Alec Hunter Herald

Living for Learning, Learning for Life

Telephone: 01376 321813 | admin@alechunter.com | www.alechunter.com December 2023 | Issue 95

Merry Christmas!

Approaching the end of what always seems a very long term, I am pleased to share with you some of the amazing things that have been happening at Alec Hunter Academy in recent times. As it has been a while since we last published a copy of the *Herald*, this edition has something of a 'Review of the Year' feel to it, with accounts of events stretching back over the past three terms. It makes me very proud to see our youngsters engaging in such a wide range of activities, extending their skills, broadening their horizons and enriching their cultural capital. Of course, this is very often thanks to the staff who devise, plan and deliver these opportunities and I am so grateful to them for doing so.

I should particularly like to extend a warm welcome to those parents who are new to the school community, with sons or daughters having joined Year 7 in September. I trust this issue will give you a flavour of the kinds of experiences that lie in wait for your child on their journey with us. Just this week, I congratulated them in their first Celebration Assembly for making such an excellent start at AHA, since they seem to have adapted very quickly to our routines, expectations and systems, and have a great attitude to learning.

I also wanted to thank all parents and carers for supporting our strategies to reduce student absence this term. Our attendance figures are currently above both national and local averages, which is most encouraging. As our messages often state, higher attendance leads to greater progress and better outcomes, so I am sure we will see our students reaping the rewards of these improvements in the years to come.

I should like to close by wishing all members of the AHA community a restful break, a Merry Christmas and a successful year in 2024.

Mr Lawn (Headteacher)

Diary Dates

January 2024

4th January – First Day of Term
11th January – Year 9 Parents' Evening
15th – 17th January – Year 11 GCSE Music Recordings
19th January – Year 11 Photos
23rd January – 11B Geography Urban Fieldwork trip to Braintree Village
25th January – Year 11 Parents' Evening
26th January – Year 10 Poetry Live in Cambridge
29th January – 11D Geography Urban Fieldwork trip to Braintree Village
30th January – 11A Geography Urban Fieldwork trip to Braintree Village
30th January – Jack Petchey Awards Evening

February 2024

2nd February – 11C Geography Urban Fieldwork trip to Braintree Village
9th February – Year 10 Apprenticeship Information Event at Colchester Institute (Braintree Campus)
12th February – P1-P5 Dress Rehearsal for School Production of 'Matilda'
12th, 13th and 14th February – Performances of School Production of 'Matilda', 7pm
15th – 17th February – Valencia Trip
17th – 25th February – Ski Trip to Italy
19th – 23rd February HALF TERM
26th February – Year 9 Diphtheria, Tetanus & Polio & Meningitis vaccination

March 2024

5th March – GCSE Drama 'Woman in Black' Theatre Trip
7th March – Year 7 Parents' Evening
11th – 15th March – Year 11 Formal Speaking Exams
15th March – Year 10 BTEC Dance Move It! Expo, Excel London

Jack Petchey Awards

On 19th April 2023, Alec Hunter Academy hosted the Braintree Jack Petchey Achievement Awards at which some of our students, along with students from other schools, were honoured. The Jack Petchey Award Scheme is a reward and recognition initiative which enables schools and youth organisations to celebrate the achievements of their young people and receive additional funding. Congratulations to **Charlie Lay, Kye Brackell, Felicity Bowden, Esmee Chudasama, Gracie Hogan, Annie Lack, Henry Poole, Ola Lys and Sophie Ryan** who were each presented with their award, following a nomination by a member of staff**.** Each winner received a grant of £300 and was able to decide how this money would be spent in school**.**

BRAINTREE

19TH APRIL

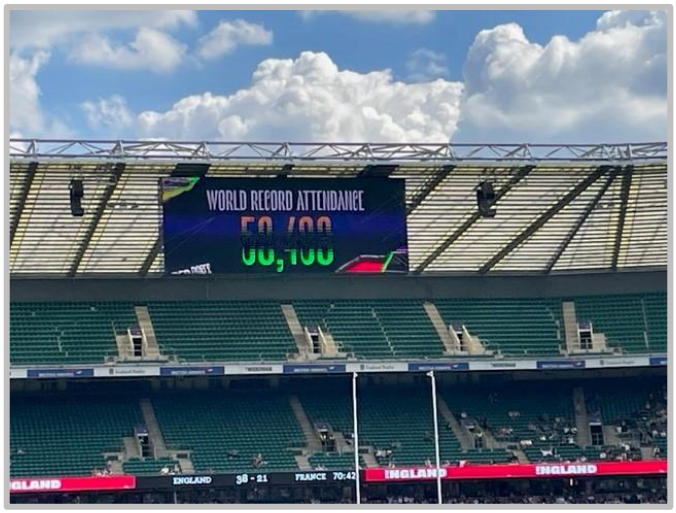
Two of our students, **Amelia McKenzie-Carter** and **Zane Miller** provided musical performances for the evening and later received a certificate of recognition and a voucher from Mr Lawn, to thank them for their contribution to the evening.

Jack Petchey Speak Out Challenge

On 27th April, superstar public speaker Annie Gill performed at the Jack Petchey 'Speak Out' Challenge Regional Final at New Rickstones Academy and earned a well-deserved 3rd place for Alec Hunter. The Jack Petchey 'Speak Out' Challenge is open to Year 10 students who take part in a free workshop that focuses on teaching the skills to speak more confidently in public. Following the workshop, selected students deliver their inspiring, thought-provoking and uplifting speeches in a competition format in front of a large audience and a panel of judges. Well done, Annie, on a great performance!

PE Rewards Trip

On Saturday 29th April, Mr Edwards took students to watch the England vs France Women's Six Nations match at Twickenham. A world-record crowd of 58,498 people saw the England Women's team beat France 38-33 to secure the Grand Slam, and our students were delighted to be part of the day!



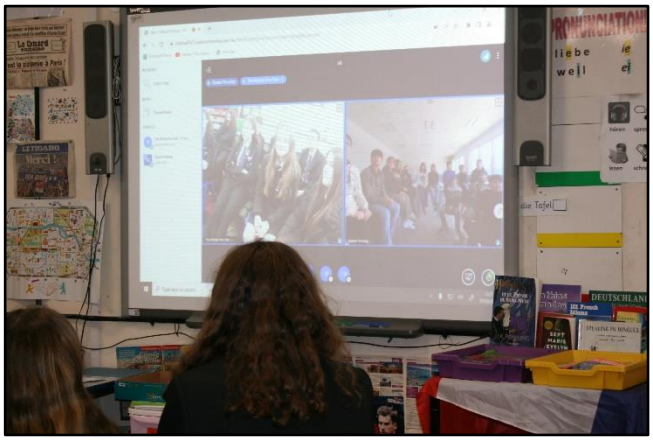
Our remaining INSET Day for this academic year will be on **Thursday 8th February 2024**. Staff will be using this time to devise teaching strategies with colleagues in line with the new School Improvement Plan, as well as working on their individual development priorities, defined through our Teaching, Learning & Curriculum Excellence programme. Students will not be required to attend on this day unless invited to come in for a specific reason.

Headteacher's Surgery: Mr Lawn will be available from 3:30-4:30pm every Thursday to meet with parents and discuss any issues they may wish to raise. No appointment is required, as parents will be seen in the order they arrive, but if you wish to book a specific time, please contact the school office.

Student Absence: Please remember to report any student absence via:
Tel: 01376 559356 / **Text:** 07598 393348 / **Email:** JJackson@alechunter.com.

German Pen Pals

Last term, another group of keen Germanists took part in the Pen Pal letter exchange with our partner school, IGS Aurich. They are exchanging letters (and sweets!) with their German pen pals once every half-term. Over one lunch break, our students "met" their German Pen Pals virtually through a Zoom call; they introduced themselves in German and then asked and answered questions about their interests: the discussion ranged from the subjects they learn at school to the football teams they all support!



Fundraising Fun

On 17th January 2023, the school raised **£742.84** for Comic Relief through student donations for a non-uniform day. Our IT apprentice, **Mr Smith,** very generously offered to have his head shaved for charity and raised another **£108.67,** so a fantastic total of **£851.51** was donated to a very worthy cause.

On Friday 17th November 2023, we held a non-uniform day and **raised a fantastic total of £861.30**!

Half of this money will be donated to BBC Children in Need and half will be divided between our four house charities, which are:
NSPCC (Attenborough House)
British Heart Foundation (Curie House)
Cancer Research (Gandhi House)
Children with Cancer (Hawking House)

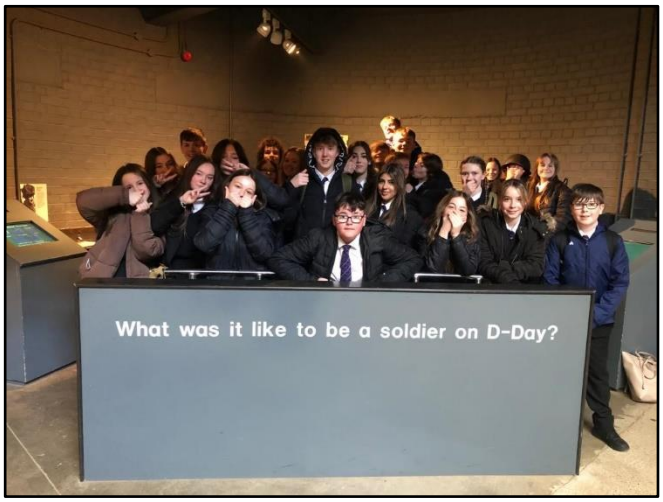
Skills Day – March 2023

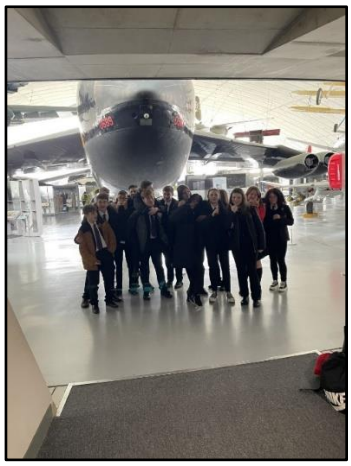
On 28th March, it was Skills Day and each of our year groups was involved in exciting activities that took place beyond our normal curriculum.

Year 7 students took part in a technology '*Designing in Context*' day. These sessions were based around the school's production of 'Wonderland' and included prop construction, designing promotional posters and programmes, creating computer games based on Alice in Wonderland and making tarts and cakes for a tea party. Each group rotated and covered three of the sessions.

Year 8 students were involved in a PE and Performing Arts day, with activities including Street Dance, Physical Theatre, Ultimate Frisbee and Flag Football. They also had a chance to try unfamiliar sports with sessions in Kabaddi, Sepak Takraw, and Spikeball.

Year 9 students enjoyed a day at the Imperial War Museum at Duxford.

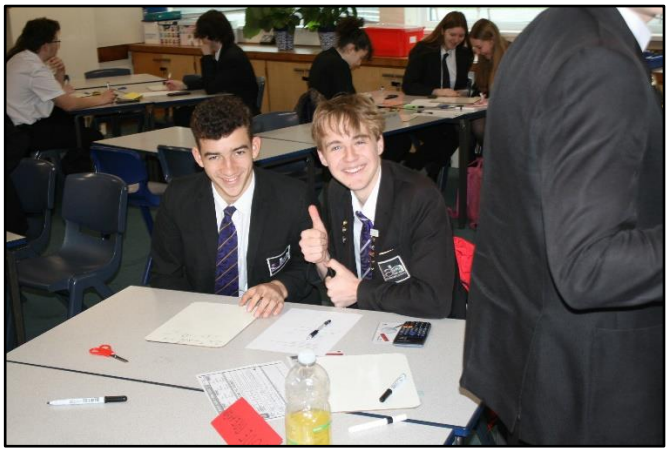




Year 10 students took part in mock interviews and a 'Careers Ready' day. Students were asked to bring a copy of their CV to the mock interviews, that took place with volunteers from local businesses including: **Braintree McDonald's, NHS, HSBC, Essex Highways, Make Happen, Colchester Institute, Braintree District Council, Nexus Tamdown, Anderson Property Developers and the Department for Work & Pensions.** Sessions were also held to help students improve their interview skills and identify transferable skills for their future, as well as working on their communication and critical thinking skills to help increase their confidence.

Year 11 students who are studying **French** had the opportunity to visit St Omer and try out their language skills whilst visitiing the local markets and food shops.

Remaining **Year 11 students** took part in Science and Maths revision sessions, including some 'Escape Room'-style challenges, to help them to prepare for the forthcoming GCSEs.



Trip to Aachen, Germany

From 12th-14th July, 44 students from Year 8 travelled to Aachen in Germany. Students and staff enjoyed visiting the cathedral, museum, the Aquis Plaza centre, the Lindt chocolate outlet store and the Aachen Treasury. On the way home the coach stopped at Dreilanderpunkt – the point where the borders of Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands meet.

Paris Residential 2023

From 11th-14th June 2023, 33 students from Year 9 travelled to Paris and stayed at the B&B Hotel in Disneyland Paris. As well as spending the day in Disneyland, students also explored Paris, enjoying a tour of Montmartre and the Latin Quarter as well as visiting the Eiffel Tower and taking a boat trip along the River Seine.

Bleed Bag Donation

On Tuesday 14th November, we were visited by Julie Taylor and the school was given a Bleed Control Kit, in memory of Julie's grandson Liam Taylor, issued by the Daniel Baird Foundation and funded by the Lions Club, Braintree.

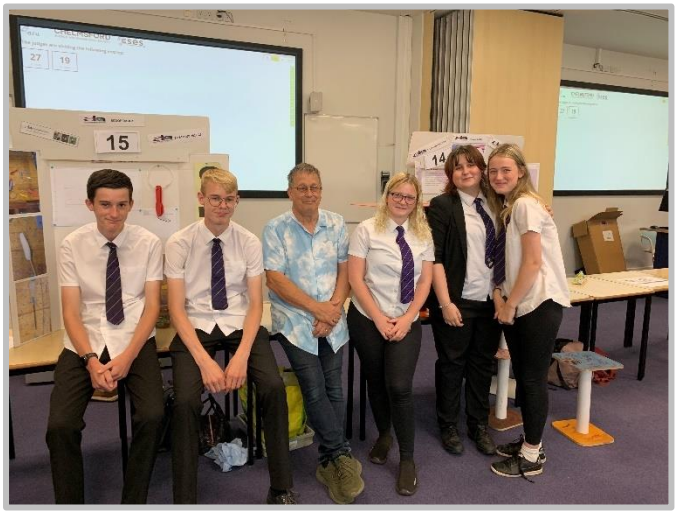
Julie has worked tirelessly since her grandson was fatally stabbed in Writtle, Chelmsford, in January 2020, to deliver Bleed Control Kits to a number of establishments including schools, pubs and clubs across the county. In addition to this, Julie has addressed many audiences on knife crime and the terrible impact of carrying knives.

Each Bleed Control Kit costs £102 and they were invented by the mother of Daniel Baird who was fatally stabbed in 2017 in Birmingham. It is important to point out that the Bleed Control Kit can be used in the event of any incident that causes extensive bleeding and this includes trauma from accidental injuries caused by broken glass or a road traffic accident, for example. Here at Alec Hunter Academy, we are proud to accept delivery of the Bleed Control Kit and whilst we hope never to need to use it, it is reassuring to know that we have a kit on site. The kit is also available to the public to use during school operating hours and is located in the main reception.

Above, left to right: Julie Taylor, Jill Cochrane and Lyndsey Dixon-Barrell, with photos of Ashley Wadsworth and Liam Taylor.

STEM Awards at Anglia Ruskin University

On 18th July, students and staff attended the Chelmsford Science & Engineering Society STEM Awards at the Anglia Ruskin University. Alec Hunter entered two Year 10 teams and were delighted that both received accolades. The girls' team of **Ruby Arnold, Libby Charles and Hollie Laverty** received 'Recognition of Achievement' Certificates, and the boys' team of **Gareth Cornwell and Alex Riches** won the CSES Concept Design Award for their 'Scoop Daddy' design.



Brilliant Club Results

Last term, 12 students took part in the Scholars Programme, run by the Brilliant Club. This is a programme designed to support students to develop skills and knowledge to make ambitious and successful applications to universities, should they wish to do so. The programme also helped nurture strong academic research skills to support their day-to-day schoolwork. Students worked with a PhD researcher on a university-style module that is pitched at a suitable level and is designed to enhance their written and verbal communication, critical thinking and metacognition through exciting curricular content. The students studied *The Living and the Dead in Medieval England* and attended a graduation event at Christ's College, University of Cambridge. The students who took part were **Timothy Garnett, Jack Markin, Grace Rice, Oliver Simpson, Grace Southgate, Jay Curl, Oliver Trebicki, Harmony West, Annie Gill, Alexa Rodrigues, Ben Collier and Sanija Aththanayake**. Congratulations to all students for working so hard on their projects and for achieving such impressive results.

Remembrance Day

On Sunday 12th November, our two Senior Student Leaders joined Mr Lawn to attend the Royal British Legion Remembrance Service at Braintree & Bocking Public Gardens. The school was honoured to lay a wreath at the war memorial as part of the ceremony, in honour of all those who have given their lives in conflict.

Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award Expedition

On Saturday 24th June, Y9 students started the expedition section of their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze award. This involved map reading, navigating, cooking their own meals and setting up their own camp for the overnight stay. Sunday involved packing away and carrying all of their equipment for the next walking section. Over the weekend, the students all covered over 30km in 30-degree heat! The students were excellent, and every one of them passed this section of the award. Students now have to continue to complete their volunteering, physical and 'learn a new skill' sections to receive the overall award.

District Sports

On 15th June, we took over 90 students to Tabor Athletics Track to take part in the annual District Athletics event. This is where 12 different schools in the North-West Essex area, come together to compete. As you can guess, there is some strong opposition, but our pupils performed admirably and we achieved some great results.
Very special congratulations go to **James Becker** who ran the 100m in 11.12 seconds, as he has only recently joined Braintree Athletics Club. Overall, Alec Hunter came 3rd out of the entire District, which was a fantastic result.

- Year 10/11 boys finished in second place by only 1 point.
- Year 10/11 girls finished in second place.
- Year 7 girls finished in third place.

Sports Awards 2023

On Thursday 19th October, we held our Sports Awards Evening, celebrating individual sporting achievements and recognising students who are involved in after-school clubs or members of school teams. This year we were delighted to welcome **Adam Lione** to help present the awards. Adam is from Essex and is an international Partially Sighted Futsal player who represents England. This year, he scored a hat-trick in the World Cup Final, narrowly losing out to Ukraine 4-3. His previous successes include: 2023 FA Disability Cup Winner and 2022/23 Golden Boot Winner in the England Partially Sighted League. Outside of sport, he is a TV producer with notable productions, such as Usyk v Joshua and the Beijing Winter Olympics 2022. He gave a highly inspirational speech to our students, and it was a pleasure to welcome him to the school.

Karate Achievements

Congratulations to Callum and Mione Biss who have both been awarded their black belt in Karate. Both students have attended the Braintree Shotokan Karate Club for 5 years, working hard and achieving their grading belts along the way. Well done to both students for this amazing achievement.

An Act of Kindness

We were heartened to hear of a recent incident involving Elizabeth Griffiths, one of our Year 11 students. On her journey to school, Elizabeth discovered a lady who had fallen and suffered a head injury. She calmly called an ambulance and sat with the lady until it arrived. She fetched a blanket from the lady's home to keep her warm and gave the relevant information clearly to the ambulance crew when they arrived. We received two reports from members of the public praising Elizabeth's composure and maturity, saying she was a credit to both her family and the school. Well done, Elizabeth! It is always a delight to be informed when our students act with kindness and compassion in the community.

Presentation Evening 2023

On Thursday 23rd November, we celebrated the academic and personal achievements of last year's Year 11 students at our annual Presentation Evening. Our ex-students were able to meet up with staff and former classmates, catch up on progress since leaving the school and receive their GCSE certificates. A number of special awards were also presented, and these are sponsored by various individuals and local organisations. They recognise commitment to sport, academic success and outstanding contributions made by students in each subject area. We are delighted to announce our winners for 2023, as follows:

Subject Awards

English Language	Amelia Porebska
English Literature	Bradley Paxton
Maths	Kathleen Steel
Geography	Howard Hurrell
History	George McAiney
RPE	George Mansell
French	Henry Gould
German	Callum Hall
Spanish	Gabriel Obeng
Computer Science	Ben Thompson
Creative IT	Esmée Chudasama
GCSE PE	Kobi Babet
PE Vocational	Jake Bunting
Combined Science	Skye Claydon
Biology	Thomas Bagwell
Chemistry	Thomas Waller
Physics	Madeleine Wilson
Drama	Kelly Gilbert
Music	Jack Stiff
Art	Natalia-Marta Jednaszewska
Applied Engineering	Kiprian Garnett
Graphics	Phoebe Wright
Child Development	Caitlin Ryan
Hospitality & Catering	Lilly-Rose Spooner
Food Preparation & Nutrition	Lexi Old
Business & Enterprise	Lily Harrigan-Rippingale
Event Operations	Sasha-Jo Porter
Citizenship	Poppy Charles

Sports Awards

The Baldock Cup for All-round Boys' Achievement	Thomas Waller
The Lindsey Cup for All-round Girls' Achievement	Lexi Old
The Margery Cup for Outstanding Girls' Effort	Esmée Chudasama
The Drummond Cup for Outstanding Achievement in Athletics	Logan Green & Elena Peralta-Simmons
The Football Cup for Outstanding Achievement	Lewis Duong
The Netball Cup for Outstanding Achievement	Fern Wager
The McElrea Cup for Outstanding Boys' Effort	Ethan Scherer

Special Awards

The Wendy Morgan Award for Citizenship	Alannah Power
The Mollie Birmingham Award for Services to the Community	Grace Hardison Taylor, Elena Peralta-Simmons & Halle-Marie Scott
The Performing Arts Award	Ollie Higgins
The Lady Stark Award for Languages	Henry Gould
The Andrew Hutchinson Award 'Be the best you can be'	Sasha-Jo Porter
The Stephen Wyatt Humanities College Award	George Mansell & George McAiney
The Alec Hunter Award	William Leech
The Hardison Taylor Award	Leigh Barkaway
The Gavin Leech Award	Elysia Joslin
The Lord Newton Award	Gabriel Obeng
The Overall Achievement Award	Thomas Waller

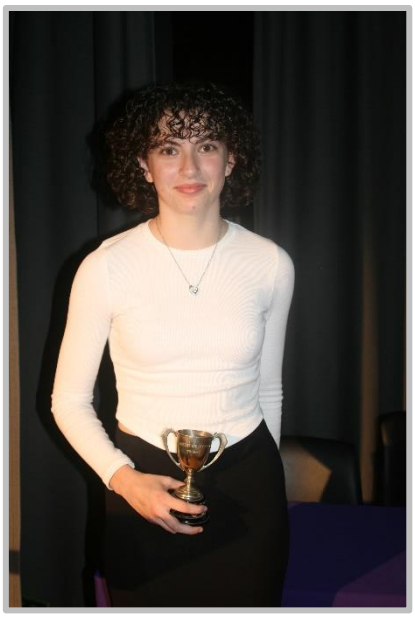
100% Attendance in Year 11

Thomas Bagwell
Esmee Chudasama
Filip Czech
Ethan Scherer

100% Attendance over 5 Years

Ellis Twydell

Presentation Evening Winners 2023



Class of 2023

The success of the Presentation Evening was not just due to the students whose achievements we celebrated, but thanks also to the generous sponsorship the school received. Our sincere thanks go to the following sponsors:

Delves Construction Ltd, Flagfinders CTB Ltd, John Ray Trust, Laura Hardison Taylor, Mrs Lyn Jefferis (Mini Firstaid), Mr Richard Hunter, Mrs J Leech, McDonald's Restaurants Ltd, Mr Simon McElrea & family and Mr Stephen Wyatt

Skills Day – November 2023

On Wednesday 15th November, students took part in our Autumn Term Skills Day. Each of our year groups was involved in exciting activities that are not covered by our regular curriculum. These are just some of the experiences they enjoyed:

Year 7 students participated in a team building day at Thriftwood Activity Centre in Brentwood. Students sampled lots of activities including archery, axe throwing, climbing, high ropes and go-karting.

Year 8 students took part in Learning for Life, RPE, History and Geography workshops including a reworking of the traditional Nativity.

Year 9 students attended Technology and Science workshops, involving baking bread rolls, textile print-making and using CAD technology.

Year 10 students visited the interactive exhibition at Silverstone Museum, learning about the engineering and technology that has changed the world of motor sport, as well as seeing real cars and bikes from sports history. Students also took part in an interactive STEM workshop in the Learning Studio.

Year 10 Business & Enterprise students visited Colchester Zoo, with a particular focus on the zoo's advertising, customer service and marketing, which will help with their current assignments.

Year 11 French students visited St Omer to explore the local markets and sample the food.

LINE MANAGEMENT FROM SEPTEMBER 2023

Please find below our line management arrangements for students. The first point of contact for enquiries should be your child's tutor and then their Student Support Leader or Head of Year depending on the nature of your query.

YEAR 7	YEAR 8	YEAR 9	YEAR 10	YEAR 11
Attendance / Wellbeing / Behaviour /Safeguarding				
Form Tutor				
Mrs Willing Student Support Leader	Mrs Weaver Student Support Leader	Ms Swindale Student Support Leaders	Mrs Johnson/ Mrs Porter (Wed) Student Support Leader	Mr Cleevely Student Support Leader
Mr Booth (Assistant Headteacher) - Designated Safeguarding & Mental Health Lead Mrs Harold (Deputy Headteacher) - Deputy Safeguarding Lead				
Learning / Behaviour / Academic Progress / Standards				
Class Teacher				
Head of Curriculum Area *(see below)				
Mr Lee Head of Year 7	Mr Spooner Head of Year 8	Miss Jones / Miss McKinnon (Fri) Head of Year 9	Mr Holland Head of Year 10	Mr Moreno Head of Year 11
Mrs Steward (Associate Assistant Headteacher) Behaviour & Progress	Mr Doolan (Assistant Headteacher) Behaviour & Progress		Mr Birley (Deputy Headteacher) Behaviour & Progress	

Mrs Gillett	SENCO
Mrs Holmes	Home-School Attendance Officer

*** Should you have a subject-related query, for example, regarding homework etc., the first point of contact should be the class teacher. Listed below are the Heads of each Curriculum Area, along with the member of the Leadership Group responsible for each Curriculum Area, to help parents in knowing who to approach for assistance.**

	Head of Subject/Curriculum Area	**Senior Leader**
English	Miss Schunmann	Mrs Harold
Mathematics	Mrs Baird	Mrs Harold
Science	Mr Fernandez	Mr Lawn
Geography	Mrs Hughes	Ms Woolnough
History	Miss Depper	Ms Woolnough
Religion, Philosophy & Ethics	Mr David	Mr Doolan
Technology/Child Development	Mr Todd	Ms Woolnough
French/German/Spanish	Mrs Peralta Jimenez	Mrs Steward
Vocational Education/Computer Science/ICT	Miss Judson	Mr Jones
Physical Education	Mr Edwards	Ms Woolnough
Performing Arts	Mrs Green	Mr Birley
Art	Mrs De Kadar	Mrs Harold
Special Educational Needs	Mrs Gillett	Mr Birley
Learning for Life	Mrs Hewes	Mr Booth

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Academic Year 2023-2024

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= Schooldays

= School holidays

= Bank holidays

= Weekends

= Non-Pupil Days*

***NB. One non-pupil day is still to be allocated and will be used for in-year priorities. Parents will be notified once this is scheduled.**

Autumn Term:	Friday 1 September 2023 – Wednesday 20 December 2023 *Half Term 23 October – 27 October*	74 days
Spring Term:	Thursday 4 January 2024 – Thursday 28 March 2024 *Half Term 19 February - 23 February*	56 days
Summer Term:	Monday 15 April 2024 – Monday 22 July 2024 *Half Term 27 May – 31 May, and May Bank Holiday - 6 May*	65 days
		195 days

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Academic Year 2024-2025

September 2024						
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October 2024						
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November 2024						
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December 2024						
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January 2025						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

February 2025						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28		

March 2025						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	25	27	28	29	30
31						

April 2025						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

May 2025						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

June 2025						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

July 2025						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

August 2025						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

= Schooldays / Weekends

= Bank Holidays

= School Holidays

= Non Pupil (INSET) Days
(There is one further date to be confirmed)

Autumn Term:	Monday 2 September 2024 – Friday 20 December 2024 *Half Term 28 October – 1 November*	75 days
Spring Term:	Monday 6 January 2025 – Friday 4 April 2025 *Half Term 17 February - 21 February*	60 days
Summer Term:	Tuesday 22 April 2025 – Tuesday 22 July 2025 *Half Term 26 May – 30 May, and May Bank Holiday - 5 May*	60 days
		195 days

Please note: The above dates may vary for individual schools, especially Foundation, Voluntary Aided schools and Academies. You are strongly advised to check with your child's school before making any holiday or other commitments.