

# Parents' Post



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Autumn 1 2023

## Thoughts from the Principal's Office

Dear Families,

Welcome to the first edition of this Academic Year's Parents' Post. We have had a fantastic start to the year celebrating the students GCSE results and getting back to learning after the long summer holiday. There have been a lot of new systems to get used to with the lengthening of the new day and returning to 60-minute lessons. Students have settled into the new timetable well and staff are very happy to have the additional time in each lesson. We will start the first review of the changes after half term, so please look out for an online form we will ask parents to fill in.

Enrichment is always a key aspect of school life, and it is wonderful that we get to celebrate this with you every half term. Already this year we have had visits from national and international renowned poets and musicians. We are continuing to engage with the National Theatre with some fantastic opportunities for students to see live theatre at Braunton later in the year, and our Eco Club have already been busy making our environment a greener and healthier place to be. I hope you enjoy this addition of the newsletter.

### The Expansion

The building work in school is coming along well. So far, we are ahead of schedule; fingers crossed the weather stays good! Over the half term further work will take place to create new social spaces for students at break and lunchtime and the steel frame for the six classrooms is now in place. There has been minimal disruption to school life from the work that is taking



War on Waste Project

place. Next half term we will have the excitement of the frame becoming a building ready to welcome another increased cohort of 180 students in September.

I wish you all a happy half term,

Fay Bowler, Principal



## Autumn Enrichment in the English Department

We've had a very enriched September in the English department this year! Nathan Rodney-Jones, a past student of Braunton Academy visited and ran a poetry workshop with 14 Year 9 students. Poppy writes about the experience below:

"We focused on exploring past memories through the art of poetry. Nathan taught us how to carefully construct a perfect poem whilst unearthing childhood memories, which created the perfect sentimental atmosphere among all of us. We were provided opportunities to share our work, without being pushed and pressured. Personally, I really enjoyed our free writing time when Nathan asked us different questions about our most distinct childhood memory, which helped us to create a creative, memorable poem. Nathan showcased each and everyone's creativity skills and inspired us all to write and perform our poems. I hope to see him again soon!"

Also, our students benefitted hugely from the Appledore Book Festival author visits. John Townsend, an ex SENCO and author of over 200 fiction and non fiction books, worked with 30 Year 8 and 9 students in the library, where he inspired both reading and writing. Patrice Lawrence spoke to 180 Year 7s in Isaac Hall about her writing process, whilst also promoting The Elemental Detectives series. Finally, Lisa Williamson, an actress and an author spoke to 180 Year 8s about the material that motivates her books. She read from her most successful novel, The Art of Being Normal and was a big hit with the students who had so many questions to ask her at the end of her presentation!

On top of that, Appledore Book Festival delivered a large quantity of brand new books by the authors who visited, which we will be able to use to enrich the lives of the students in our care.



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## Can You Help?

The Technology department are looking for donations of cotton and polycotton fabrics and denim jeans, which will be used for school projects. If you are able to help, please drop them in to school reception. Many thanks.





### Visit by Sheku Kanneh Mason

Braunton Academy hosted a very special assembly by world-renowned cellist Sheku Kanneh Mason. Primary and secondary students from the Braunton Community and other young strings players from the area sat on the edge of their seats as they sang Russian folk songs and learnt about the world of an elite classical musician. The Question and Answer session led to many insights as students asked some excellent questions to learn more about Sheku's life and career so far. He told them:

"There are no shortcuts...just lots of practice", "I perform around 80 concerts per year", "If I could master one other instrument it would be the voice...I'd love to be a great singer".

"Yes, I do support Arsenal Football Team!"



Sheku was accompanied by another incredible musician, Tom Featherstonhaugh. Tom is a brilliant pianist and conductor and his energy on stage was electric.

Many autographs were signed and photos taken. GCSE students were able to continue with a more intimate Q & A session before we finally said goodbye to the pair and let them prepare for their sell out-performance at The Queens Theatre, Barnstaple that evening.



## Showcasing GCSE Art Work From Summer 2023.

Studio Kind is kindly hosting a two-week long exhibition of GCSE Art work from last year's leavers.

Please come along to see the huge range of responses to their portfolio based on the themes "Collections" and "Identity".

We are also exhibiting a range of work undertaken during the ten-hour exam and supporting sketchbooks.

Please come along to see how talented the young people are in our community.

Studio Kind is located at the back of Tesco in Braunton.



14th - 28th October  
Wednesdays to Saturday  
12:30-5:30pm

Opening Event:  
Saturday 14th October  
12:30-2:30pm

**KIND.**

 **ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**  
Supported using public funding by

## Letter from Daniel, at Kira Farm



Dear Nick

Hello Nick how are you, for me from here am still good every thing is nice we now planted our maize and every one have his or her plot and am in a tree nursery family thank you every thing is nice event my training and our last season crops we are still eating now am learning a lot of thing here and am getting enough knowledge and experience in Agriculture and how to staying in a community and Amigos is empowering people thank you i don't have much to say i hope you are going to replay me this time may God bless you

Thanks,  
your faithful  
DANIEL OKELLO



### Speak Up – National Theatre 2023

At the end of the last academic year 25 students from Branton Academy participated in a pilot project from the National Theatre called 'Speak Up'. This nation-wide programme gives people the opportunity to explore issues that matter to them by working together with local artists and creatives to produce work in any form of their choice which reflects issues important to them.

Students have experienced workshops delivered by local artists on topics such as songwriting, animation, clay self-portraits, puppetry to name but a few. This academic year will see the students embarking on building on this experience as a

group to being more visible in the school community raising awareness about the issues most important to them as young people in North Devon.

Mr Carroll and local artist and facilitator Beth Barrington have been working with the students every Monday in a 'co-creative' process which see students at the core of making decisions about the creative process and how they want to express themselves. The programme continues this year so watch this space for Branton students 'speaking up'.

**SPEAK  
UP**

**National  
Theatre**

### Ecoclub News - WOW Project

This week, our brilliant Ecoclub sorted 24-hours' worth of Branton Academy waste in order to audit it, weigh it and thereby work out how we can reduce our waste - plus recycle more. This is the first step in the WOW (War on Waste) project that we are being supported through by Devon Country Council. It was a grim job at times and the Ecoclub members really impressed me with their determination and diligence. Once we have the data back, we will plan how we can increase recycling and decrease waste across the school site. The photos show 'pasta pot' turtles (all pasta pots currently go in general waste and are incinerated in Exeter) plus the sorting process. A big well done to everyone involved!



## Absence and Holidays In Term Time

Dear All Parents/Carers

We believe that in order for a student to fully benefit from their education, good attendance is crucial. It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement and full attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career.

As of September 2013, an amendment to the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 came in to force and greater clarity was introduced to the issue of schools authorising absence requests. These changes reinforced the Government's view that every minute of every school day is vital and that students should only be granted authorised absences by the school in 'exceptional circumstances'.

A family holiday is not normally considered by the Government to be an 'exceptional circumstance' and therefore will not be authorised by this school.

I must take this opportunity to remind you, that should you choose to take your child out of school without the authorisation of the school, then Parental Responsibility Measures could be instigated. This could mean receiving any of the following;

- A Penalty Notice
- A summons to the Magistrate Court which could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment for up to 3 months.

Schools are required to notify the Local Authority if a student has a number of unauthorised absences. Unauthorised absences can be acquired when;

- Leave has been requested, but the circumstances are such that the school is unable to authorise the leave and it is taken anyway.
- Leave is not requested and/or the school has grounds to believe that the child has been taken out of school for an avoidable reason (example – a family holiday). Only the Head teacher can authorise an absence. This year there have been occasions when schools have been notified that the student is sick, but the school later discovers and reasonably believes that the reason given for the absence is not genuine.
- A child continually arrives late after the registration period has closed.

This school will be notifying the Local Authority in all of the circumstances listed above. Should a Penalty Notice be issued as a result of unauthorised absence then one notice will be issued to each parent/carer for each child involved. Currently, each Penalty Notice is for £120, which is reduced to £60 if paid within the first 21 days. If a Penalty Notice goes unpaid after 28 days, then court proceedings will be initiated.

We understand the disappointment that the refusal of a leave request may cause and we apologise, but as you can appreciate this policy represents the school's responsibility and commitment towards providing your child's education and supporting their future life opportunities. We hope you will support us by ensuring that your son/daughter obtains the maximum benefit from their time at school by attending punctually for the 190 days each year that the law requires (unless prevented from doing so by an unavoidable circumstances).

Thank you for your anticipated support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Mrs F Bowler, Principal



## Year 9 Trip to London

We set off early on Monday morning and our first stop was the Tower of London, followed by a river boat cruise down to Greenwich where we learnt about the history of the River Thames. An early start the next morning took us to Parliament where we visited the House of Commons and the House of Lords, as well as exploring how laws are made during a hands-on workshop. We then crossed the river and some went to the London Dungeons and some visited the Sea Life Centre. We had a very interactive experience at the Dungeons with Mr Ovey being 'volunteered' for a range of torture experiences and a cure of the plague! That night we visited the Cambridge Theatre to see Matilda, which was incredible. On the final day we hit the museums - Natural History Museum, Science Museum and the V&A Museum. Students were free to explore the museums, including the interactive 'Wonderlab' in the Science Museum. Thank you to Mrs Rush, Miss Sayer and Mr Ovey for their support on the trip.



## Non-Uniform Day for JUST ONE Tree Day

On Friday 20th October we had a fantastic JUST ONE Tree Day! Students supported this by having a non-uniform day, and learnt lots about protecting our planet. It was a fun and educational day for all. What's even better is that we were able to raise funds to kick-start our school's forest. Our forest will be creating homes for wildlife, raising rural employment, protecting coastlines, capturing water, cleaning the air we breathe and most importantly tackling climate change. We're so pleased that our school community is having such a positive impact. We will email home soon with the exact amount of money raised - many thanks for your support.





## Football News

A huge well done to Maicee in Year 8 who has signed for Plymouth Argyle. An amazing achievement for her, we are all very proud of her and wish her the very best of luck.

Absolutely thrilled to announce that Leo in Year 10 has taken part in the @england Emerging Talent programme.

The FA hosted four area talent ID trials around the country, with Leo being invited to the U15s South West trials held at the @royalaguni in Cirencester.

Leo is a goalkeeper who represents @brauntonacademyofficial and @only1argyle and we all wish him the very best of luck in his trials over the next few months.



## North Devon Netball Tournament

We say a huge "well done" to the Year 9 girls who won the North Devon Netball tournament at Park school. They played seven games and came out triumphant. They have now qualified for the Devon finals in Paignton.



Sign up Room 17

— Starts Friday November 3rd

Chess Tournament  
**ARE YOU  
READY  
TO WIN?**

