

Links Journal



Autumn Term

School Calendar

Term Ends

Friday 20 December 2024

@ 12.30 pm

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Spring Term

INSET DAYS

Monday 6 January 2025

No Students in school

Tuesday 7 January 2025

No Students in school

Student Parent Review Day

Wednesday

8 January 2025

Form Tutors will arrange convenient time to meet with Parents & Students

Term Starts

Thursday 9 January 2025

Dear Parents/Carers

As we approach the end of this term and embrace the winter season, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the incredible achievements, growth, and resilience we have witnessed in our school community.

This term has been filled with inspiring moments, from student successes in the classroom to the numerous extracurricular activities that have brought our community together. I hope you enjoy the content of this journal highlighting these activities.

As we head into the winter break, I encourage all of you to take time to rest, recharge, and reflect on the term that has passed. It is a time to celebrate the progress we have made, both individually and as a community, and to look forward to the exciting opportunities that the new year will bring. I want to take the time to thank Mrs Budrikyne who will be leaving us at the end of term and wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

Thank you to our wonderful staff, students, and families for making this term a memorable one. Your hard work, support, and dedication make our school a place where all learners can thrive. I wish you all a peaceful and joyous holiday season, and I look forward to seeing what the next term will bring.

Kind Regards

Mrs Brown

Head of School



Links Academy welcomes comments from parents/carers and families about any aspect of school life. Please contact us via our email admin@linksacademy.herts.sch.uk www.linksacademy.herts.sch.uk to view Ofsted reports, key dates, journals and school information

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at Links Academy – What changed this term?

The new National Framework from the Department for Education (DfE) regarding Penalty Notices for school absence, including unauthorised holiday absence, became effective for all schools from 19 August 2024 and has resulted in some changes this term for Links Academy's practice towards monitoring attendance, absences and rewards.

Certain things have remained unchanged:

From a parents/carers perspective:

- Legally every child is entitled to an education and it is a parent/carers legal responsibility to ensure their child receives an education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school
- Parent/carers have a legal duty to ensure their child attends their registered school regularly, which means they must attend every day the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as illness or being given permission in advance from school



From a child's perspective:

- A child engaging and attending school regularly will get the most out of their school experience, including attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances
- Regular attendance is an important protective factor for a child, the best opportunity for needs identified, and support provided.



Attendance Matters



Every Day Counts....

From a school's perspective:

- A continuing responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance
- Attendance is an essential foundation to positive outcomes for all students including their safeguarding, attainment and welfare

In addition, the New Framework also recognises that for some children, attending school every day will be harder than for others and this may resonate to some parents/carers. This is why the message sent out from the DfE was very much one of **'working together'**.

For further information on how to support your child's attendance visit: <https://assets.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wpuploads/2024/07/aaa-guide-for-parents-on-school-attendance-19th-Aug-version.pdf>



So what's new?

At Links Academy attendance has become a whole school focus.

With the New Framework needing to be implemented, it wasn't about re-inventing school routines already in place, but adapting where necessary to include the changes with what is already working within our school community.

ATTENDANCE



As always, the expectation remains for parent/carers to call in any child's lateness or absence on the first day and any subsequent days of absence for whatever the reason may be.

In the event of school not receiving a message, contact will be made with all emergency contacts (in order of priority) to establish the safety and whereabouts of a student.

Proof of Life/Welfare Checks will continue to be made for student's who have not been seen in school for a significant period of time, which can range from 1 day of absence to 10. If there are any concerns or the student not seen, Links Academy will liaise with the Police to undertake a Welfare Check.



Medical and dental appointments should continue to not be booked during the school day in order to avoid disruption. When they are, please notify school in advance.



Any leave of absence from school during term time, must be requested in writing, in advance and Links Academy will judge each application on an individual basis. Please note: a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance and will be referred to the Local Authority.

All parents/carers and students attend a Student Parent Review Day (SPRD) meeting at the beginning of each term, where students can discuss and explore any barriers to attending school with their form tutors as well as looking at setting targets for the following term.

All individual student attendance is recorded and monitored daily, reviewed weekly at school level, monthly at Trust level and termly at Trustee and Local Authority level.

Attendance Rewards - Let's Celebrate!

This term a new rewards system was launched and has been well received by students.



Now celebrated on a weekly basis, are all students who have achieved **100% ATTENDANCE TO SCHOOL** for the previous week.

These students are entered into a weekly draw and one lucky winner receives a £5 Love 2 Shop voucher.

So far this term.....

- 29 students at Hatfield site have achieved 100% attendance on 93 occasions
- 24 students at St Albans sites have achieved 100% attendance on 101 occasions

As there can only be one lucky winner, drawn weekly at each school site, plans are in place to recognize all students who achieve 100% for the week...watch this space. This is an amazing achievement and demonstrates to students what they can do.

And finally.....

Links Academy will always try to work with students and their families to support attendance and/or improve punctuality.

If you have any concerns, please speak to your child's form tutor at their SPRD appointment in January 2025.

Mrs Porritt, Trust Attendance Officer

CEDARS ATTENDANCE

Attendance Update – Autumn Term 2024

As we come to the end of yet another school term, it is time to celebrate the fantastic attendance for our students at Cedars.

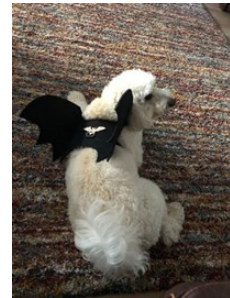
Halloween (Pumpkin Prizes) – Attendance Rewards at Cedars

Out of the 37 school days for the first half of the Autumn Term, 'Pumpkin Prizes' were awarded by Mrs Porritt and Mrs McGleish to all our Cedars students in recognition of their amazing attendance and resilience in attending school.

Nayan, Freddie and Darwin were rewarded for 37/37 days, and Chloe and Micah followed closely behind with 36/37 days. This is an incredible achievement – well done all!



A special guest appearance was made by Daisy, who wanted to showcase her wonderful Halloween costume and congratulate her Cedars friends on how smart they were for coming to school. Our students (and staff) had a fun-filled time at this spooktacular event.



Christmas (Rudolph Rules) – Attendance Rewards at Cedars PSB.

Our elves are currently busy working on our Christmas celebrations for the end of term 'Rudolph Rules' rewards. Our students' attendance for the second half of the Autumn Term have been equally impressive to date.

Students will be receiving their Rudolph Rules prizes and certificates at our Christmas Lunch on Thursday 19 December.



Mrs Porritt, Trust Attendance Officer

It has been a busy term at Cedars. This term, we bid farewell to two of our fantastic children. Although we are sad to see them go, we are incredibly proud of their achievements and wish them every success in their return to their schools. With our farewell, we also look forward to welcoming three new members to our class in the spring term. Children have been working hard in all areas of their learning; however we have also managed to find time to fit in a range of fun activities.

Throughout the week, children engage in a range of different lessons, completing lessons in the core subjects of Maths and English and engaging in a more practical topic lesson at the end of the day including: PE, Art and Food Tech. We also incorporate time for sensory input, Epic Reading, Maths games and of course some motivational activities. Our timetable this term can be seen below:

9:00am – 9:15 am	Soft start activity
9:15am – 10:00 am	English Lesson
10:00am – 10:15am	Motivational/Choosing Activity
10:15am – 10:30am	Movement Break
10:30am – 11:00am	Snack and Break
11:00am – 11:30am	Reading
11:30am – 12:00pm	Maths Lesson
12:00pm – 12:15pm	Movement Break
12:15pm – 12:45pm	Lunch and Break
12:45pm – 1:15 pm	Topic Lesson
1:15pm – 1:30pm	Golden Time
1:30pm	Home Time

English

Each term, our English lessons are based around a book. This exposes children to a range of different texts and authors and focuses our writing around a theme. During the term, our lessons were based around *The Spiderwick Chronicals*, *Mr. Stink* and *The Morning I Met A Whale*.

Children thoroughly enjoyed engaging with the different characters of the texts and produced fantastic pieces of written work inspired by the books including a non-chronological report, creating our own mythical creature, creating a character profile and writing a backstory for a character using past tense.

Maths

In Maths, we use a range of resources to support our learning. We teach concrete, abstract, pictorial Maths ensuring that concepts are first taught through concrete resources such as unifix cubes or base ten before showing a concept through pictorial representation and finally applying the concept in the abstract through calculations. Throughout the term, we have covered various topics, including, number and place value, addition and subtraction and multiplication.

Topic

Throughout the term, children have engaged in various topic lessons. These lessons aim to be practical in nature in order to encourage enjoyment for learning and to provide children with certain life skills that can be implemented outside of the classroom. Throughout these lessons, children participate in class discussions, relating the topic being discussed to many of their personal experiences, sharing stories and facts openly and confidently.

Extra Curricular Activities

With so much learning taking place, we have also managed to squeeze in a range of fun activities. We have had Mr Bunn - our Police Community Support Officer- lead weekly Mini Police sessions where the children were given their own Mini Police uniforms to wear and participated in a range of educational activities including going out onto the road to learn about road safety, attempting the 'Bleep Test' and learning about environmental crime looking at littering and the time it takes various materials to decompose. All the sessions were incredibly interactive, and children even had the opportunity to try on various items of PCSO's uniform including metal studded boots and padded vest.

We have had an incredible term filled with learning, fun and laughter and look forward to another exciting term ahead.



Mr Taylor, Primary Support Teacher

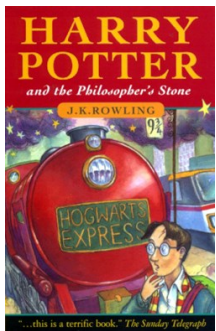
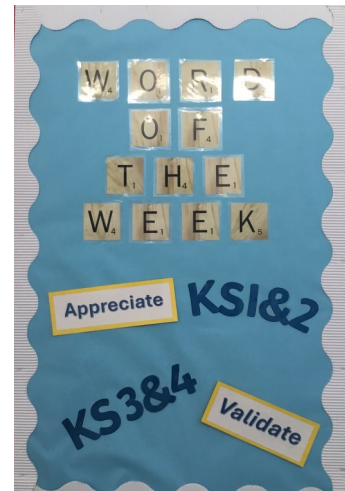
LITERACY ACTIVITIES

Word of the Week

We are excited to have recently launched our *Word of the Week* programme, designed to enrich students' vocabulary and encourage a love of language. Each week, a new word is shared with students across the school, giving them the opportunity to encounter and engage with words they may not use in their everyday lives.

All key stages, including children at Cedars Primary Support Base, will be encouraged to use the words both in lessons and beyond, fostering a school-wide appreciation for the power of language. This programme reflects our commitment to improving literacy skills and helping students grow in confidence as they begin to incorporate a wider range of vocabulary into their speech and writing.

This term, we were thrilled to host two fantastic events as part of our commitment to fostering a love of reading and creative expression among our students.



Harry Potter Book Day

On 17th October, students participated in *Harry Potter Book Day*, where each lesson throughout the day included dedicated time for reading or listening to the first chapter of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. This initiative, part of our 'Reading for Pleasure' programme, encouraged students to immerse themselves in a world of magic and imagination. We're excited to replicate this with other celebrated authors and books in the future.

National Poetry Day

For National Poetry Day, students explored the fascinating connections between poetry and music lyrics. They engaged in lively discussions and analysis, uncovering poetic devices.

The highlight was a poetry competition, where students showcased their own creative writing talents.

We are delighted to congratulate our winner, Adam, for his outstanding poem - well done, Adam!

Both events were fantastic opportunities for students to engage with literature in innovative ways, and we look forward to continuing these creative initiatives throughout the year.



Please see the next page for a full page spread of Adam's winning poem.


Miss Ross, English Teacher

LINKS POETRY WINNER

Sitting down watching the sunset,
Wishing I ever would have met
My brother in another life,
Wondering if God rolled a dice,
Between me and him to see who would have a turn at life.

I looked like I got the chance,
My brother in a better place, loving life doing a dance,
God watching down with him, watching me.
Looking through my eyes so they can see my POV
On life.

My life has made me paranoid
Mad sometimes, even sad.
Missing and wishing I could have
One last hug from my nan and grandad.
But sometimes life has been bad,
Ruining my life as a young lad.

The reason I'm always sad,
Is because I wish I still had
My cat by my side.
He used to follow me on bike rides.
I wish he would be with me for centuries,
So I could have so much more memories
I will forever miss my beautiful cat, named Lenny 

Adam, Year 11

WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY

On Thursday 10 October 2024 the team at Woollam participated in **Wear it Yellow for World Mental Health** day to show our young people that we stand together for young people's mental health. It's a changing world, where new pressures and stresses can be overwhelming. From the cost-of-living crisis to the climate emergency, it's a tough time to grow up. And when you reach out for help, the systems in place aren't good enough, or they're not there at all.

Young Minds want our young people to know that they're not alone. Things can get better.

So as a team we decided to wear it loud, wear it proud, and support a world where all young people get the mental health support they need, when they need it.

If you or a young person are struggling with your mental health, you are not alone, and support is available.

Asking for help from an adult you trust is always okay.

The Young Minds website also has practical guidance to help you look after yourself as well as advice on how to get help.

Remember, your feelings are valid, and things can get better.

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk>



Ms Backhouse, Senior Outreach Worker

Links Academy Remembers



The eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month signifies the end of the First World War to all of the inhabitants of this country. It is a time and date that has been remembered since the end of that war and one that holds a special meaning for many here at Links Academy. This year it seemed appropriate to remember not just all of the many Armed Forces who have served their country in many conflicts, but also those of our own families. On the previous Friday Mr Allen had told us of his family's role as servicemen and their losses. Our display this year featured the Spitfire aircraft that was central to the victory in the air achieved during 'The Battle of Britain'.

Our service started with students and staff reading a poem written for an ex-soldier. Then we observed the two minutes' silence at eleven o'clock and listened to some music whilst each laying our own poppies. It was as always, a chance to gather to reflect, remember and to be grateful for all that we have. Both as individuals and as a community.



Mrs Heagren, D&T Teacher

MOVEMBER

Risking open ridicule, cold faces and bemused spouses, this year's LINKS team were proud to be taking part in the month of MOVEMBER.

Messrs Buckland, Bunn, Broadbridge and Boxer shaved down then sprouted forth to support the men's charity which operates in over 20 countries, worldwide.

Without a motorbike or wrestling ring in sight, the team nevertheless opted to grow *'The Handlebar'* moustache. This was not an official rule, but as Fleetwood Mac almost sang, 'you can Mo your own way'.



Fresh faces in Week 1.
No MO in sight...



Handlebar-tastic in Week 4.
...Faces full of fuzz.



Behind the Tashe - Men's health is in crisis. Men are dying on average 4.5 years earlier than women, and for largely preventable reasons.

MOVEMBER prioritises funding for the three biggest health issues facing men: **mental health and suicide prevention, prostate cancer and testicular cancer.**

The funds raised will impact men's health both locally and globally, uniting experts from around the world to collaborate on projects that will fundamentally change the way men in need are treated and supported. Over 1320 men's health projects have been funded so far.

More information is available at <https://uk.movember.com/>

At the time of publishing, the LINKS MAT Team had raised **£1000** for men's health charities. Many thanks to all our friends, family, students and colleagues who have supported us!

Mr Boxer, Healthy Lifestyles Lead

HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

It's that time of year again! The leaves are falling, the nights are drawing in and the last remaining smokers are huddling together for warmth around their glowing 'coffin nails'.

There have been political rumblings for some months that the smoking laws are due to change once again. Nothing has come into force yet, but the likelihood is that the legal age to purchase tobacco might be raised (potentially year on year), and public places where smokers can indulge their addiction will be further limited. And we know that the prices are going up and up and up...



So, what better time than **now** to embrace freedom from the 'evil weed' and join **STOPTOBER**?

The focus of this year's campaign is the fact that if a smoker makes it to 28 days smoke-free, they are **five times** more likely to quit for good.

- Since it first launched in 2012, Stoptober has helped over **2.5 million** people make a quit smoking attempt.
- Quitting smoking is the **best** thing you can do for your health.
- When you stop there are almost **immediate** improvements to your health.
- It's **never** too late to quit - even if you've tried quitting before, give it another go this Stoptober.

As an ex-smoker myself, I have felt the benefits of quitting on both my mental and physical health. Not to mention the **£3000** per year that no longer goes up in smoke. (Which, let's face it, could be spent on a family holiday instead.)

Finally, when young people claim that "everyone smokes" it's important to challenge this.

In fact, the number of adults smoking in the UK has fallen to just **12%**.

For advice and support, contact: **Hertfordshire Health Improvement Service**
0800 389 3 998.



HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Healthy Lifestyles Room

The start of term saw a new development at the Hixberry site, with the introduction of a designated Healthy Lifestyles Room. This provides a comfortable, cosy and relaxed space to host student one-to-one sessions. These can sometimes be difficult conversations, so holding them within a calming environment can be beneficial.



The 'outside-in' rainforest theme continues throughout the room.



Whilst Mr Boxer visits local schools, other colleagues are welcome to use the room.

To date, professionals from Services for Young People and the NHS Mental Health Support Team have taken this opportunity to speak with our LINKS students on a range of issues.

Health Resources

In addition to the 'counselling space', there are a wealth of health education resources available within the room.

On display currently are some drug education games and tobacco and alcohol awareness tools for students to explore and interact with.

Also around the room are medical artifacts from history, and numerous books, leaflets, and posters, covering many subjects: From sexual health guidance to knife crime, and from LGBT+ issues to medicines.

Local support services information is openly available.



Mr Boxer, Healthy Lifestyles Lead

HYGIENE BANK

Basic Hygiene is *NOT* a Privilege

The Secondary Outreach Team have continued their partnership with the Hygiene Bank to provide all our families with everyday hygiene and personal grooming products.

At The Hygiene Bank, they believe it is not right that feeling clean should be a luxury or a privilege for anyone in our society, yet many are living in poverty and cannot afford to stay clean. That is why their network of projects exists – to give people access to the basics they need.

The Hygiene Bank are a grassroots, people-powered charity and social movement, grounded in community. Their passion stems from the injustice that people may be unable to fully participate in society due to hygiene poverty. This is why they work to inspire social change.

What is Hygiene Poverty?

Many people locked in poverty or those who find themselves in times of crisis often experience restricted options. This leaves them caught between being able to heat their home, pay their rent, buy food or keep clean. Hygiene poverty can be shaming, humiliating and excluding and can result in social isolation. It can lead to a lack of confidence and can negatively affect good health and mental well-being which can impact early childhood development, learning, employability and social interaction.



HYGIENE BANK

- ⇒ It is struggling to wash your hair because you can't afford shampoo.
- ⇒ It is not being able to purchase deodorant because money is needed for the electric card.
- ⇒ It is not being able to replace a toothbrush when needed or sharing a toothbrush because one each just isn't an option.
- ⇒ It is being unable to change your baby's nappy as often as is needed and scraping out the contents before reapplying it.
- ⇒ It is washing hair, bodies, faces and clothes in the same cheap washing up liquid used for the dishes.
- ⇒ It is being housebound because you can't afford period protection or have to improvise with rolled up loo roll and socks.
- ⇒ It is having to choose between shaving foam and razors or the transport fare to a job interview.
- ⇒ It is going to school with matted hair because there is only one hairbrush in the household and there's no time for everyone to get a chance to use it.
- ⇒ It is not being able to launder clothes, school uniform and muddy sports kit when needed.
- ⇒ It is being 'judged' for living in an unclean home, because you can't afford the cost of household cleaning products.
- ⇒ It is being 'judged' for living in an unclean home, because you can't afford the cost of household cleaning products.

We will continue to work with the Hygiene Bank to support our students and their families - basic hygiene is not a privilege, it's not right that anyone should experience hygiene poverty. Everyone deserves to be able to care for themselves and their families. We know access to hygiene products is key to anyone's health and wellbeing.



Ms Backhouse, Senior Outreach Worker

Links Outreach Manager Mrs Haynes and Higher-Level Outreach Worker Ms Backhouse attended the first Pastoral Hub of this Academic year in October. The event was hosted by Townsend school with many of the schools we support across St Albans and Harpenden attending. It's always a great networking opportunity and great to see so many familiar faces.

Guest speakers this term included TLC, NESSie, Youth Talk, and Sandbox.

TLC - Talk, Listen, Change:



TLC believe that safe, healthy and happy relationships are the bedrock of good emotional wellbeing.

They strive for everyone within their reach to enjoy personal resilience and benefit from positive relationships.

Over their 40-year history, they've helped thousands of adults, children and families. As their organisation continues to grow, they aim to expand their reach across the whole of England and extend support to even more people.

TLC offer a diverse range of services to help you maintain positive relationships with yourself and those around you.

They've proudly supported people for over 40 years and won several awards. Their core aim is to ensure that everyone within their reach benefits from safe, healthy and happy relationships.

For more information, please visit: <https://talklistenchange.org.uk/>

NESSie:

DSPL7 The Hub

Our Children, Our Area



Delivering Special
Provision Locally

NESSie aims to provide therapeutic support for children in Y2-Y7 who may:

- ⇒ show signs of developing Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)
- ⇒ be on reduced timetables because of anxiety
- ⇒ have trauma and attachment needs that impact on attendance

NESSie provide art therapies (Art, Drama and Music), using creativity and imagination to improve mental health and are particularly helpful to those who prefer a less verbal approach. Children and young people use drama, music or art to explore, express, reflect and recover from difficult or challenging events. Art therapist are clinicians and are registered and regulated in the UK.

Making a referral

NESSie supports children in years 2-7 with moderate mental health difficulties whose needs cannot be better met by another service and fall within the Local Authority's priority areas. Referrals are only accepted from schools and parent consent is needed.

Before making a referral, both the parent and school should complete the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire and upload the forms to the referral portal. The information in the questionnaire will help the therapist decide whether NESSie is the right service for the young person.

Youth Talk

Youth Talk provide free, confidential psychodynamic counselling for young people age 13-25 in St Albans and surrounding areas.



Since 1997 thousands of young people have trusted Youth Talk to help them. Young people face unprecedented demands, disruptions and uncertainties and the demand for their free, confidential counselling service has reached unprecedented and worrying new heights. As a result, Youth Talk have launched a new strategy to respond to the significant challenges we are facing, which includes:

Vision: Every young person can talk to someone who can help with whatever's worrying them

Mission: To provide the best possible mental health support to young people in St Albans and surrounding areas

Values:

- ⇒ We are open and accepting
- ⇒ We always give our best
- ⇒ We are stronger together

For more information, please visit: <https://youthtalk.org.uk/>

Sandbox

The Sandbox is an NHS-funded service to support children and young people in South Staffordshire and Hertfordshire with their mental health and well-being. In addition to providing NHS-funded support, The Sandbox is a central place for resources about common mental health issues, with information on how to access additional support or emergency services. The Sandbox is for Children and Young People struggling with their mental health.

This service is available for anyone registered with a GP in either South Staffordshire or Hertfordshire. Sandbox are an online only service so are not suitable for certain more severe mental health issues or for people who are in crisis.

For more information, please visit: <https://thesandbox.mindler.co.uk/#:~:text=The%20Sandbox%20is%20for%20Children%20and%20Young%20People,issues%20or%20for%20people%20who%20are%20in%20crisis.>

SECONDARY OUTREACH TEAM

The secondary Outreach Team have had a busy start to the new Academic year, 2024-25 covering 25 schools across St Albans, Harpenden, Welwyn, Hatfield and Hertsmere, supporting students in their existing mainstream settings.

The team of four, managed by Fiona Haynes, provide a pivotal role providing a service that supports schools in understanding and developing practical and creative strategies to enable students with social and emotional needs and challenging behaviour, to become more successful learners in school.

The outreach teamwork with school staff, parents/carers and the students to help:

- ⇒ To reengage disaffected pupils in their mainstream school
- ⇒ To support students on reintegration or managed moves
- ⇒ To engage and work with parents/careers in their child's educational provision

The Outreach Team use their knowledge and skills to provide practical interventions within mainstream settings and have a proven track record in successfully supporting and enabling schools to aid students with social emotional and mental health needs to find practical, creative ways to meet the needs of the school and students alike.

The team provide 1-1 support developed to suit the needs of the individual bespoke group work.

As a team, they work to support the emotional wellbeing and behaviour of young people promoting a holistic approach to understanding and supporting the emotional wellbeing, engagement and behaviour of learners.



Ms Backhouse, Senior Outreach Worker

ACTIVITIES & TRIPS

Boxing

Mr Broadridge, PE & Science Teacher

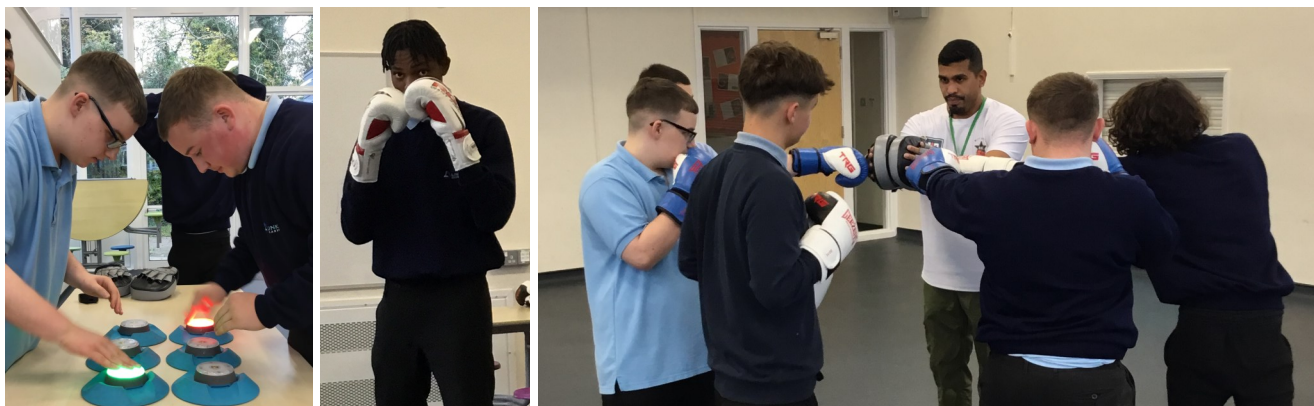
Links Academy students have had several boxing sessions with a coach called Joseph. The focus has not just been on strength and power but also mental resilience and teamwork. These sessions are designed to challenge students both physically and mentally.

The sessions have been as much about skill as they have about power, so students are taught the fundamentals of footwork, punches, and defensive positions. Drills have been done with partners, where one student practices attacking while the other defends. This helps students develop precision and control, ensuring they can box safely and effectively.

Joseph has focused on teaching the students the proper stance, the right technique for jabs and ways to dodge or block punches. Emphasis is also placed on breathing and maintaining composure under pressure.

Boxing can help students manage stress, frustration, and anger in a constructive manner.

The safety of the students has been paramount. The focus is not on competitive fighting but on fitness and personal development. The sessions are closely supervised by Joseph who ensures that students understand the importance of listening and being safe.



Mock GCSE's 2024

As we approach the end of the term, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the recent Mock Exams held in November. I'm pleased to share that they were a great achievement! Our students demonstrated commendable dedication by attending many of the exams and arriving punctually. It was lovely to see how seriously they took this opportunity, adhering to the exam rules and approaching each paper with focus and determination.

I would like to extend my congratulations to all the students for their hard work during this busy period and to thank the parents for your continued support in helping your children prepare and stay motivated.

As the festive season begins, we wish you all a joyful and restful Christmas break. Here's to a successful year ahead!

Mrs Ulucay, Trust Exams and Data Officer

ACTIVITIES & TRIPS

Leavesden Studios Trip

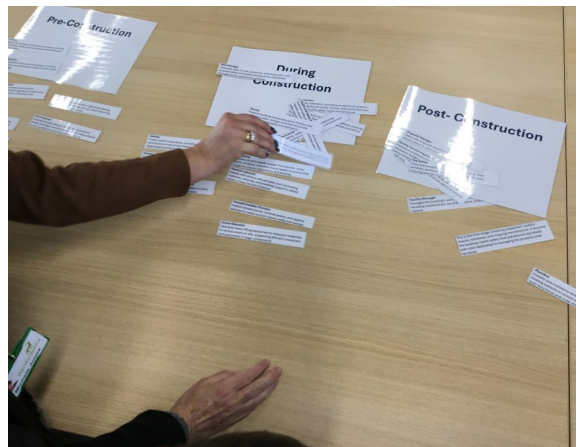
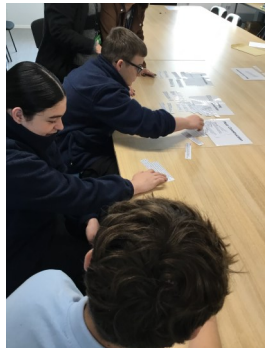
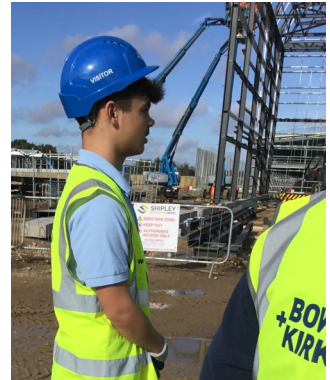
Visiting the construction site at Leavesden was an eye-opening experience, offering a firsthand view of the intricate processes and teamwork involved in building infrastructure. The visit began with a safety briefing, highlighting the importance of wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) such as helmets, gloves, reflective vests, and steel-toe boots.

A safety officer outlined potential hazards, including falling debris, heavy machinery, and uneven surfaces.

In one section, a team of workers assembled a huge steel structure for what appeared to be the skeleton of a large sound stage.

A brief conversation with the site manager provided insights into the challenges faced daily - from unpredictable weather affecting timelines to ensuring materials arrive on schedule. The manager emphasized the importance of communication and adaptability, traits that keep the project on track.

The visit was more than just observing buildings being erected; it is an opportunity to witness all the different parts that are needed for the project to be a success. It gave the students a deeper appreciation for the hard work and planning that go into creating the structures we often take for granted.



Mr Broadridge, PE & Science Teacher

ACTIVITIES AND TRIPS

Orbital Jump, Luton

Our Key Stage 3 students went on a range of exciting trips and visits 18-21st November 2024.

Some pictures of the beautiful flower decorations can be seen here at Amaravati Buddhist monastery, where we spoke with one of the nuns about her life and having no possessions at all, only what she is given by others. We also ate some delicious vegetarian foods, donated by people to the monastery and cooked by volunteers and we washed our own plates and dishes!

As a final reward for all our good behaviour and cooperation this week, we went to Orbital trampoline park in Luton and had a great time, chasing each other around and challenging teachers and each other to duels.

Well done to all the Key Stage 3 students who came on the trips and behaved really well and asked some great questions at the places of worship.



Ms Daly, Art Teacher

ELF-TIVITIES THIS CHRISTMAS

This year, across our St Albans sites, the students have taken part in some fantastic Christmas activities.

'Elfie' has been working hard at Woollam to create amusing, creative scenes. Cedars and Inclusion students have loved coming in everyday to find Elfie up to all sorts of mischief. From swallowing too much bubblegum, to lamp-bathing, to baking, Elfie has been making his presence known around the site.



At our Hixberry site, our students and staff have shown that you're never too grown up to participate in Christmas shenanigans. Our students search for Elfie throughout the day and manage to find incredibly imaginative hiding spots for the little fella! From being taped to classroom windows, to being hidden in an air fryer, our students have absolutely loved taking part in the festivities.



Miss Hamilton-Mason, Receptionist

It has been an enjoyable and varied term for me working across the Trust, spending time with all of our students and meeting some new faces along the way. To all our students, I hope you enjoy a break from school and I look forward to seeing you again in 2025. For now, I'll leave you with some words of advice to keep you safe over the winter break. As the school's Police Community Support Officer, I feel it is my duty to do so.

Layer up. It's hard to predict the weather these days. We're having to adjust to sudden and extreme weather conditions so during winter we can go from mild weather to snow and ice in the blink of an eye. With this in mind, if you're outside on a cold day, makes sure to wear plenty of layers to keep yourself warm.

Beware of ice. If we do experience snow and ice this winter then by all means, enjoy the snow but beware of the ice! Slipping on ice can cause a great deal of harm and can be hard to spot too, so tread carefully.

Charge your phone. If you know you're going to be out or away from home for a long time, make sure you've got plenty of charge on your phone and that you have the means to charge your phone when you need to. It's so important that you're able to be reachable and be able to contact people when you need to.

Stick together. It gets darker quicker in the winter, don't be caught out going it alone when it's dark. There is safety in numbers.

Tell people where you are going. Make sure a friend, guardian or family member knows where you are going, who you are meeting and let them know when you'll be home again.

Lock up your bikes. I know many of you like to get out and about on your bikes and I also know that there is nothing a thief likes more than a stray bike, left unattended with no lock to keep it secure. If you have invested a lot of money in your bike, then the last thing you

Be SMART online. Your generation are way more tech savvy than any other, however this does not always prevent bad things from happening online. So...

- ⇒ Stay safe by not giving out your personal information to people you don't know.
- ⇒ Meeting up with someone you have only been in touch with online can be dangerous. Either don't do it or go with friends/a trusted adult, never alone.
- ⇒ Accepting emails, texts, files, pictures or links from people you don't know can cause problems. If it looks dodgy then it probably is. Delete it, report it, be done with it.
- ⇒ Reliable? Check information before you believe it. There are so many apps/sites/social media platforms where we can get our information from, make sure that what you are seeing and hearing is actually true.

Avoid anti-social behaviour. Enjoy your winter break, have fun but please remember to be considerate of others and respectful of your surroundings. Negative behaviour will always have a negative impact on others, positive behaviour is very much likely to have a positive impact on others and yourself.

Avoid derelict buildings. Each year we receive reports of anti-social behaviour, fires being started and general nuisance in and around derelict buildings. They are extremely dangerous and unstable structures. Anybody entering them is putting themselves at great risk of serious injury or worse still, death.

Don't carry knives. If, over the winter break, you find yourself in a situation where your safety is at risk, e.g. someone has a knife or weapon, don't put yourself in danger. Tell your friends you are leaving and don't be persuaded to stay. Get away. If you need a place of safety, make sure it is a well-lit area with members of the public around and tell a responsible adult e.g. parent, police or neighbour.

Trust your instincts. If something doesn't feel right, even if you can't pinpoint why, talk to your mates and walk away from a situation that makes you feel uneasy.

Stay safe,

PCSO Richard Bunn



Mr Bunn, PCSO