



01.12.2023

Issue No: 1103

The Link

Charles Darwin School

Aspire - Endeavour - Achieve

Headlines

Biggin Hill Christmas Light Switch-on

I was delighted to be able to attend the Christmas Light Switch in Biggin Hill last Saturday. It was a such a lovely community event and I would like to thank all the students who went along to sing or cover stalls. They should be proud of themselves and the positive way they represented the school.

DofE Celebration Event

On Monday evening all of our DofE students who completed expeditions last academic year were invited in with their parents and carers for certificates to be presented. The evening was very well attended despite the cold wet weather with extra seats added to accommodate the year 10 and 11 families who were there to celebrate their child's accomplishments. Mr Culver, Mr Mills and Miss Owen spoke about the challenges overcome and skills exhibited during the expedition. They also shared examples of the volunteering contributions that students made within the school and the local community before Mrs Pitt and I had the pleasure of awarding certificates.

It was lovely to hear how much local charities, sports teams and residents value the support provided by our students through the DofE award. Watching a selection of the students' expedition videos was a highlight of the evening that really displayed the camaraderie and teamwork our students are capable of. We are currently in the process of enrolling students in years 9, 10 and 12 onto Bronze and Silver DofE awards for expeditions in 2024 and we are proud that so many students get the opportunity to take part in what is such an enriching experience. Well done and congratulations to everyone involved!



Christmas Concert

Wednesday evening was full of Christmas cheer and music as the wonderful Christmas Concert took place in St. Marks Church. It was a delightful event with some outstanding performances from the students. My thanks and congratulations to all the staff and students involved.

Sixth Form Celebration of Success

My thanks to all families who attended the Celebration of Success event on Thursday evening. It was a really lovely evening and I thoroughly enjoyed celebrating the success of our students. Special thanks to the staff involved in the planning and running of the event whose hard work resulted in such a wonderful evening.

Adverse Weather Arrangements

We are now approaching the season where we may expect more extreme winter weather. With this in mind I would like to remind parents of our procedures in case of adverse weather.

Whilst recognising that it is our duty to remain open if at all possible, the health and safety of staff and students battling through adverse weather conditions must be weighed against the health and safety of students who, for whatever reason, expect to be in our care during school time. A decision to close the school in adverse conditions is thus seen as a last resort and is only made if there are concerns regarding the welfare and safety of staff and students. The weather conditions in Biggin Hill can often be very different to those in the more built-up areas and the number of hills and narrow roads in the vicinity compounds the problem.

Summary of key information regarding school closure:

- The decision to open or close the school will be made by the Headteacher.
- The decision will be made by 7.30am.
- Should the school need to be closed due to extreme weather a message will be posted on the school website and our Twitter and Instagram pages. All are updated regularly.
- You are advised to check the school website prior to sending your son/daughter to school.
- The school will liaise with the bus companies but are not responsible for the bus services and advise parents to check with TfL to find out which services are running, cancelled or terminating at a different stop.
- In the event of school closure home learning will be expected and work set for students on Satchel One

If the weather deteriorates **during the school day** students may be allowed to go home early and parents will be alerted by text message via Call Parent. In this regard please can parents ensure that the school has up-to-date contact details.

The decision whether to send pupils into school or to collect those already at school rests with parents themselves.

When exceptional weather is expected the following guidelines should be noted:

Clothing:

Students should wear appropriate clothing, taking into account the type of weather. Suitable footwear to cope with weather may be necessary, but school shoes should be brought and changed into upon entry to the school building.

Transportation:

Parents are advised to check local transportation information if their son/daughter travels by public transport or via the school mini bus. There is a specific policy for the school minibus service of which parents and the students concerned are aware. The bus companies do keep us informed of the transport situation and students will be alerted to any transport difficulties as we become aware of them. If, due to the weather, your son/daughter cannot get to school, parents should telephone the school in the usual way to report this absence.

Thank you for your support in this matter.

Aston Smith

Reading Corner at Charles Darwin

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.

Here is a recommendation from bronze badge winner, Alexander Mack in 7SMA

Mrs Pitt



'The Island' by C. L Taylor

Six teenagers, craving for the holiday of their lives; a week-long excursion to a remote tropical island. What they thought would be a dream come true, morphed into a living hell. After their guide dies of a stroke leaving the teens stranded from any civilization, the situation escalates into an unrealistic ephialtes, for someone on the island knows each of the group's worst fears...

Who will make it off the island alive?

A-Level Drama

A-Level Drama students visited the National Theatre on Monday evening to see a performance of the classic text "The House of Bernarda Alba" by Lorca. The performance communicates control and oppression in the family home. After the death of her husband, Bernarda Alba puts her daughters under a strict, prolonged period of mourning. The play ends in tragedy as the sisters struggle with the restrictions placed on them. The huge doll house style set design was really innovative and students were fully engaged with the twists and turns of the plot. They were a delight to be with and the production will now be analysed to help prepare them for their written exam.

In January, two further theatre trips will take place to see The Play That Goes Wrong and The Homecoming.

Miss Currie

PTA Update - Appeal

If you are able to spare some time to help us to sell refreshments and raffle tickets at our school production this year on any of the following dates, we would be very grateful:

Monday 11th December 6.30pm for 1 hour or 8.00pm for 1 hour

Tuesday 12th December 6.30pm for 1 hour or 8.00pm for 1 hour

Wednesday 13th December 6.30pm for 1 hour or 8.00pm for 1 hour

Thanks in advance for any help you can offer by e-mailing us at friends@cdarwin.com

**Want a chance to win great prizes
AND fundraise for Charles Darwin School?**



BUY YOUR TICKET/S VIA OUR ONLINE PTA SHOP NOW:
<https://friends-of-charles-darwin-school.sumupstore.com/>

**FABULOUS
PRIZES FROM
OUR LOCAL
BUSINESSES FOR
£5 PER STRIP**

- 1 x Christmas lights package from H Lilley, Biggin Hill
- £40, £25 & £15 Voucher from Charcoal Grill, Biggin Hill
- £55 Voucher from Shampian Restaurant, Westerham Hill
- 1 x £25 Bluewater Shopping Voucher
- 1 x Magnum of prosecco from Waitrose, Biggin Hill
- 1 x Family Swim at Biggin Hill Pool
- 1 x Trampoline Lesson from Revolve
- 1 x Haircut from Sam's Barbers
- 1 x Sandwich Toaster from The Original Factory Shop, Biggin Hill
- 1 x £20 voucher from Jacob's Ladder Butchers, Biggin Hill
- 1 x Prosecco and sweets from Tesco, Biggin Hill
- Pet food from Pet's Corner, Biggin Hill
- Wine from the The Kings Arms in Westerham
- Books from Waterstones
- 1 x Large Pizza from Domino's Biggin Hill
- 1 x Doggy Christmas Hamper, from The Saddlery & Gunroom
- 1 x Biggin Hill Salisbury's Fish and Chips Meal
- 1 x 10% off voucher from Occasions, Biggin Hill

Raffle drawn at school production interval – Wednesday 13th December 2023
friends@charlesdarwin.com

Attendance

Congratulations to the following Tutor Groups who have the highest attendance for week ending 24 November 2023.



7STe	95.9%
8PDg	95.9%
9HBu	96.4%
10ZPa	95.6%
11JBi	95.2%
12GQu	100%
13FSu/MEd	98.2%

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

Jade St John
Rory Daniels
Charlie Wood
Charlie Harris
Stevie Ruggins

Harrison Smart
Macie Collins
Summer Morse
George Booth
Callum Wooldridge

Student Services Duty Pupils

Millie Hatton
Maksym Kryvylo
Ralph Pratt
Gemma Merredew
Freddie Burns

Thank you to Olivia Klin for helping Miss Booth with Flu Vaccines



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

Achievement Points Leader Board



Top 10 achievers across the school for the period 01.09.2023 - 01.12.2023

Jack Wilson	9RMo	91
Phoebe Vincent	9RMo	88
James Azzopardi	8ZHa	86
Charlie Ince	8EOI	86
Leah Benwell	7SHu/WCa	84
Ivy Bird	7LMc	83
Milly Rogers	8ZHa	83
Jade St John	8RSi/RBr	83
Alan Ioannou	9RMo	80
Jenson Ladd-Talbot	8TMi	78



Top highest achievers per each year for the period 01.09.2023 - 01.12.2023

Leah Benwell	7SHu/WCa	84
James Azzopardi	8ZHa	86
Jack Wilson	9RMo	91
Jessica Dorsett	10ZPa	65
Thomas Alexander	11JBi	50
Scarlett Towersey	12JDa	38
Piper Roseman	13Mcr	37

Geography Worldwide Quiz

This Wednesday the Geography department at Charles Darwin hosted the Geographical Associations Worldwide Quiz. We welcomed teams from Bullers Girls, Hayes, Ravenswood and Coopers. Nearly 100 year 10 students, in 9 teams, battled it out to claim the title of the borough's best Geographers. They faced challenging questions about fieldwork, glaciation, populations, aerial photos and many more rounds. The Charles Darwin teams of: Jess Dorsett, Megan Dotter, Claudia Lamont, Hannah Weedon, Jonathan Oryema, Imogen Barton, Jack Lynch and Eray Dyson represented the school with pride and showed that Darwin produces excellent Geographers. After a tightly contested quiz, the Darwin teams finished mid table and Ravenswood ended up winners and have won a trip to the new observation deck at Battersea power station. We look forward to next year's competition.

Mr T Ayling-Jones

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.

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 (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.

CHARLES DARWIN PTA PRESENTS

**ONLY
£1**

OWN CLOTHES DAY



**FRI
DEC
8TH**

**FUNDRAISING FOR SCHOOL
PROJECTS, INCLUDING
ENHANCING OUR OUTDOOR
RECREATIONAL AREAS**

CHRISTMAS JUMPERS OPTIONAL

Pay your £1 entry to your form tutor.

Harrison Catering

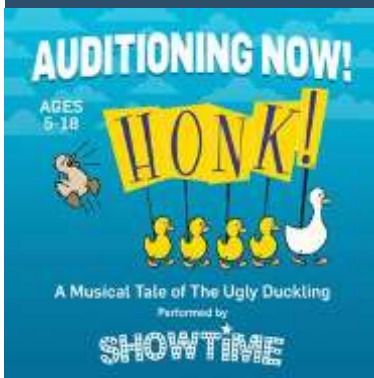
Please see below MENU Week 3 for the week commencing 4 December 2023

WEEKLY MENU Charles Darwin Week 3				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Spaghetti Bolognese	BBQ Chicken with Rice	Roast Turkey, Roast Potatoes & Gravy	Mexican Style Soft Chili Beef Taco with Toppings & Mexican Style Rice	Fish & Chips
Mixed Bean and Vegetable Chili	Indian Style Vegetable Biryani with Chickpea Dhal	Vegetable Moussaka	Sweet Potato Stir with Spiced Vegetable Rice	Veggie Finger & Chips (V) (2)
Pesto Pasta	Vegetable Tagine	Roast Vegetable & Tomato Pasta	Mac'n'Cheese	Chilli Bean Wrap & Salsa with Chips
Sweetcorn or Peas	Garlic Green Beans / Roasted Vegetables	Broccoli / Herb Roasted Butternut	Broccoli / Carrots	Beans or Peas
Berry Swirl Sponge with Custard	Marble Sponge & Custard	Glossed Carrots / Green Beans	Apple & Berry Oat Bar with Custard	Fruit Flapjack

Available daily
Jacket Potatoes, Salad Bar available daily.

HARRISON
food with thought

HONK Auditions



Showtime Performing Arts are looking for talented students to take part in our production of HONK! Previous experience isn't vital, just a willingness and enthusiasm to take part.

Here are the trial dates:

- SATURDAY 25th November and 2nd December at Sevenoaks, Weald of Kent, Sevenoaks Annexe, TN13 3SN
- SATURDAY 9th December at Strood Academy, Strood, ME2 2SX
- SATURDAY 9th December, at The Malling School, West Malling, ME19 6DH
- SATURDAY 6th January Churchill School, Westerham, TN16 1EZ
- SUNDAY 7th January in Oxted School, Oxted RH8 0AB

You must be part of Showtime to audition for a main part.

Honk! will take place on Sunday 9th June 2024 at the Stag Theatre, London Road, Sevenoaks TN13 1ZZ.

Please contact hello@showtime.london with your child's name, DoB, contact number and saying which date/venue you would like to attend.

The time is from 10am to 1pm, you must wear suitable clothing (i.e. t-shirt & leggings) to move in and bring a snack and drink.

Dates for the Diary

December

1st December - Trip: German Christmas Market - MFL, Yrs 9, 10, 12&13

1st December - Year 7-11 Flu Vaccinations

8th December - Own Clothes day (£1 donations to go to form tutors)

11th December - School Production, 7pm Main Hall

12th December - School Production, 7pm Main Hall

13th December - School Production, 7pm Main Hall

13th December - Christmas Lunch

13th December - Year 10 Award Trip

13th December - Trip: Supreme Court and Somerset House - History & Politics, Yrs 12 & 13

15th December - End of Term - Early Close

Sixth Form from break time onwards

Year 7-11 - 12pm

January

2nd January - INSET DAY (school closed)

3rd January - Spring Term starts

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 29th March 2024

Easter Monday 1st April 2024

INSET Days - School closed to students

Tuesday 2nd January 2024
Friday 26th January 2024