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## A MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Zoe Ramshaw

“Courage is doing what you are afraid to do. There can be no courage unless you are scared.”

—Eddie Rickenbacker

January is traditionally one of the harder months for most people due to the long, cold, dark days and nights. However, at Orange Tree we have had a great month with our learning opportunities, new clubs and general lifting up of each other.

I have some wonderful news to share; Ellern Mede Orange Tree School is now registered as Orange Tree. We have changed our name with the Department for Education to reflect how much we have grown over the last three years. Whilst we will remain under the Ellern Mede group, we are now just called Orange Tree. Thank you to all the parents who trust in us to provide your child with their education. We enjoy working with the students so much.

Lastly from me, we are just finalising our term dates for the next academic year. However, we will be sending out a survey to see if parents would like us to consider any changes. We ask this as we see many of the students really burning out at different times of the year and so we would like to consider this when putting our term dates together. I would appreciate as many parents as possible completing the survey.

# SUBJECT SPOTLIGHT

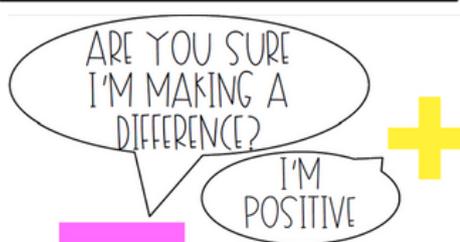
## MATHS

Here at Orange Tree School, we believe that everyone can do Maths. However, it would be fair to say that many of our students, staff and parents don't all feel that way. Many people have deep anxiety when it comes to Maths. Hearing someone say "I hate Maths" or "I'm rubbish with numbers" is not uncommon. At Orange Tree School, we look to create a maths-positive culture where we celebrate and use mistakes all the time to help our learning.

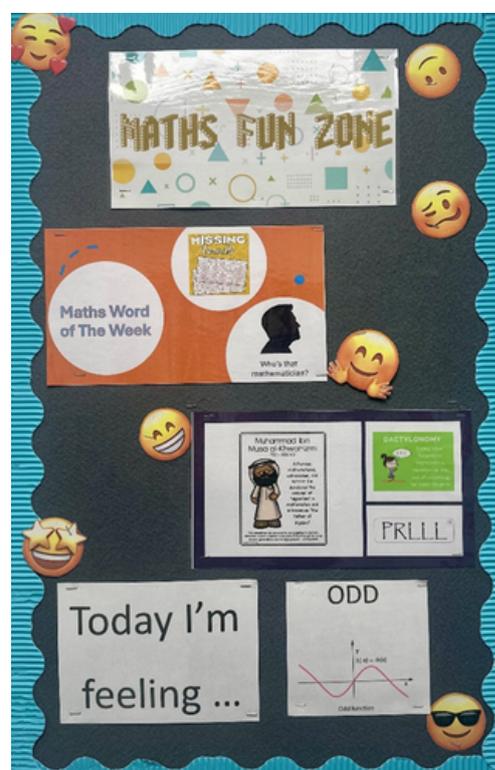
We try to find new learning journeys towards problem-solving and try our best to deliver lessons to captivate students by using creativity, fun and super funny jokes! We aim to help them make the connections between classroom Maths and real-life application. One of the biggest factors to affect how children and teenagers feel about maths is how they feel about their own mathematical ability so we are very conscious of what we are saying so not to project any negative feelings to the students. This might be helpful at home too!

### FLIP THE NARRATIVE (to help get to the $\sqrt{\text{root}}$ of the problem!)

"I'm just not a maths person."	→	"I'm not a natural at Maths but I try my best to find ways to make it stick."
"I hated maths in school"	→	"I found Maths hard when I was at school but I can see how important now in my work/ everyday life."
"Maths is boring and it is too hard."	→	"Maths can be challenging, but it's also incredibly rewarding. Solving problems feels great!"
"Just get through it, and you won't have to deal with it again."	→	"It seems tough, but you've made great progress in Maths. Let's keep building on that and see how far you can go."



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## YEAR 9 FOOD TECH TRIP

On Thursday, 30th of January, our lovely Year 9 students had a trip to the Enfield Garden Centre for afternoon tea as part of Food Tech - in the next few weeks they will be hosting their very own afternoon tea. We arrived at around 2pm, got a table and ordered our drinks. They then started bringing out trays full of delicious treats like sandwiches, scones, biscuits, cupcakes, trifle, and rocky road.

On the way back to school, we had a jamming session in the school van - it was a lovely time!



# SPRING TERM THERAPY TRIPS

## SNOWBLILITY

Year 10A, 10B and 11C students have been enjoying their skiing lessons at the Hemel Snow Centre. They are on a weekly rotation, with half of the students going one week, and the other half going the following week.

Snowbility provides a safe environment for students with different needs, where each student feels special and every course is tailored to deliver a unique personal experience.

<https://snowbility.co.uk/>



## WILD ABOUT OUR WOODS

KS3 (Y7, 8 and 9) students have been practicing their survival and outdoor skills on Tuesdays with Wild About our Woods. This month, sessions have been taking place at school. So far, students have had the chance to play team-building games, wood carve flutes, make hot chocolate using a bonfire, and make friendship bracelets.

Moving forward, students will be visiting the Wild About the Woods site to continue building these skills.



# NEW LUNCHTIME CLUBS

Starting this term, we have introduced new lunchtime clubs: Pathfinders, Origami, Nature Based Crafts, and Wellbeing! They all take place on different days at 13:25 - the second half of lunch break. These clubs promote a sense of community and allow our students to broaden their horizons socially and creatively.

## MONDAY - KARAOKE CLUB

Karaoke Club is held every Monday in the Maths room. It is a fun, judgement free space where students can boost their confidence and enjoy performing their favourite songs.

The club is all about having fun, stepping out of your comfort zone, and connecting with others through music.



## TUESDAY - PATHFINDERS CLUB

The Pathfinders Club is a supportive space where students can learn how to set meaningful goals, explore their passions, and plan for a successful future. Engaging activities and personalised guidance, will help them gain confidence, develop essential skills, and take steps toward achieving their dreams.

## WEDNESDAY - GARDENING CLUB

Zoe, our occupational therapist, leads the Gardening Club every Wednesday. Gardening has a positive impact in the emotional wellbeing, psychosocial skills, self-esteem and of our students. We cannot wait for spring to arrive and see our projects bloom!



## WEDNESDAY - CURIOSITY CLUB



In our Curiosity Club, we had a fun time with our future scientists! We explored the "Glowing Orange" - an eye-catching experiment. The little scientists were amazed as their oranges lit up, and of course, we spilled the science-y beans on why the magic was happening.

Learning + glowing = Curiosity Club!

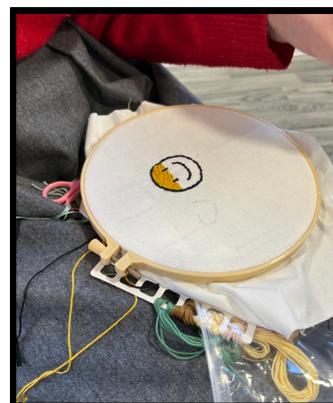
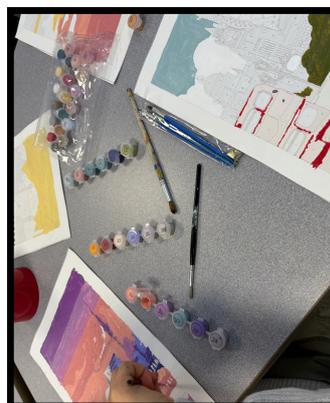
# NEW LUNCHTIME CLUBS

## THURSDAY - WELLBEING CLUB

The Wellbeing Club is back and better than ever, with over 50% attendance on the first session! This half term, students have chosen to undertake a long term project, consisting of either paint by numbers, crystal art, or embroidery.

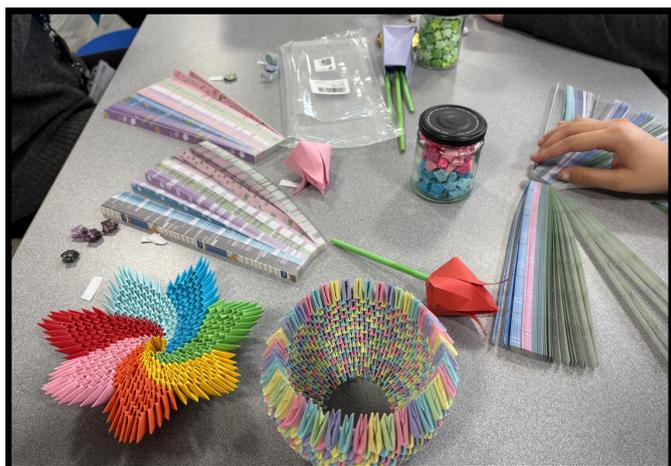
During the second half term, students will be able to partake in a different activity every week, ranging from board games to quizzes, treasure hunts and more!

We look forward to sharing all the finished projects!



## FRIDAY - ORIGAMI CLUB

The origami club is a welcoming space where students can relax, unleash their creativity, and discover the magic of transforming simple paper into extraordinary creations. From charming animals and vibrant flowers to intricate 3D models and more, we offer a diverse range of projects to suit all interests and skill levels. Come along, learn, create, and experience the joy of origami!



## FRIDAY - BSL CLUB

The newest addition to our lunchtime clubs collection, the BSL club has kickstarted today, 31st of January and will continue every Friday in the library.

British Sign Language is a fantastic communication skill for our students to learn and practice - we hope to see you all next week!



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# PSHE AND SOCIAL LEARNING UPDATES

## PSHE

So far this term the students have covered a variety of topics within our theme of Relationships and Sex Education. We are so proud of how well all the students have engaged in lessons that can be sensitive and difficult topics. Please find below a list of helpful and safe websites that your child may want to use to explore these topics further.

Brook Health lives for young people - <https://www.brook.org.uk>

NHS Website - <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sexual-health/>

Support for Puberty – Boys & Girls <https://www.childline.org.uk>

Help for women and children on domestic abuse

<https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/>

Support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in abusive relationships

<https://galop.org.uk/>

## SOCIAL LEARNING

**KS3:** This half term in Social Learning, our **Year 7s** and **8s** have started their lego therapy projects and are using this approach to develop their communication and interaction skills. They are also learning about strategies to help with organising their belongings.

Our **Year 9s** are working on problem solving skills and interoception.

**KS4:** Our **Year 10** students have been learning about personal information, form filling and have also had lots of fun role playing making doctors appointments with the lovely “Maureen” (aka Jade, our lovely receptionist).

The **Year 11s** are continuing to work on their personal goals, and we have had some lovely sessions with individuals helping them with things like: preparing for college interviews, creating CVs, understanding the rules of dating, managing money, creating a healthy sleep routine, etc.

## STUDYBUGS

We have introduced a new, more efficient and secure system for reporting your child's absence due to illness. If you haven't already, please get the free app, or register on the Studybugs website, and use it to tell us whenever your child's ill and unable to attend school. <https://studybugs.com/about/parents>.

# IMPORTANT DATES

**February 11th, 2025**

*Immunisation for all students  
(non-compulsory)*

**February 14th, 2025**

*Start of half term*

**February 24th, 2025**

*End of half term  
(Soft start 10:30)*



**February Book of the month: King of Nothing - Nathanael Lessore**

## Orange Tree School's Safeguarding Team

If you have any concerns about a child or want to talk to a designated or deputy safeguarding lead, please speak to one of the following:

**DSL: Zoe Ramshaw**  
**DDSLs: Hayley Hunter, Keziah Arthur**

## VACCINATIONS AT OTS

On Tuesday 11th February at 1pm, the Barnet Immunisation Team will be at OTS to administer the **Nasal Flu vaccination** for students in **Years 7-11**.

Additionally, **Year 9** students will receive the **Senior Booster vaccine**, which includes the Diphtheria, Tetanus, Polio, and Meningitis ACWY vaccines.

## APPRECIATION LEAF OF THE MONTH

Each Month we will have an appreciation tree winner by picking a leaf at random from our Appreciation Tree. This month, the winner is Delilah.

Her leaf said: "Delilah, for having a positive attitude towards school and always smiling -From Grace"

Thank you Delilah, we hope you like your appreciation gift!



## ORANGE TREE VALUES

Optimistic  
Ready to Learn  
Achievement  
Nice and kind  
Good listening  
Effort

Team work  
Respectful  
Engagement  
Empathy and Acceptance

## General Resources and links:

**Podcast for parents of students with PDA**

<https://feeds.captivate.fm/pda-parents/>

**BBC article on school avoidance**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cpq9dgv138wo>

**Article about being a young person with Selective Mutism**

[Selective Mutism: 'I struggle to talk but dream of being on stage' - BBC News](#)

# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

# TIKTOK



## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Adults tend to associate online videos with YouTube – but among teens, TikTok is king. The app provides a stream of short clips tailored to users' interests, based on what they've already watched. Around half of British children use TikTok, and while much of the content is benign, Ofcom considers it the app where youngsters "were most likely to encounter a potential harm".

## AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT



While TikTok's Following feed only displays videos from familiar creators, For You is a collection based on a user's previously watched clips. Most of these videos will probably be inoffensive, but the app *could* potentially show something unsuitable. If children then engage with this content, more like it will follow. TikTok's guidelines prohibit the sharing of illegal or inappropriate content, but the huge number of uploads means that a small amount inevitably slips through.

## BODY IMAGE AND DANGEROUS CHALLENGES

According to Ofcom, most online harms for teens are body image related for girls (promoting unhealthy eating, body shaming and so on) and dangerous stunts for boys. Both are prevalent on TikTok. One extreme example of the latter was the 'blackout' trend, which encouraged users to hold their breath until they passed out from a lack of oxygen. This led to two families filing lawsuits against TikTok over the tragic deaths of their children.

## IN-APP SPENDING

TikTok is free, but users have the option to buy TikTok coins, which can be used to purchase gifts for content creators. Coin bundles range from £9.99 to an eye-watering £99; while that may not sound appealing, the app still generated £7.9 billion in user spending in 2023. TikTok's policy is that under-18s can't make in-app purchases, but it's possible to bypass this with a fake birth date.

## CONTACT WITH STRANGERS



With more than 1.5 billion users globally, the potential for contact from strangers on TikTok is high – especially as accounts created by over-16s (or young people using a fake date of birth) are set to public by default. This means that not only is someone's profile visible to everyone else on the app, it also suggests their videos to others and enables *anyone* to download or comment on them.

## MISINFORMATION AND RADICALISATION

Although the short videos on TikTok tend to be more frivolous than the longer ones on YouTube, clips can still influence impressionable minds in a negative way. Not only is there plenty of dangerous misinformation on TikTok, but Ofcom reports that nearly a third of 12 to 15-year-olds use TikTok as a news source – so you should be wary of misogynistic, racist or conspiracy-themed material shaping how they see the world.

## ADDICTIVE DESIGN

With its constant stream of eye-catching videos, TikTok can be addictive to young brains. In 2024, UK children spent an average of 127 minutes per day on the app: that's twice as much as in 2020. Excessive use can interfere with young people's sleep patterns – often leading to irritability – and distract them from other, healthier activities. The instantly skippable nature of bite-size videos may also impact children's ability to maintain focus.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING

Family Pairing allows parents to link their TikTok account to their child's, and control settings remotely. Parents can then turn on Restricted Mode (reducing the chances of a child seeing inappropriate content), set screen-time limits, make accounts private and manage whether their child can send messages – and if they can, to whom. Children can't alter these settings without parental approval.

### DISCUSS THE DANGERS

If a child wants to use TikTok and you're happy for them to do so, it's good practice to discuss the potential risks. Ensure that they don't share any identifying personal information, and that they know to talk to a trusted adult if they're worried by interactions on the app. With more teens using TikTok for news, it's also worth talking about misinformation and propaganda, and how to identify it.

### BLOCK IN-APP SPENDING

If a child is using an iPhone or Android device to access TikTok, you can alter their settings to prevent them from making in-app purchases. We'd recommend enabling this feature, as it can be quite easy for a young person to spend a significant amount of real money buying TikTok coins to unlock more features of the app – sometimes without even realising.

### READ THE SIGNS

If you're concerned that a child is spending too much time on TikTok, or that they've been emotionally affected by something they've seen, it's important to know how to spot the signs. Increased irritability and a lack of concentration are potential red flags, as is failing to complete homework or skipping meals. Remember, the parental controls are there for a reason, and it's never too late to introduce limits.

### Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, TechRadar, Tom's Guide, The Evening Standard and The New Statesman.



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Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/tiktok-2025>