



Message from the Head



The December newsletter usually starts with a review of the previous year Where do I begin !

I think I have to start with a massive THANKYOU to you as parents and carers for your ongoing support and patience as we have navigated our way through academy conversion, ever changing COVID-19 guidance, delivering a broad curriculum, short notice of absences requiring groups to remain at home, supporting your children to take part in remote learning sessions and significant building work on the Shenstone site. We couldn't have done it without you !

As I write, we continue to be one of the only schools in Sandwell that has not had a confirmed positive case of COVID-19 amongst staff or students, despite Sandwell remaining in the top tiers of lockdown.

This is a tremendous achievement and is a testament to the measures we have put in place to reduce the chances of viral transmission.

For the first time ever, our overall attendance compares well Nationally against mainstream schools !

With vaccinations starting across the country and overall COVID infection rates seeming to fall, we are optimistic that the New Year will bring an exciting and fresh start, so that we can begin again to venture out for school trips and invite guests through our doors.

On behalf of the Governors, the Trust and everyone here at Shenstone Lodge have a very Merry Christmas !

REMINDER :

The Brades Lodge and Shenstone Lodge Schools will be closing for the Christmas Break at 1pm on Thursday 17th of December.

If your child suffers from a persistent new cough, high temperature or loss of taste or smell they must self-isolate and you should immediately book a test.

If the test is returned positive, please let the school know if the symptoms started on or before Saturday 19th December.

The contact email address is

which will be checked daily up to the 23.12.20 between 10 am and 11am.

karen.appleby@shenstonelodge.co.uk

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The students at Shenstone Lodge School created a moving display to mark Armistice Day 2020. Individual poppy designs were created by students from each class. The students explored the meanings behind different coloured poppies and a minutes silence was held to remember the fallen. Mrs Black



Good to Know... Working with Families In Sandwell

Up-to-date local information on **COVID-19 restrictions** can be found on Council's website

<https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Parent Zone have launched their new app **Ollee**. An early-intervention tool that will help 8-11 year olds with their emotional wellbeing and encourage communication within families.

<https://parentzone.org.uk/ollee/for-parents>

Reminder: As part of the **Dove Self-Esteem Project** there are free **Confident Me workshops** are all about teaching 11 to 14-year-olds strategies to protect and build self-confidence – in themselves and others.

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

There are several **[vacancies for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games](https://www.birmingham2022.com/get-involved/jobs/)**

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RESIDENTIAL .. Open All Hours !

We have been thrilled to welcome the children back in to residence this half term. There has been a lot of bike riding, playing and baking going on, which all the children have very much enjoyed.

Although we have not been able to leave the site, due to COVID restrictions we have been able to use the amazing Shenstone site to its fullest extent.

To celebrate Bonfire night we had an evening in the woods, sat around a camp fire toasting marshmallows and drinking hot chocolate.

To acknowledge 'Anti-bullying week' between the 16th and 20th November. the children participated in some superb 'my learning' which involved group discussions and debates.

On another note, it has been really lovely to introduce new children to residence, getting to know them and learning all about the things they like and enjoy. We look forward to an exciting new term. Mark Smith (Deputy Head of Care)



As the impact of the pandemic hits the finances of families across the country the staff at both The Brades and Shenstone have been collecting food & toiletries for local food banks. Students from The Brades have been helping to deliver some of the products to the West Midlands Food Bank and have seen first hand the difference it makes. It is hoped that the items will go some way to ensuring that a family has food to eat over Christmas.



Cheer Us Up Mr D !

Mr Daniel at the Brades Lodge is well known in school for telling the odd joke or two to raise a smile in the staff room before a hard day at the 'chalk face' ... Given the current state of the nation he has kindly offered to share a few witty words to keep us all going.. Thanks sir !

When does a joke become a dad joke? When it becomes apparent.

What do you call a fake noodle? An impasta.

Why can't dinosaurs play basketball? Because they are dead.

There are three types of people in the world, those who can count and those who can't.

What does a martial arts expert drink? Kara-tea.

When my kids found out I replaced their beds with trampolines... they hit the roof.

Xmas Quiz Corner

1. How many ghosts appear in A Christmas Carol ?
2. How do you say 'Merry Christmas' in Spanish ?
3. How many new words can you make using the letters in Christmas ?
4. Christmas Island is in which ocean ?
5. If you were born on Christmas Day, what would your star sign be ?
6. What colour are mistletoe berries ?

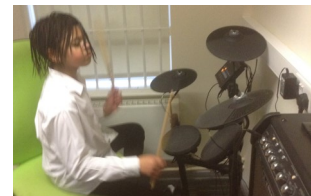
TOP OF THE POPS

Individual music lessons have been 'threaded' into The Brades Lodge curriculum for the first time. The students have taken this opportunity with both hands and we are now over subscribed with budding rock stars wanting to learn how to play the drums or guitar.

Initially the school wanted to provide access to the sessions as an intervention to encourage creativity, motivation and increase levels of well being, for those who rely less on other pastoral supports from the school.

The sessions are already making a significant impact and we have already increased the number of sessions that the students can take part in.

Despite the relatively short time span, we are already looking toward music grading for several students, offering them more opportunities for qualifications and increasing their employability. Kane Cabellero (Well Being Support Team (TBL))



WATCH THE CARPET !

In Athos class students have had a great time combining science and art.

They have been exploring their senses, developing their understanding of how they work and what they do. To do this they have created some fantastic tactile artwork by using their hands and feet. Mia loved stepping in the paint, and couldn't believe how big her feet looked when she pressed on the paper !

A.O.B.

- We are pleased to welcome Josie Marston who has been appointed as a Learning Support Practitioner at The Brades Lodge
- We will be saying goodbye to our Business Manager, Karen Appleby at the end of Term. She is leaving her position to take a senior role in Derby City Council. Karen has been working across the two school sites for the last four years and will be sorely missed by each of the school teams. We wish her well in the future.
- As you are aware the school day for those students attending the Shenstone Lodge site was adjusted to try and accommodate some of the challenges that the ongoing pandemic has delivered. For information and confirmation, we will be continuing with the school hours as they currently stand. We will review the times again next half term and let you know as soon as we can if there will be any changes.
- Building works have sadly overrun at the Shenstone Lodge site. This means that the both roofing and heating contractors will still be on site till the end of January.

Diary Dates...

Xmas Break 1pm finish on the
17th Dec and return 4th Jan

Half Term 15th - 19th Feb

Easter Break 2nd - 16th April
(1pm finish on 2nd)

School Data Box 2020/21

Whole School Attendance for 2019 /20 school year
(pre 'lockdown') : **83.7%**

Attendance for 2020/21 Autumn Term **86%**

Days lost to Exclusion

2019/20 Aut Term : 24

2020/21 Aut Term :41

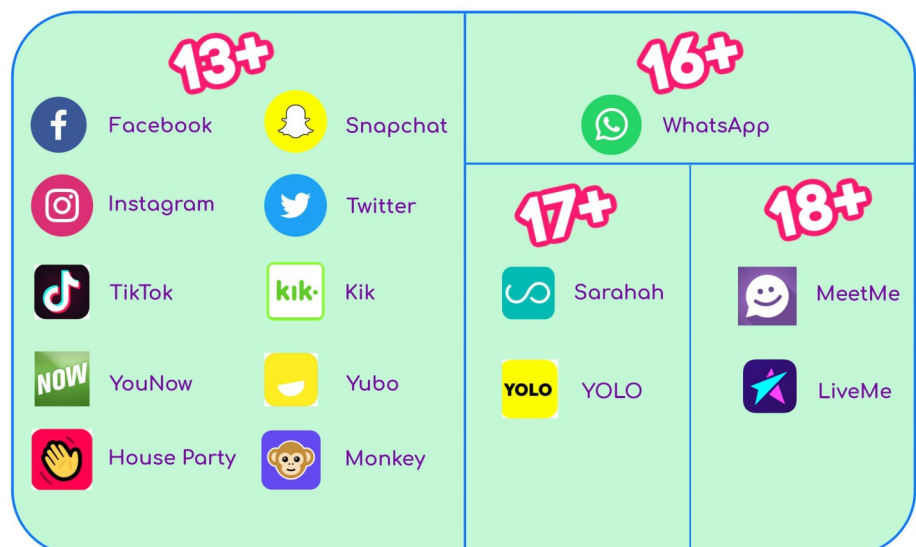
STAY SAFE ONLINE

The use of Social Media platforms has boomed this year as face to face contact with people has been restricted.

On the whole this hasn't been a bad thing ... but do you know :

Most social media platforms have an age restriction of 13+. This is to comply with EU legislation and to protect children.

For further information please go to www.internetmatters.org



14/12/20

Dear Parents, Carers, Colleagues and Governors,

It seems a very long time ago since 02/04/20 when I last wrote to you on behalf of Directors of the Trust and myself during lock-down. I know you have had numerous letters and forms of communication from the School and for the same reasons as last time, I have waited before we break up for the Autumn term before writing to you as to avoid over saturation.

As before, this letter is not to add to your burden of advice and guidance, but again to express the Manor Hall Academy Trust's gratitude for your efforts during these extraordinary times.

Since September and the wider opening of schools, the challenge of safely keeping as many children in school as possible has been one which has occupied us all. This challenge has been made more difficult by the constant changing of advice and guidance provided in uncharted times. I am sure like myself you are constantly checking on what the right thing to do in terms of protecting ourselves and others.

I deliberately address this letter to parents, carers, colleagues and governors, as it is the team effort that has resulted in the best we can do for our children.

I realise that the wider opening of Schools has caused anxieties for both parents, carers and all school staff and I am most thankful how you have all worked together to help each other come to terms with such worries; in the interests of our children.

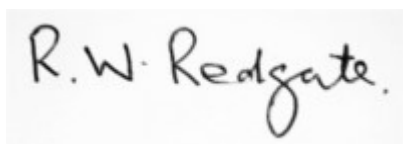
The Spring term will soon be upon us. Trust Schools will continue to work within Trust principles but finding local solutions to ensure that the particular needs of your school and local communities are taken into account.

Recovery, to times gone by, is still a considerable time away. We will continue to work together to ensure that we keep each other safe and provide our children with the best possible education, in the circumstances that are presented to us.

Once again, on behalf of the Directors of the Manor Hall Academy Trust and myself as the Chief Executive Officer, **Thank You.**

Wishing you a happy Christmas and Healthy new year.

Kind Regards.



(CEO-MANOR HALL ACADEMY TRUST).