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## A MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

**Zoe Ramshaw**

Dear Parents, Carers, and School Community,

As we move through another busy and rewarding term at Orange Tree School, I am incredibly proud of all that our students have achieved and the positive spirit they continue to show each day. This month's newsletter highlights many of the things that make our school such a special community. From developing practical skills in Food Technology and caring for our newly hatched chicks, to taking part in Mental Health Awareness Week and celebrating success through clubs, competitions and awards, our students continue to demonstrate resilience, curiosity and kindness in everything they do.

A particularly special moment this month was celebrating our Year 11 students as they begin the next stage of their journey. It was a privilege to reflect on their achievements, growth and determination, and we wish them every success as they complete their GCSE examinations and prepare for the exciting opportunities ahead. As Mark Twain reminds us, "Continuous improvement is better than delayed perfection." This message perfectly reflects our approach at Orange Tree School. We encourage our students to embrace challenges, learn from mistakes and recognise that progress is made through perseverance, effort and a willingness to keep trying. Every step forward, no matter how small, is something to be celebrated. This commitment to continuous improvement extends beyond the classroom. We are always looking for ways to enhance our school environment and create spaces where our students can learn, play and thrive. The recent developments to our outdoor facilities are just one example of how we continue to invest in our school grounds, carefully considering how every improvement can enrich our students' experiences, wellbeing and opportunities. Our children are at the heart of every decision we make, and we remain committed to creating the very best environment for them to succeed.

Thank you to our families, staff and wider community for your ongoing support. Together, we continue to create an environment where every young person feels valued, supported and empowered to achieve their potential. I hope you enjoy reading about the many successes and memorable experiences from this month

"Continuous improvement is better than delayed perfection."

-Mark Twain

# FOOD TECH



This month in Food Tech lessons, students have been developing their practical culinary skills by cooking and baking a range of delicious recipes like cherry Bakewell cookies, vegetarian quesadillas, chocolate muffins and chicken katsu curry. Stepping out of their comfort zone with new and exciting recipes has helped students build confidence in independently following recipe steps, using kitchen equipment safely and exploring new flavours.

To wrap up each lesson, students enjoy a quick taste test and a one-to-one chat with their Food Tech teacher- think of it as a mini debrief with a sprinkle of encouragement! Together, they reflect on what went well, celebrate those tasty successes, and pinpoint a few “ingredients for improvement.” This friendly check-in helps students build confidence while setting exciting goals for their next practical session.

To support our focus on fresh ingredients this summer, we’ve organised a trip to the local garden centre. Vegetable seeds and herbs chosen by our year 8 students have been carefully planted in our very own garden, ready for use and looking after!

We look forward to incorporating some of these home-grown ingredients into future recipes and learning more about where our food comes from.



# YEAR 11 LEAVERS ASSEMBLY

On the 1st of May, the Year 11 students celebrated their final day at school before beginning their GCSE exam season.

The extension was decorated for the occasion, with pizza, desserts, music, and gifts helping to create a memorable afternoon for everyone. As a leaving gift, students were given black and Orange Tree school hoodies along with special notebooks with personalised goodbye messages from staff.

At 2pm, the Headteacher gave a heartfelt speech and read aloud a page from each student's leavers' notebook, sharing kind words, best wishes and memories of their time at Orange Tree School. Each year 11 had the chance to say a few words themselves to the rest of the year group and thank staff who had the pleasure of supporting them along the way. This afternoon also gave students some time to relax and spend time together before heading home to prepare for their exams this summer.

**We wish all of our Year 11 students the very best of luck in their GCSEs and for the future ahead!**



## Jack Petchey Award Winner



A big congratulations to Edward (year 9) who has been awarded the Jack Petchey Environment Award this month for his work at the art club, Art for Life Project.

The prize is a grant to benefit the art charity and the planet. Edward was praised for his "quiet and steadfast determination to the people and the world around you". Well done for your efforts - we look forward to hearing how the grant is used to benefit all!

# ORANGE TREE SCHOOL CHICKS



On the 5th of May, we've had a long-awaited delivery from Living Eggs!

Students and staff were excited to welcome 10 eggs in an incubator ready to hatch. A live stream was set up in the woodlands room so that we wouldn't miss it- had it happened over night!

Out of the 10 eggs, we've got to see 7 healthy chicks hatch, including 4 boys and 3 girls. The excitement around school grew each day as students checked on the chicks and watched them grow stronger and more active every day.

Over the 2 weeks with us, students gave the chicks cute names like nugget and omelette and visited them with their form group twice a day in 20 minute sessions.

Students enjoyed spending time with them, learning about their development, and carefully handling them under staff supervision. To make sure the chicks stayed safe, calm, and well cared for, students followed a rota and a set of important rules during each session.

It gave students the opportunity to learn about animal care, responsibility, and the life cycle in a hands-on and memorable way. The chicks quickly became a favourite companion for a quick break from lessons and regulation times around the school.



# MENTAL HEALTH WEEK



During the week beginning 11th May, our school proudly celebrated Mental Health Awareness Week, taking time to focus on the importance of wellbeing, kindness, and supporting one another. Throughout the week, students and staff were encouraged to have open conversations about mental health and to remember that nobody has to face challenges alone.

On Wednesday 13th May, the school community came together by wearing green to show support for Mental Health Awareness Week. It was wonderful to see so many members of our school community getting involved and showing their support.



To promote wellbeing and meaningful conversations, both staff and students had the opportunity to sign up for different wellbeing activities running throughout the week. Students had the chance to spend their break times with a "Hot Chocolate and a Chat", where they could bond over a sweet treat catch up with friends, and chat with members of staff. Whether discussing their day or simply enjoying each other's company, the sessions encouraged students to take time for themselves, connect with others, and share what's on their mind.

Those who prefer to look after their wellbeing with movement joined us for a 'Walk and Talk' around the local area, giving students the opportunity to get some fresh air, enjoy a change of scenery, and have meaningful conversations outside of the school environment.

This week encouraged students to slow down, connect with others, and remember the importance of taking care of both their mental and physical mental health.

A big thank you to all staff and students who took part and helped make the week a success.

JOIN US FOR

# WALKS & TALKS

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

Take a break, get some fresh air and have a chat. You're not alone.

**WHEN?**  
Next week  
Monday - Friday

**TIME:**  
10:55 - 11:15am  
(20 minutes)

**WHERE?**  
Walking around  
the block

The poster features a green and white color scheme with illustrations of people walking and talking. It includes a calendar icon, a clock icon, and a location pin icon.

# EXTRA CURRICULAR CLUBS

## Monday



**Gem Art**- create sparkling designs and colourful masterpieces using gem art techniques.

JOIN US  
FOR LUNCH TIME CLUBS  
MONDAY TO FRIDAY  
in the extension FROM 1:25PM  
TO 1:50PM

## Tuesday



**Cross Stitch**- Learn the relaxing art of cross stitch and make your own stitched creations.

## Wednesday



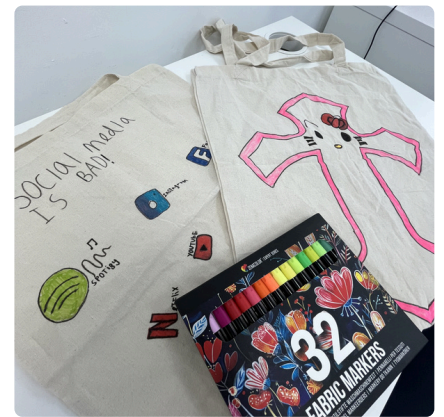
**Paint by numbers** - relax at our mindful paint-by-numbers club.

## Thursday

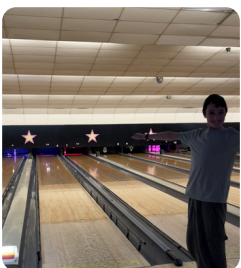


**Puzzle Club** - Work together or independently to complete a 3D puzzle of different shapes and animals.

## Friday



**Bag Design**-Decorate your own tote bag with gems, markers and iron-on stickers.



## Bowling Reward Trip

As a reward for winning the previous positive point competition, on the 7th of May, Year 8 students spent the afternoon in Hollywood Bowl Finchley. Accompanied by two members of staff, they travelled by school van and spent the afternoon taking part in two exciting games of bowling, with a lunch break in between.

To conclude their bowling trip, students were treated to some free time in the arcade. They enjoyed trying out fun video games, racing simulators and basketball machines- testing their skills, and collecting tickets to spend in the tuck shop until it was time to go back to school.

# SCHOOL SITE UPDATES



During the summer half-term break, work was carried out on the school site to add to our outdoor astroturf area. The space on the left-hand side of the school has now been designated specifically for ball games, providing students with an improved flat area for both physical activity and fun.

The final touches and pitch markings were completed during the first week of June, creating a full football pitch for students to enjoy during break times, lunchtimes, and activities lessons.



We look forward to seeing students make the most of this fantastic new addition to our outdoor facilities.

## TUTOR GROUP COMPETITION



Over our first summer term, year 11B reached the top of the leaderboard in week 1 with 26 points on average and 7A( 21.7 points) in week 4 and 9B (26.7 points) in week 6.

Our overall winners of the positive point competition were 12A achieving the most positive points for 3 out of 6 weeks! A big well done to all tutor groups for their hard work this term,

# IMPORTANT DATES

## Orange Tree School 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:** Hayley Hunter  
**DDSL:** Lucy Price  
**DDSL:** Jake Beeson  
**DDSL:** Evie Waldren

**3<sup>rd</sup> June**

HPV Vaccinations (12:30- 3pm)

**Monday 15<sup>th</sup> - Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June**

Year 10 Mock Exams

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June**

Yr 10 Parent Coffee Morning: Post-16  
Transition

**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June**

Parent Forum with Senior Leaders (9:30-  
11:00am)

**Monday 29<sup>th</sup> June**

Whole School Anti-Racism Workshops

**Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July**

Solutions Not Sides Workshops (Yr9 & Yr10)



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School](https://www.facebook.com/OTS-Orange-Tree-School)

## ORANGE TREE VALUES

**O**ptimistic  
**R**eady to Learn  
**A**chievement  
**N**ice and kind  
**G**ood listening  
**E**ffort

**T**eam work  
**R**espectful  
**E**ngagement  
**E**mpathy and Acceptance



## APPRECIATION TREE LEAF WINNER

The appreciation tree leaf winner this month is Tahlia!

Tahlia's leaf said: "For working so hard in intervention this week."

Thank you and we hope you enjoy your prize!

## Food Tech highlights

This month in Food Tech, year 7 and 8 made Cherry Bakewell Cookies and chocolate muffins meanwhile Year 9 & 10 made Vegetarian Quesadillas and chicken katsu curry.



# 10 Top Tips on Supporting Children with SELF-REGULATION

Children need to learn to understand and recognise their emotions, while finding healthy ways to process them. Emotional self-regulation, however, depends heavily on age and development. While very young ones or children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) may find it particularly challenging to self-regulate, nurturing these important skills can be hugely beneficial. Here are ten top tips for supporting children with their self-regulation.

## 1. DESIGNATE A TRUSTED ADULT



It's vital that children feel safe and know that there's someone they can always go to for help if they need it. Schedule consistent times for the child to develop a relationship with this person – ideally through play and games – allowing trust to grow and ensuring that the child is more likely to come forward if anything is wrong, rather than hiding their emotions.

## 2. MEET CHILDREN HALFWAY

Unless you know where a child is developmentally and tailor your approach to their needs, you're less likely to have an impact. In particular, younger ones and children with SEND can struggle to self-regulate and instead rely on others to help them. We call this 'co-regulation'. Rather than offering strategies for self-regulation, it could be better to start co-regulating with a trusted adult first.

## 3. FACTOR IN THEIR BASIC NEEDS

Remember that for a child to develop emotional regulation skills, their basic needs must be met first. Children who are hungry, tired, cold and so on – as well as those who have experienced adverse childhood experiences – may struggle to self-regulate. Before you develop strategies with any child, make sure they feel safe, secure and comfortable in themselves.

## 4. REMAIN PATIENT

If a child is struggling with their emotions, it can often become difficult to stay calm. Remember that dysregulation is beyond their control, so a display of frustration or anger could negatively impact the situation. Instead, children need to be met with comfort and understanding to help them manage these problematic feelings.

## 5. BE 'A DYSREGULATION DETECTIVE'

While some children can tell you why they become dysregulated, many others can't. You could investigate potential triggers by observing the child and talking to their family. When the child becomes dysregulated, note down details like the time, what they're doing and who they're with – the trigger may be someone they sit near, an unmet sensory need or something else entirely. Once we identify some triggers, we can help to avoid or overcome them.

## Meet Our Expert

Georgina Durrant is an author, former teacher, Special Educational Needs Coordinator and the founder of the award-winning SEN Resources Blog, where she shares activities, advice and recommendations for parents and teachers of children with SEND.



## 6. USE SUITABLE LITERATURE

There are some wonderful books that can help you teach self-regulation to children. Reading these with a child can be especially powerful. Take time to discuss the content: ask questions about what feelings the characters had, why they felt that way and what strategies helped them. It can also be useful to refer back to snippets of these books at appropriate moments.

## 7. TRY SENSORY RESOURCES

An overlap between sensory needs and emotional regulation is possible. Children may struggle to self-regulate if they're experiencing sensory overload (a noisy classroom, for example). Positive sensory input can help calm them down. Use resources such as weighted blankets and fibre-optic lights. Of course, what works for one child might not work for another – so it's important to offer a choice of resources to discover which they prefer.

## 8. NURTURE INDEPENDENCE

If you feel it's appropriate, let children try out these strategies alone. Always offer them a choice: they could listen to music when they're feeling stressed, for example, or they could write down their worries or draw something to represent how they feel. This may take time for the child to get used to, so be patient. Encourage them to share any helpful strategies with a trusted adult.

## 9. MODEL GENUINE FEELINGS

Children learn a lot just from watching grown-ups. Don't be afraid to show your own emotions and self-regulation strategies. While you'll obviously want to avoid sharing anything too personal with children, they should still see us experiencing and handling our own feelings. Tell them how you are feeling, then show them how to respond in a healthy manner.

## 10. FORMULATE A PLAN

As much as we try to prevent children from experiencing dysregulation, it's always wise to have an appropriate plan for when it does happen. Discuss this strategy with the child (if appropriate) and their family. The best approach for an individual child is often a bespoke one; it's hugely important to know in advance what might help and what could worsen the situation.