



Happy holidays from our LSAs!

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

**Zoe Ramshaw**


December has been such a festive and rich month full of love, learning and laughter. The feeling I have had when walking around the school has been full of happiness and I have seen lots of teamwork. The festive baking and amazing activities have been delightful.

We had our first ever cooked festive lunch this year, cooked by Hayley in the new school kitchen. It was so wonderful to have a whole school meal with singing and music.

We have finished the year with a whole school celebration assembly, where all students were recognised for their efforts and progress this term. We are very proud of all of the achievements this term.

Sadly, we say goodbye to Mel and Ben, but we wish them all the best for their futures. We will miss you.

To all of our families: We wish you all a very restful and peaceful holiday. We look forward to welcoming you all back in the New Year.



“Celebrate endings—  
for they precede new  
beginnings.”

—Jonathan Lockwood  
Huie

# SUBJECT SPOTLIGHTS

## ART

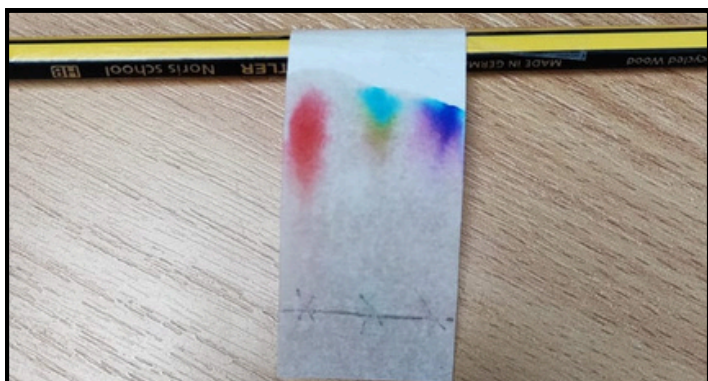
KS3 students made some lovely Christmas trees out of air-drying clay towards the end of term. Some students decided to use the wrap around method painting their tree green and decorating the branches with snow with a glint of silver. Other students made a cone shaped tree painted white making different size holes and hearts and adding gold and silver decorations. They all really enjoyed working in 3 dimension.

A tea light can be added inside the tree for a Christmas effect!



## SCIENCE

### Year 7 Scientists get Creative with Chromatography!



In their Chemistry lessons on Separating Mixtures, our Year 7 students explored the colourful technique of chromatography, learning how to separate and identify dyes in mixtures. Through engaging experiments using skittles and felt-tip markers, students developed their problem-solving and teamwork skills while enjoying hands-on, sensory-rich activities.

These practical tasks not only supported their understanding of key scientific concepts, but also sparked curiosity and enthusiasm for science. The vibrant results of their experiments, captured in the photos, showcase both their learning and creativity. Great work, year 7!

The Science department and the Therapy team



# HOLIDAY SEASON AT OTS

## CHRISTMAS LUNCH AND FESTIVE JUMPER DAY

On December 12th, we celebrated Christmas at OTS. Our Year 9 students were in charge of setting up the dining hall for our Christmas lunch, and they showed amazing teamwork doing so - good job girls! Students enjoyed their lunch made by our Food Tech teacher Hayley (and a couple of eager little helpers) while Anders, our music teacher, led a Christmas sing-a-long. It was lovely seeing everyone coming together to bring the holiday cheer to school!

## FESTIVE BAKING

These past couple of weeks, all students have been doing some festive baking in Food Tech - feast your eyes!





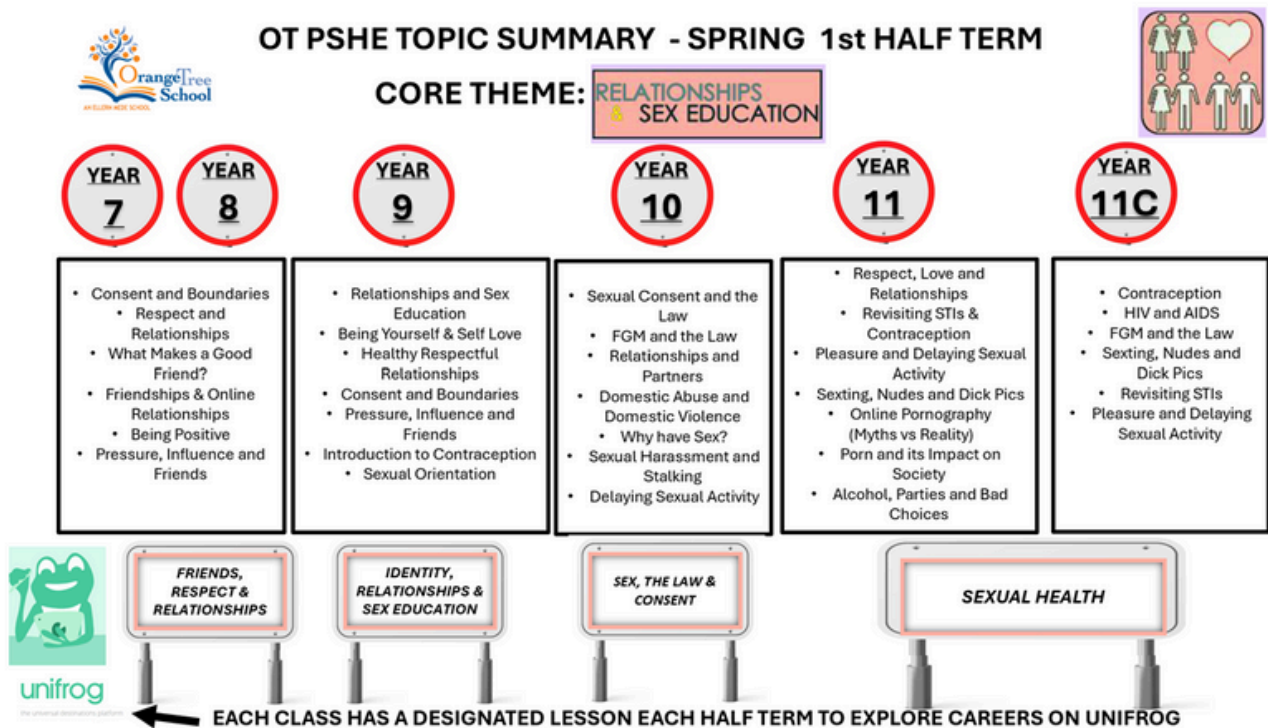
# PSHE UPDATES // STUDYBUGS

## PSHE

As we finish off the theme of 'Health and Wellbeing' our students have learnt about puberty, personal hygiene, self-esteem, and body image. Our Yr11s have looked at some deeper topics such as cancer prevention and suicide.

All the students have been introduced to **Unifrog**, our careers platform and will continue to explore this next term.

We will come back after the holidays to begin our new theme of 'Relationships and Sex Education'. Please see below for a summary of topics being covered and do look at our PSHE and RSHE policies on the school website if you have any questions or concerns or please do get in touch via email to [vicki.marer@orangetreeschool.org](mailto:vicki.marer@orangetreeschool.org)



## STUDYBUGS

We're pleased to announce that OTS is introducing a new, more efficient and secure system for reporting your child's absence due to illness, called **Studybugs**. If you haven't already, please get the free app, or register on the website, and use it to tell us whenever your child's ill and unable to attend school. <https://studybugs.com/about/parents>.

Top 3 reasons to use **Studybugs**:

1. It's integrated with our systems so we know right away if your child is unaccounted for.
2. It's quick and easy to register and use and automatically reminds you to keep us posted.
3. You'll be helping the NHS and other public health organisations improve children's health. (<https://studybugs.com/about/schools>)

# TRIPS AND UPCOMING CHANGES

## YEAR 7 TRANSPORT MUSEUM TRIP

On December 16th, our Year 7 students went on a reward trip to the London Transport Museum. We explored exhibitions detailing London's transport history dating from the 19th Century to present day. It was very interesting seeing how much our city has changed in just 200 years! Students had a great time exploring the exhibits and taking pictures on the buses and trains. After lunch, we went to the gift shop and purchased some souvenirs. It was an amazing day!



## SPRING TERM THERAPY TRIPS

Starting in January, Year 10 students will replace Year 7 and 8 for skiing - 10A and 10B will alternate weekly. KS3 (Y7, 8 and 9) will replace Year 10 for Wild About the Woods. We are looking forward to seeing our students try new things and gain new skills! So far, our students have really enjoyed their trips - and will miss working with such kind staff. Here is a commemoration of how much fun Year 7s and 8s had at the Snow Centre!

## LUNCHTIME CLUBS

Starting on Spring Term, we will introduce new lunchtime clubs: Pathfinders, Origami, Nature Based Crafts, and Wellbeing! The **wellbeing club** is returning on Thursday, the 9th of January, at 13:25! Students have had a chance to share what they would like to engage in during the wellbeing club next year, and the majority has chosen arts and crafts. Up until the February half term, everyone will get to complete one project: either paint by numbers, crystal art, or embroidery!

During the second winter half term, students will be able to partake in a different activity every week, ranging from boardgames to quizzes, treasure hunts and more!





# IMPORTANT DATES

## Orange Tree School's 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:**  
**DDSL KS4:**  
**DDSL KS3:**

## ORANGE TREE VALUES

Optimistic  
Ready to Learn  
Achievement  
Nice and kind  
Good listening  
Effort

Team work  
Respectful  
Engagement  
Empathy and Acceptance

## JANUARY 6TH

*Staff inset  
School closed to students*

## JANUARY 7TH

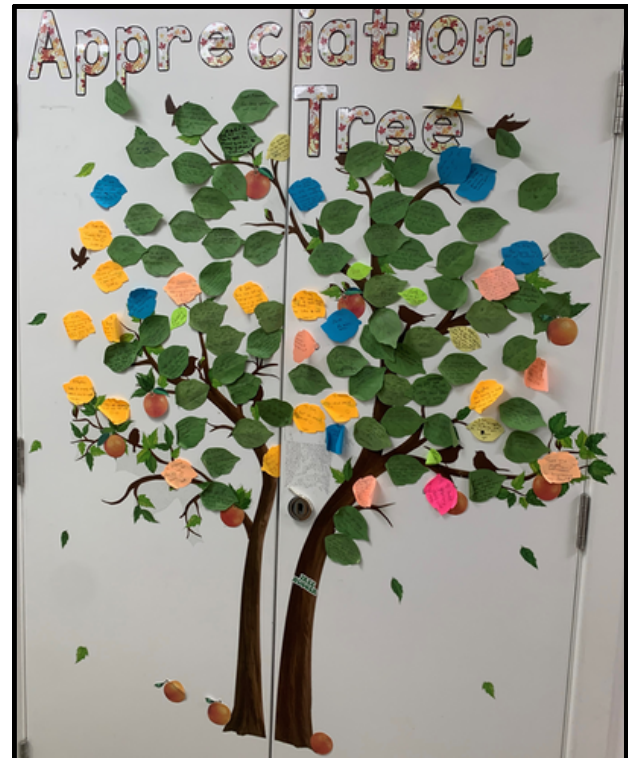
*First day of Spring Term  
(10:30 Start except for  
Year 11s taking Number  
and Measure exam)*

## APPRECIATION LEAF OF THE MONTH

Each Month we will have an appreciation tree winner by picking a leaf at random from our Appreciation Tree. This month, the winner is Niayme.

Her leaf said: "Thank you for bringing this magical voice to school!"

Thank you Niayme, we hope you like your appreciation gift!



## General Resources and links:

### Podcast for parents of students with PDA

<https://feeds.captivate.fm/pda-parents/>

### BBC article on school avoidance

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cpq9dgv138wo>

### Article about being a young person with Selective Mutism

[Selective Mutism: 'I struggle to talk but dream of being on stage' - BBC News](#)