

Brine Leas School

Headteacher's Newsletter to parents

(Spring 2019 - DC1)



Dear Parents, Guardians and Carers,

New beginnings

The start of the Spring term feels like a long time ago. The nights and mornings were darker, the days were colder (except for that glorious weather in half-term week) and I had just started in this role. My first two months have been action-packed and I've enjoyed the challenges along the way. Here's a selection of things that are and have been going on in school over the course of this term. If you have any items to celebrate from your son/daughter, then please pass them on to me via info@brineleas.co.uk with a subject of "Headteacher's Newsletter". Pictures and details would be useful for me to include it in the next Newsletter.

Building Work

Even though it feels like we are still surrounded by builders, we've actually completed a significant proportion of the building work that's been going on. We have shiny new boilers and half of our roofs have been replaced/resurfaced. We will be getting some new ceilings and lights in some key areas and some refurbished toilets and new laboratories too. Just to be clear about the funding for this, which is in contrast to the current school budget deficit, the money for this is from Condition Improvement Funding (CIF) bids that we place directly with the Education Funding Agency (EFA). The money is tied to repairs and improvements and is not reusable on anything else. We currently have another CIF bid in to replace our ancient mobile classrooms and should hear the outcome of this very soon. The extension to D block continues and while the pace isn't quite as we expected it to be, the structure is taking shape and it will be ready for September as was the original intention. Again, I feel like I need to clarify the funding situation. This is funded by Cheshire East Local Authority, in response to the number of new housing developments in the area and the demand for school places. It isn't the only work like this on a school in the area. While it doesn't provide an expansion to the school, it is to meet our current oversubscription situation. Future demand on places from local developments would suggest that we will need further expansion if we are to meet the demand for places at this school. This money is not transferrable and does not help the school budget situation.

New Staff

This term, Mrs Robinson joined us as Head of Art and she is currently buried deep within the demands of GCSE and A Level Non-Examined Assessment (NEA).

School Budget

Thank you to all of you who completed the YouGov poll on the debate around future school funding. Cheshire East now rightly shows as a hotspot for signatures of concern as it is one of the lowest funded Local Authorities in the country. Just as a reminder, Brine Leas is also the equally lowest-funded secondary school in Cheshire East. Compared to previous years, the school has more students on roll than it's ever had. We receive significantly less funding, in real terms, than we have in the past. Schools have had more unavoidable expenditure to pay for from their reduced budgets than ever before, that either haven't been funded or haven't been fully funded (teacher's pay increases, support staff pay increases linked to the National Living Wage, employer's National Insurance contributions, employer's pensions contributions and rising energy costs). We have less income than we did before and have to spend more of it on things beyond our control. The National Funding Formula is supposed to address the differences in school funding across Local Authorities and within Local authorities, but this isn't mandatory, and Cheshire East have chosen a different model for 2019-2020. Before funding for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Pupil Premium for disadvantaged children is

added to the school budget, we receive less than all other secondary schools in Cheshire East per pupil, excluding those six schools who are funded at the same level that we are and less than most other schools in the country. Part of my role is to manage how we continue to provide the education that we want with the reduced funding that we receive, and this process has been going on for a number of years. It often leads to tough decisions, but our primary aim is to secure the best education possible for our students. Please continue to campaign if you feel that change is needed.

Careers@BLS

Careers Convention – the annual Careers Convention took place on Tuesday 12th February in the Sports Hall. This year we welcomed a huge range of employers, training providers, local colleges and universities and the Sports Hall looked amazing. Year 9, Year 11 and BL6 students had the opportunity to speak to exhibitors and explore their future options and career ideas. We are so grateful to all the exhibitors who gave up their time to inspire our students and we would like to thank everyone who attended for their continued support. Mock Interviews – all our Year 10 students attended a Mock Interview during National Careers and National Apprenticeships Week (4 - 8 March 2019). The students had already prepared a CV in school and were asked to dress smartly, as they would do for an interview. They were very smartly dressed, and the standard of responses given by those interviewed, impressed many of the interviewers. We were extremely lucky to have a wealth of professionals who gave up their time to provide our students with this experience. Hopefully the students will go to future interviews for BL6, college or an apprenticeship with more confidence. Thank you to all the interviewers who allowed us to provide our Year 10 students with such a great opportunity. Work Experience 21st – 25th October 2019 – We launched Work Experience to our Year 10 students at an evening held in school on Monday 4th March. The students will complete this from Monday 21st to Friday 25th October 2019, when they are in Year 11. All the information regarding Work Experience can be found on the Brine Leas School website. It is encouraging that we have already received some completed self-placement forms already. The deadline for students to return their fully completed forms is Friday 14th June 2019. If your child would like ideas on organisations that could possibly provide them with a placement, please ask them to speak to Mrs Cundy at Student Reception. If you or anyone you know would be able to offer one of our students a placement, please contact us at work.experience@brineleas.co.uk



Admissions for 2020

The admissions for September 2019 (current Year 6) are finalised and announced. For September 2020 (current Year 5), we will be admitting 240, which is over the Published Admission Number of 215, as per the agreement with the Local Authority. This is made possible by the work mentioned earlier and funded by the Local Authority to accommodate our current oversubscription. This is not an expansion of the school. The work to facilitate this includes laboratories, toilets and classrooms.

Principal Students

Last week I had the pleasure of interviewing twenty-three Year 10s for the Principal Student posts for next year and this week the successful five were informed of their positions. All twenty-three performed incredibly well and I am arranging for the remaining eighteen to secure other senior student posts within the school due to the impressive nature of their applications and interviews.

RESPECT course

Students from Year 9 completed the 8 week programme in conjunction with Cheshire Fire Service around the following themes:

- Sessions included developing an understanding of the importance of working together and nonverbal communication as well as learning the importance of and the ability to listen effectively.
- The students had an insight into the role of a firefighter at Road Traffic Collisions and worked with Nantwich Firefighters to run a training exercise to extract a casualty from a car and providing basic first aid.
- Students learned about the consequences of actions and the law through work with the local Police.
- They completed teamwork-based exercises at Delamere Forest.
- During their last week they completed a practical and verbal demonstration via a graduation ceremony of basic firefighting skills in front of parents, the local Mayor and Fire Station staff.

All students did themselves and their families proud, with behaviour and attitude being exemplary throughout the course.



German Exchange 2018-19

Just a few weeks before Christmas, seven of our Year 9 students jetted off to spend a week living with their German exchange partner and family. The German children all attend the Max-Ernst-Gesamtschule, which is just outside of Cologne. During the week, our Year 9s went to the famous Christmas markets, visited the gothic Cathedral, explored the beautiful city, accompanied their partner into lessons, danced together at a party and went bowling... They had a great time making new friends and practising their German. The students were an absolute credit to Brine Leas, their families and themselves. Mrs Cuddihy and Mr Gresty both said how wonderfully well behaved and polite they were, and how they all got involved to make the most of every opportunity. Well done! As is to be expected with an exchange, there must be a return leg! The children from Germany are coming over here to stay for a week. They arrived on the 20th March and we've got a really exciting week in store for them. Be sure to greet them with a smile if you see them in the corridor or find them in your lessons! The German for 'hello' is 'hallo'!

Year 11 Textiles



As you can see above, Year 11 Textiles students have been completing some amazing course work. They have been busy sewing, printing, beading, embroidering all of their garments. Each fabric has been printed from the student's drawings and artwork. These are just a few examples of the creative and stylish outcomes produced.

Resilience Workshop

Working with Tianne Croshaw, a local Mind Coach, some Year 11 students have been learning the techniques of using Left/Right brain thinking to create a more positive mind set. Students have also explored and designed their own wellness plan to encourage ownership and self-responsibility.

Year 11 and Year 13 Examinations

As we approach the examinations for Year 11 and Year 13, it's worth me re-iterating what has been a long-standing and successful practice at Brine Leas during the examination period. We do not have a finishing date for Year 11 or Year 13 as every student's examinations finish on different dates. During the examination period, there will be as many lessons and tutorials in those subjects who still have an examination to come as we can manage. For those wishing to study in a quiet place in school, we will provide a place to do this. The best advice and preparation that you can get in the leadup to an examination, is from the staff who have planned and taught your course, so please continue to work with them throughout the examination period. The date that your son/daughter is expected to attend lessons until, is the date of the last lesson in that subject immediately before the last examination in that subject. We work hard to provide these lessons over the examination period and would appreciate your support in making sure that your sons/daughters get the most from us by attending these lessons.

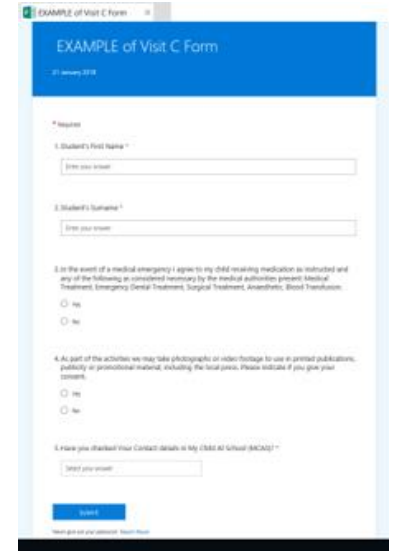
Brine Leas Trust

I would like to thank parents, families and friends for their continued support of the school through the Trust. Many parents have contributed by playing the school lottery as well as donations to the Trust itself. Proceeds from recent projects have gone towards library chairs, cameras, whiteboards and the food room. More details available at www.yourschoollottery.co.uk and then searching for Brine Leas School or visiting <https://brineleastrust.co.uk/>

New C form for visits and trips

I don't think anyone actually knows why these are called C Forms anymore, other than someone who's been in schools a very long time, but they are needed every time you give consent for your son/daughter to participate in a trip or extra-curricular activity outside of school. In order to reduce the amount of paperwork and administration time for our C Forms and to make sure our school has the most up-to-date information concerning your child, we have trialled a new online way of sending and receiving information regarding C Form for visits and trips. If your child goes on a visit/trip, you will receive a link, via the information letter or an email, which will direct you to the appropriate C Form required for your son/daughter to take part. It should only take a couple of minutes to complete online before you can submit the form. From the link below, you can see an example of the new C Form.

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=DzCkQQ2bGkGmfhFdWNBVI7zmSdjLLRpCn98-v8x_As1UMDJVSEIEWIJSNDMwQ1c3MFFTSA2MFowSi4u

The image shows a screenshot of a web form titled "EXAMPLE of Visit C Form". The form is displayed in a browser window. It contains several sections: 1. "1. Student's First Name" with a text input field. 2. "2. Student's Surname" with a text input field. 3. "3. In the event of a medical emergency I agree to my child receiving medication as instructed and any of the following as considered necessary for the medical publication: (parental Medical Treatment, Emergency Dental Treatment, Surgical Treatment, Anesthesia, Blood Transfusion)." with radio buttons for "Yes" and "No". 4. "4. As part of the activities we may take photographs or video footage to use in printed publications, publicity or promotional material, including the local press. Please indicate if you give your consent." with radio buttons for "Yes" and "No". 5. "5. Have you shared your contact details in My Child at School (MCAS)?" with a text input field. At the bottom, there is a blue "Submit" button and a small "Thank you for your response" message.

We're hoping that they are much more convenient for parents. Please let the school office know if you have any feedback for us.

UCAS/Oxbridge

112 year 13s submitted UCAS applications with nearly all students receiving offers from most of their 5 chosen institutions. Two students have been successful with Maths applications at Oxford and Cambridge and one for Veterinary Medicine. Over 60 students have been successful in securing offers for what the Times Educational Guide selected as their top 20 universities and many more have had offers from other 'Russell Group' Universities. Finally, we have now got over 20 students in Year 12 working towards applications for Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science and Oxbridge for next year.

iDEA

Many will remember our flying visit from HRH The Duke of York last year to present students with their iDEA certificates. Our students continue to have success with iDEA award. Years 9, 10, 11 and 12's are completing the award with some doing this as part of their Duke of Edinburgh Award. To date we have:

- Participants: **457**
- Bronze Award winners: **110**
- Silver Award winners: **13**
- Total number of iDEA badges: **8,180**

Year 11 Language Speaking Exams

The speaking exams for French, Spanish and German will take place soon after the Easter holidays. Your child will be told their specific date and time. Here are the days allocated to each teacher:

Thursday 18th April: French - Miss Bentley's classes

Tuesday 23rd April: French - Miss Bentley's classes

Wednesday 24th April: French - Miss Bentley's classes

Monday 29th April: Spanish - Miss Rafferty's classes

Tuesday 30th April: Spanish - Miss Rafferty's classes AND French - Mr Cador's class

Wednesday 1st May: French - Mr Cador's class AND Spanish - Miss Rafferty's classes

Thursday 2nd May: Spanish - Miss Rafferty's classes AND Mr Pollard's class

Friday 3rd May: Spanish - Mr Pollard's class

Tuesday 7th May: German - Mrs Sykes' class

Wednesday 8th May: German - Miss Butz' class

Thursday 9th May: German - Miss Butz' class

Students should be learning their answers to the speaking questions, practising role-play cards and practising photocards.

PE News

Congratulations to the Y8 boys who won the indoor Sportshall Athletics finals at Ellesmere Port, to become Cheshire champions! Also, congratulations to the Y10 netball team who came 2nd in the South Cheshire netball tournament on 5th March. Y11 GCSE PE - There are 2 revision webinars taking place in BL6 from 3:15-5pm. Paper 1 revision is on Wednesday 1st May and paper 2 revision is on Tuesday 14th May.



Dates for the diary

Friday 22 nd March 2019	-	Y9 Options deadline
Monday 25 th March 2019	-	Y10 Geography Fieldtrip
Tuesday 26 th March 2019	-	Y8 exams finish
Wednesday 27 th March 2019	-	Y12 Parents' Evening
Wednesday 27 th March 2019	-	Merit prize afternoon tea
Thursday 28 th March 2019	-	Interhouse Drama competition
Thursday 28 th March 2019	-	School closes for students
Friday 29 th March 2019	-	INSET Day
Monday 15 th April 2019	-	School re-opens
Wednesday 17 th April 2019	-	BL6 Information Evening (Y12)
Thursday 18 th April 2019	-	School closes for Easter
Tuesday 23 rd April 2019	-	School re-opens
Thursday 25 th April 2019	-	Y12 exams commence
Saturday 27 th April 2019	-	PSCA Alton Towers trip
Thursday 2 nd May 2019	-	Y10 Parents' Evening
Monday 6 th May 2019	-	School closed for Bank Holiday
Tuesday 7 th May 2019	-	School re-opens
Tuesday 7 th May 2019	-	Spanish exchange arrive

Friday 10 th May 2019	-	Y12 exams finish
Monday 13 th May 2019	-	External exams commence
Friday 24 th May 2019	-	Y13 Leavers' assembly
Friday 24 th May 2019	-	School closes for half term

Letter from Mrs Darling:

We know that you as parents/carers want the best for your child and that having a good education helps to create more opportunities in adult life. Bearing this in mind, I would like to include a regular reminder regarding the law relating to holidays taken during term time.

As parents you have a legal duty to ensure that your child attends school on a regular basis. The Education Act 1996 makes it a criminal offence for a parent to “*fail to secure their child’s regular attendance at school*”. The recent amendments to the 2006 Regulations remove any reference to *family holidays, extended leave and the statutory threshold of ten school days*. The amendments also make it clear that **Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence (holiday) during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances**. The amendments give parents no entitlement to take their child out of school for a holiday in term time and require the Head Teacher and Governing Body to determine what the exceptional circumstances are. The decision will be made by the Head Teacher, and/or Governor. We will use discretion to consider each request individually.

A Request for Absence form must be completed in advance and returned to school FAO the Attendance Officer. The form is available from the school office or on the school website. Email requests can be made to attendance@brineleas.co.uk, with the form as an attachment.

- ❖ Please attach details of the exceptional circumstances which requires the leave of absence to be taken during term time
- ❖ On receipt of the request, you will be sent a response indicating if the school is able to authorise the absence

Any absences taken without the school’s permission will be marked as **unauthorised**. This may lead to the Local Authority being contacted and a Fixed Term Penalty notice being issued.

Penalties for unauthorised absence		
Timeline	One Child	Two children
Paid within 21 days	£60 per parent	£60 per child = £120 per parent
After 21 days and before 28 days	£120 per parent	£120 per child = £240 per parent
After 28 days	You will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates’ Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child’s regular attendance	You will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates’ Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child’s regular attendance

I understand that some parents/carers will find these measures extremely serious, but we believe that regular and high attendance is in every pupil’s best interests and helps to maximise their achievements and enjoyment of school. This letter reflects accurately the current legalisation and, as a school, we have a duty to point this out to parents/carers.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Darling
Assistant Headteacher