



05.01.2024

Issue No: 1106

The Link

# Charles Darwin School

Aspire - Endeavour - Achieve

## Headlines

### Welcome Back

A warm welcome back to all students and a Happy New Year to everyone. I hope you all had an enjoyable Christmas break and students have returned refreshed as we enter the Spring term. New year is traditionally a time to review the previous year and set personal targets or New Year's resolutions for the coming year. In school we encourage students to reflect on this and consider setting targets linked to things such as starting a new club, improving attendance to remain above 95%, improved attitude to learning or committing more time to wellbeing, sports and healthy eating. I would encourage you to discuss this with your child and support them with ways of sticking to these targets as we move into the year.

The term ahead is a busy one and particularly for those students who will be sitting public examinations in a few months' time. Staff have been working closely with our examination students to ensure they are well prepared for their examinations and have a planned approach to revision. As part of our support for these students we will again be running a range of revision interventions including an Easter Revision school and I would encourage parents to sign up for these sessions. Further details will be released in due course.

*Aston Smith*

## R8 bus service

Many parents would have seen an increased staff presence outside the school, in particular for the R8 bus service. There had been a couple of days before Christmas where 70-80 students were queuing for a 'hopper' style single decker bus service that can carry only around 30 passengers. Over recent weeks, to support the safety of students onto and during the service up to Main Road, Biggin Hill, staff have been operating a system where the numbers in the queue are limited to 30 to support this safe approach. Please do not be surprised if there is already a queue and students are told that there is not room on the bus. If there is a specific need, this will always be taken into consideration, but the walk up to the Main Road is only 700m.

**Mr Jones**

## ParentPay canteen payments

Did you know you can set up an alert on ParentPay to notify you when your son/daughter's balance is running low?

On the page that shows the balances for each person, underneath your current balance is the option to "Set up low balance alerts". You can then select which amount you want to be notified on, e.g. £5 and then you can select whether you want to be notified by text or e-mail. This will help students to avoid going to the till with food and having no money left in their account to pay for their food.

You can also see what you son/daughter has bought every day by looking at "lunchtime meal activity" at the bottom of the home page.

**Ms Kelly**

A reminder to parents that as well as the LINK and the 'latest news' section on the website, you can follow the latest events happening in our school community on:

CDarwinSchool



CDarwinSchool



**Mr Jones**

# Reading Corner at Charles Darwin

Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a lovely Christmas. Maybe you received a lovely new book? If you read something you really enjoyed please do pass on any recommendations for sharing to me at: [spi@cdarwin.com](mailto:spi@cdarwin.com)

## Benjamin Zephania

It was very sad to hear of the death of inspirational writer, Benjamin Zephania in the last week of term. Many staff and students have enjoyed his work over the years. Our librarian, Mrs Adams, is in the process of organising a fitting commemoration in the coming weeks...

## Hundreds and Thousands Reading Club

Once again, massive congratulations to the students who have achieved their Hundreds and Thousands reading badges.

To achieve the bronze badge, students read 1000 pages and write one book review on the book they've enjoyed most.

To achieve the silver badge, students start again but this time read 2000 pages and write two book reviews.

To achieve the gold badge, students read 3000 pages and write three book reviews. At least one of the books they read must be a more challenging text and/or from the English literary canon.

Silver badge winner, Taylor Ayling in 9SAr has been busily reading the Harry Potter books by J. K. Rowling. Her favourite was 'The Deathly Hallows'. She said, "I love this book and the ending!" Well done, Taylor.

**Mrs Pitt**

## School jumpers and PE kits needed!

Parents/Carers

We need your help! We are specifically short of navy school jumpers, red and black PE hoodies, white polo shirts and red socks. If you have any lying around that your daughter/son has outgrown, we would greatly accept donation of these. We also welcome any other parts of school uniform like school and football shoes.



All donations can be left at **Main Reception**.

Thank you in advance for your kindness.

**Preloved Uniform Shop Team**

Please see below MENU Week 2 for the week commencing 8th January 2024.

WEEKLY MENU Charles Darwin Week 2				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Chicken Tikka with Rice	Cottage Pie with Gravy	Roast Gammon with Roast Potatoes & Gravy	Sausage & Mash with Onion Gravy	Fish & Chips
Vegetable Tikka Stuffed Peppers with Rice	Carrot & Chickpea Falafel Pita with Tomato Relish	Mexican Style Vegetable Fajitas with Toppings & Mexican Style Rice	Vegetable Chow Mein	Cheese & Onion Pasty with Chips
Tomato Pasta	Broccoli / Herb Roasted Butternut	Thyme Roasted Carrots / Savoy Cabbage	Wholemeal Cheddar Cheese & Spinach Quiche with Chips	Red Pepper & Sweet Potato Patten, Sweetcorn Rice
Sweetcorn or Green Beans	Green Beans or Sweetcorn	Roasted Seasonal Vegetables	Pasta & Carrots	Beans & Pasta
Raspberry Sponge & Custard	Banoffee Pie	Carrot & Orange Cake with Custard	Red Velvet Cake with Chocolate Sauce	Pineapple Upside Down Cake

## Attendance

**Congratulations to the following Tutor Groups who have the highest attendance for week ending 15 December 2023.**



7SHu/WCa	95.7%
8PDg	94.6%
9HBu	95.6%
10COu	91.6%
11SDa	95.7%
12JDa	95.8%
13SMa	93.2%

*As you are aware attendance is linked to a student's attainment and at Charles Darwin we work closely with the parents to keep students' attendance levels as high as possible. Please could we ask that if your child feels unwell in the morning (headache etc.) and they do feel better later on, that you send them in. This will benefit them as they will not miss a whole days learning.*

**Please can we also remind parents to call in before 8.30am for each day of your child's absence and not rely on receiving a text from us chasing their absence.**

*Thank you for your continued support.*

**Students Services Team**

A reminder that pupils **should not** contact home if they feel unwell but should be seen and assessed by Mrs Booth, our Health Care Lead.

Parents should be aware that pupils will not be sent home without being seen by Mrs Booth in the first instance.

If your child contacts you directly, please phone the school to confirm whether they are unwell and have permission to go home.

Thank you

**Student Services Team**



Parents should be advised that the school does not provide students with Paracetamol unless it is a medical emergency.

We have a limited supply in school and prefer that medication wherever possible is administered at home.

Many thanks for your support.

**Mrs Booth  
Lead First Aid**

### Year 8 Duty Pupils

Sam Young  
Tom Halliday  
Thomas Baker

Thomas Mullen-Walsh  
Maisie Connor  
Khyran Dixon

### Student Services Duty Pupils

Ryan Moody  
Darja Domkova  
Olivia Gabbadon



**They have been fantastic this week, and their help has been invaluable.**

# Severe Weather Conditions

Charles Darwin School will stay open if at all possible when there is snow. The decision to close is not taken lightly and will be made with the health and safety of children and staff, many of whom do not live locally. We will try to make a decision by **7:30am** and communicate this through:

- ❖ The school website – [www.cdarwin.com](http://www.cdarwin.com) (**not the main school switchboard**)
- ❖ Twitter – [twitter.com /CDarwinSchool](https://twitter.com/CDarwinSchool)
- ❖ Instagram – [www.instagram.com /CDarwinSchool](https://www.instagram.com/CDarwinSchool)

**All students are expected to check Satchel One to complete school work from home**

**Otherwise** - Students should wear appropriate clothing i.e. coat, hat, gloves and come to school. Suitable footwear to cope with pavements may be necessary if snow and /or ice are on the ground. School shoes must be brought to change into.

**Keep warm and safe on your journey**

## Transport

You are advised to check local transport information if you go to or from school by bus. The school will liaise with school bus companies to check whether the services are likely to be disrupted.

**If weather conditions deteriorate whilst the school is in session, we will endeavour to contact parents via the website, social media and Call parent (txt).**

There is a policy for users of the school minibus which parents/students concerned should be aware.

## Dates for the Diary

### January

25th January - Year 11 Parents' Evening

26th January - **INSET DAY (school closed to students)**

31st January - Year 9 Parents' Evening

### February

8th February - Early close - 2pm

12th - 16th February - HALF TERM

29th February - Year 8 Parents' Evening

## 2023-24 Term Dates

### Autumn 2023

Tuesday 29th August – Friday 13th October

**Half Term: Monday 16th October – Friday 27th October**

Monday 30th October – Friday 15th December

**Christmas Holiday: Monday 18th December - Monday 1st January**

### Spring 2024

Tuesday 2nd January – Friday 9th February

**Half Term: Monday 12th – Friday 16th February**

Monday 19th February – Thursday 28th March

**Easter Holiday: Friday 29th March – Friday 12th April**

### Summer 2024

Monday 15th April – Friday 24th May

**(Monday 6th May - Bank Holiday)**

**Half Term: Monday 27th May – Friday 31st May**

Monday 3rd June – Friday 19th July

### Note:

Good Friday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Easter Monday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024

**INSET Days** - School closed to students

**Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2024**

**Friday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

**Friday 28th June 2024** - INICIO Day (home learning for students)

## Pupil absence line: 01959 574043, option 1:

Reminder – please can parents call the absence line each day of your child's absence before 8.30am. This ensures we know your child is safe and their absence is authorised where possible. Our Attendance Officer is having to spend an increased amount of time each day chasing for responses.  
Thank you for your support.