



Links Journal



Dear Parent/Carer

It is that time of year again where we say said goodbye to our Year 11 students and I am sure you will be joining me in wishing them well for their future careers.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, the students, staff and Trustees for their support during what has proved to be a challenging year. Without your support it would have made my job more difficult.

May I take this opportunity of wishing you all a very happy and restful summer break and look forward to welcoming you all at the Student Parent Review Day on Friday 3 September 2021.

Please can you ensure that when you and your child come to Student Parent Review Day are in full uniform so that we don't have any issues at the start of the term.

David Allen Headteacher



Summer

School Calendar

Term Ends

Friday 16 July
@ 12.30pm

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Autumn Term

INSET DAYS

Wednesday 1 September

Thursday 2 September

No Students in school

Parent Review Day

Friday

3 September

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

Term Starts

Monday 6 September

Year 11 GCSE Results Day

Thursday 12 August 2021

Congratulations

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.linksacademy.herts.sch.uk to view Ofsted reports, key dates, journals and school information

SPORTS NEWS

Street Snooker is a new game that has been introduced to Links Academy. Students took to this game well when first introduced and have taken part in Street Snooker as an enrichment activity at lunchtime. The aim of the game is to accumulate as many points as you can in 60 seconds by throwing a ball at snooker inspired targets. A randomisation wheel is spun between throws to move you around the floor, so you shoot from different ranges making it more challenging. There is a running leader board with the high score displayed on the enrichment board which promotes friendly competition among students and staff.



Mr M Broadbridge/Teacher of PE

Tug of War



Students and staff took to the field to test their might in the art of **Tug of War**. The students, with youth on their side, displayed confidence which turned out to be misplaced. The staff, with their years of wisdom, demolished the shocked and surprised students. After a quick team talk and some tips on working together, the students put up more of a fight in the next couple of attempts.

It was great to see that the entire school took part or came out to watch - thankfully the rain held off! Only time will tell if the students will get their own back!



Mr M Broadbridge/Teacher of PE

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Throughout this academic year our Year 10 and 11 students have been participating in the Duke of Edinburgh Award (DofE). For their DofE award the students needed to complete a volunteering section, physical section and a skills section. Unfortunately they were unable to complete the expedition section this year due to Covid-19 restrictions.



Many of our students completed the physical section by joining the Dodgeball Club which they thoroughly enjoyed playing weekly against both staff and students. The students either chose to participate in the section for three or six months in order to achieve this section.



For the volunteering section two of our students completed campaigns for their chosen charities creating awareness and fund raising. Another student volunteered at Cedars Primary Support Base where she worked closely with the students each week.



For the Skills Section many students decided to make cooking a part of their course where they could gain new skills or improve old skills. Other students completed tasks in woodwork that counted towards their awards and should be proud of their successes.



All of the students that participated in this year's Duke of Edinburgh Award should be extremely proud of their achievements and should show their awards off at any opportunity as it is a highly recognised achievement. I am proud of how well everyone has done this year, and I look forward to welcoming the next group in September 2021.



Mr S Bailey/Teacher of Business/Geography/Leisure and Tourism



Food Tech News

An exciting half term in the Food Tech Department. Many of you would have sampled our culinary delights last Thursday lunchtime. Reneé in Year 10 cooked a 2 course meal that she had planned and prepared independently. Reneé has practiced the recipes at home before cooking them for all staff and students. It was 'all hands on deck' throughout the day, with many students helping and taking on chopping, cooking and serving in their lessons to



lend a hand. This was a huge success! All of the food was ready and hot on time and was absolutely delicious! The chocolate chip brownies were enjoyed by all, and we have included the recipe for all to enjoy making at home. The success continues for Reneé, as her hard work earned her a level 2 BTEC in



home cooking skills, as well as one unit of work towards her hospitality BTEC. Well done Reneé!



Mrs S Abraham/Teacher of Food and Hospitality/History

Reneé's Brownies

Ingredients

100g Cadbury Bournville chocolate
175g unsalted butter
3 medium eggs
75g plain flour
40g Cadbury Bournville cocoa powder
250g light brown sugar or muscovado sugar
1tbsn golden syrup
150g white chocolate cut into small chunks



Method

Preheat the oven to 180 degrees/gas 4. In a small saucepan, half-fill it with boiling water and place on the hob under medium heat. Place the unsalted butter and the chocolate (broken into small pieces) into a bowl and put this on top of the saucepan to allow it to melt. Continue to stir with a table knife. Once melted, take the bowl off of the saucepan to let it cool down.

In a large bowl, whisk the eggs and the sugar together until a much bigger frothy mixture appears, which usually takes about 2-3 minutes. Pour the bowl with the melted contents into this larger bowl and mix using a wooden spoon.



In the same bowl, sieve in the plain flour and cocoa powder. Slowly fold these in to create a thick, chocolatey brown mixture. Add a tablespoon of golden syrup to enhance the richness of the flavour, stir through the white chocolate

Pour the mixture into a 9/9inch square cake tin, and place in the oven for 25 minutes, or until the crust on top is easily breakable and the contents inside are soft but not runny. Allow to cool, then serve and enjoy!



HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

It's been a very busy term for the Healthy Lifestyles Lead!

Across the 3 Links MAT sites and two additional mainstream schools there have been just under 100 student one-to-one sessions, supporting young people in need of some additional support and these resulted in several successful closures. Some lovely feedback was received from these students as they moved onto the next stage of their lives:

"A lot of me feeling better has been because of our sessions so thank you and I'm sure I will have more in the future."

"I really enjoyed our sessions, found them very helpful and felt supported. Overall my mental health improved massively!"

"I'd say our chats definitely helped a lot because I was never that open about talking about how I felt at all and it gave me a way to be less stressed and worried by laying out all the things I was feeling in front of me and putting it into perspective."

Healthy Lifestyles education was also delivered in classes/forms and whole year groups. This included such topics as *'Staying Positive During Times of Change'*, helping students with their return to school post-lockdown(s), and *'Basic Drug Awareness – Trends & Consequences'*. Students were introduced to the concepts of peer pressure, social norms, and consent via these sessions.

Some additional teaching was offered and accepted by local schools Tring & Yavneh College (Herts), and those further afield (Downe House, Berks and Kings College, Wimbledon).

Hertfordshire Constabulary invited our input for their *'Lives Not Knives'* virtual parent's forum. The presentation *'How Do Parents Speak to Their Children About Drugs?'* was received well in April, with a repeat event due in early July.



We raised awareness of Testicular Cancer with the *'Get to know your nuts!'* assembly presentation, learning about how to check ourselves regularly and how our chromosomes, genomes and genetic predisposition play a part in determining risk.

It's a hugely important subject because testicular cancer is the most common form of cancer in young men between 15yrs and 35yrs old, but many young men find it too embarrassing to talk about. We encourage this discussion and awareness because the great news is that 95+% of men can survive this form of cancer if it's detected early.

We linked the stats to the facts from the MOVEMBER campaign (which all the staff supported last year via sponsored moustache-growing), and showed their brief 'how to check' video, which you see at:

<https://youtu.be/OhojaxF7Rc0> .

If you'd like further information you can find at on the NHS website here: www.nhs.uk/conditions/testicular-cancer

Wishing you all a healthy, relaxing and (hopefully) sunny summer!

Mr R Boxer, Healthy Lifestyles Lead

HAPpy Program

YCH Service for Young People delivered the HAPpy programmes during the Easter holidays, Links Academy kindly lent us their Hixberry Lane site. The aim of the programme was to engage with young people in receipt of free school meals, to give the young people an opportunity to build their self-confidence, understand the importance of good nutrition and both their physical and emotional wellbeing. The programme delivered fun and interactive challenges, physical activities, emotional wellbeing exercises and a hot lunch.



Sessions included 'Mindfulness' allowing young people to discuss their dreams, goals and ambitions as well as their concerns for the future, with the session ending in painting mindful stones. During a personal safety session young people discussed how to deal with a range of difficult situations and how to access networks for additional support. Furthermore, young people also engaged in sport activities, art workshops, interactive team challenges which gave them new skills. The programme also enabled them to build positive friendships.

Feedback included:

"It was all inclusive and got me out of my comfort zone"

"I enjoyed meeting people and having a laugh with the staff".



YCH Services for Young People St Albans deliver a range of projects that young people can get involved in such as ; Youth Council, Girls and Boy's Allowed, Friday Night Project's and so much more. To find out how young people can get involved go to our website: <https://www.ychservicesforyoungpeople.org/> or follow our twitter (@StAlbansTeam) and Instagram (ychsfyp.stalbans).

Staff Sunflower Competition

This term all staff had the opportunity to take part in the **Links Sunflower Competition**. They all planted their seeds just after the Easter holidays and the competitive nature of our staff started to show. There has been successes and many sunflowers that didn't make it, along with some staff taking part in plant swapping! It was lovely to see that some had made it to full flowers, looking lovely putting a smile on people's faces. Congratulations to **Mrs Heagren** who was the winner!!!



Mrs C Brown/Assistant Headteacher



Year 11 Destinations



This is now the time of year when we try and make sure that all the Year 11 students have a destination for September. We have been working hard during the school year to look at options Post 16 and deciding what direction they would like to go in based on their skills and qualities. It can be a very confusing time suddenly having to make decisions post 16. Some students wanted to look at apprenticeship opportunities and some wanted to look at various courses in college.

In previous years we have gone for a 'tour' around college, normally Oakland's, to give the students an idea of what they can expect from college life. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 restrictions we have not been able to do this currently.

Several students have now secured an apprenticeship and other students have their college places confirmed.

We are also running a Year 11 Summer Programme to keep the students engaged and this has been running for several weeks. Topics have included CV writing, interview skills and employer expectations.

There is also support during the summer months at our Young People's Centre in St Albans, based in Catherine Street.



Ms M Nissen/Services for Young People

Visit to Morgan Sindall Construction Site

On 7 July 2021 two of our Year 11 students were offered the opportunity to tour a large construction site in London Colney by the company Morgan Sindall.

The students experienced first-hand the rigorous site induction and Covid security the company completes every day to its staff and all visitors. Then had a presentation from the site Project Manager who explained the various roles within the company. Following this we were all equipped with relevant safety equipment and taken on a site tour by one of the site managers.

She explained the different tasks being undertaken and how the company support and train their staff.

Both students were offered a chance of completing work experience this summer if they want to? Pretty sure the answer will be 'Yes!'

Our thanks goes to Morgan Sindall who were amazing to let us visit and spent so much time explaining all the aspects of construction to us.



Mrs J Heagren/Teacher of DT and Construction

REWARDS TRIP



On a beautiful sunny June day, five intrepid driving enthusiasts descended on Rye House go karting track for their rewards trip. The behaviour was impeccable as expected and they took on board all advice and guidance from the track staff before starting the race.

As the race started it was clear that although all the students were enjoying themselves, different agendas were in place. For some it was a leisurely Sunday drive, for others it was a constant challenge to the laws of physics, especially where the bends were. The outright



winner was Charlie ("call me Lewis") who drove as if he was born to race.

Overall a great experience for all and a big thank you to the excellent staff who looked after us so well. We shall return to race again.

Mr M Fuller/Assistant Headteacher

FOOTBALL WITH ST ALBANS CITY YOUTH

The students went off timetable for an end of term treat in the form of a football session with Anthony from St Albans City Youth FC. The coaches have been working with our Year 11s this year and it was great to be able to give this opportunity to the rest of the school as well.

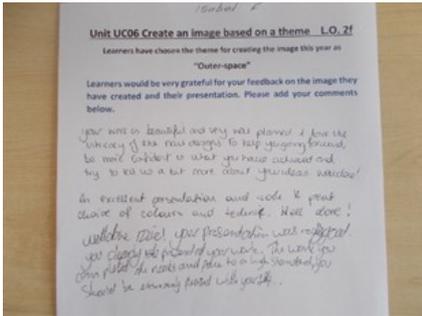
Passes were made, tactics were used and goals were scored! The Euro championships certainly got our students in the mood for football!



Mr M Broadbridge/Teacher of PE

HAIR & BEAUTY

Congratulations to Izzie for achieving her VTCT Level 2 Award in Hair & Beauty skills qualification achieving an overall Distinction grade. She will now be continuing to the higher qualification of Certificate in Hair & Beauty skills. Izzie created an "Outer-space – Metallic stars image on a trainer hand and mannequin. Izzie showed her power-point and gave a speech to an audience who provided written feedback.



Congratulations to Reneé on achieving a Distinction grade for unit UBT2 Basic face painting, where her theme was "Horror". The striking design was completed on a member of staff, Joe.



Mrs A Smith/Teacher of Hair & Beauty



TREE PLANTING

As part of a Woodland Trust initiative Links Academy received a selection of hedgerow plants. The staff one afternoon took great joy in planting them around the border of the field at the Hixberry Lane site. Staff planted a variety of species including hazel, dog rose and hawthorn hedging which will help make a natural screen around the field which is easy to manage and will help wildlife stay on the move.



Mrs C Brown/Assistant Headteacher

WOOLLAM INCLUSION

This has been a busy and successful Summer Term in the Inclusion Unit at Woollam. A number of our students have successfully transitioned either to Hixberry or into new school settings. Many of them have done this after really developing academically, including gaining Level 1 qualifications. Our Year 11 students had a mixture of Functional Skills work, as well as gaining evidence for their GCSE maths and English. They all did really well, sourcing apprenticeships and post 16 plans.

We have had a number of Year 8 students who have shown a brilliant work ethic and attitude, and I'm confident will do well in the future. In addition to this we have had some students attend the **Forest Schools** course at Hudnall Park for the past five weeks. We have seen them thrive in this environment, showing brilliant outdoor skills. This was great to see.

Finally a big 'thank you' to Mr Holgate for his superb work in inclusion, and Miss Fields, who has contributed a great deal to the academic success of our students. Everyone now deserves a great summer break, and I look forward to seeing both students and staff in September.

Mr S Boatwright/Senior Practitioner

Forest schools fun!



OUTREACH

This has been a busy term for Outreach. The Year 6 transition programme has been sent out to 1984 pupils across St Albans and Harpenden and we have been in schools delivering a bespoke programme to some schools across the area.



We have been running group work with Year 8 students in Harpenden to support with resilience and anxiety. We continue to run Secondary Surgery in all secondary schools across St Albans and Harpenden. These meetings are now held in person and not virtually. This service is a light touch support helping students who are just began to bubble with behaviour or attendance.

We plan to work with our secondary schools in September to ensure students have a settled and positive start to their new setting.



Mrs F Haynes/Outreach Manager

CHELSEA'S CHOICE



The students this term had the opportunity to watch 'Chelsea's Story' which is an innovative and powerful production highlighting the very serious and emotional issue of child sexual exploitation which forms part of our PSHME programme. From this production the students gained a better understanding of the devastating impact that sexual exploitation has on a young person's life. This raised awareness of the issues relating to sexual exploitation and reached out to the students, giving them some skills and knowledge to be able to protect themselves from this form of abuse. The students behaviour throughout the performance was exceptional.



Mrs C Brown/Assistant Headteacher

Year 11 Leavers

LEAVERS 2021

Friday 28 May 2021 we celebrated our Year 11 Leavers Day. The hall was decorated with balloons and banners, including a balloon arch in the Links colours. Party food was provided and a delicious cake to which they all enjoyed. The students signed polo shirts and had memorable photos taken. **Year 11 you will all be missed!!!**



Year 11 GCSE Results Day

We would just like to remind all Year 11 that Results Day is Thursday 12 August 2021. You will be able to collect your results from the Hixberry Lane Site between 10 am – 12 pm on that day. You will need to collect your results in person. If you are unable to come and you will be sending a parent or carer you will need to let us know in advance or they will need to come with a letter on the day stating that you give them permission to collect your results on your behalf. If results are not collected by 12pm they will be posted first class to you.



We would like to congratulate Year 11 on their work ethic this year and their conduct in both mock and actual exams. They have been a credit to both themselves and the school. We would like to wish them all the best for the future.



Mrs C Brown/ Assistant Headteacher

GO APE TRIP

GoApe at Trent Park

12 July 2021—A day to remember! Our activities day to GoApe was a rope swinging success! Students and staff enjoyed the fears and thrills of the 5 course high ropes at Trent Park. The students challenged and supported each other throughout. The more confident went first completing the course in no time at all, you could hear the laughter across the treetops. Then they waited patiently in the sun with ice cream. While those less confident supported each other, digging deep into our resilience tanks to



take the leaps of faith into a cargo net and climb those, oh so high, ladders to the next challenge. I felt overwhelmed with pride and respect for the young people who really challenged themselves. At the end of the day, happy, tired and muddy we went home knowing that we had overcome some fears and made some great memories.



Miss J Coulson/Teacher of Maths/Science/Child Care

Thorpe Park Trip



On the 8 July 2021 the Year 11 leavers visited **Thorpe Park**. It was a brilliant day out and we were very proud of the way the kids behaved themselves and represented the school. The Year 11s got to experience many thrills on all of the rides: 'Stealth' - which is the tallest ride in the park in which you go from 0-80mph in 2 seconds was the favourite amongst the group. The day ended like a normal day in the UK, with a downpour of heavy rain. This however, did not stop the students from jumping on some extra rides to finish the day. The adrenaline rush ended with some pupils napping on their journey back home.



Miss E Juseviciute/Pastoral Leader

WOBBLE BOARDING TRIP



The water sports 'Wobble Boarding' trip to ESSA in Essex was a great success. Every student engaged fully in the activity. Mo was doing press-ups on the board and Charlie even managed to do a cart wheel before falling into the water. 'Man of the Day' had to go to Bruno, who struggled initially, then persevered to take part in all the activities. He even managed to wangle a ride in the rescue boat as a reward for his efforts. Gabriel was frozen. Roxy and Kimberley entered into the spirit of the raft games, while Luke wins the prize for spending the most time in the water.

A great staff team spirit—not competitive of course, were Gina, John, Martin, Sam and Angela. Chief bag holder, driver and guardian of the lead was Mr Allen.



Some comments from students were:

'I'm the best at everything' (Charlie). 'It was good' (Luke). 'It was cold' (Gabriel).

Mrs A Smith/ Teacher of Hair and Beauty

It has been a tiring term for all at Cedars but the students have continued to work towards their targets and personal aims. They have had a fun, filled term with a range of experiences and activities added to their curriculum.

Cedars PSB



Forest School was enjoyed by all especially the camp fire and marshmallows! The students all learnt a range of life skills and enjoyed experiencing the outside.

Science and PE lessons at our secondary site were valued by the Year 5 students who learnt a great deal about Biology and Chemistry-the experiments created a lot of excitement.

The Year 1 students were busy developing their maths skills whilst the Year 5 were having Science lessons.



Two students have come to the end of their Cedars journey and both staff and parents are extremely proud of the students and what they have achieved. We want to wish them both the very best of luck for their next steps and we look forward to hearing about their future successes.

We would like to thank all parents for their support throughout this term and hope you all have an enjoyable summer break.

We look forward to seeing you in September.

Miss G Nash/Assistant Headteacher

ATTENDANCE

With the end of the academic year coming to a close, it is time to celebrate some of the attendance success we have had over the last term.

As the majority of Year 11's had remained in school during the lockdown period, the summer term revealed that they had stayed on task and subsequently enabled students to work with YC Herts to apply for college courses and apprenticeships.

Not quite ready to say goodbye to our Year 11's, throughout June YC Herts and Links Academy ran a Pathways to Success Programme on Tuesday afternoons, which gave our Year 11's further access and support to CV writing, interview practice and other appropriate activities, to help support them for life outside of Link Academy.

In the lower year groups, attendance throughout the term remained high, with over 50% of students achieving above 86% attendance and some into 90%+. A great way to finish a year for Years 10, 9 and 8.



At Cedars PSB, all students had achieved over 90% attendance for the term (with some achieving 100%) and it was with great pleasure to take a delivery of pizzas from Pizza Hut over to the students for their well-deserved Rewards Lunch. Certificates were handed out to all, acknowledging their achievement.

I once again look forward to seeing all parents/carers and students at the Student Performance Review Day in September 2021.

Mrs Sarah Porritt – Attendance



SCHOOL IS OUT FOR SUMMER

Enjoy the break—school is out for Summer!

After a very challenging year I do hope that you all take an opportunity to relax and enjoy the break that the Summer holidays will offer. Take a walk in the park, have a lazy day or visit family and friends.

If you feel you require some support or would like some ideas in improving your wellbeing have a look at some of the website below:

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/five-steps-to-mental-wellbeing/>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/>

We hope that you all enjoy the holidays, keep each other safe and return refreshed and ready to learn in September. Please take care of yourselves.

Miss G Nash/Assistant Headteacher

