

Links Journal

Summer Term



Dear Parents and Carers

As we close out another school year, we want to extend our heartfelt thanks to each of you for your continued support, enthusiasm, and partnership. Together, we've created a vibrant and nurturing environment where our children have had the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive.

From classroom to extracurricular adventures, it has truly been a year full of meaningful moments and memorable experiences. We are so proud of everything our children have accomplished—and we're grateful to the entire school community for making it all possible.

Wishing you a joyful and restful summer!

Kind regards

Charlotte Brown

Ms Brown
Head of School



School Calendar

Summer Term Ends

Friday 18 July 2025

@ 12.30pm

Summer Break

Monday 21 July —
2 September 2025

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Autumn Term

INSET DAYS

Wednesday 3—
Thursday 4 September
2025

No Children in school

Student Parent Review Day

Friday 5 September 2025

Form Tutors will arrange
a convenient time to
meet with parents &
children

Term Starts

Monday 8 September
2025

Half Term

Monday 27 October —
Friday 31 October 2025

Year 11 GCSE Results Day

Thursday 21 August 2025

School will be open for Year 11 Leavers to collect their exam results from
10 am to 12 noon. If you are unable to collect your results on this day please
email : admin@linksacademy.herts.sch.uk

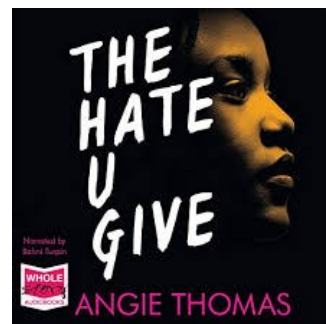
Links Academy welcomes comments from parents/carers
and families about any aspect of school life.

Please contact us via our email admin@linksacademy.herts.sch.uk
www.linksacademytrust.herts.sch.uk to view Ofsted reports, key dates, journals and school
information

This term, students across all year groups have continued to develop their skills in English through a variety of reading and writing tasks. Our Year 11 students worked particularly hard in the lead-up to their GCSE exams, focusing on planning, timing, and structuring their responses effectively.

In Key Stage 3, students have also started exploring a new contemporary text which has sparked thoughtful discussion and strong engagement.

It's been encouraging to see how many of our learners have connected with the themes and characters, and how this has helped build their confidence in both written and spoken English. They have also written a newspaper article based on a key event in the text, demonstrating their ability to express ideas clearly and with purpose.



LINKS REVIEW

www.madeupwebpage.com 28th April 2025 £2.75

Young local teen boy shot dead by police officer



Community says "end racism"

Written by Billy Bob

Last night a black local teenage boy was shot dead in Garden Heights by a white officer.

The officer believed the teen had a weapon, but it has been confirmed by local authorities that there was no weapon on him and in fact it was a hairbrush.

The original reason that the teen was pulled over was for his indicators. We know this because we have a witness to the shooting.

Ashley Brown, our witness reported that "the police sirens was loud. I decided to see what was happening. I seen two young teens, around the age of 16 getting pulled over. One was asked to exit the vehicle and keep their hands on top of the car. When the officer turned around the driver grabbed a hairbrush and was talking to the passenger before getting shot twice by the officer.

The police have responded to the public saying "we are still investigating this case. We can't say much at this time. What we do know is it happened between 9pm and 10pm last night."

The community has protested as another witness says she had seen how long it took for an ambulance to be called. "I saw that it took over an hour for an ambulance to be phoned for. The officer looked panicked as if he didn't know what to do". These allegations have caused a spark of outrage in the community.



By T. H.

News Review

www.madeupwebpage.com 28th April 2025 £2.75

Young black teen boy shot dead after fatal gun wound



Community say "protest all over the world"

Written by Abdullah Ahmed

Two weeks ago in Brooklyn, a young black teen was shot dead by a police officer. His name was Alexander Reynolds. He was coming back home from a party he was with his friend. They were driving home they were stopped by a white police officer.

Alexander was mistaken for having a gun when actually it was a hairbrush. The police officer thought Alexander had a gun when he shot him.

The community has reacted, some have said "The cop that shot Alexander Reynolds done it because he is against black people". The community says the police officer should be fired. They plan to hold a city-wide gathering as a protest.

One witness reported "I saw a boy get shot dead in Brooklyn at 22:27 on Friday".

Another witness told us "I saw the teen fastly pull out a hairbrush and then the white officer just shot him dead".

There have been deaths of 50 black males in Garden Heights because of racism in the police service.

The police have repeatedly responded "we cannot comment at this time" in the conference room to all questions.

The community want answers. This is a sad day in Garden Heights.




Across the board, we've seen students making positive steps, whether through improved focus, greater participation in class, or a willingness to complete more extended pieces of writing. We're proud of their efforts and look forward to continuing this progress into the next term.

Ms Ross, Teacher of English

What a wonderful and constructive year it has been!

It only seems like yesterday that we were writing our entry for the first term of the year, yet, here we are now in our final term before ending another school year. The academic year has flown by, in which, we have seen many successes and memories made by/with the students here at Woollam.

In English this term at Woollam, we have been continuing to focus on moving our late Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 children through their Functional Skills English qualification and studying for our new GCSE 2.0 exams. The Year 11's have been focusing on exam techniques, whilst the Year 10's have been working towards their Functional Skills qualifications, completing the necessary reading, writing, and speaking and listening elements one by one. Our Key Stage 3 children have been studying texts such as Stone Cold and using them to develop their love of reading. We continue to also adapt our learning context to suit the interests of our students as much as possible, further helping to engage them in the right learning behaviours.



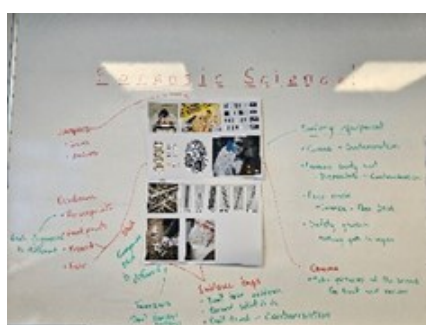
If 1 chicken costs £30(c) and 1 duck costs £50(d) and you buy 3 chickens and 2 ducks, how much have you spent? $3c + 2d = £160$ ALGEBRA!

Despite being the most loathed topic in maths, our students have been exploring the world of Algebra and thoroughly enjoying it. "Why does math have to mix letters with numbers?" is a common question I get, but it is only asked because students are not taught the real meaning behind algebra and how we use it every day in our lives, therefore, creating a negative perspective towards the topic. We have been working hard to debunk these myths and expose our students to the factual reality that maths is within every aspect of our daily lives. With our hard work in the class, our students have persevered and demonstrated such aspiration for their future by undertaking the Functional Skills Qualifications in maths to expand the opportunities that will be available to them in the future.

Alongside English and maths, we have been encouraging diverse learning opportunities, something our team is driven about providing. From exploring the world of science and working towards the students entry level certificate, to cooking and baking a range of recipes in the kitchen, as well as discussing creating healthy lifestyles for themselves outside of school.

We have encouraged learning around key celebrations such as the 40th Anniversary of VE Day and Anzac Day. We hope these are new experiences for the young people we support and provides great opportunities for them to broaden their view of the world.

We want to wish our students and their families a wonderful and restful Summer break.



Mr Holgate

The Summer term at Cedars has been an exciting one. Although we have to say 'goodbye' to four of our wonderful students, we are so proud of the progress they have all made and wish them all a successful return to their mainstream schools. We also look forward to welcoming new fantastic children to our class in September. Throughout the term, we have had plenty of time to enjoy the sunshine, soaking up the sun with the occasional ice lolly treat. Although we have welcomed the summer sun, our children have also been working exceptionally hard in all areas of their learning.

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: Eco School, PSHE, PE, Art, Science and Food Tech.

We also incorporate time for sensory input, Phonics, Epic Reading, Circle Time and outdoor activities.

Our timetable this term can be seen below:

- * Soft Start
- * English
- * Circle Time
- * BREAK
- * Snack
- * Reading
- * Alert Activity
- * Maths
- * Outdoor Activity
- * Sensory
- * Lunch Play
- * LUNCHTIME
- * Topic (Eco school, PSHE, PE, Art, Science)
- * Golden Time
- * Story



English

Each term, our English lessons are based around a carefully chosen book, allowing children to engage with a range of texts and authors. At the beginning of each unit, we explore the book in depth, encouraging discussion and prediction before gradually incorporating key grammar elements linked to the story.



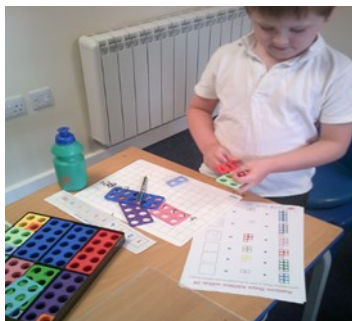
This term, we have studied *George's Marvellous Medicine*, where students had the exciting opportunity to create their own "medicine," sparking creativity and descriptive language. To develop their use of adjectives, students participated in interactive stations including "Touch and Describe," dressing up Grandma, and playing an adjective dice game.

We also tapped into the cohort's enthusiasm for video games by giving students the chance to design their own game character. This activity was paired with lessons on writing commands, as they created missions for their characters to complete, linking grammar to a topic they are passionate about.

Later in the term, we explored *Mr Stink*, where students demonstrated their understanding of the story by recreating scenes using recycled materials. Alongside this, they learned how to use fronted adverbials to describe when, where, or how events occur, applying this skill to describe scenes and actions in the book.



Maths



In Maths, we have focused on building strong foundational understanding through a range of hands-on, practical activities. Key concepts have been explored through visual and tactile resources, allowing students to make meaningful connections and deepen their number sense.

We began with place value, using Dienes blocks to support children in understanding the structure of numbers, specifically hundreds, tens and ones. This concrete approach helped students to visualise and partition numbers effectively, laying the groundwork for more complex number work.

To support fluency in number bonds, we used counters and numicon to reinforce combinations that make ten. Children practised with example problems, using physical manipulatives to develop a clear sense of number relationships and mental calculation strategies.

In our shape unit, students explored both 2D and 3D shapes through a variety of models and construction activities. This enabled them to identify key properties such as edges, vertices and faces, and to distinguish between flat and solid shapes through direct interaction. We also introduced the concept of direction through a fun and active obstacle course.



Students worked in pairs to guide each other using positional and directional language, which brought terms like “left,” “right,” “forwards,” and “quarter turn” to life in a purposeful and memorable way.

Finally, our work on volume and capacity was delivered through a series of exploratory stations. Activities such as “Pour and Predict,” “Fill It Fast,” and “What Container for What Purpose?” allowed children to investigate measurement in real-world contexts, comparing and estimating volume using a variety of containers.



These practical experiences not only reinforced mathematical concepts but also encouraged collaboration, problem-solving and communication—essential skills that underpin lifelong numeracy.

Topic

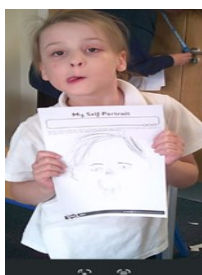
Our topic lessons this term have offered a rich and varied learning experience, combining creativity, practical skills, and personal development across a range of subject areas.

As part of our **Eco Schools** focus, students took on the challenge of designing and creating a bug hotel using recycled materials. This hands-on project encouraged environmental awareness, problem-solving, and teamwork, while also supporting our school's commitment to sustainability.

In **PSHE**, we explored the theme of kindness through the story *A Little Spot of Kindness*. Pupils reflected on their own actions and shared examples of how they have shown kindness to others, promoting empathy, positive relationships, and emotional literacy.

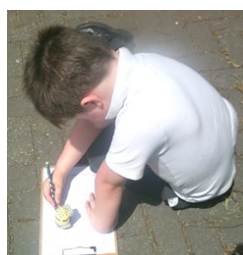


PE lessons this term centred around teamwork and collaboration through a series of engaging team-building games. A standout moment came during a particularly hot week, when students took part in a water transfer challenge. Using cups, sponges, and balancing containers on their heads, they explored creative and cooperative ways to move water—developing coordination, communication, and a lot of laughter along the way.



In **Art**, we explored the theme of identity through self-portraits. A memorable part of this unit involved using a range of mixed materials to create textured, expressive portraits of their own faces, allowing students to experiment with colour, form, and personal expression.

Cooking sessions focused on building life skills, particularly cutting and chopping safely. A key activity involved making apple crumble, giving students the opportunity to practise their preparation techniques while learning about food hygiene and healthy eating.



In **Science**, we investigated light and shadows, focusing on how the position of a light source affects the size and shape of shadows. Pupils experimented by moving the light source closer and further away, recording their observations and discussing the results in relation to real-world phenomena.



Finally, we were fortunate to take part in the **Mini Police** programme—a truly special opportunity for our pupils. Students learned about community roles and responsibilities, tried on real police uniforms, and even took part in a bleep test to experience some of the physical challenges involved in police work.

Through these topic lessons, students have developed a broad range of skills—from environmental stewardship and emotional awareness to scientific inquiry and physical fitness—while building confidence, curiosity, and a strong sense of community.

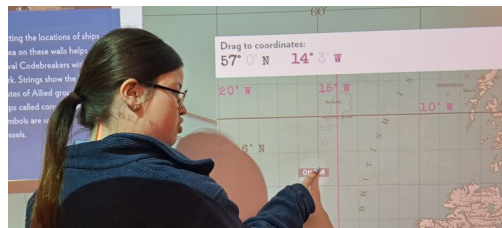
Bletchley Park

What an exciting trip to Bletchley Park where the secret code breakers in England managed to decode the Enigma machine used by the Germans to send messages of attack plans.

We visited the underground bunker where all the secret paperwork was kept, and students were able to work out coordinates on a map of ship locations.

We were able to see and hear actual footage of the people that worked there, we even visited the mansion with its massive staircase and ballroom.

To be in the place where the first computer was invented was very special with most students saying they would like to go again.



Ms Trotman, Teacher of Science

Thorpe Park

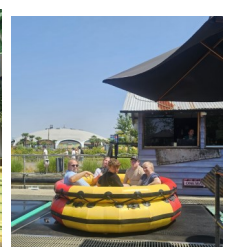
As part of our end-of-year activities, on Thursday 19 June 2025 the Year 11 leavers visited Thorpe Park.

The weather was very warm and sunny, and everyone made good use of the water rides to cool down!

We experienced many thrills on rides, including the Hyperia was one of the last rides they ventured on, it is a record-breaking rollercoaster at Thorpe Park, UK, opening in 2024 as the tallest and fastest in the UK. It stands at 236 feet tall and reaches speeds over 80 mph. The children loved this one. It was wonderful to see the student's resilience in taking up this challenge.

It was a fantastic day out and a great opportunity to reward those Year 11s for their hard work and dedication during the GCSE exam period.

The students behaved brilliantly throughout the day. It was a pleasure taking them out and we were very proud of the way they represented Links Academy.



Mr Marland, Teacher of English

Fishing Thursdays at Moor Mill Fishery

Thursday afternoons have taken on a new rhythm lately, with peaceful sessions spent at Moor Mill Fishery, just outside St Albans. The experience was arranged through our contact at SEGRO, who now manage the beautiful lakes on-site.

Our student angler already has some solid experience in the fishing game, so Mr Broadbridge didn't feel too out of his depth joining the adventure!

While the first visit didn't yield any fish (with a grand total of zero caught), it still proved to be a calm and rewarding introduction to the venue.



We were met by Mick on arrival, who kindly guided us to a quiet swim tucked beneath some low-hanging trees. The site was serene—surrounded by wildlife, still water, and the occasional ripple hinting at fish moving below the surface. We spent the first session targeting carp, but with limited time, success was elusive.

Learning from that outing, we returned the following week with a new plan: light float setups and maggots in the hopes of attracting silver fish. This time, our efforts paid off. Eight small roach were caught in quick succession, sparking smiles all round.

Although there were no record-breaking catches, the sessions have become a welcome opportunity to unwind—simply sitting by the water, listening to birdsong, and watching the float bob gently in the breeze.

Fishing, after all, is about more than landing the biggest fish. It teaches patience, focus, and how to appreciate the pace of nature. A big thank you to SEGRO and Mick for making these afternoons possible—we're already looking forward to the next one.

Mr Broadbridge, Teacher of PE



Natural History Museum



The Natural History Museum was a wonder for the students to explore. They enjoyed talking about the wide variety of animals on display.

They compared species, and discussed size and pattern variations. They freely explored the space, spending their time where it held their interest.

Overall, the students engaged well with the museum, representing the school positively, it was a pleasure to accompany them.

Miss Coulson, Teacher of Maths

Extra-Curricular Activities

Graveley Fruit Farm

Pupils recently enjoyed an unforgettable day out at Graveley Fruit Farm, combining outdoor fun, adventure, and fresh countryside air. The trip offered students the chance to explore beyond the classroom and take part in a variety of exciting activities.

The highlight of the day was the range of attractions designed to challenge and thrill. Students took turns racing around the on-site go-kart track, cheering on classmates and practicing their driving skills.

Another standout feature was the exhilarating zip wire, which gave pupils the chance to soar through the air and enjoy a bird's-eye view of the farm grounds. Meanwhile, the inflatable pillow trampoline provided endless laughter and energy-burning entertainment, as children bounced high and shared giggles with friends.

In addition to the adrenaline-pumping activities, the group also took time to enjoy the farm's scenic surroundings and learn a little about local agriculture. The day ended with tired feet, happy faces, and plenty of stories to share.



Harvester



Our Cedar students enjoyed a delightful school outing to the Harvester restaurant, accompanied by staff and a wonderfully inclusive atmosphere. The trip was made even more special by the presence of one of our inclusion students, who shone as a fantastic role model throughout the day—demonstrating kindness, patience, and enthusiasm that set a positive tone for the group.

As we settled into the cozy setting of the Harvester, excitement grew as students explored a wide range of delicious options on the menu. From juicy chicken to cheesy pizza, everyone found something they loved. The side of chips was a particular favourite, with students eagerly tucking in and sharing laughter over their meals.

The trip ended on a sweet note with a round of ice creams, bringing big smiles all around. It was a joyful experience that not only filled our bellies but also strengthened friendships and celebrated the importance of inclusion.

We look forward to more shared adventures like this one!

Mr Taylor, Teacher of PSB

GCSE Exams 2025

As the GCSE exam season comes to a close, we would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all our students on their hard work, commitment and positive attitude over the past few weeks.



Sitting exams is never easy, but the students approached each day with resilience, maturity and strong sense of responsibility. Their punctuality and attendance were very good throughout the exam period, and we are incredibly proud of the way they conducted themselves.

On behalf of the school, we wish every student the very best of luck as they await their results. We hope they achieve everything they've worked so hard for and are able to take the next exciting steps in their journey, whether that's further education, training or employment.

We look forward to seeing many of you on **Results Day: Thursday 21 August 2025**, when results will be available to collect between **10 am – 12 noon** at **Hixberry Lane site**. If you are unable to collect your results, please contact the office.

Well done to all – you have done yourselves proud!



Mrs Ulucay, Trust Exams Officer

Year 11 Leavers Celebrations

I would like to say a big thank you to all staff, students and parents/carers for such a wonderful event. The weather was on our side and it was lovely to see so many people turning out to celebrate the successes of the Year 11 and their time with us at Links Academy.

Well deserved!

Please do not forget us — you know where we are. We are always interested in what you are up to and your future achievements.



Mrs Brown, Head of School



Links Outreach Manager Fiona Haynes and Outreach Worker Sarah Shaw attended the last Pastoral Hub of the academic year, hosted by Townsend School.

Pastoral teams from the thirteen secondary schools across St Albans and Harpenden were invited to meet a variety of agencies and organisations, share knowledge and offer specialist support to Pastoral school staff.

Agencies represented included:

Hertfordshire Virtual School

Virtual School bring together information about young people who are looked after in Hertfordshire. They track the progress of each young person, supporting with interventions where needed.

Virtual School champion the needs of looked after young people, ensuring they have the best possible education and every chance to realise their potential.



Jo Chapman, Senior Practitioner WSA Mental Health Support Team

Jo and her team meet with young people in schools to address their mental health needs. They offer support with Emotional Based School Non-Attendance and other behaviours linked to mental health.

HCC Services for Young people

HCC Services for Young people provide youth work, information, advice, guidance, work related learning, outdoor education and wider support for young people. Most of their work is with those aged 13 to 19 and up to 24 for young people with learning disabilities and care experienced young people.

Services for
Young People

Youth Talk

Youth Talk provide free, confidential counselling to 13–25-year-olds in St Albans and the surrounding areas. Their Vision is that every young person can talk to someone who can help with whatever's worrying them. Their Mission is to provide the best possible mental health support to young people in St Albans and surrounding areas



Herts Young Homeless

Herts Young Homeless offer education, advice and support for 16-24 year olds facing homelessness. Their vision is for every young person to have a home from which they can grow and thrive. Their mission is to break the cycle of youth homelessness in Hertfordshire.

The event was well attended by professionals from St Albans and Harpenden schools. The event provided interesting and exciting learning opportunities, as well as an opportunity to promote The Links Academy.



Ms Shaw, Secondary Outreach Worker

Thank you—£50 raised!

Our latest Bag 2 School event raised £50 with donations from staff and students. We have purchased a wormery for the school and will look to purchase another shortly.



We will be holding further Bag 2 School fundraisers in November 2025 and May 2026 and we look forward to receiving lots of donations to help raise funds for the school.

Further details to follow.



Mrs Brown, Head of School

RAAC OPENING

You will be aware that in September 2023 the Government informed us that the main Admin block at our Hixberry Lane site was identified to have had RAAC and this facility was closed immediately.

After a lot of work the Department for Education agreed to refund the removal of the RAAC and the restoration of the building to its 'former glory'. I am pleased to inform you that after this work was completed Daisy Cooper MP agreed to re-open the building on Thursday, 24 April 2025.

I would personally like to take this opportunity to thank Daisy Cooper MP for her ongoing support with this matter.

For further reading please follow the attached link:

<https://www.hertsad.co.uk/news/25112696.mp-daisy-cooper-reopens-links-academy-building-raac-closure/>

Mr Allen, CEO



Everyone has 'mental health', just as we all have 'physical health'. And like our physical health, there are times when our mental health is better than others. We all know prevention is better than cure.

Since 2001, the Mental Health Foundation has been leading Mental Health Awareness Week - bringing the UK together to focus on getting good mental health. This year, the week takes place from **12 to 18 May 2025** and the theme is '**community**'.



Mental Health Awareness Week this year, is all about celebrating the power and importance of community.

Being part of a safe, positive community is vital for our mental health and wellbeing. We thrive when we have strong connections with other people and supportive communities that remind us, we are not alone. Communities can provide a sense of belonging, safety, support in hard times, and give us a sense of purpose.

The community at Woollam turned Woollam Green in support of good mental health, by going green, we are supporting the Mental Health Foundation carry out vital research and deliver programmes for different communities.

Here are our top tips for looking after your mental health:

Focus on the things you enjoy. This could be an existing hobby or something brand new that you wanted to have a go at. Try creating things (e.g. drawing, painting, writing, crafting), playing games or puzzles, decorating, or spending time watching or creating content on social media or streaming sites.

Set limits on the news and social media. While it is good to stay informed, media coverage of world and UK events can also be overwhelming and make us anxious and worried. Experiment to find the balance of news and media coverage that works for you. YoungMinds has information on how to have a more positive experience online. <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/coping-with-life/social-media-and-mental-health>

Connect with others. Find time regularly to connect with friends, family, classmates, co-workers or others. It can help you all feel more connected. Try different ways of keeping in touch to find the ones that work best (e.g. video calls, quizzes or games with friends). If you use video calls for work or study, you might want to try something else for socialising: an online watch party where you all stream the same film and chat together, for example, or simply a phone call.

Find your routine. Try to find a routine that is realistic, flexible, and includes some fun. There are many ways to do this, so experiment with what works best for you. The proper routine for you might look different from someone else's, and that's okay! Try picking three things to do daily, breaking your day into chunks, or planning regular mealtimes and bedtimes.

If your young person is struggling with their mental health, encourage them to talk - talk to us - we have a team of Mental Health First Aiders on site.

#TeamGreen

#WoollamGreen

#WollamCommunity

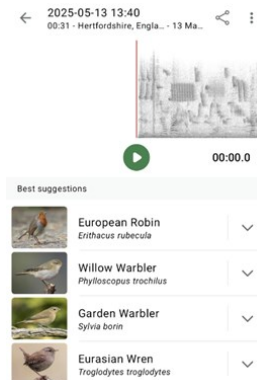


As part of our on-going efforts to take care of the environment and meet our Eco School aims, we have been very busy with a few projects. Firstly, we have collected kilos and kilos of textiles and clothes for recycling. We managed to raise £50 from this, which will be used to buy a wormery. the wormery is a great resource for recycling food waste and also as a learning resource in science. If you'd like to create your own wormery and other great projects, you can find out how, here:

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2020/05/how-to-make-a-wormery/>

Secondly, we took all our KS3 and Year 10 students on a nature trip to Heartwood Forest. We were able to find caterpillars, moths and butterflies. We learnt which tree is which from looking at the leaves and walked through the trees and sculptures to improve our wellbeing. We also used the Merlin Bird App to identify different birds in the woodland from their songs. You can find the Merlin Bird App here, if you would like to try this for yourselves: <https://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/>

Later this term, we are planning to make a pond in school, with the help of students, to create more habitats for wildlife and encourage frogs, toads and newts to thrive. If you have any pond plants or things to donate, please get in touch with Ms Daly and / or Mr Broadbridge.



Ms Daly, Teacher of Art

Attendance at Links Academy – 2024/25 Highlights!

This time last year Links Academy were preparing for and sharing the news of the new legislation and National Framework for Penalty Notices for school absence, including unauthorised holiday with all parents and carers.

It's been a busy year, with a new Attendance Policy, Absence Procedure and webpage being implemented across the Trust, July now gives Links Academy the opportunity to review and explore any adaptations to procedures and processes in line with the legislation, ready for the start of the 2025/26 academic year in September.

Of course, some things will remain unchanged:

- * Threshold of **10 unauthorised sessions** (previously 15 sessions) for any reason (equivalent to **5 school days**) within a rolling 10 school week period for when a penalty notice must be considered.
- * **No longer** be able to take your child out of school for **one week's holiday without a penalty notice being issued.**
- * The penalty fine is increasing **from £60 to £80 if paid in 21 days.** If the fine is not paid by the first 21 days, it will rise to **£160 if paid within 28 days** of being issued.
- * Should a second penalty fine be issued to the same parent for the same child within a **3-year rolling period**, the fine will automatically rise to £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80. Should your child move school during this 3-year period, the previous school action will still apply.
- * If there is a third offence in a 3-year rolling period, the Local Authority will need to consider other enforcement options available to them.

What have Links Academy seen this year?

An increase in the number of penalty notices issued for unauthorised holidays.



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Links Academy are no longer able to authorise student absences due to holidays and must be notified of any term-time absences.

If there are exceptional circumstances to be considered for a term-time absence, this must be requested in advance, either by email or by completing the '*Application for Leave of Absence from School during term time*' available on-line and/or at school.

A gradual decline over the year, in the number of communications initiated by parents/carers to school reporting their child's absence.

Parent/carers must notify Links Academy of any student absence or lateness by 9.30am on the first day or absence and subsequent days.

If your child's school provision starts at an agreed later point during the day, parent/carers still must notify Links Academy of the student absence or lateness as soon as the provision is due to start.



Hatfield Students: 01707 346170

St Albans – Hixberry Students: 01727 836150

St Albans – Woollam or Cedars PSB Students: 01727 836150 OPTION 6

Reasons for absence relating to a student's tiredness, refusal and well-being remain high.

As a school, working collaboratively in partnership with families, treating the root causes of absence, removing barriers to attendance and signposting families to support, is our preferred option.

A 6-week summer holiday break from school offers a temporary reprieve from the daily battle but can just delay the inevitable when September looms closer.

If this sounds familiar, don't wait until September when school starts again, feel free to access (via our website), the resources available from other organisations, which may be helpful to re-establish routines a week or two before the new academic year begins, or obtain support during the holiday period.



Go to: <https://linksmultiacademytrust.co.uk/help-and-advice/>

Links to help and advice, ranging from foodbanks, anxiety, sleep hygiene, national campaigns and much more, are all available here – please check it out.

If you have any further concerns, please speak to your child's form tutor at their Student Performance Review Day in September.

Cedars Attendance Update – Summer Term 2025

As we come to the end of our Summer Term, it is time to celebrate once again, the fantastic attendance of all our students at Cedars.

The first half of our summer term was very short, 21 days! Our new students settled in very well and it was a great start to our summer term.

At the end of half term, the students all received their attendance certificates in recognition of their amazing attendance. Freddie, Oliver and Harrison were rewarded for 21/21 days, setting a great example to their peers. We are so proud of you all, what a great start to the term!



Our students' attendance for the second half of the Summer Term has been equally impressive to date with a special mention to Freddie with an impressive 25/25 days. Students received their end of year rewards on Friday 4 July for their resilience with their attendance to school with a special appearance from Daisy the Dog.

We wish our leavers all the very best with their transitions.

Mrs Porritt, Trust Attendance Officer

Hygiene Poverty: A Hidden Crisis Affecting Millions in the UK



The Secondary Outreach team recognise that feeling clean should not be a luxury or a privilege for anyone in our society, yet we know many are living in poverty and families struggle to afford to stay clean. That is why the Secondary Outreach Team have continued their partnership with the St Albans and Harpenden Hygiene Bank to provide all our families with everyday hygiene and personal grooming products, regardless of personal circumstances and without judgement.

Thank you for completing the feedback forms at your child's Student Performance Review Day with their form tutor. Your feedback is much appreciated; it helps us tailor the hygiene bags to your family's needs. On the back of your feedback, we have in addition to basic hygiene bags also been able to provide two families with baby products for a newborn in the family and a bundle of joy on the way.



It is thought that more than three million people in the UK are thought to be experiencing hygiene poverty. We take feeling clean and having clean clothes for granted, but it is often the first sign that a family is falling into crisis when they can't afford these essentials. The feelings of shame, the stigma, the self-isolation, the social exclusion, and impact on mental health is all very real, but we are here to help.

If there is anything you wish to discuss re the hygiene bags, please feel free to contact Mrs Backhouse in the Outreach Team.

Mrs Backhouse, Higher Level Outreach Worker & DSP

Supporting Schools Through Grief

When a school community experiences the death of a student, staff member, or loved one, the emotional impact can be profound and far-reaching. Sadly, this has been the case in two of the schools the Secondary Outreach teamwork in.

The Secondary Outreach team pulled together, helping the schools navigate the difficult path of grief and recovery. We have offered immediate and compassionate assistance supporting both staff and students.

As a team we have helped create a safe space where grief can be expressed and managed in healthy, constructive ways.

For the students we have provided age-appropriate guidance and emotional support. This had been done through group discussions, one-on-one conversations, and creative activities, helping the young people understand and process their emotions, reducing feelings of isolation or confusion.

For the school staff we have provided emotional support for their loss but also advised on how to support grieving students while managing their own emotional responses. Outreach workers often offer training sessions, debriefs, and resources that empower educators to respond with empathy and resilience.

As a team we have tried to ensure that both school communities feel seen, heard, and supported during one of their most challenging times they may face.

If you have been affected by bereavement there are several organisations that can offer support:

Cruse help people through one of the most painful times in life – with bereavement support, information and campaigning.

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

Winston's Wish is a charity that helps children, teenagers and young adults (up to the age of 25) find their feet when their worlds are turned upside down by grief.

<https://winstonswish.org/>

Grief Encounter help bereaved children, young people and their families to find hope and healing.

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

Mrs Backhouse, Higher Level Outreach Worker & DSP



Empowering Educators: Delivering Effective Staff Training on De-escalation, Healthy and Toxic Relationships, and Misogyny

In today's educational landscape, teachers play a critical role not only in academic development but also in fostering safe, respectful, and inclusive environments. With increasing concerns around student behaviour, mental health, and gender-based issues, Mrs Haynes (Outreach Manager) and Mrs Backhouse (Higher Level Outreach worker) have been delivering targeted staff training on de-escalation, healthy relationships, and misogyny in partnership with the Alban Teaching Schools Hub.

De-escalation Techniques

Effective de-escalation strategies equip teachers with tools to defuse situations calmly and safely. Our training has focussed on our acronym FLAMES.

- F** Finding a solution to help resolve the issue.
- L** Listening actively by giving the young person your full attention.
- A** Acknowledging emotions and validating their feelings, this reduces blames and shows empathy.
- M** Maintaining open and non-threatening body language to reduce escalating further.
- E** Ensuring calmness and composure and the avoidance of using confrontational questions.
- S** Setting boundaries and knowing when to walk away and take a break and revisit later.



Understanding Healthy vs. Toxic Relationships

In Outreach, the young people we support often speak about their friendships and relationships, and teachers can be best placed to observe signs of unhealthy dynamics among students. Having delivered the training in-house, we also took the training externally exploring the characteristics of healthy relationships—such as mutual respect, consent, and open communication—as well as warning signs of toxicity, including control, manipulation, and emotional abuse. In addition, we addressed consent using the acronym FRIES:

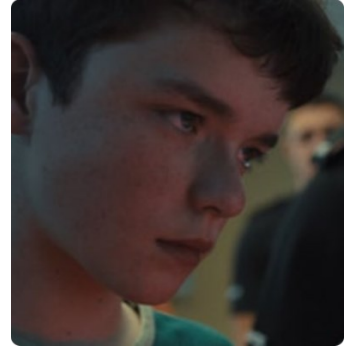
- F** Freely Given. Consent should be given without any pressure, coercion, or manipulation
- R** Reversible. Individuals can change their mind about consent at any time.
- I** Informed. Consent should be given with full knowledge of the activity, including any potential risks or consequences.
- E** Enthusiastic. Consent should be actively and genuinely desired by all parties involved.
- S** Specific. Consent to one activity does not imply consent to another. Each action requires its own explicit consent.



Mrs Backhouse, Higher Level Outreach Worker & DSP

Addressing Misogyny and Promoting Gender Equality

Misogynistic language and behaviours, even when subtle, contribute to a hostile learning environment. In Secondary Outreach we have seen a rise in this behaviour in our schools and the young people we support. Through training, this empowers staff to identify and challenge misogynistic attitudes in young people and in our training, we encourage schools to foster critical discussions around gender norms, empower students to challenge inequality, and model respectful behaviour.



We discussed the TV series Adolescence and how it explored the impact of misogynistic online content being viewed by schoolboys, the dangers of toxic masculinity, online radicalisation and the impact of social media on young people.

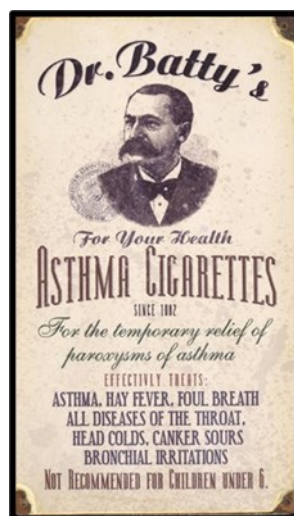
By delivering comprehensive training in these areas, schools empower their staff to better support students, respond to challenging behaviours, and contribute to a more reasonable and emotionally safe educational environment. Investing in this professional development is a crucial step toward shaping a more informed, compassionate, and socially responsible generation.

Mrs Backhouse, Higher Level Outreach Worker & DSP

‘Don’t snooze on SNUS’

According to archaeologists, humans first started smoking tobacco 5000 years ago in the area known today as South America. However, it took until 1586 for the habit’s introduction into Elizabethan society by Sir Walter Raleigh.

Since then, tobacco addiction has been a battle fought by huge numbers of people in our country. Thankfully, we have progressed from the dark days when tobacco companies used deceptive advertising tactics, often involving medical professionals, to portray smoking as harmless or even beneficial to health (!)



As parents, many of us have lived through various eras of tobacco promotions and law changes. It does not seem so long ago that it was ‘normal’ to see smoking ads on TV or watch sportsmen (and they were exclusively *men*), playing snooker or darts in front of millions of viewers with a burning fag on the go.

Although much of this nonsense has gone the way of the dinosaur, our children face a whole new threat from ‘Big Tobacco’. Up until recently the fad was vaping, but that is just starting to peter out as disposable vapes have been banned (June 1st, 2025), and their credibility seems to have peaked... But here comes the new kid on the block: *Snus*.

What exactly is SNUS?

Snus is an oral, smokeless tobacco product primarily used in Sweden and Norway since the 1600s. It is made by air-curing ground tobacco, mixing it with salt & water and then 'pasteurising' it to remove bacteria. It comes in portioned sachets, which are placed between the gum and upper lip.

Snus contains *thousands* of chemicals - including nicotine - and is therefore incredibly **addictive**. There are legal and illegal versions, meaning there is the risk of adulteration – for example, sachets containing slaked lime (used in cement) and areca nut (which is carcinogenic).

European style
tobacco-based Snus



(a) Tobacco-based Snus
(b) Non-tobacco Snus



These sachets come in various sizes, flavours, and strengths – so the nicotine content varies. [Normal = 3mg. Strong = 6mg. Extra Strong = 9mg]

Tobacco Snus has been banned across most of Europe, including the UK, as long-term heavy usage is linked to diabetes, heart disease, and cancer.



You will have seen Snus openly for sale in newsagents, supermarkets, corner shops and petrol stations, but perhaps not registered what these small round tins contained.

They are often on the counter or at the end of aisles and may easily be mistaken for mints or travel sweets.

The one advantage UK Snus has is that it contains **no tobacco at all** – hence the pouches are pure white. But don't be under any illusion – These pouches are simply a delivery system for nicotine. There is a big difference between being '*less harmful*' than tobacco and being '*safe*'!

Like products before it, Snus will have its day, only to be replaced by something else.

But in the meantime, any student who wishes to have an informal chat, ask questions or pick up info about any smoking product can attend the Thursday lunchtimes '*Catch Your Breath*' clinic and speak to me in confidence.

Mr Boxer, Healthy Lifestyles Lead

DISCOUNTED STUDENT BUS TRAVEL WITH ARRIVA BUSES



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Summer Break Activities

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PER DAY £28 30% OFF THE WEEK 10% OFF FOR SIBLINGS	CAMP ONE 28 JUL 1 AUG	CAMP TWO 4 AUG 8 AUG	CAMP THREE 11 AUG 15 AUG	CAMP FOUR 26 AUG 29 AUG
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<https://jpprofootball.pembee.app/>



Hertfordshire County Council Services for Young People

HOLIDAY ACTIVITY PROGRAMME

Links Academy
 Woollam Crescent
 St Albans AL3 6EJ

Join us this summer!
 Monday – Thursday each week
 28 July to 14 August 2025
 10am-2pm each day

For young people aged 12-16

Priority booking for those eligible for
 benefits-related free school meals

Free summer holiday activities

- Fun physical activities such as sports, dance and team games
- Creative activities such as music production, cooking, and arts and crafts
- Informal healthy lifestyles workshops
- Socialising with other young people and making new friends
- Free healthy food every day
- Information about other local services

Use the QR code below or contact
 SYFP St Albans Team to sign up.

Tel: 01442 454060
 Text: 07860 065195
 sfyp.stalbans@hertfordshire.gov.uk
 www.servicesforyoungpeople.org
 @HCCSYFP



Hertfordshire County Council Services for Young People

POSITIVE PATHWAYS SUMMER PROJECT

Cottonmill Community &
 Cycle Centre

Old Oak, Cottonmill Lane, St Albans, AL1 2EF

Join us this summer!
 Tuesday to Friday
 29 July to 15 August 2025
 5-8pm

For young people aged 13-17

For more information call Robert Brown –
 Youth Work Practice Manager on 01442 454070

Free summer holiday activities – Helping young people to stay safe

SYFP Positive Pathways Projects are for young
 people who are at risk of exploitation, social
 exclusion, crime or antisocial behaviour.

Our Youth Workers engage with young people to

- Improve their confidence, social skills and ability to make informed decisions
- Support them to learn new skills for life and achieve their goals
- Develop an action plan in response to their concerns, issues and needs
- Offer them opportunities to take part in a range of positive activities

Tel: 0300 123 7538
 sfyp.stalbans@hertfordshire.gov.uk
 www.servicesforyoungpeople.org
 @HCCSYFP



NHS Wellbeing Workshops

Children's Wellbeing Practitioner Workshops July – September 2025

Workshops are open to all young people & parents/carers of children and young people who attend a school or are registered with a GP in Hertfordshire. A referral is not needed to access a workshop.

All workshops are currently being delivered online via Microsoft Teams. For more information about what each workshop covers and to book a place onto a workshop, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/hct-childrens-wellbeing-practitioners-33494371787>



Workshop	Date & Time
Emotional Wellbeing (For Young People 11-16) A workshop focused on adolescents managing their emotional wellbeing and things parents/carers can do to help.	Thursday 31 st July 10 am-12 pm Thursday 18 th September 6-8 pm
Adolescent Self-Esteem and Resilience A workshop focused on adolescents improving their self-esteem and resilience and what parents/carers can do to help.	Tuesday 8 th July 6-8 pm Tuesday 2 nd September 6-8 pm
Supporting your Child's Self-Esteem and Resilience A workshop focused on parents/carers supporting their child to improve their self-esteem and resilience.	Thursday 7 th August 10 am-12 pm
Supporting with Sleep Difficulties This workshop focuses on supporting children and adolescents with managing their sleep difficulties and things parents/carers can do to help.	Tuesday 5 th August 6-8 pm
Developing your Child's Emotional Literacy A workshop focused on parents supporting their child with developing emotional literacy.	Thursday 10 th July 6-8 pm Tuesday 12 th August 10 am-12 pm Thursday 25 th September 6-8 pm
General Emotional Wellbeing and Regulation Tips for Parents/Carers A workshop focused on parents supporting their child's general emotional wellbeing and ability to emotionally regulate.	Wednesday 16 th July 10 am-12 pm Tuesday 19 th August 6-8 pm Wednesday 24 September 10 am-12 pm

To access the recorded **Emotionally Based School Avoidance Webinar** please visit:
<https://www.hct.nhs.uk/service-details/service/childrens-wellbeing-practitioners-21/>