



# THE HOLMEWOOD SCHOOL



National  
Autistic  
Society

Accredited  
Advanced  
2020



## Newsletter

### Friday 25 February 2022

Dear Families,

Welcome back to the second half of the year. I can't quite believe we are halfway through the academic year already!

Firstly, I'd like to take a minute to address the conflict in Ukraine which hit the point of crisis on Thursday. If you have friends or family in Ukraine, my heart goes out to you and we will do all we can to support you. Please do get in touch. In assembly today I spoke with students (Lower and Upper) about what is happening. There is a lot of information in the media at the moment and it can be quite overwhelming and terrifying. I urge you to talk to your children this weekend about what they are seeing and also consider limits to how much your children are exposed to at home, particularly on the TV, and particularly for those who are still very young and lack understanding. In school we will continue to talk about what is happening and I will ask the SaLT team to support us by making some social stories which I will share with you all for your use at home. I have recommended to students that BBC Newsround (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/60417806>) is a reliable source of information that may give them the facts they need to begin to understand this terrible situation.

This week we have continued to celebrate LGBTQ+ history month with a talk from Natty about Alan Turing; a movie afternoon at the Upper School; and 'The Big LGBTQ+ Quiz' at the Lower School. Thank you to all who have contributed to our events throughout February.

Next week we look forward to celebrating World Book Day in both Lower and Upper School. Our celebrations will be on Tuesday 1st March (NOT Thursday) as several classes will be on a residential trip to Miden Hall Farm in Suffolk for the latter part of the week. Please support your child to dress up as a character from a book they love.

On Monday 28th February I am also running an 'Online Safety and Nude Selfies' workshop for parents - if you want to join, please let the admin team know so they can arrange to send you an invitation for Google Meet.

Finally, next week we have 2 new students joining Holmewood. Jacob will join District Class, and Eloise will join Circle Class. To support staffing, we have also welcomed Ms Laurie Martin to District Class this week. On Monday we also welcome Rosa Stockwell as our new HLTA for the lower school. Rosa comes to us with a strong grounding in autism having worked at Priors Court School. We look forward to welcoming the new staff, new students and their families.

Best wishes to you all for a lovely weekend and happy costume making ready for World Book Day!

**Ms Camilleri**

Executive Head Teacher

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## Dates For Your Diary

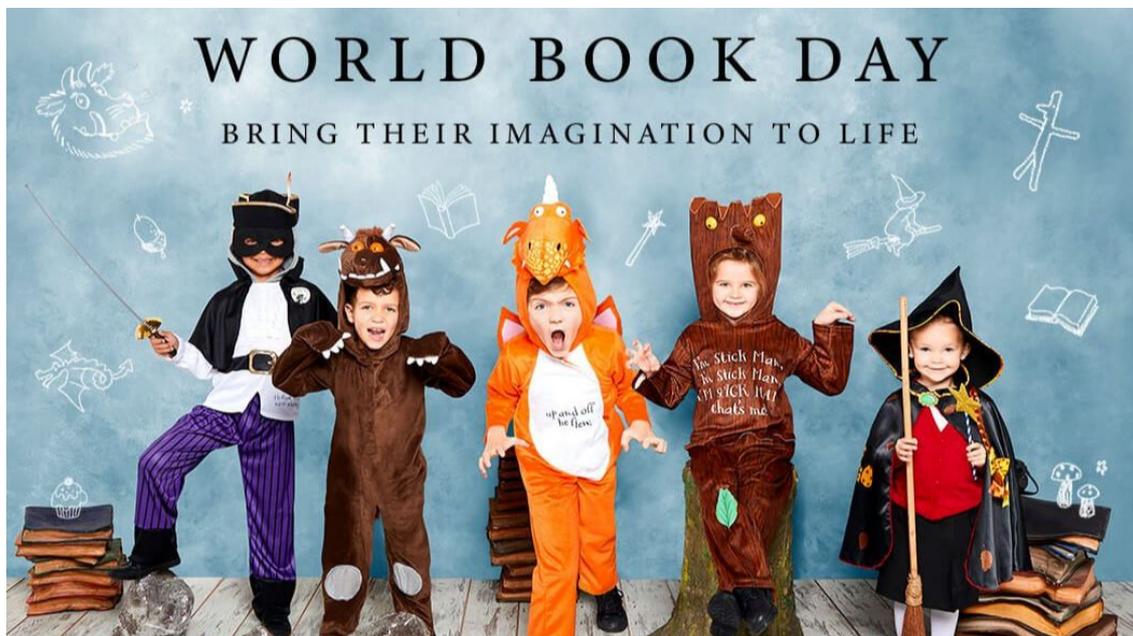
- **Tues 1st March (instead of Thurs 3rd March)** - World Book Day (students can come dressed as a book character)
- **Mon 14th - Fri 18th Mar** - STEM week
- **Mon 21st - Fri 25th Mar** - World Autism Awareness Week (WAAW)
- **Fri 25th Mar** - End of spring term
- **Mon 18th Apr** - Bank holiday
- **Tues 19 Apr** - Inset day
- **Wed 20th Apr** - Summer term (1st half) starts

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## World Book Day Celebration: Tuesday 01 March

Hello, due to classes being on a residential trip, this year we will celebrate World Book Day on Tuesday 1st March instead of Thursday.

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We look forward to seeing what inventive costumes students choose this year. Dressing up as a character from a book sparks so many discussions about reading and is great for our students.

#### **Activities at Woodside Park:**

- Guess the book trail
- Guess the staff Shelfie
- Planned activities in the English room include quizzes, book art, guess the book, explore the library- to name a few.

#### **Activities at Upper school:**

- Guess the book trail
- Guess the shelfie
- Lunchtime quiz and activities

The day will finish with the Best Dressed' prizes.

Additionally, we have prepared a little bag for all students with a book of choice ( for those who filled in the form) book mark, note book, book voucher, sensory toy and treat.

I was inspired by the book requests from students which varied from books about transport, books on poetry to epic novels like War and Peace. We encourage students to donate the books back to the library when read, if they choose to do so.

I have shared the World Book Day link via ParentMail. There are various bookish events happening in London throughout the whole of March. I hope that you will find something you and your families can enjoy.

**Miss Lyons**

Assistant Head

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# Impermanence

I received some really useful advice this week. I was complaining about how busy I am, and the fact that I have two sets of friends staying with me from out of town. A colleague reminded me about impermanence. Everything in life, the situations we find ourselves in both good and bad, it's all impermanent. If we remember that, then we can remember to enjoy the company of others while we can, knowing that there will be plenty of time to rest in the future.

It reminded me of something my mother always says - 'in the future this situation will be a distant memory'. Impermanence reminds us that troubles will also pass in time.

The concept of Impermanence is also known as the 'philosophical problem of change'. Autistic people can find any kind of change difficult. Due to the behavioural, information processing and sensory aspects of their diagnosis, many people on the spectrum often prefer familiar environments with a predictable routine and we work really hard to provide this for our young people at home and at school.

Of course, there are some changes we simply cannot help; from big global changes like the pandemic, to smaller individual or day to day changes like a staff member being absent. It is for this reason that alongside providing structure and routine, we must support our young people to anticipate change and have the skills to cope with it.

But I wonder, would it be possible to go even further? Would it be possible to help our young people reframe change, to see impermanence as being an opportunity to express gratitude for the good things and to understand that the bad will pass.

I plan on giving this a go myself. If it works, I may be on to something.

Have a lovely weekend.

**Ms B Young**

Head of Upper School



This week in Piccadilly we have started a unit of work on 'Myths and Legends'. We have shared the book 'Selkie' which is a Scottish folk tale, about a seal that can shed its skin to take human form. We've really enjoyed learning about the characters in the story, and thinking about why they behave in the way that they do. We're looking forward to reading other books about mythical sea creatures later this term.

In Maths we have been revising perimeter, by doing practical activities in and around the classroom.

We're looking forward to visiting the Forest again this half term for our Forest School session with District Class.. Last half term we had lots of fun thinking about different types of shelter and exploring more areas of the forest. We made some hotels for the insects and small animals of the forest, thinking really carefully about the things we needed to include to make the creatures as comfortable as possible! Here are some photos of our finished hotels.



Wishing you all a lovely weekend.

**Ms Mansfield**

Piccadilly class Teacher



We have only been back one week after the holidays but Central has been very busy, producing some great work as always. Below are some highlights from this week.

**College:**

This week Maddie met the new ferrets at Capel Manor College.

She has been thriving in her course and was rewarded with a Distinction in her first assignment. The students have been waiting for the ferrets to arrive for a few weeks now so it was a delight to welcome them after the half term break. As you can see Jupiter was very fond of her!



Next week the Capel Manor college students will be visiting Colchester Zoo as a reward for all their hard work.

### **Sewing Club:**

This week was the beginning of the sewing sessions with Mrs Row. Some of the Central students have been making scarves.

They will be making pencil cases next time. We can't wait to see their creations.



### **English:**

Central has written some great poems this week with Ms.Yauner. They chose to write about their cats and their living spaces. Ms. Yauner was so impressed that she wanted their work to appear in this week's newsletter. Well done to everyone.

#### **Livia - My Living Space**

My living space is usually too noisy to be in  
My living space is messy and busy  
My living space is taken over by animals and clothes  
My living space is full of stories and ideas

Each story teaches me something  
Each story is different  
Each story gives me a different image  
Each story tells me about a different person  
Each story is important and perfect

I go to my stories when my living space gets too loud  
The stories are less messy  
The stories have better animals  
The stories are always there,  
Constantly waiting,always reliable  
Waiting for me to return.





### Sophia - It's All Me

A creative retreat  
Where all I am and all I feel, Is free  
Postcards posters, it's all me

Collages and cascading  
fake leaves  
cradle me  
Black bed sheets  
It's all me

Here I never  
Fear or self censor

Like acrylics, I cling  
To wall floor and ceiling  
A paint tube that burst  
Everywhere disperst  
Something that speaks  
It's all me.

### Faye - Max and Ginga

I love you Max and Ginga with all my heart  
The dark marks you leave on my arm is too much for  
my heart,  
Our love for each other is like a wall of symmetry  
Nothing, nothing even the hulk cannot tear us apart.  
YOur silky, shiny fur comforts me when I'm down,  
Like the bed I lay down  
As you lay by my side, never leaving me behind  
Our bonds enhance like the ideal love I've never had  
before I met you.  
If you die, I don't know where I will hide.  
But I will always have the love that you have left behind  
Scarring me till death brings us apart



### Rock Band:

Sophia has been writing the lyrics for a song that the school band will perform. Other band members including Charles and Arlo are working on the chords and drummer Patrick working on the beats. He is killing it! Mr. Gonzalez has helped with creative direction whilst also teaching the band Music Theory.

We look forward to hearing the band perform at the next Holmewood event.

### Mr Tysman

Central Class Teacher

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# SaLT News

## Hello

I hope you all had a restful half term! As you may be aware I fractured my foot during the Christmas holidays. It was strange to return to work after such a long time off! I was definitely in the yellow zone on my first day back. I was very excited to be back and to see all the students and staff. Many of the students were curious to know how I fractured my foot. Embarrassingly I had to reveal that I did not look where I was going and tripped down a hill!

## Size of the Problem

I have had a busy week meeting lots of new students and catching up with students I met before Christmas! In some of the SaLT sessions we have been focusing on “the size of the problem” as part of the Social Thinking framework. This is a concept that supports the students ability to identify that problems have different sizes e.g small, medium and big problems. It also encourages students to respond in proportion to the size of their problem. For example a small sized problem would be if their pencil lead breaks. They can solve this on their own by sharpening the pencil and remaining in the green zone. Examples of big sized problem could include life events like a significant change in the family situation or a storm which destroys homes. These are issues in students lives which could affect them for a longer period of time and requires support from adults. The aim is for students to recognise what size their problem is and use their problem solving skills to seek the support they require.

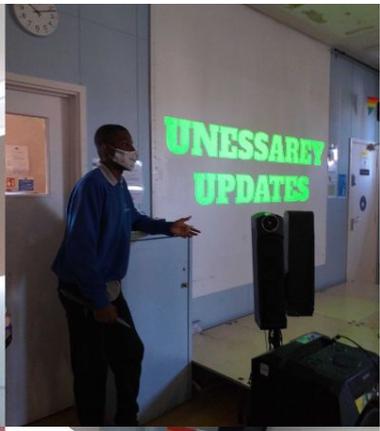
## Ms Shafique

Speech & Language Therapist

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## The Holmewood Gallery











## Designated Team For Child Protection And Safeguarding

If you are a student and have been harmed, or are at risk of harm, these are the people who can help. You can also talk to us if you are worried that another student is at risk of harm.

Lower School			
			
Ms D'Silva (Assistant Head and Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer for Lower School, Level 3)	Ms Lempaszek (Head of Welfare & Behaviour, Deputy DSO for Lower School, Level 3)	Mr Gibbs (Humanities & PSHE Teacher, Deputy DSO for Lower School, Level 3)	Ms Camilleri (Executive Head, CEOP Ambassador and Deputy DSO, Level 3)
Upper School			
			
Mr Lamb (Deputy Head and Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer for Upper School, Level 3)	Ms Young (Head of School and Deputy DSO, Level 3)	Ms Young (Assistant Head and Deputy DSO, Level 3)	Ms Camilleri (Executive Head, CEOP Ambassador and Deputy DSO, Level 3)

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