



Pear Tree School

Achieving the Best We Can in Everything We Do

Newsletter

Autumn 1 - 2022

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Introduction

Welcome to the first newsletter of the academic year. The summer holidays now seem a distant memory and our new pupils to school have very quickly and happily adapted to school life. Matilda, Mia, Nancy, Wan Yin, Waisea, Cody, Vinnie and Rehan are all settled and have started building positive relationships with staff and their peers. There has been lots of change for many other children as they moved classes and have re-engaged with their learning in a different environment.

All our children demonstrate huge levels of resilience and myself and the staff have been very impressed by their enthusiasm and love of learning.

Our new School Improvement Plan is available for you to read on the school website and it will demonstrate our whole school priorities for the coming year. A major focus this year is to increase face to face parental involvement. Thank you to so many of you who joined us in our Open Afternoons. I hope it was a great opportunity for you to see your son/daughter in the classroom and observe their interactions. It is also a good way for you to interact with the staff team and witness the different resources we use to aid learning. Our Literacy lead, Craig, also presented a phonics session for parents as part of this afternoon and I know many of you found this very informative. Please remember that if you require more information regarding communication, reading and phonics, you should make contact with the class teacher who will be more than happy to liaise with you on this.

I will be seeking additional ways over the coming year for parents and families to become even more involved in school life and if you have any suggestions as to how this could be improved further, then please let me know.

With the warmest of wishes

Kate



Parents' Evening

Our Annual Parents' Evening will take place this year on Wednesday 9th November. All parents/carers will be offered a face to face appointment during which you will have the opportunity to discuss your son/daughter's progress with the class teacher and TA3/4. More information will be sent out after the half term break and I look forward to seeing many of you there.

Website

You may be aware from Facebook that we are in the process of moving to a new website provider. We love our current website, however, from your feedback prior to the summer break in your questionnaire responses, we have identified a website that will co-ordinate all of our communication so that it can all be accessed in one place. We have some fabulous new photos and a great short film that you will be able to see just as soon as the website goes live. Keep your eyes peeled!

Creative Curriculum - Growth and Change



As part of our Creative Curriculum this half term, classes have been learning all about growth and change! The theme has been incorporated in lessons throughout the school. In Bay Tree class, they have been reading the traditional tale *The Enormous Turnip*. Some pupils have enjoyed reading a sensory story version of the text and have thoroughly enjoyed working on developing their early communication skills. Other pupils have taken part in an active re-telling of the story and have worked on participating and engaging in a story for prolonged periods, carrying out big movements and actions throughout to not only support engagement, but also sensory regulation.

Some pupils have been further exploring the theme as part of their science lessons when learning about Autumn. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed taking part in an attention autism session looking at autumn leaves. Pupils extended their learning by exploring a range of autumn materials, focusing on developing their communication skills in order to communicate simple properties.

In the Compass Centre pupils have really embraced the creative curriculum theme of growth and change. The whole building has been adjusting to change over the half term with the introduction of their enhanced provision. Formal learners have been reading *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, where they have been looking at all of the changes that happened to Harry when he started school at Hogwarts. In the communication cooking session, pupils have been looking at change once more, melting marshmallows and mixing them in with Rice Krispies to make some super delicious marshmallow cakes... but the best change was making them magically disappear from the plate in one big bite!



In Upper School, pupils have been joining in signing along to different folk tales... the pupils favourite was about the witch Baba Yaga. It was really spooky and got us in the mood for Halloween! Pupils' favourite change in the story was when the witch turned the wicked stepmother into a slug! Finally, this half term Elm Tree's science lessons have been electrifying! Pupils have learnt all about electricity and where it comes from. They then created a range of different circuits which they tested by changing the switches and the battery power, noting any changes. Pupils enjoyed making 'carrot bongos' using the Makey Makey to create circuits. It was lots of fun seeing if we could change the circuit to make it flow through more people!

Preparation for adulthood



In the summer, Sixth Form and Compass Centre students, alongside their TA Advocates, worked on understanding which options they wanted to choose for the next academic year. They ranked their options from most preferred to least. The most popular options were selected. For this year, the Sixth Form are running, Horticulture, Community Action, Performing Art and Catering.



Some of the younger students in the 14-19 department are taking part in weekly vocational sessions. This will enable them to be fully informed when it is their time to make an option choice in the Sixth Form.

This half term, in the Community Action group, our students have been donning their hi-vis jackets (and rain macs) and heading out into our local hot spots, and litter picking to help contribute to making our community a safer and cleaner place to live.

Our vocational taster group has been looking at retail, and have successfully identified retail in our local community, explored job roles and even managed to plan and execute a simple retail project. This saw us running a two week special of 'Tricky Treats', a Halloween themed tuck shop, which was very successful. The students worked as a collective, to plan the branding, prepare the stock and delegate job roles, and I'm sure you'll agree by the logo, they did an outstanding job!



Parking

I recently posted on Facebook that the old Social Services building adjacent to school had been purchased privately, and we are no longer able to use the car parking spaces within its grounds. Those of you who bring your child to school each day will observe the amount of traffic on site at that time in the day. Therefore, if you are able to, I would politely request that if you bring your child to school, that you park offsite and walk in. I know that this is not a practical solution for all, and I thank those of you who are able to support us, in order to keep our site as safe as possible.

Good bye and Good luck

One of our Year 14 pupils will be leaving school a bit earlier than planned. Isobel joined Pear Tree in 2007, and has now been presented with the exciting opportunity to move into Supported Living. I know that she will leave a huge gap at Pear Tree and in the Sixth Form, but we all agree that this is exactly the right thing for her and her family, and we all wish her lots of love and luck.

We have a few members of our support staff team who will be sadly leaving us at the end of this half term. Sue O'Malley has been employed at Pear Tree since 1999 and has been a dedicated and passionate member of staff. Sue has now decided to retire from her post, and I will always be so thankful for the intuitive relationships she developed with some of our most complex of learners.

We also have Abbey and Marie (Compass Centre) and Chloe (Pine Tree) leaving us too and we wish them all the very best in the future.



Online Safety – Navigating the digital world with confidence

The online world presents risks and opportunities for all young people and this can mean a careful balancing act for parents and carers.

Keeping up with a changing digital world can be daunting but you do not need to be a technology expert to help your young person stay safe and thrive online.

With access to the Internet available everywhere from phones and tablets to watches and even TVs it's important that at home each device and each website your child uses is as secure as possible.

Here are a few tips and tricks of things you can do at home but if you need any specific help please get in touch and we can support you with this.



Online Parental Controls Steps

Things to Think About

There are two basic things to think about

- ~ Securing the websites
- ~ Securing the devices

1 SECURE THE WEBSITES

Think about the places your child likes to visit on the internet and the things your child likes to do.

~ What sites has your child favored?

You can vet online game servers and only allow your child to play on monitored servers, like AutCraft

Google

Google Safety Center

Go to "Manage Online Content"

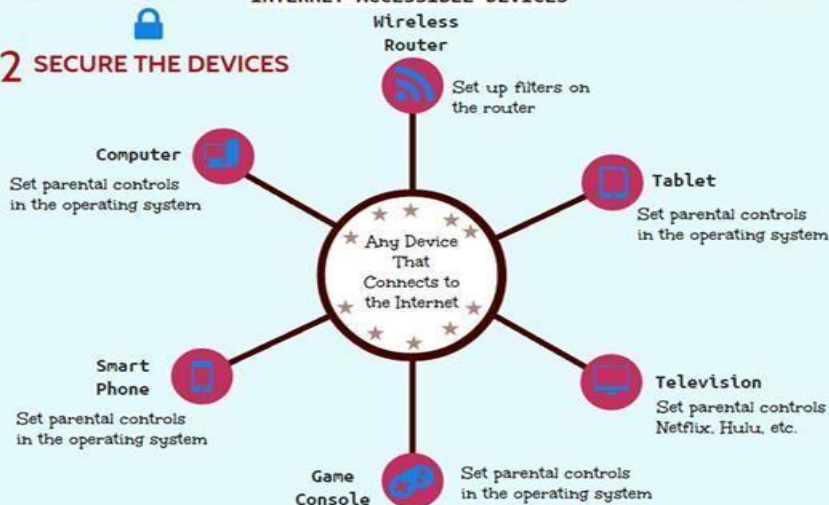
YouTube

Go to "Disable or Enable Safety Mode"

Children on the Autism spectrum, their families and friends can apply to join the Autcraft whitelist

INTERNET ACCESSIBLE DEVICES

2 SECURE THE DEVICES



SET PASSWORDS

Pick a Password with your Child

Something for their specific games online. Choosing their own helps them feel like they have some control. Remind them not to share their passwords with anyone!

Pick a Password for the Device

Set a password that only you know for the devices your child uses - this gives you oversight of how and when they access the device

Pick Passwords for the Sites

Pick passwords for Google, YouTube and other searchable sites that only you know so that parental controls can only be changed by you

TOUCH BASE REGULARLY

Your child's online needs are going to grow with your child

Does your child need more access for school projects?

Is your child ready for more sophisticated videos?

Has your child matured to not needing an access password on the device?

OTHER TIPS



Use the device's timer to control how much screen time your child is getting



Set up a checklist of things your child needs to do before getting screen time



www.Autism-Mom.com



Work with your child to come up with other ideas!

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Dates for diaries

Friday 21 st October	Break up for Half Term Holiday
Monday 31 st October	School re-opens
Wednesday 9 th November	Parents' Evening
Friday 25 th November	Pine Tree Class Assembly
Tuesday 6 th December	Christmas Dinner Day
Monday 12 th December	Lower School Nativity
Tuesday 13 th December	Lower School Nativity
Thursday 15 th December	Christmas Party Day

