



Oaklands School

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HEADMISTRESS

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3 March 2025

Dear Parents

Re: March 2025 Headmistress's Letter

We now only have a few weeks remaining of our Spring term. Children throughout the school are working hard and enjoying their learning, although I suspect they are now ready for the warmer weather to return. The children who have brought wellies to school will begin to return to playtime on the fields now the worst of the weather has passed.

11+ Entrance Examinations

For our Year 6 pupils and parents, January and February have been rather nerve wracking. From the beginning of the Summer Term of Year 5 through to the Autumn Term of Year 6, the pupils have been working particularly hard preparing for their entrance examinations to a variety of different independent schools. They persevered to complete numerous practice papers, tackling complex sample questions and revisiting areas where they were not 100% secure.

I am delighted to inform you that our pupils have again done extremely well and have all been awarded places at a variety of schools. Many are in the enviable position of having some difficult choices to make as they received a number of offers. The staff and I are extremely proud of them all for their consistent hard work, but also for their caring and supportive attitude towards each other.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff for the excellent standard of teaching they enthusiastically and consistently provide to the pupils and the outstanding pastoral care that surrounds every child and helps maintain the 'family' atmosphere of our school.

Further details of the results will be found on our website once all the offers have been finalised.

Similarly, I would like to congratulate our Year 2 pupils on their offers to both Bancroft's and Chigwell. They have also worked hard and this has been rightly recognised.

Parents' Evenings

Our second parents' evenings of the year, for Years 1-6, will take place on Wednesday 26 and Thursday 27 March. The specialist teaching staff will be available on Wednesday 26 only and there will be more details on booking arrangements soon. If you are a Reception parent requiring feedback from specialist teachers please feel free to contact them by email and they will be more than happy to provide a brief, written update for you. Reception parents' evenings take place on Wednesday 19 and Thursday 20 March to avoid clashes with our Mother's Day celebrations.

Parking

We continue to receive numerous complaints every week from our neighbours in Albion Hill, usually with photographs of offending vehicles. Once again, I remind you that blocking drives, even if it is a few feet and for a few minutes, is not acceptable. It makes it very difficult for people to enter and exit their properties on a narrow road. I would urge you, when attending assemblies and other school events, to park elsewhere. Once again, may I remind you not to engage rudely with neighbours who ask you not to obstruct their properties. I am aware there are some spaces on Albion Hill where it is legal to park, I ask you to consider whether you are churning a grass verge or creating a blind spot on an already dangerous road before you leave your vehicle. I am sure you will all agree school staff time is better spent with the pupils rather than calming disgruntled neighbours.

Open Morning

Our second Open Morning of the academic year takes place on Thursday 6 March, 9.15am to 11.15am. You are welcome to come to this event. Prospective and current parents will have the opportunity to see the school at work and to hear more about what is happening at Oaklands. Refreshments will be available in the school hall from 9.00am. I shall be giving a short talk at 9.30am with tours, conducted by our Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, commencing at 9.45am. Our older pupils are always happy and confident to talk about life at Oaklands from a pupil's perspective.

Drop-in Sessions Spring/ Summer Term 2025

Our popular Drop-in sessions continue. These informal sessions provide parents with the opportunity to view some of their child's work in their classroom prior to the start of the school day. I know that the children thoroughly enjoy discussing their work with you. Please refer to the table below to check when your child's Drop-in session is being held:

Friday 14 March
Thursday 15 May
Friday 16 May

Year 3 to Year 6
Reception
Year 2, Year 5 and Year 6

World Book Day

The whole school is celebrating this special themed day on Friday 7 March. Due to a clash with their Fire Station visit, Upper Kindergarten children will dress up on Wednesday 5 March instead. The children have been asked to come to school dressed as a character from their favourite book. Please remember to dress the children in sensible shoes and a warm coat for playtime. There will be a special assembly organised by Miss Dee and Miss Zaydner, our two English Coordinators, for Year 1 to Year 6 and Mrs Potts, Head of EYFS, will be leading the EYFS assembly.

I would be grateful if each child could bring a donation of £1 which we will be sending to Book Aid International. Thank you for your support.

Here is a link to World Book day for families, with ideas for dressing up and some useful tips for developing a love of reading; <https://www.worldbookday.com/families/>

Sport

We have many sporting events taking place over the next few weeks. Please read email invitations carefully as some letters will contain important information about clothing required. Not all children will receive every letter; we only send them to those participating. Well done to all of our swimmers who took part in the Oak-Tree Swimming Gala, with a special mention to those pupils who volunteered to swim for one of the other schools! A magnificent performance by everyone.

Stratford Music Festival

In the last week before half term our choir, led by Mrs Rathbone, entered the Stratford Music Festival. The choir performed extremely well and were commended for their expressive singing. Well done to them all and a huge thank you to Mrs Rathbone who prepared the children very well.

Epping Forest Food Bank Collection

Thank you all for your generous donations to this important charity. So many families from our local area will now benefit from your kindness in the form of food gifts. The children all enjoyed an assembly this half term led by Margot Tucker from the Epping Forest Food Bank. She gave an enormous amount of information about the incredible work this charity undertakes. You can read more about their work here; <https://eppingforest.foodbank.org.uk/>

Extra-Curricular Clubs 2024 - 2025

We are in the process of finalising our club schedule for next year and, once again, we will be using Google forms. In response to parents' feedback, we plan to make the release time of forms slightly later in the evening to help our parents who commute from their jobs. There will never be one system that suits absolutely everyone so we are aiming for the best fit for our whole school community. Please read the cover letter very carefully before booking clubs. We aim to make the process of allocation as fair as possible, considering the number of clubs applied for and the time of submission. This is to ensure that all children get some clubs. There is no guarantee of a club every evening for each child.

Important Summer Term Dates

I would like to bring to your attention some very important dates in our hectic summer term for you to add to your diaries: Sports Day for all year groups will be held on Friday 20 June, weather permitting; Celebration of the Year for Lower Kindergarten to Reception children will be on Wednesday 2 July at 2pm followed by our more formal Prize Giving ceremony at 4pm for pupils in Year 1 to Year 6. More details for both events will follow shortly.

Our INCAS testing will take place on the weeks of 12 and 19 May this year and children must be at school for these computer-based tests because we will struggle to fit them in after this date.

Uniform

A reminder that children should be in full school uniform, with blazers, unless they have PE. I have allowed earmuffs on very cold days but we do not permit snoods or neck scarfs of any kind, unless they are the school issued scarf. Please do not send children wearing any neckwear other than our school scarf. Unless in PE kit, children must wear smart, black shoes for school and a letter, stating reasons, is needed if your child is not wearing shoes.

Manipulative Marketing in Mobile Games - Better Internet for Kids

Finally, I have attached some wording and a link for you all to read concerning marketing in Mobile Games, some of which our children are often exposed to. Children are increasingly becoming major components in the online games industry. Many games are deceptively pay to play, whilst claiming to be free. For most of these apps the download is free but most of the gameplay is locked. 'Free' in the context of apps is a highly flexible term. Online gaming firms use the 'free' label to draw in players, whom when talking about minors may be attractive due solely to that quality. Money making tactics such as these can be hard to detect even for adults. Their use of bright colours, distracting music and other methods can be highly persuasive in gaining players. Better Internet for Kids has crafted a learning module designed to explore digital marketing tactics. You will learn why companies use these tactics and how they can impact your child and their rights. You will also learn how you can support your child to spot and avoid these issues, as well as where you can seek help and support. If interested, please visit the following link: <https://better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/learning-corner/parents-and-caregivers/marketing-games>

Dates for the Diary

The following list provides a current list of events planned for the rest of the academic year:

Please note the early finish time for the last day of the Spring and Summer terms.

Tuesday 4 March	9am	Assembly to Parents	Year 2S
Wednesday 5 March	All Day	Trip to Houses of Parliament	School Council
	All Day	World Book Day	Upper Kindergarten
Thursday 6 March	9.30am	Open Morning	Prospective Parents
Friday 7 March	All Day	World Book Day	LK and Reception to Year 6
	Morning	Trip to Loughton Fire Station	Upper Kindergarten
Wednesday 12 March	8.30am	Gymnastics Assembly	Years 3 to 6 by Initiation
	All Day	Book Fair in School	Whole School
Thursday 13 March	All Day	Book Fair in School	Whole School
	9am	Assembly to Parents	Year 2Z
	All Day	Trip to St Albans Abbey	Reception
Friday 14 March	All Day	Book Fair in School	Whole School
	8.25-8.45am	Drop in Session	Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6
Monday 17 March	All Day	Book Fair in School	Whole School
	Morning	Oaklands House Swim Gala	Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6
Tuesday 18 March	Afternoon	Visit to St Marys Church	Year 1
	3.30-6pm	Parents Evening	Upper Kindergarten
Wednesday 19 March	All Day	Trip to Verulamium	Year 3
	3.30-6pm	Parents Evening	Lower Kindergarten & Reception
Thursday 20 March	All Day	Easter Bunny Visit	Whole School
	9am	Assembly to Parents	Year 1C
	Afternoon	Visit to St Marys Church	Year 2
	3.30-6pm	Parents Evening	Reception
Friday 21 March	All Day	Trip to Fishers Green	Year 5
	All Day	Comic Relief Day	Whole School
Monday 24 March	9am or 1.30pm	Mothers' Day Fun Day	Reception
Tuesday 25 March	9am	Mothers' Day Assembly to Parents	Upper Kindergarten
	3.30-5pm	Oak-Tree Spelling Bee at Oaklands	Years 3 to Year 6 by Invitation
Wednesday 26 March	9am	Mothers' Day Assembly to Parents	Lower Kindergarten
	3.30-6pm	Parents Evening	Year 1 to Year 6
Thursday 27 March	9am	Assembly to Parents	Year 1W
	1.30pm	Mothers' Day Fun Day	Reception
	3.30-6pm	Parents Evening	Year 1 to Year 6
Friday 28 March	Morning	Last Day of Term - 12pm finish	LK, UK and Reception
	Morning	Last Day of Term - 12.15pm finish	Year 1 and Year 2
	Morning	Last Day of Term - 12.30pm	Year 3 to Year 6
Saturday 29 March - Friday 4 April	All Day	Oak-Tree Ski Trip	Year 6 by Invitation
Monday 31 March – Tuesday 22 April – Easter Break			
Wednesday 30 April - Friday 2 May	All Day	Residential Trip to The Hive	Year 4
	All Day	Residential Trip to Lambourne End	Year 5
	All Day	Residential Trip to Danbury Outdoors	Year 6
Tuesday 6 May	Morning	Road Safety Workshop	Year 5
	3.30-6pm	Secondary Transfer Parents Evening	Year 5 Parents
Thursday 8 May	3.30-6pm	Secondary Transfer Parents Evening	Year 5 Parents
Friday 9 May	Morning	Evolution Workshop	Year 6
Monday 12 May - Friday 23 May	All Day	INCAS Assessments	Whole School
Wednesday 14 May	All Day	LAMDA Exams	By Invitation
Thursday 15 May	All Day	LAMDA Exams	By Invitation
	8.25am or 2.30pm	Drop In Session	Reception

Friday 16 May	8.25-8.45am	Drop In Session	Year 2, Year 5 and Year 6
Tuesday 20 May	2-3pm	Instrumental Music Concert	Year 2 by Invitation
Wednesday 21 May	5-6pm	Instrumental Music Concert	Year 3 to Year 6 by Invitation
Thursday 22 May	5-6pm	Instrumental Music Concert	Year 3 to Year 6 by Invitation
Friday 23 May	All Day	Brentwood School Taster Day	Year 5
Monday 2 May – Friday 30 May – Half Term			
Tuesday 3 June	All Day	Trip to Hylands Park	Reception Owls
Thursday 5 June	All Day	Trip to Barleylands	Year 2
Monday 9 June	9am	Fathers' Day Fun Morning	Reception, UK Foxes and Badgers
	Afternoon	Rainforest Workshop	Year 3
Tuesday 10 June	All Day	Trip to Hylands Park	Reception Robins
Thursday 12 June	All Day	Trip to Hertfordshire Zoo	Upper Kindergarten
Friday 13 June	All Day	Trip to Science Museum	Year 4
	9am	Fathers' Day Fun Morning	LK & Squirrels, Rabbits, Hedgehogs
Tuesday 17 June	All Day	Trip to Hylands Park	Reception Woodpeckers
Thursday 19 June	All Day	Trip to Warner Bros Studio Tours	Year 6
	All Day	Trip to Old Macdonalds Farm	Lower Kindergarten
Friday 20 June	All Day	Sports Day	Whole School
Friday 27 June	6.30pm	Lopping Hall Performance	Year 5 and Year 6
Wednesday 2 July	2pm – 3pm	Celebration of The Year	LK, UK and Reception
	4pm – 5.30pm	Prizegiving	Year 1 – Year 6
Thursday 3 July	Morning	Meet the Teacher	Lower and Upper Kindergarten
Friday 4 July	Morning	Meet the Teacher	Reception to Year 5
Thursday 10 July	9am	Leavers Assembly	Year 6
	Morning	Last Day of Term - 12pm finish	LK, UK and Reception
	Morning	Last Day of Term - 12.15pm finish	Year 1 and Year 2
	Morning	Last Day of Term - 12.30pm	Year 3 to Year 6

I look forward to seeing you all at the various school events we have planned.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely



Gretchen Copeman
Headmistress

OAK-TREE SCHOOLS is the group name of:

BRAESIDE SCHOOL, BUCKHURST HILL • COOPERSALE HALL SCHOOL, EPPING • NORMANHURST SCHOOL, NORTH CHINGFORD • OAKLANDS SCHOOL, LOUGHTON

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