

Batchwood Newsletter



Autumn 1 24-25

Headteacher's Letter

Welcome back to our Autumn edition of the school newsletter. This half term seems to have gone by in a flash but as you will see in the following letter we have achieved an awful lot in a short time.

Staff have been working tirelessly to support our students, this has not been easy as we have been slightly down on staff after the summer break where two members of staff moved on. After half term we will have two new teaching assistants, and in the weeks after are hoping to appoint to more.

The year 7's have made a positive start to the year and are adjusting to life at Batchwood. For many it is the first time they have been in school full time for a long time.

We have appointed two head students for the year following a rigorous application and interview process, we were so impressed with the students that we also appointed two deputies. The student council have been actively involved in the appointing of the two new teaching assistants and continue to be a credit to the school.

Uniform continues to be very good. Please can we work together in maintaining these high standards. We seem to be having a problem with students chewing gum and dropping it on the floor can I ask that parents support the school in ensuring students are not bringing it into school.

All in all, a very positive start to the new academic year with so many students making great progress in both learning and behaviour.

Ross Whitaker

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Overcoming Barriers to Attendance

We understand that sometimes our students may face challenges that make regular school attendance difficult. They might have poor sleep patterns or heightened anxiety. They could be worrying about an upcoming test or a Repair with a teacher. Maybe they have friendship issues that have spilled over from the day before or from an online exchange.

We want you to know that we are here to help. If your child is experiencing any difficulties that are affecting their ability to attend school, please reach out to their form tutor, the attendance lead, or a member of our pastoral team. We're committed to resolving these issues before they become larger barriers to attendance and learning.

Regular school attendance helps prepare young people for adulthood and is key to supporting positive outcomes – not only academic achievement, but good school attendance also contributes to better long-term economic and social opportunities, as well as improved mental health and well-being.

Let's work together to ensure every student has the support they need to succeed.

**MOMENTS
MATTER,**

**ATTENDANCE
COUNTS.**

The School Day

In the table below, you will see a breakdown of the week and activities available for the students at Batchwood. Please have a look through and familiarize yourselves with the what your students have available to them and where they are meant to be, whilst with us at Batchwood.

AM Form 8.40-9.20	Students arrive at school and go straight to forms from their taxi. Phones to be handed to form tutors immediately. Breakfast club is available for free to all students 8.40-9.00 Form time activities Monday – Friday
Lesson 1 9.20-10.00	Timetabled lesson. Students to arrive promptly and engage in learning activities.
Lesson 2 10.00- 10.40	Timetabled lesson. Students to arrive promptly and engage in learning activities.
Break 10.40-11.00	Students can get a drink and a snack provided by the school for free. Students to be in an area of staff supervision. Actives available such as football and music
Lesson 3 11.00-11.40	Timetabled lesson. Students to arrive promptly and engage in learning activities.
Lesson 4 11.40-12.20	Timetabled lesson. Students to arrive promptly and engage in learning activities.
Lunch 12.20-13.00	Lunch can be eaten in the hall. There are some rooms available for students to eat if they would like a quitter environment, however these are limited. Activities and rooms are available for students to engage with such as football, music, art and basketball. Students should be in an area with staff supervision.
Lesson 5 13.00-13.40	Timetabled lesson. Students to arrive promptly and engage in learning activities. <i>Thursday: Alternative learning. Students choose an activity for the half term. This cannot be changed due to group sizes. Activities include, Bush craft, Dungeons and Dragons and Tennis.</i> <i>Friday: Enrichment. Students ca make a choice each week.</i>
Lesson 6 13.40-14.20	Timetabled lesson. Students to arrive promptly and engage in learning activities. <i>Thursday: Alternative learning.</i>
PM Form 14.20-14.40	All Students are expected to go to PM form. This is where students can discuss their days with the form tutors, receive praise or have a discussion to support them in class. Phones are given back to the pupils no earlier than 2.30 or when students go down to their taxis

Students of the Term!

Each half term we are going to be celebrating students from Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, who have been working hard across the curriculum.

Autumn 1 students are:

Subject	Students		Subject	Students
English	KS3: Callum G 8A KS4: Zack G 10B		PE	KS3: Isla M, Aiden K & Leo T N1 KS4: Dylan 10C
Maths	KS3: Mercy 9B KS4: James B N2 & Riley D N2		Forest Schools	KS4: Lily Rose w 10A
Science	KS3: Ben G 9B KS4: Finn S 10B		Music	KS3: Daisy 7A KS4: George 11A
Art	KS3: Hannah K 9B KS4: Amberly B N2			
Food	KS3: Lenni 7B KS4: Charlie E 11C			
DT	KS3: Hannah K 9B KS4: Rebecca 10C			



Mental Health and Wellbeing



On Friday 18th October, we will be celebrating World Mental Health day. On this day we will be raising money for the YoungMinds charity.

YoungMinds is a wonderful charity that supports young people and this is another opportunity in our school to raise awareness about mental health and wellbeing, reduce mental health stigma and allow our students to invest in their own and others mental health and wellbeing.

We have asked students to celebrate and mark this day by wearing yellow and offering a pound to the YoungMinds charity. Hopefully, this will encourage our students to support other peoples mental health as well as their own and feel more courage to ask for help when they themselves require support. It is vital that our young people grow up without feeling that sharing their problems is a weakness. True courage comes from sharing our vulnerability and being able to ask for help when we need it.

In line with this way of thinking, this term we asked the *NHS Mental Health Support Team* to come in and support our Year 7 and 8 students with understanding more about mental health issues and what they can do to help themselves and seek support. We have had some great feedback from the students and some found this really beneficial. We hope to deliver more workshops like this in the future. Watch this space!

The MHST is also an early intervention service, using proactive strategies to support mild to moderate mental health difficulties such as anxiety and behaviours that challenge. This is part of a national programme to support emotional wellbeing and offer early interventions in school settings.

Some of our students are already using this service to support their emotional and mental wellbeing and reaping the benefits. We also have our own wellbeing staff who can support your child's needs with mild to moderate mental health issues and a school counsellor for more complex mental health issues.

Please speak to the SENCo, Family Support Officer, your students tutor or myself (the Mental Health lead) to discuss a referral being made.

We have included some signposting for mental health services that might be helpful to you and/or your children. If you would like to speak to me more about your child's mental health or any support regarding signposting, please do give me a call, *Miss Maxen - Mental Health Lead*



10 Things Students Can Do To Boost Their Mental Health

Mind & Body

Look after your body as your mind. Eat a well balanced diet, keep hydrated and get into a regular sleep pattern.

Exercise

Engage in regular exercise. Find a sport or activity you enjoy. Exercise is a great tool for improving mood and reducing stress and anxiety.

Organisation

Manage your time effectively. Stay organised and on top of things. This will help to reduce pressure.

Self Care

Practice self care. Make sure to look after yourself. Relax, smile, have a bath, go for a walk and do something you enjoy.

Talk To Someone

Don't be afraid to talk to someone about how you are feeling. Talk to your friends, family or teachers.

Breathing

Learn how to breathe effectively. Practice a number of techniques and find what works for you: ratio breathing, progressive muscle relaxation.

Write Down

Write down how your feeling or what you are thinking. This can be a really simple way to understand what is going on within your mind and body.

Challenge

Try to challenge your thinking. If you experience an unhelpful thought, try and turn it into a helpful thought.

Check In

Regularly check in with yourself. Monitor your emotions and mood.

Problem Solve

Learn how to problem solve effectively. When you experience a problem, try and write down a number of solutions.

@yourmentalhealthpal

National helplines for young people and adults:

- **Samaritans**

Phone 116 123 or www.samaritans.org

- **Support Line: 0300 102 1234**

Open 9am to 6pm Monday to Friday

- **Mind Infoline**

Phone **0300 123 3393** or text **86463**

info@mind.org.uk

www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helplines

- **Rethink Mental Illness Advice Line**

Phone 0808 801 0525

email: advice@rethink.org

www.rethink.org/about-us/our-mental-health-advice

- **Saneline** - Phone 0300 304 7000

ww.sane.org.uk

- **Side by Side** peer support online sidebyside.mind.org.uk/about

- **SHOUT** - 24/7 text service text: 85258

MENTAL HEALTH

IS...

- A part of everyone
- Something to look after
- Real and complex
- Really important
- Something you can change

ISN'T...

- A sign of weakness
- All in your head
- Something you can just snap out of
- Always a negative thing
- Something to be ashamed of



Managing Behaviour at Batchwood

The below letter was sent home to parents through parent mail.

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope this letter finds you well. As we approach the upcoming half-term break, I would like to inform you of a slight change we will be making to our behaviour system, which will take effect when students return to school.

Over recent weeks, we have noticed an increase in low-level behavioural incidents across the school. While these instances are not severe, they can be disruptive and have a negative impact on the learning environment. As a school, we are committed to ensuring that all students have a safe and fair space to learn, and we believe it is important to address this issue promptly.

To help manage this, we have developed a more student-friendly Code of Conduct, which we feel will be easier for students to understand and follow. This updated code outlines clear expectations and consequences, encouraging positive behaviour both in and out of the classroom. We believe that by having a clearer, simpler structure in place, we can reduce low-level disruptions and maintain a productive learning environment for all students.

To ensure students fully understand why these measures are being introduced and how the new Code of Conduct will work, we will be holding dedicated sessions during form time after half-term. During these sessions, we will explain the reasons behind the changes and go through the new code step by step, giving students the opportunity to ask questions and discuss how they can contribute to a more positive school atmosphere.

The new Code of Conduct is attached to this letter for your reference, and we would appreciate it if you could review it with your child. It's important that both students and parents/carers are aware of the changes and understand the expectations moving forward.

We are confident that these adjustments will help us create a more positive and focused learning environment. Should you have any questions or concerns about the new behaviour system, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Mr J Williams.

Code Of Conduct
Be responsible and look after yourself and your school.
Take responsibility for my belongings and hand mobile phones in to form tutors/member of staff at the start of the school day. They will be returned at the end of the school day. Mobile phones will not be available during morning break or lunchtime.
The possession or use of any offensive weapons/devices or illegal substances will not be tolerated.
Any smoking materials such as lighters, tobacco, vapes and matches must not be on brought onto school site. Any such paraphernalia will only be returned to parents upon request.
Show respect for the feelings and opinions of all adults and students.
We do not tolerate any bullying or racist, sexist, ageist, and homophobic comments. Take responsibility for your actions.
Students must not touch or take a member of staff's keys or identity badges.
Keep your hands and feet to yourself – no fighting or physical contact with others.

OUTREACH LEARNING



AIMS

- To gain qualifications in Maths and English while on a reduced timetable/home learning.
- To maintain a positive link to the school community.
- To support re-integration back to school.

AT A GLANCE

Curriculum

- Primarily focus on **Functional Skills in English and Maths**
- Other subjects can be discussed once Functional Skills qualifications have been achieved
- Preparing for Adulthood

To start

Get comfortable with having me at home so we start with:

- Chatting
- Drawing
- Games- Banagrams, Pass the Pigs, Dobble or whatever you suggest

SUPPORT

I will assess what we can do to support your learning and develop tools to succeed such as movement breaks, breathing techniques etc.

This may mean referring you for additional support such as mentoring or counselling.

Sonal Vekaria

One to One and Interventions Teacher
svekaria@batchwood.herts.sch.uk

“TEACHER AT HOME? THAT’S SO WEIRD!”

I understand that having a teacher in your home probably feels very strange, but we can work together to create a therapeutic learning environment which allows you to learn, build confidence and gain those much needed qualifications.

WE WILL NEED

- Quiet Room - either kitchen or lounge
 - Clear Table or tray table if you don't have a table
 - Plug socket nearby
 - Pens, Paper, Ruler, calculator and book/folder
 - Laptop if available
 - Adult in the home to meet safeguarding needs
- Just like at school, you should not have distractions such as:
- Your phone
 - TV

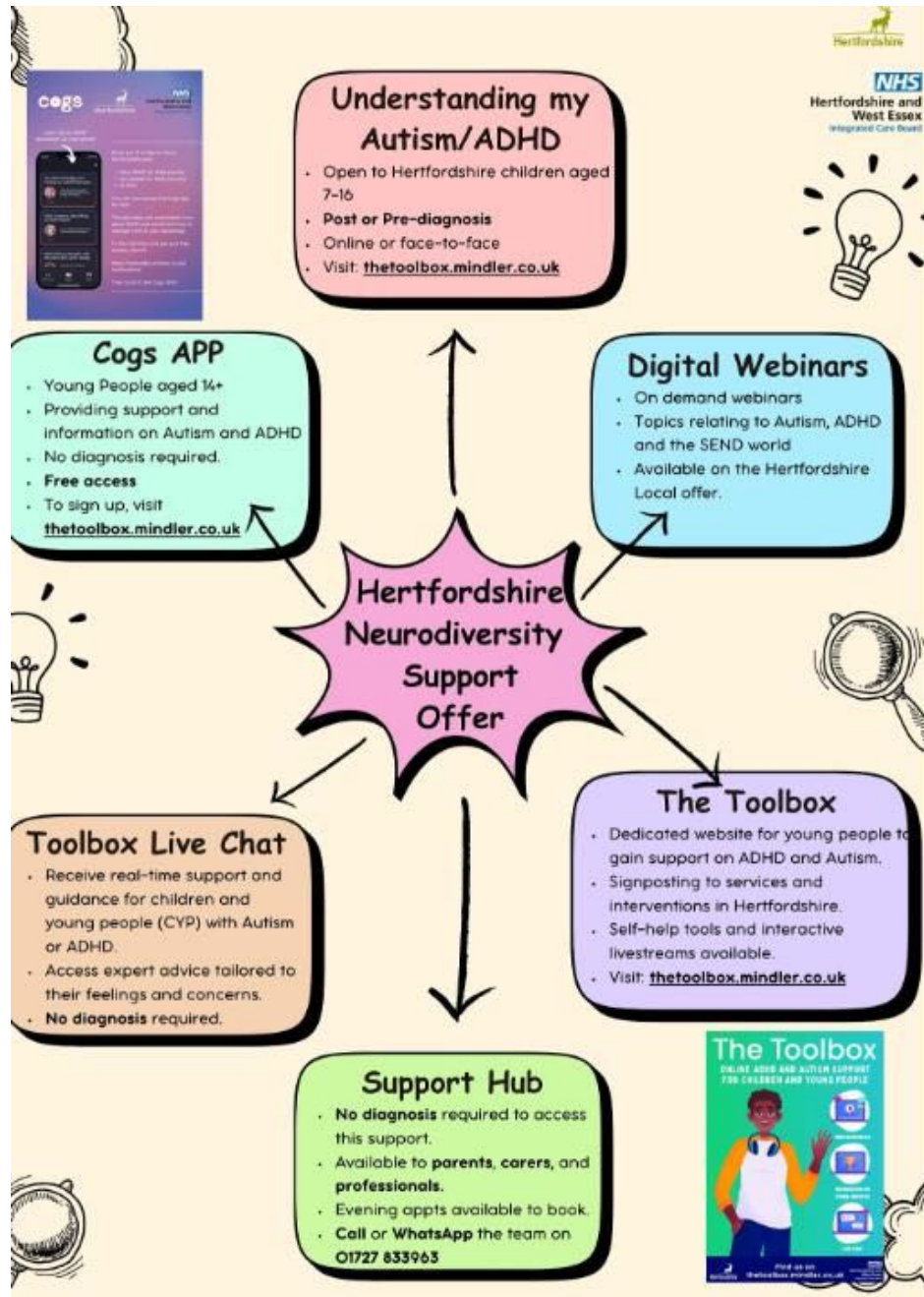
ATTENDANCE

It's so important for you to attend each lesson. If you are mildly unwell or under the weather then please try to continue with your learning and we can have a 'low demand' lesson.

Requesting a '**low demand**' lesson is also helpful if you are feeling overwhelmed, anxious, tired or demotivated due to your ASD, ASHD and/or mental health.

If you are unwell enough to not learn, then please ask your parent/carer to call the school on **01727 868021** to report an absence.

Hertfordshire Neurodiversity support offer



Student Work and Achievements

GCSE descriptive writing practice completed by Archie M in 11C-

The land was filled of dark pink and white candy floors. Spinning around like roots in dirt seemingly leading nowhere yet everywhere at the same time. However, the path would cut of no matter where you would go some paths would last for hours, some last minute and some last seconds all ended the same a dead end. The air was filled with a sweet aroma very similar to hot chocolate. No matter how far or wide you travel the scent would follow almost as if it was a predator tracking its pray waiting for its time to strike.

Rivers filled of chocolate making the sound a normal river would make but there was no water just chocolate, and no matter how much you drink you thirst would never be quenched, your body always wanting more never satisfied. And as you took a closer look you'll see that the floor of the river wasn't lined with candy it was lined with crystalized popping candy each shining with a bright reflection of the sun with schools of gummy fish each swimming in sync with each other not a single fish missing a beat.

The sky where filled of candy floss clouds, a gummy sun and liquorish birds. The sharp rays of light from the sun touched your skin with a gentle warmth like a hug from your mom making you reminisce of the good old days sheading a single tear of fizz from your eye. And as the tears stop the sky starts poring lightly with fizz and you manage to see a beautiful thing a rainbow made out of skittles, defying gravity by staying in the air not a single one falling seemingly billions upon trillions of skittles being in the sky.



Bottom Left: Year 7 are fully inducted into the workshop.

Upper Left: Candle holder made by Lily –Rose W in Bushcraft.

Centre & Upper Left: Lamp and Lamp design on CAD.

Bottom Right: Rebecca C's functioning Kaleidoscope.



Important Diary Dates



October 2024

- 18th - Tag rugby house competition
- 21st - Half Term Starts



November 2024

- 4th - Return to school (all years)
- 10th - Anti-bullying week
- 12th - Anti-bullying Ambassador training trip



December 2024

- 9th - Assessment week
- 18th - Panto whole school trip
- 19th - Christmas Dinner
- 19th - Reports out to parents/carers
- 20th - Christmas Show
- 20th - End of Term (half day)



January 2025

- 9th - Assessment week
- 20th - End of term (half day)