musical instruments. We explored different ways to play the instruments, quietly, loudly and softly. What an exciting term, great job Camels!



Grandin Class enjoyed working on producing an advertisement for their dream house. Using descriptive words and language learnt in English.



Beethoven Class took part in designing a lorry to celebrate fresh, healthy food as part of the Aldi competition.





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Phase 3

Hawking and Tajiri had fun during sports week, we played skittles, we tried rounders but needed all hands to help so couldn't get photos, we had a go at throwing bean bags into a target as well as having running races. We used bubbles in lots of different ways, we had a bubble machine which made lots of bubbles for us to hide in, we had a go at making giant bubbles and we made lots of bubbles with a hand whisk and bubble mixture. The students really enjoy listening to music so we have lots of opportunities for dancing, using pom poms, streamers and materials to make patterns with. We also explored water, trying to move it from one bucket to another using big and little cups, trying to carry water balloons and then finally finishing off this week with lots of fun in the paddling pool, trying to cool down.

This term Hawking and Tajiri have tried tie dying, with help, the students put rubber bands and pegs onto some canvas bags and socks and then put the die on them. They were washed, dried and ironed and they will be going home as end of term gifts filled with artwork from the term. In March Cath came to help us with our raised flower bed. Since then we have been working hard to maintain it and make everything grow. We have taken our job of watering the plants very seriously and learnt how to fill up a watering can and water them to make them grow. Once the hose came out everyone got a bit wet! We had a bumper crop of strawberries, some of which were HUGE! We shared them with Lisa and Claire when they joined us for our tea party to thank the NHS. We have also grown marigolds, poppies, lettuce and tomatoes.





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Students in zone 10 have been completing garden maintenance tasks as part of their horticulture learning for independent living and to be proud of their learning areas.



They have also been working hard within Sports and Active leisure learning to design fitness workouts and to record and extend on these weekly for their own progress. For example, they have decided to add duration or repetitions to their routines.



Some of our Gates and Nash class students helped to facilitate the student interview panel for potential teacher candidates; they designed their own questions, recorded and scored answers!



Students continue to work hard within their roles at the soccshop to sort, organise, quality assure and upload stock items for sale.





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Congratulations to two of our phase 3 students who completed 5 weeks of weekend work experience at ZSL Whipsnade zoo. At the end of the course they graduated with certificates! We have another Phase 3 student interested in animal care who is due to begin his work experience with the zoo this summer holiday.



Adeptan class have been surveying each other for information within communication partners.



They have also been exploring practical maths concepts of measurement creatively for comparison.



Students have been learning to process and recall their day through music and sing back what they have learnt throughout their day. Students have been working hard to navigate and decipher information that they would find in the community such as this savers shop leaflet on personal hygiene, household products and medical products.





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Packham class have learnt through practical activities linked to enterprise; such as, weighing out ingredients within practical maths to make dog biscuits for sale in our school socsshop. They have also been learning about money and savings and have created their own papier-mache money banks as well as learning about weights and measures from weighing out ingredients for their dog biscuits and from weighing compost when making Cacti pots for sale.



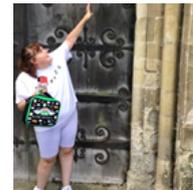
Semi-formal learners within Phase 3 incorporating practical maths and English to learn about and create Mexican Piñatas to share with other peers across the school to celebrate the summer



They also began their sports week by celebrating Wimbledon with tennis skills and then enjoying some of the strawberries that they had grown within the school allotment.



They also enjoyed a treasure hunt around Dunstable town and a game of bowls in Grove Park!





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Formal learners completed a walking trip to Mentmore Park to complete sports and team games.



They have also been learning about basic first aid as part of the Good Health subject learning.





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SOCs Shops

www.socsshop.com – the online shop run by our students Once again, thank you to all our supporters who have contributed to the purchases of socsshop items. By doing so you are contributing to work experience, learning of employability, high aspirations for futures beyond school and in students investing in social action and other stages and phases within the school.

Current enterprise for sale:

<p>Student made dog biscuits: £1.00 for each bag (70-80grams)</p>	
<p>Round and cone shaped Summer hanging baskets £10.00 each</p>	
<p>Animal planters (rabbit, dog and owls available) £8.00 each</p>	
<p>Grow your own herb baskets £5.00 per box (6 seed packets, compost, pots, recipes and instructions)</p>	
<p>Scented soap bars – scents of vanilla, apple, strawberry heart, lavender and lemon £2.50 per bar</p>	



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<p>Student planted and individually named Cacti in decoupage pots</p> <p>£2.50 each</p>	
<p>Painted wooden flower planters or herb planters for your window sill or as a gift.</p> <p>A range of colours available and sizes small or large</p>	
<p>Student constructed rustic coat pegs with shelf</p>	
<p>Clothing bundles of up to 10 pieces £5.00</p>	

..... and many many more items! Brand New, nearly new and pre-loved, books, dvd's, gifts, jewellery, bric-a-brac, antiques, games and toys, footwear, bags, soft furnishings, baby and childrens.

Orders taken after 12PM on Wednesday 27th July will not be available until Wednesday 8th September.

We look forward to harvesting allotment produce within the autumn term to create a range of soup bags for sale.