



Head's Newsletter

Dear Parents, Guardians and Carers

Building Work

- **D Block** - I will be around to finish D block...well not me personally with a hod and wheelbarrow, but I will oversee it all along with the School Business Manager and the Facilities Manager. It looks like it will not be ready for when we hoped, due to an issue about steel work. So we will be well into April, or more likely early May, before we can move in.
- **Technology Toilets** - The toilets in the technology block will be out of action for about six weeks in the New Year whilst they are ripped out and replaced. Hopefully this will straddle Easter to reduce the amount of time they are out of action to the students. When this work is finished, it will increase the number of toilets around school. Also, whilst we are retaining the idea of 'open toilets', cubicle doors will be full height for total privacy.
- **Roofs** - The roofers are pretty much on target and the sports hall is virtually finished. Fascias will go on in the New Year. Once they have finished they will flick over to the main school where the main hall, canteen and house offices will all end with a new roof. If you can picture it the canteen has roof lights and therefore part of it will have to be cordoned off. This should not affect the serveries but we will need to use the hall as an overspill for eating.
- **Bids for Next Year** - We hope to be able to replace the mobile classrooms as well as completing the roofing project. We should know the outcome by March 2019.

Lego Competition

Do you or does someone in your house eat, sleep and breathe the little plastic bricks? Is the LEGO MASTERS build room with over 1 million bricks your idea of heaven? The producers of the popular Channel 4 series LEGO MASTERS are looking for a new bunch of imaginative building pairs to take part in a third series of the bold brick-building competition. If you think you, a family member or a friend have the creativity, skill and imagination to be crowned Britain's best amateur building team then please email build@tuesdayschild.tv

Revision and Homework

All students and teachers now have free access to Seneca - a revision and homework platform making studying more fun. Seneca is an interactive way to learn official course content. Their web app covers 150+ exam board specific courses condensing what students need to know for their exams. The software is able to identify gaps in learning. For instance, when you get a question wrong, the platform will repeat the topic in different formats and their smart algorithm has proven to make students remember topics 2x faster. Seneca is totally free for students, teacher and parents. You can sign up via senecalearning.com

Feasibility for Expansion Project Phase 2 and Places for 2020

The feasibility has started with the aim of having 240 in each Year Group. There will be 240 places available for current Year 5's anyway as the large year group, currently in Year 10 moves on. This year we had over 240 first choice applications so, if numbers are similar to this year, we should meet virtually all of the demand for places for 2020.

Christmas

- I have heard some of the rehearsals for the Christmas Concert which is being held on Tuesday 18th December at St Marys in Nantwich. All are welcome and it really is a lovely way to kick-start Christmas.
- My beautiful witty sister, Andrea, has caught the bus and will be in school, providing her back holds up, on Wednesday 19th December. This is when we are having Christmas jumper day (treat it as a non-uniform day if you haven't got a Christmas jumper or feel like the Grinch) as well as a lovely Christmas lunch.
- If you have an older child who finished BL6 last year, then this is a reminder about the Presentation Evening on 19th December. Please let Denise Court in BL6 know if you are able to make it. It's a very relaxed informal evening and a chance to catch up with ex students, and there is a small bar. Usually families come as well to take a few photos and celebrate success.

Inter House Dance

Rehearsals are well under way for the 2018 Inter-House Dance. My leg warmers have been dusted off and I fully intend to demonstrate some of my 1970's moves as well as the latest street garage steps that I have been working on; I always think that class is timeless! Good luck to everyone who is taking part.

Head's Merits

I am about to do my last batch of Head's Merits. It has always been such a pleasure to award these as they are nominated by staff for something above and beyond. Well done to all those students who have made it to the big office to pick up their merit.

Gold Standard

This section enables us to celebrate the success of students outside of school. If you have any information for this section of the newsletter, then please do email head@brineleas.co.uk.

- I am pleased to include a member of staff in this section of the newsletter this time. Congratulations to Mr Elliot who represented the Scottish invitational charity team, ProjecX Waterboys, in the Barbados World 7s on 8th-9th December. The tournament was held at the famous Kensington Oval cricket stadium in Bridgetown. They overcame Atlantis (USA), Barbados, Guadeloupe and Ponty Butchers (Wales) to win the tournament and the \$10,000 prize money, which has been donated to the team's charity 'The Doddie Weir Foundation'. I would also like to point out that Mr Elliot was player of the tournament!

Rail Crossing Closure

The B5074 will be shut at the railway crossing between 5th and 14th January 2019. If you're struggling to think of where this is then, coming from Cheerbrooks, go straight across at the lights; if travelling out of Nantwich, it is the road with the Leopard Pub on it. Do please allow extra time for your journey if this is your normal way to school. It will also push more traffic past the school as well, so there could be considerable congestion and delays for all. I have included a link to the Network Rail website if you want any more details. <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/our-routes/wales/newcastle-road-level-crossing-renewal/>. Network Rail has offered this advice, 'We understand that closing the road is inconvenient and we thank the local community and road users for bearing with us during this time. Our advice to road users is to plan ahead and allow additional time for travelling. Between Saturday 5 January and Monday 14 January, there will also be no pedestrian access across the level crossing. When travelling south we recommend vehicles use Crewe Road and Nantwich Bypass to access the south side of the B5074. If travelling north, we recommend using Nantwich Bypass and Crewe Road. The diversionary route will be clearly signposted.'

Year 11 Mocks

The Year 11 Mocks have run really well thus far. Well done to the students in taking them seriously and the mock results day will be on 11th January. Mr Mottram will send out details of how results will be shared with you.

Parent Governor Elections

A huge thank you to all the parents who recently stood for election. I don't recall ever having as much interest. Around a quarter of families chose to vote. Congratulations to Mrs Su Turner, who was re-elected (and will continue as Chair of the Local Governing Board) and to Dr Deborah Varley who has been elected to her first term of office this time.

Stockbroker Challenge

On 21 November, more than 150 Year 7's from across Cheshire East took part in a trading challenge that put their financial skills and acumen to the test on a virtual stock exchange. Congleton Town Hall was transformed into a fictional stock exchange. The objective was to provide young people with an interactive insight into the world of work and test their skills in maths, economics and business in a global context. We are delighted that one of our Year 7 teams 'Prime Investors' won the competition and made more than a 50 per cent profit from their trading. Very well done to the team.

Uniform & Attendance

Thank you for supporting the School since September in maintaining our high standards regarding uniform and attendance. I hope that the information we provide on uniform helps you in your discussions during those long shopping trips with your child, by providing a very clear indication of our expectations and standards. If you would like any further clarification on any part of our uniform policy, please do read the information on our website or contact the pastoral team at school. Key areas that seem to cause the most discussions between children and parents/carers are hair, shoes, ties, jewellery and make up. The easy rule of thumb is that, if in doubt, it's probably not acceptable. I am grateful that so many of you encourage and cajole your child to get out of bed and get to school on time, especially in these dark, winter months. Spring is not too far away so hopefully the tummy bugs and colds will start to disappear.

Kindness

We regularly reward students for their kindness towards others. Sometimes children can be unkind to each other and we have seen a slight increase in such behaviour recently; particularly regarding social media issues that are then brought in to school. All of our children have had two assemblies this half term about 'banter' and kindness to each other, however the pastoral team are still dealing with an increasing number of issues. I would be very grateful if you could reiterate our message about the need for kindness towards each other. The school will not tolerate poor behaviour of any kind and we will follow the positive schooling handbook. The assembly information on 'banter' can be found on the school website <http://brineleas.cheshire.sch.uk/Docs/BanterBullying.pdf> along with several other resources that you may find useful. We would like everyone to feel happy and safe in school and really would appreciate your support with this matter.

Staffing Updates

Both Mrs Sharman and Miss Bates have just started their maternity leave. Miss Meredith will take over as Head of English for the rest of this academic year and Miss Willington will become Acting Head of Geography; Mrs Rogers will be joining the geography department too. Congratulations to Miss Corcoran and Mr Linde on the birth of their baby daughter. Miss Sanderson will shortly commence her maternity leave. Mrs Board recently left us from reprographics in order to take up a new promotion and Mr White, the Senior ICT technician, is leaving Brine Leas after nearly twenty years of service; we wish them both well. Mrs Fletcher has a change of role after Christmas as she is finishing in her role as Headteacher's PA but, thankfully, retains her post as PA to the Chief Executive Officer (me). She will remain as Clerk to the Governors as well as Clerk to the Multi Academy Trust. Mr Cole will have a new PA who will hopefully start in early January. We will also be welcoming Ms Victoria Robinson as Head of Art.

The Future

Out of habit I have kept using the word we in this document which is only just about right. My role does now become more strategic as I relinquish Headship and retain just the CEO role. I will miss the daily hubbub of Brine Leas.

Lots of people have asked what I will do in my newly found leisure time. Well, I hope to spend more time with my own family. I want to read more and also have another go at writing (current status - unpublished). I like painting, although I am not that good at it. I am dreadful on the golf course and have yet to break a 100....that day may come. I love gardening and hope to master growing a decent cauliflower. The list goes on but that may give you a flavour. I have been so fortunate to be surrounded by wonderful students and an amazing staff team. A special public thank you to the Leadership Team at BLS; they have achieved amazing things. Another thank you goes to my long suffering PA, Mrs Fletcher, who has worked tirelessly for the last twelve years and who has never been afraid to tell me when I am wrong (that happens a lot). Little can be achieved if you are on your own; I have never been on my own. However bleak things may seem a walk around school always does put the wind back into your sails. Thank you for choosing Brine Leas School and the support that you have given to both myself and my staff. You have some wonderful children. Good luck and best wishes to Mr Cole; he will be excellent in his new role.

Finally

I would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

Andrew Cliffe
December 2018

Dates for the Diary

Tuesday 18 th December 2018	-	BLS Christmas Concert at St Mary's Church
Wednesday 19 th December 2018	-	A Level Certificate Evening
Friday 21 st December 2018	-	School Closes for Christmas
Monday 7 th January 2019	-	School Re-opens to Students
Thursday 10 th January 2019	-	Year 13 Mock Examinations Commence
Friday 11 th January 2019	-	Year 11 Mock Results Day
Monday 21 st January 2019	-	Year 11 Information Evening
Friday 25 th January 2019	-	Year 13 Mock Examinations Finish
Monday 28 th January 2019	-	Year 9 Examinations (for 1 week)
Wednesday 30 th January 2019	-	Year 7 Parents' Evening
Tuesday 5 th February 2019	-	Spanish Exchange Depart
Tuesday 12 th February 2019	-	BLS Careers' Convention
Wednesday 13 th February 2019	-	iCreate Showcase Evening
Thursday 14 th February 2019	-	School Closes to Students for Half Term
Friday 15 th February 2019	-	INSET Day (school closed for students)
Friday 15 th February 2019	-	Ski Trip Departs
15 th February – 16 th February 2019	-	Art Tattenhall Residential
Friday 22 nd February 2019	-	Ski Trip Returns
Monday 25 th February 2019	-	School Reopens to Students



Brine Leas School

An Academy

'Believe, Learn, Succeed'

If you are worried about yourself or someone else over the weekend, evenings or holidays please don't struggle to cope alone.

Contact any of the numbers or websites below.

- In an emergency, call 999
- NSPCC [0808 800 5000](tel:08088005000)
- Childline [0800 1111](tel:08001111)
- Kooth Online Counselling <http://www.kooth.com>
- Samaritans [116 123 \(UK\)](tel:116123) or email jo@samaritans.org
- NHS urgent care (non-emergency) [111](tel:111)
- <http://www.youngstonewall.org.uk> for information on LGBT
- Domestic Abuse -women can call 0808 2000 247, the free 24-hour National Domestic Violence Helpline run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge
- Domestic Abuse -men can call the Men's Advice Line free on 0808 801 0327 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm) or ManKind on 01823 334 244
- Anyone who needs confidential help with their own abusive behaviour can contact Respect on their free helpline on 0808 802 4040.



NHS
Cheshire and
Wirral Partnership
NHS Foundation Trust

Are you struggling
with...



Out of Hours Advice Line Children & Young People

Wirral & Cheshire Wide

Are you worried
about something?



Are you self harming
or having thoughts
of suicide?

Are you feeling very
sad & unhappy?



5pm - 10pm Mon to Fri
12pm - 8pm Weekends

01244 397644

