

Children's Hospital School

'Better Together'



Executive: Headteacher: Mr S Deadman

Willow Bank School

Simmins Crescent

Leicester

LE2 9AH

Christmas 2024 Newsletter

Tel: 0116 2298137

Welcome to The Children's Hospital School newsletter. We hope you enjoy reading about all the latest news across all our settings, Willow Bank School, Magpie Learning Centre, Leicester Royal Infirmary, The Beacon Unit and The Phoenix Learning Centre.

As we approach the end of the year, I would like to thank all those who have supported the school and our children. It is a real privilege to work with so many inspiring people and I am regularly in awe of the brilliant work I see across all parts of our school.

Looking back over 2024, I feel a great sense of pride having seen our young people achieve so much, making progress both academically and socially. The staff have helped shape our provision so it continues to be outstanding and they are always looking for new things to do and new ways to improve outcomes for the children. I hope you will join me in thanking the staff for their dedication, hard work and care over the last year.

The newsletter gives you a snapshot of what has been going on in school this term, but there is plenty more beyond what you read here. There have been school trips, visiting workshops in school and plenty of enrichment activities run by our staff.

The Children's Hospital School celebrates its 75th birthday this year, having been established at the General Hospital in 1949 and starting life in an oxygen room with four fold up chairs and one teacher! It's amazing to think how much the school has changed in that time – now with almost 70 staff across 5 school bases.

We have some staff who are new to the school. Rebecca Preston (transition support at the Phoenix) and Diane Issitt (kitchen assistant at Willow Bank) joined us in the last few weeks. In January we have 3 new starters – Zoe Kirby (pastoral & inclusion at the Phoenix), Sumera Jugon (maths teacher at the Phoenix and Magpie) and Amy Smith (HLTA at the Leicester Royal Infirmary).

As Christmas approaches, I hope that each of you will be able to enjoy a peaceful and restful time with family and friends. My very best wishes to you all and I look forward to seeing what 2025 will bring.

Stephen Deadman

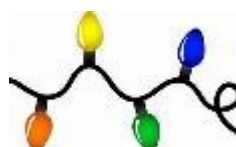


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NEWS FROM LEICESTER ROYAL INFIRMARY

Children in Need 2024

On Friday 15th November, our children took part in lots of Children in Need activities. From decorating Pudsey to themed puzzles our children had lots of fun!



Christmas Celebration Day

On Friday 13th December, our children had a fun-filled Christmas Celebration Day with Soft Touch and Messy Senses.

It was a pleasure to have Soft Touch with us this term to bring joy and laughter to the wards. On Friday, the team dressed as Frozen characters and sang Christmas songs across the wards. Our children love getting involved playing percussion instruments. Ward staff and parents also look forward to the weekly event.

We also welcomed Messy Senses to the wards. Our children loved the festive multi-sensory experience and made some wonderful crafts to treasure.



Elf Adventures



The Elf has made a return this year!! Please follow us on X: [@LRISchool](https://twitter.com/LRISchool) and keep up to date with his adventures!

You will also find our annual Christmas video on our X Page towards the end of the term!



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NEWS FROM WILLOW BANK SCHOOL



Careers Fair

A Careers Fair was held at Willow Bank School on Monday 28th October. Many colleges, such as Gateway, SMB, NWSLC, Beauchamp City and Loughborough college attended. This gave the students an opportunity to talk to providers and to think about their future options.



College Virtual Assemblies and Visits

Leicester College and SMB College Group both delivered virtual assemblies this half term for our KS4 students. It was interesting to see what both colleges offer, in terms of courses and facilities. The providers spoke about the importance of attending college open days, so that the students can gain experiences of college environments. Some students also had the opportunity to visit Leicester College at a later date for a bespoke tour, which included looking at the Childcare, Health and Social Care and Mechanic facilities at the Abbey Park Campus.



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Fire Service Visit

Leicestershire Fire Service came to visit Willow Bank School on Thursday 7th November. They spoke to the students about what they do on a day to day basis and the emergencies they have to deal with. They also spoke passionately about their job roles and about the different careers you can get into. The students asked some really insightful questions. The highlight of the visit was seeing the fire engine and seeing the students enjoying themselves whilst trying on the uniform.



Blue Cross Virtual Assembly

Blue Cross (Animal Welfare Charity) did a virtual assembly on Tuesday 12th November for our Willow Bank Students. It was interesting to find out what the charity does and how we can support them. The charity provides veterinary care, offers expert behavioural help and finds homes for pets. The students also learnt about the many careers within the organisation and also about volunteering. You can find out more information by visiting their website www.bluecross.org.uk



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Box it to Beat it



Some students took part in a 12-week programme called 'Box it to Beat it'

The programme was delivered by Waterfront Sport and Education Academy and designed by the charity 'Mind' in partnership with 'Boxing England'.

The programme used non-contact boxing and mentoring to improve young people's wellbeing. Each session consisted of 20 mins personal and social development activities and 40 minutes boxing from professional coaches.



As part of this programme the students went out on several occasions to the boxing gym for their sessions.

Now that the programme has come to an end, Waterfront have given the students a FREE pass to attend weekly free sessions in evening up until 31st March 2025 so that they can continue their boxing journey out of school!



Here we are in our Christmas Jumpers ready for the Christmas lunch provided by our brilliant chef Nicky Henson.



Merry Christmas from all the Staff at Willow Bank



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Theatre Trips at Willow Bank

We have been really lucky this half term to have the opportunity to take part in two theatre trips to support our English Literature curriculum.

On Thursday 31st October, we took students to Curve to see An Inspector Calls. It was a really great production that was enjoyed by all who went. Our students were even able to get a photo with some of the cast!



On Friday 22nd November, we headed slightly further afield and went to see Mark Gatiss' 'A Christmas Carol: A Ghost Story' in Birmingham. Again, the students did brilliantly – especially as this was a larger and busier venue than Curve had been. It was a really brilliant performance, with a few jumps and plenty of Christmas spirit.

Christmas Cinema Trip

On Wednesday 18th December, our students went to see Wicked at the Showcase Cinema DeLux in Leicester.

This was a magical end of term reward for all of their hard work over the past few months.



We then returned to Willow Bank in time to eat a delicious Christmas lunch!



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Christmas Cakes at Willow Bank

The AQA cooking students have been busy this month designing, making and icing their own Christmas cakes as part of one of their awards.



Cassie Moore



Maysam Ali



They have created some brilliant imaginative designs for their cakes, and worked their magic bringing their designs to life.



Violet Duce in Year 10 has also made and decorated the school's Christmas cake too.



As anyone who has ever made a Christmas cake knows there is a lot of work that goes into them and so our students should be so proud of their achievements.



NEWS FROM THE MAGPIE

Eyres Monsell Nativity

Students in our CHS group had the pleasure of watching the Reception Class Nativity performance at Eyres Monsell Primary School at the start of December. This was a great chance to see the children that our students worked with last year and also to be an audience member - this is a key requirement of their Arts Award qualification. Our students enjoyed the performance - there were lots of tapping toes and encouraging smiles to the primary pupils. CHS students are now busy writing about their experience to submit with their Arts Award work.



National Memorial Arboretum

Following the successful visit last year, we took our CHS students to the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire for Remembrance Day. This is a charity run site as part of the Royal British Legion. We started our day with walking through a WW2 exhibition, followed by watching an incredible film created by sand artists depicting a story of a D-Day veteran. We then attended a 2 minute silence in the Millenium Chapel. The students then spent the day walking around the 150 acre site looking at all the various memorials to different charities, people and organisations. One of our students then placed the wreath they had made on the poppy memorial. To finish the day we walked to the armed forces memorial which is a national significant memorial and is a main point of the Remembrance weekend. This is always an incredibly poignant and significant trip remembering those who fought and are still fighting for us, heightened by being in the heart of the National Forest, surrounded by beautiful woodland.



Fantastic Remembrance Day cake
made by Mrs Wood



Messy Senses



Louise from Messy Senses brought us some new students – Tilly and Ted. Louise showed us her two tortoises and the students were able to bathe them! They learnt about what they eat, how to care for them and how they change whilst going into hibernation. One even tried to escape!



Arts award



We have just received our first set of Arts Award 'Discover' certificates for our Intervention students! We are incredibly proud of them and their commitment, they have produced some fantastic independent research and have talked with confidence about their learning.



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Ice Skating

For our end of term reward the CHS group went ice skating at Jubilee Square. They all loved it and we've got some promising ice skaters in the group! Everyone was incredible and really enjoyed it. We were even interviewed by BBC Radio Leicester – look out for details on how to listen to the interview. They then came back to school for a festive afternoon of hot chocolate and Christmas films and games.



New Tigers

We have welcomed a new group of Tigers who have settled in well. They took part in their ice breaker week ready for their next 12 weeks. They baked delicious brownies, played games and took part in quizzes.

Wreath Making

Students from our Tigers and CHS groups made some beautiful Christmas wreaths this week. We had a visit from Chris our governor too, who helped with the spray and bow making. It felt very Christmassy and both staff and students felt very proud of their efforts.

Well done everyone they will look lovely on your front doors! Merry Christmas xxx



NEWS FROM THE BEACON

We are almost at the end of term and Christmas is finally here at the Beacon. The young people have been busy making wooden decorations for our Christmas tree.

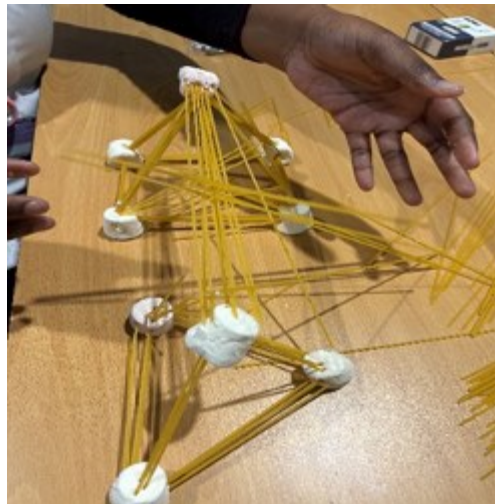
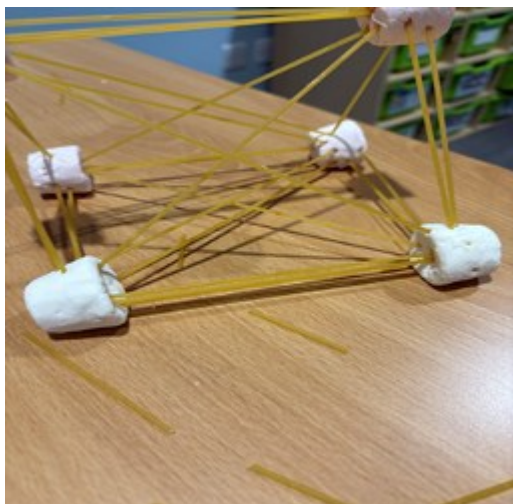


On the 11th of December we held our charity Christmas sale. Over the last 6 weeks the young people have been working through an enterprise project, where they have been looking at marketing, profit and design. A grand total of £152.00 was raised and the money will be delivered to the hospice by our young people next week.

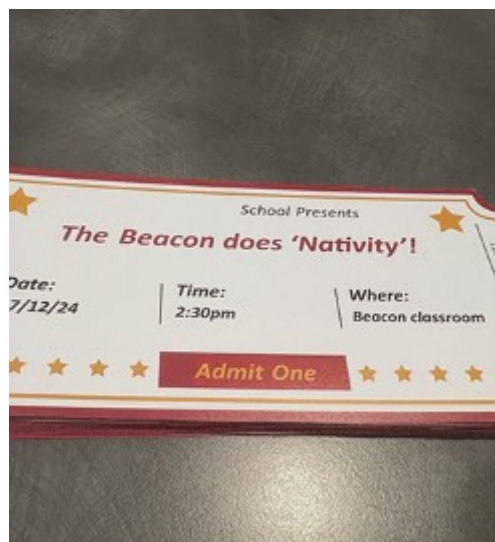


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In STEM, the young people were set a challenge to build the tallest free-standing tower out of spaghetti and marshmallows. The tallest tower was 50cm and as an extension task the group collaborated to turn their towers into a bridge which would hold a minimum weight. This turned out to be a great teamworking activity!



Media lessons have once again been a hit. To get into the Christmas spirit the young people and staff have been busy creating, performing and filming a short mini clip, based on the film "Nativity". It has been a joy to see so many people get involved and on the 17th of December the young people and staff will be walking the red carpet to attend the premiere!



On the 18th of December the school will be serving turkey and stuffing Christmas cobs to the young people and staff.

We wish you a very Merry Christmas from all at the Beacon



NEWS FROM THE PHOENIX

We have had a good Autumn term at the Phoenix Learning Centre. Our students have continued to engage well in learning. We have had two new pupils start their journey with us and we say goodbye to our first little group; we wish them all the best in their futures. To celebrate their last day with us we wore Christmas jumpers, made snowmen, they chose to watch the Grinch over lunch, and they finished with Mario Kart racing!



During uplift students have achieved the Christmas PawPrint badge having created lots of Christmas crafts, including Christmas cards, bookmarks, decorations and a Christmas tree. We have worked as a team to complete several puzzles! We have been reading, 'A Boy Called Christmas' and have shared our thoughts in our Monday morning Book club.



During messy senses students have enjoyed creating a Christmas wreath from salt dough, sock snowmen, a star decoration and much more. We also met Lara's pet Tortoises!



As part of Get Active we have enjoyed walks in the community to the local park where we have played table tennis. We took part in the Christmas Tree Festival at St. Mary's Church and we enjoyed indoor mini-golf at the Birdie Bunker.



We wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



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THRIVE TIPS FOR PARENTS

At CHS we use the Thrive Approach, which is a trauma-informed approach that helps to improve the mental wellbeing of young people. There are many different strategies we use in our approach that we want to share with parents as way to increase your knowledge and skills to support your young person at home. In Thrive we use what we call the Vital Relational Functions (VRF's). The VRF's are listed below:

= Validation = Attunement = Containment = Regulation

Last newsletter we introduced the idea of validation. This time we will discuss what attunement is, which you may find helpful when supporting your young person.

WHAT IS ATTUNEMENT?

Attunement is being aware of and responding to the emotions of another person and is the process by which we form close relationships. It is that essential component that allows us to feel close and connected to others.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Be attentive – Turn towards the person, make eye contact, look interested, give them time to calm themselves if needed but also show them they aren't being ignored, notice what they are experiencing (name this outloud so they know you can 'see' them).

Encourage – Actively listening, being emotionally available and positive .

Receive – Begin to repeat or reflect back what they told you to show that you have heard them and understand.

Be attuned together – Bring the conversation onto a more equal and more cooperative footing by taking turns to talk, sharing thinking and feelings.

Guide and support - This won't be effective if you haven't already attuned to the other person through the previous steps. This is exploring ideas and solutions together.

Attunement allows us to not just observe a person's behaviour but to be more able to identify what that behaviour means. This knowledge helps us to adjust our approach to better meet the needs of that person. Being attuned to someone allows us to act quickly to help when we notice they are not coping or are becoming distressed.

Information adapted from: <https://education.gov.scot/media/qobanx4l/information-note-attunement.pdf>



Year 11 Summer 2025 Examinations

The summer 2025 national exam timetable has now been published. Please use the QR code which will take you to the EXAMS page on the school website. You will find the timetable along with other useful documents and guidance relating to examinations. Further information will follow in due course. Contact: exams@childrenshospitalschool.leicester.sch.uk



WANTED PLEASE

It's that time of the year when you may be lucky enough to be treated, or just feel like treating yourself to some chocolates. In cooking, we are desperate for any empty sweet tubs (although if you want to leave the chocolates in, Gemma and I can dispose of them).

We would be also grateful for ice cream cartons or new foil trays with lids, if you are sorting out your kitchen cupboards.

So, if you can bare us in mind and bring them in rather than putting them in your recycling bins, that would be brilliant.

Many thanks



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INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

FREE SCHOOL MEALS

Your children may be eligible for free school meals if you receive:

- > income support
- > income-based jobseekers allowance
- > income-related employment and support allowance
- > support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- > child tax credit (providing you're not also entitled to working tax credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- > the guarantee element of state pension credit
- > working tax credit run-on – paid for four weeks after you stop qualifying for working tax credit
- > Universal Credit with annual net earned income of less than £7,400

Applying could also help your school get extra funding through the Government's Pupil Premium scheme.

Visit: <https://freeschoolmeals.leicester.gov.uk>
[Free School Meals | Leicestershire County Council](#)

Please contact Jayne Lister (details below) if you need assistance

FAMILY SUPPORT WORKER CONTACT DETAILS

Jayne Lister

Family Support Worker - Children's Hospital School

07961 397 364

jlister@childrenshospitalschool.leicester.sch.uk

Jayne will be working one day per week during the summer holiday.

Or contact safeguarding@childrenshospitalschool.leicester.sch.uk

The Household Support Grant (HSG) has been launched for the final time in the County on 03/06/2024. If County families are struggling with Household fuel bills and are in debt, plus are in receipt of certain benefits, Jayne can support them to apply. The HSG will continue until the money 'runs out'.



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INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

USEFUL WEBSITES



For any drug related problems
questions or issues.

www.talktofrank.com



For drug and alcohol related support

www.Turning-point.co.uk/services/leicester

ONLINE SAFETY



Talk

Chat to their child about their online world, just as they'd ask about their day at school, such as discussing the apps, social networks and websites their child uses.



Explore

Explore and understand the apps, games and sites their child uses and get to know their child's online world better, such as making a list of their child's favourites.



Agree

Make sure they are a good role model and agree common ground rules and boundaries with their family, such as which websites and apps are okay and not okay to use and why, times they are allowed online and what they are allowed to do.



Manage

Make use of the technology. Adapt privacy settings and use parental controls where necessary. Set rewards if their child sticks to the agreements and allow them more freedom as they mature and develop.



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INFORMATION FOR PARENTS



Children's Hospital School – Term Dates 2024/2025

Term No 1: 37 days (7 weeks 2 days)	
Schools Open	Wednesday 28 August 2024
Schools Close	Thursday 17 October 2024
INSET day (closed to pupils)	Friday 18 October 2024
Autumn Half Term Holiday	Monday 21 October 2024 to Friday 25 October 2024

Term No 2: 39 days (7 weeks 4 days)	
Schools Open	Monday 28 October 2024
INSET day (closed to pupils)	Monday 25 November 2024
Schools Close	Friday 20 December 2024
Christmas & New Year Holiday	Monday 23 December 2024 to Friday 3 January 2025

Term No 3: 30 days (6 weeks)	
Schools Open	Monday 6 January 2025
Schools Close	Friday 14 February 2025
Spring Half Term Holiday	Monday 17 February 2025 to Friday 21 February 2025

Term No 4: 35 days (7 weeks)	
Schools Open	Monday 24 February 2025
Schools Close	Friday 11 April 2025
Easter Holidays	Monday 14 April 2025 to Friday 25 April 2025

Term No 5: 19 days (3 weeks 4 days)	
Schools Open	Monday 28 April 2025
May Bank Holiday (schools closed)	Monday 5 May 2025
Schools Close	Friday 23 May 2025
Summer Half Term Holiday	Monday 26 May 2025 to Friday 30 May 2025

Term No 6: 30 days (6 weeks)	
Schools Open	Monday 2 June 2025
Schools Close	Friday 11 July 2025
Summer Holiday begins	Monday 14 July 2025

190 Pupil Days



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INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Do you need support and advice about the benefits you are receiving?

Jags Katwa

Supporting.Families@dwp.gov.uk

07776 166327

Supporting Families Employment Adviser (Department for Work and Pensions)

Leicester City Council

Early help and social care contact

If your message requires action to safeguard a child or young person please contact the appropriate Local Authority for Children's Early Help or Social Care or the relevant emergency service(s):

Leicester City - 0116 454 1004

Leicestershire - 0116 305 0005

Rutland - 01572 758 407

CAP – Central Access Point

A reminder of the emergency contact number for CAP mental health support for adults and children:



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INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Online Safety and Social Media

Understanding online safety is tricky for everyone. As a school we want to provide you with some advice to help you learn about how to consider the safety and wellbeing of your child when they are online as well as a family. On our school website and in school newsletters you can find ideas about keeping your child safe by **Talking** to them about their online activities, **Explore** what Apps and platforms they are using, **Agree** a safety plan and time they can use their device as well as **Manage** the settings and internet connection.

Research by Dr S Nuichani OBE and Dr S Jones at the Leicester Royal Infirmary has identified the challenges digital devices have on children's health and wellbeing. They have produced tips for managing healthier screen time.

At CHS we have filtering (ekte) and monitoring (securus) in place on school devices to protect students. There are Privacy and Safety Checklists from the UK Safer Internet Centre for Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok. You can find others checklist for different platforms online. If you would like a paper copy, please get in touch.



Our eLearning team may be able to offer some technical support about changes to settings.

Have a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year. We will see you on Monday 6th January 2025.



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