



Diary Dates

School Day – 8:40am – 3:05pm	
08/03/23	Rescheduled Year 8 Geography visit to London
12/03/23	ESA Pond working party @ 10.30am
15 & 16/03/23	Strike Action see Parentmail 23 rd Feb
23/03/23	Provisional Year 8 STEM Ambassador visit
24/03/23	ESA Family Quiz
30/03/23	Year 8 Foundation Subject Parents Evening in person 5-7pm
31/03/23	ESA Easter Egg Hunt
03-14/04/23	Easter Break
17/04/23	Summer Term Begins
27/04/23	Year 5 Foundation Subject Parents Evening in person 5-7pm
28/04/23	Provisional Year 8 Thorpe Park Visit (more details to follow)
01/05/23	Bank Holiday
08/05/23	Additional Bank Holiday - Coronation of King Charles III
09-12/05/23	Year 6 SATs
18/05/23	Year 7 Foundation Subject Parents Evening in person 5-7pm
19/05/23	ESA School Disco
29/05-02/06/23	Half Term
29/06/23	Year 6 Foundation Subject Parents Evening in person 5-7pm
13/07/23	County Transition Day
21/07/23	End of Summer Term

What is our teaching-learning data and books telling us about our students’ recovery from COVID?

We are really pleased to see that students are finally returning to securing ABOVE in their core subjects and their foundation subjects, so that we are returning to pre-pandemic numbers securing ABOVE age-related expectations. We are also seeing more students return to making rapid progress in a term, not just good.

What is making the difference?

The students securing this attainment and/or rapid progress all attend well and are most likely to consistently complete their homework. During Parents evenings this term and next, you will be able to see the foundation subjects’ books and review their progress with the teachers.

What are we noticing about our mental health, that of our students and our communities and what plans are we putting in place?

For the last 3 years, we have completed a wellbeing survey, this is a National survey that Hertfordshire buy into, and our year 7 and 8 take part in. For the last 3 years our students results have shown an significant spike in their wellbeing, results are higher and better than that of Hertfordshire and the National figures. However, this year our results were in-line with the national and Herts figures, the wellbeing of our students had dropped. We have noticed that an outcome of this is that some of our children are currently less tolerant and understanding of others, or quicker to move to a stress state of fight (verbally in the majority), flight, or freeze.

We have also seen a decline in the mental health of our staff, who like you are experiencing an increase in stress and pressure as they battle mortgages, the cost of living crisis, and a rise in ill health in their families and friends or themselves. This is repeated in the community with families struggling now to make ends meet. This has resulted in us experiencing angry and agitated parents on a daily basis, who will often at the end of a heated email and/or phone conversation, apologise for their behaviour and identify that this is stress.

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You might experience it the community?

Signs of poor mental health of many can be seen with drivers less tolerant of each other, neighbours moving swiftly to arguments or you finding yourself less able to cope when something goes wrong.

In reading, researching and talking to other heads, we are not alone in these experiences. So, what are we going to do to help? Some of the answers lie I believe, in asking what were we doing that made a difference and put us above the national for mental well-being during COVID and after?

We have a clear answer, for three years we ran a mental health and well being programme of learning that took place each morning and supported children to notice their well-being, notice others, and seek and get help if they needed it. It also provided a whole set of strategies to help them manage anxiety, low periods and or keep their well being in a good and positive state.

Our plans for the second half of the year are therefore to:

- Look at returning to a registration that involves small simple wellbeing exercises, that support students to notice their wellbeing and others, and to gain strategies to keep their mental health strong.
- At the same time as students are carrying out these exercises, so will our staff.
- We noticed in the three years of doing these that we were learning about our own, and our families wellbeing and how to keep it strong and resilient.
- We are going to be offering a series of four sessions to support the community and parents/ carers on:
 - how to protect your child from poor mental health related to poor mobile phone use. We have the NSPCC and

then an inhouse session with Jo Gant via TEAMS which will give you an insight into what we have learnt about mobile phones and how to support your child to use them well and to protect their wellbeing.

- We will also offer two sessions for key stage 2 parents and then key stage 3 parents sharing the wellbeing and positive mental health curriculum that we use, and how we promote good mental health. This can be helpful in understanding your child's behaviours and the language we are using to support, but as staff we have also found it incredibly useful to support our own wellbeing.
- Our wellbeing lead is trialling a peer support group of year 8's who have been developing their self-esteem and would like to help others, this group will be working with year 5 and 6's under the leadership of Mandy Harris.

You are not a trained expert in mental health, are you qualified to offer this curriculum?

We have in the last 3 years based our curriculum on the Zones of Learning, a recognised and well-respected strategy to help students regulate, the Hertfordshire Education Psychologists publication in May 2020 which supports post traumatic growth post COVID and the clinical psychologist Dr Julia Smith. This year our mental health lead Mandy Harris has researched, trained and resourced a series of strategies titled *Healthy Coping Strategies for Young People*.

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What change will this bring about for my child?

If we get this right you will notice the following:

- Your child is comfortable and can easily identify if their wellbeing is dropping.
- They are able to speak openly about worries and concerns
- They are able to suggest and put in place strategies to help them maintain good mental health.
- They might even give you a little advice!

We are clear that we need to do something to help to return to significantly above the national and Herts average for well being and mental health.

We have asked the question as a Church of England school – isn't the COWO, the school values and the spirituality in the school meant to help wellbeing and good mental health?

SAT Parent Evening Information

For any Parent/ Carers who were unable to attend our evening on Thursday, please find attached information slides.

Is there a year 6 and 8 residential this year?

We will be publishing news of a year 7 September residential for our current year 6 next week.

Mr McCarthy is currently finalising the trips and activities for year 8 for the end of Summer term, this will involve a camping activity.

Year 8 London trip.

We are looking forward to finally getting Year 8 to London where they will visit the Grenfell Tower Memorial site, the Community Church and a survival and recovery talk from the Community. They will travel on to St Pauls where they will have an opportunity to cross the river and explore the South bank. Teachers and parent volunteers will support the children to explore Borough Market,

the Tate Modern, the OXO Tower, the Globe Theatre, the Shard and other fabulous sites on the River Thames. Please provide students with a pack lunch or funds to be able to purchase a lunch in Borough market. Please however note that we have received a Cold Weather Alert Level 2 from the Met Office, so we will keep an eye on the weather from the start of the week.

SEND National Crisis Hertfordshire survey

The purpose of this survey is to gather data on and understand the experiences of families and professionals within Hertfordshire regarding the lack of SEN officers or EHCP coordinators over the last 6 months (since July 2022). They plan to use this information to raise their concerns with Hertfordshire LA, about the ongoing issues this is causing in an attempt to effect change for Hertfordshire families and professionals.

The survey is open to parent/carers and professionals in Hertfordshire who have been impacted by the lack of SEN officers or EHCP coordinators within the Local Authority over the last 6 months.

<https://forms.gle/5WwQjr9RuDp7duVo7>

School Lay-by

The school lay-by is reserved for school buses, to enable them to deliver students safely before and after school. Please do not use these lay-bys to drop your children off as this is causing dangerous congestion. Please note that parking is available in the Sainsburys car park free of charge before and after school.

[Car Parks in Buntingford | East Herts District Council](#)

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Edwinstree School Association (ESA)

There has been a big decrease in the number of lost coats this week, however there are some still hanging on the rail at the back of the stage, if these are not collected by Thursday 9th February the ESA will collect them and sell at pre-loved uniform events. Please see the attached poster of lost shoes. These are also available to reclaim at the back of the stage along with several odd shoes and lunch boxes.

Thank you to all the Year 5 and 6 students who worked hard over half term helping around the home and raising money for the Outdoor Classroom Campaign. So far you have raised £133.58 but it's not too late, if you still have your Smarties tube at home or wish to donate online.

Will the year 7 and 8's raise more money when they have their fundraising challenge?

On Sunday 12th March 10.30am-12.30pm we will be tidying the pond/wildlife area, building a new shed (kindly donated by Dandara), planting some plants and generally giving the wildlife area, and possibly Sensory, Growing and Millennium gardens a makeover. Many hands make light work so please come and help us if you can, bringing your gardening tools if you have them.

ESA quiz

The ESA are holding a quiz night on Friday 24th March, starting at 7pm. Teams are a maximum of 8, with at least one child per team. It would be great to support them raising money for the school.

ESA Meeting

The next ESA meeting is taking place on Monday 6th March 18.30. To join online via zoom or email (EdwinstreeSchoolAssociation@outlook.com) for venue details if you wish to meet in person

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/5512450529?pwd=b6j9k6nnGbfqsiWG9kTTJ7ydYy1Ngb.1>

Meeting ID: 551 245 0529

Passcode: School

Best Wishes

Mrs J Gant - Headteacher

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