



19.12.2019

The Link Charles Darwin School

Aspire—Endeavour—Achieve

HEADLINES

Consultation on the two week half term In October

My thanks to all parents and carers who responded to the consultation on the two week October half term. We had 24 responses, 19 of whom were very much in favour with the proposal as it stood and the rationale behind it, in addition two responses agreed with the proposal but had concerns about the timing, the impact on summer holidays and the impact on primary schools that don't operate a two week arrangement. There were only two responses that could not support the proposal outright.

Those in favour often cited benefits to family time, the advantages of breaking up the long autumn term in terms of student motivation, energy and attendance. There were a number who said that being able to go away on a break in October with the family was particularly important for them.

The questions and concerns raised were:

1. Where was the additional time for the two week break coming from - would this mean a reduction in the summer break?

The dates proposed show the summer term ending on Friday 23rd July. The original Bromley term dates proposed a finish on Wednesday 21st July. This immediately equates to 2 of the 5 days being accounted for. There is an additional day added to the 2nd half of the autumn term too. These days ensure that where ever possible terms finish at the end of a week. This does mean that there are 2 less teaching days in our academic year but we feel strongly that the increased period of rest in the autumn term would allow us to use the time in school more effectively.

2. How will this affect our other feeder schools

One of the reasons for the proposal was to come into line with other local schools, both primary and secondary. It has become noticeable that our staff and parents are experiencing different half term arrangements from different local schools.

If children from the same family attend different schools the different arrangements are awkward for families for obvious reasons. Whilst not all local schools plan to adopt the two week half term model we believe that coming in line with the vast majority of Bromley schools will help alleviate some of these additional complications I mention. Our proposal is thus to come into line with the main body of Bromley schools.

3. The weather is not nice in October so we don't want more holiday then.

Whilst I agree with this sentiment completely the main reason for the proposal is to aid with parental choice should they wish to have a holiday at that time and pupil and staff wellbeing. The wellbeing issue is becoming more and more noticeable every year. Our main reason for this proposal and our hope is to help alleviate some of the pressure on children and staff that arises because of the long autumn term.

4. Will this change the impact of GCSE courses and revision?

Whilst we believe that the proposal may impact a little bit on GCSE courses as we will lose two days of teaching time in October we also believe, from the experience of other school who have introduced this two week half term, that overall there will be a significantly positive benefit for pupils and staff. Schools that operate a two week half term in October report improved student focus, motivation and attendance and well as more staff energy and less staff absence. This should more than compensate for the loss of the two teaching days.



As I say the overwhelming response was in favour of the proposed change and it is therefore likely that we will now proceed with implementing the proposed half term arrangements.

May I take this opportunity to thank all those who responded to the proposal, the time that you took to feedback and raise questions is most appreciated. The issues you raised have certainly helped clarify some of my thinking on this matter. Thank you.

I have reproduced below the term dates for 2020/21:

Autumn 2020	Tuesday 1 st September - Friday 16 th October
<i>Half term</i>	<i>Monday 19th October – Friday 30th October</i>
	Monday 2 nd November – Friday 18 th December
<i>Christmas Holiday</i>	<i>Monday 21st December – Friday 1st January</i>
Spring 2021	Monday 4 th January – Friday 12 th February
<i>Half term</i>	<i>Monday 15th February – Friday 19th February</i>
	Monday 22 nd February – Thursday 1 st April
<i>Easter Holiday</i>	<i>Friday 2nd April – Friday 16th April</i>
Summer 2021	Monday 19 th April – Friday 28 th May
<i>Half term</i>	<i>Monday 31st May – Friday 4th June</i>
	Monday 7 th June – Friday 23 rd July

INSET days will be confirmed in due course.

End of Term

We come to the end of our first term of the 2019/20 academic year. It has been a very busy and overall successful term. I would like to wish all families a restful and enjoyable Christmas break and look forward to seeing all our students again, refreshed and ready for the Spring term in January.

Merry Christmas!

Sunil Chotai

Charles Darwin School Mock Election

This week the Year 12 and 13 Politics classes helped Mrs Ruth hold a Mock General Election in which each form, from Year 7-11 represented a constituency. They were able to vote for their favourite candidates, in order to generate interest in Politics across the school. The parties that ran were as follows; Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat and the Green Party. The Year 12 students created election campaign videos for students which forms used to decide their vote. The Year 12 and 13 Politics classes then proceeded to hold a 'question time' themed discussion during their respective tutorials, in which Year 13 Party Representatives discussed their parties policies which included their stance on Brexit, global warming etc. The results were as follows:

Year 12 and 13

1st - Conservative (62)
 2nd - Liberal Democrats(45)
 3rd - Labour (30)
 4th - Green party (25)
 Spoilt ballot papers - 3

Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11

1st – Labour
 2nd – Conservative
 3rd – Green
 4th – Liberal Democrats



Thank you to all of the voters and participants within our school's election in particular the Year 12 and 13 party representatives who participated in our question time themed discussion, Ben Reilly, Ella Shaw, Billy Kennedy, Andrew Stevens and Natasha Withers. We hope the school's Election helped generate plenty of interest in Politics and encouraged eligible Year 13s to vote in the General Election.

Mrs Ruth

Charles Darwin students meet leading Historians

On Tuesday 10th December, the Year 13 History students attended a History in Action A level student conference at the Emmanuel Centre, Westminster. The vast hall was packed with hundreds of students, their amazingly hard working teachers and five leading historians on 20th century Russia.

The first lecture on the collapse of the Romanov Dynasty by Dr Daniel Beer examined the autocracy's failure to meet the challenges of modernisation and to adapt to the rise of mass politics as well as exploring how WW1 sealed its fate. One student commented *"I really liked Daniel Beer's lecture on the Romanovs as it really helped my understanding of the background to the revolutions"*.

Professor Catherine Merridale discussed the role of Lenin as the "Shaper of the Revolution" explaining clearly his journey from being a powerless exile at the start of 1917 to master of the Kremlin in 1918.

Professor Martin McCauley considered the reasons Stalin came to dominate the USSR by 1928; maintained power during the 1930s and survived WW2 as well as addressing the question "was Stalin a psychopath"? (Yes was his answer). Professor Robert Service (who according to one student was *"incredibly well received by everyone in the hall"*) posed and eloquently answered a variety of questions including:

Why did the Bolsheviks seize power?

How much did their ideas contribute to their use of terror?

What was the importance of individuals such as Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin?

Incidentally he disagreed with Professor McCauley's assessment of Stalin's psychopathic status. Dr Robin Bunce's session on how to write a perfect examination essay was also very informative.

Earlier this term, James Barr, British Historian and author of the widely-acclaimed "A Line In The Sand" and "Lords of the Desert", delivered a thoroughly insightful talk to students and staff at school on the competition between Britain and France to shape the Middle East post WW1 and touched upon the contest between Britain and America to dominate the post-WW2 Middle East. He also explained some of the difficulties historians encounter when completing their research and how this impacts on interpretations; all of which is extremely pertinent for the students' A level coursework. One student commented that James *"has really helped me with my coursework, everything he said was so relevant for my essay"*.

The students have all shown a commitment to their studies and we hope this input from such well respected, world class historians helps them to get top grades this summer.

Mrs Furness



Forthcoming Events

JANUARY 2020

Monday 06 January - Spring Term starts
Monday 13 - Friday 17 January - Year 7 Attendance Reward Trip
Monday 13 - Friday 17 January - Year 11 Theatre Trip (Matinee)
Thursday 16 January - Year 10 Reward Trip
Friday 17 January - Year 8 Reward Trip
Monday 20 - Friday 24 January - Year 9 Art & Textiles Trip
Thursday 23 January - Year 11 Parents' Evening (2)
Thursday 30 January - Dance Competition Semi-Final
Friday 31 January - INSET DAY - School closed to pupils

FEBRUARY 2020

Thursday 06 February - Year Parents' Evening
Monday 10 February - Dance Competition Final
Saturday 15 February - Sixth Form Trip to Berlin departs
Monday 17 - Friday 21 February - Half Term

MARCH 2020

Monday 09 March - Year 13 Theatre Trip to Stratford (pm)
Thursday 12 March - Year 8 Options Evening
Thursday 19 March - Year 11 Information Meeting

Attendance and House Points update

Attend today: achieve tomorrow

The House Point totals for the Autumn term are as follows:

Henslow	4200 (1st)
Wedgwood	4037 (2nd)
Grant	3735 (3rd)
Lyell	3600 (4th)

Congratulations to the highest scoring form from each Year Group:

Year 7	7FSu with 1098 house points
Year 8	8JLa with 734 house points
Year 9	9ADo with 315 house points
Year 10	10CAh with 498 house points
Year 11	11CZy with 196 house points

Congratulations to the highest scoring students from each Year Group: **Michael Gewitzke, 7FSu** with **83** house points, **Jack Maslin, 8LBr** with **55** house points, **Liam Wescott, 9ADo** with **37** house points, **Freya Philip, 10CAh** with **43** house points and **Jack Longbottom, 11CZy** with **25** house points

The Attendance percentages by Year for the Autumn term are as follows:

Year 12	96.8%
Year 7	96.4%
Year 8	95.9%
Year 11	95.7%
Year 13	95.3%
Year 9	95.1%
Year 10	95%

11SCu and **12ARo** had the highest form attendance of **97.9%**, followed by **7FSu** on **97.3%** and **8JLa** on **97.1%**. Years 7 and 12 are currently above the whole school target of 96% attendance – well done to them all.

Mrs Rees

Duty Pupils for Praise Week ending 19th December 2019

Many thanks to Eloise Butterworth, Callum Smith, Alfie Saunders, Frankie Peacock, Charlie Roberts, Emma Pini, Kieran Shepherd and Sophie Merrit, Year 8.

**Miss Payne
Reception**



Lost Property

There is a large amount of lost property in Student Services (please ensure any valuable items always have names in them) – this will be here until the first week back and then will be donated to charity – please encourage your child to check.

Student services would like to wish all families a Happy Christmas and New Year and thank you for your continued support.

Thanks.

**Mrs Paterson
Student Services**



Parents Evenings 2019/20

Year 11: 23 January 2020 (2)
 Year 8: 6 February 2020
 Year 9: 4 March 2020
 Year 12: 25 March 2020 (2)
 Year 13: 25 March 2020 (2)
 Year 10: 29 April 2020
 Year 7: 7 May 2020



School Council Tombola 2020

If you get any duplicate Christmas gifts or any presents simply not to your taste, please could I ask that you donate to the School Council Tombola.

We will happily recycle any chocolate, alcohol, toiletries, toys etc. providing they are unopened.

The first tombola will be at the Year 11 Parents' Evening in January so anything in the first week of our return in January would be most welcome. Please bring to Main Reception. Many Thanks.

Mrs Rees

Pupil absence line: 01959 574043, option 1:

Parents/carers must phone before 08:30 with a full reason on every day of their child's absence.

Christmas Jumper Day 2019



Congratulations to all our year groups for raising money for their chosen charities. Well done to Year 9 who raised an amazing £237!