

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

Zoe Ramshaw

*"The journey of a  
thousand miles begins  
with one step."  
Lao Tzu*

Welcome to our first ever monthly newsletter. We do so many different events and ways of learning at Orange Tree that we wanted to share it with parents. November has been a very busy and exciting month which has included new extra-curricular clubs, some very exciting assemblies and fun but meaningful events, which I have loved going around and seeing the students involvement; some are much braver than I am.

In this newsletter you can read more about the dissection afternoon in science, our new fish keeping club, our PSHE and Social learning updates as well as learn about how we embraced anti-bullying week.

Next month is equally busy including year 11 mock assessments, we will be putting the Christmas tree up, we will be holding our annual Macmillan fundraising event and many other things to look forward to. So please do help us by making sure that your child is in school every day and don't forget they can enjoy a healthy breakfast between 8.50 and 9.05 if they would like to join us.

# SUBJECT SPOTLIGHT: SCIENCE

“So stomach-churning yet I couldn’t turn away” and “what a fun and exciting afternoon” were just some of the comments around the dissection afternoon that took place this month. Students were given the opportunity to dissect cow and sheep hearts, sheeps’ kidneys and a whole sheep’s head with intact organs. After they put on their aprons and gloves, listened carefully to the techniques used in dissection and of course the health and safety aspects, they literally got ‘stuck in’.



It was a joy to see our students so engaged and willing to learn despite their fears surrounding blood and gore! They took this opportunity to enjoy learning about the processes that we have covered in biology and even had selfies with the sheep’s head!

## LUNCHTIME CLUBS

Our fishkeepers at OTS have been very busy; we learnt how to keep the glass of the tank clean, we did a water test to make sure the water has safe levels of bacteria for the fish to live in, and we even tried our hand at some fish photography! We also did the very important job of naming our fish! Meet: Mr. Goldie, Popcorn, Carrot and KFC! Well done!



### Lunchtime Clubs

#### Monday

Crochet/ Running club

#### Tuesday

Fishkeeping/Puzzle Club

#### Wednesday

Art Club/ Running club

#### Thursday

Gardening Club

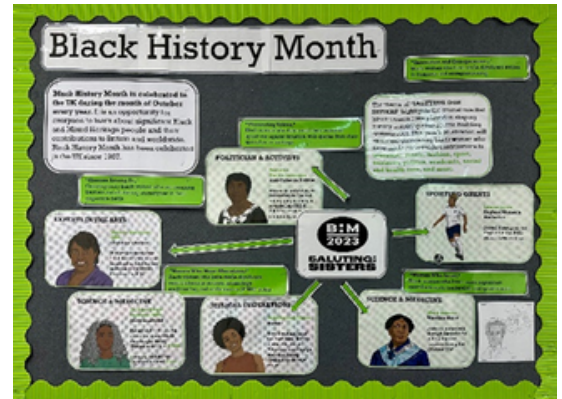
#### Friday

Touch-typing/ Running club

# PSHE AND SOCIAL LEARNING UPDATES

## Black History Month

The theme this year was 'Saluting our Sisters' and at OTS we celebrated the crucial role that black women have played in shaping history, inspiring change, and building communities. During October we looked at and highlighted the work of pioneering black women who have made remarkable contributions to literature, fashion, sport, politics, academia, and more. We even enjoyed some popcorn watching lunchtime screening on Hidden Figures shining light on Kathryn Johnson and the fantastic women of NASA.



## Social Learning

This term our students have been working together to build some older lego models, using a lego therapy task. They have been using their language skills to give complex instructions to each other, to take turns, to ask for help when needed, and to solve problems together as they arise. Photos of the finished lego projects in later issues! We have also been exploring the Zones of Regulation approach. This approach aims to validate all feelings, and help students identify their zone of feeling, assess the size of the problem, and identify strategies that support them to manage their feelings when they feel a bit too intense.

## Anti-Bullying Week

During ANTI BULLYING WEEK Orange Tree School MADE SOME NOISE about bullying and really thought about the differences between banter and bullying in PSHE and Assembly time.

On Wednesday we celebrated Odd Socks Day having some fun encouraging people to express themselves and celebrate their individuality and what makes us all unique!



## Upcoming themes

**PSHE:** Relationships and Sex Education.

**Social Learning:** Understanding different social situations;  
Developing emotional understanding and vocabulary;  
Nuances of language.

# IMPORTANT DATES

**Monday, 4th December 2023**

**Mock exams begin**

Year 11 students take their first mock exams.

**Monday, 5th December 2023**

**OTS Unity Afternoon**

Students and staff to do activities promoting the values of love, diversity, peace and kindness.

**Wednesday, 6th December 2023**

**Year 11 communication day**

School closed to students. Appointments for parents communication.

**Wednesday, 20th December 2023**

**MacMillan Cake Afternoon**

From 1pm to 3pm, parents are invited to join and attend a session with PSHE and therapy teams.

**Thursday, 21st December 2023**

**Last day of term**

Early finish at 1:00 pm.

**Monday, 8th January 2024**

**Inset day**

School closed to students,

**Tuesday, 9th January 2024**

**Start of the term**

Late start at 10:30 am.

## SAFEGUARDING TIP

National Online Safety believes in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information they need to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on the Minecraft platform. Please visit [www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com) for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

**National Online Safety**  
#WakeUpWednesday

### Safety Tips for Parents

- BLOCK STRANGERS AND UNWANTED CONTACT**  
Despite the fact that private messages can no longer be sent in the game, strangers may still attempt to interact with your child. From the passive mines, players can block chat and limit responses from others in the game. This causes any perpetrators, email addresses and phone numbers to become automatically blocked, meaning it's harder for anyone you don't know to potentially contact your child.
- LEARN FROM YOUTUBERS / TWITCH STREAMERS**  
There are a lot of Minecraft focused YouTubers and Twitch Streamers that offer a huge variety of fun, engaging content. Many of these focus on making videos specifically for younger audiences, which don't include too language or anything scary if you're unsure about the particular content, ask your child's teacher and more importantly, ask who your child's favourite YouTuber or Twitch Streamer is and what they can do to help you understand what the game is about and also make sure that your children are watching age appropriate content online.
- PLAY IN CREATIVE OR PEACEFUL MODES**  
Playing the game on Creative or Peaceful mode ensures that the experience is mostly safe. Peaceful mode allows children to explore with friends without having the constant threat of being attacked by monsters, while Creative mode allows imaginations to run wild with unlimited resources, unobstructed flight and no death. There really are no 'to do' lists or 'to do' lists, so you can be as creative as you want to be. It's a great way to bond with your child and give you a long term project to complete with them.
- MONITOR GAME TIME**  
Being able to play on a wide variety of platforms can be beneficial however it can also make it more difficult to put the game down. Play time should be monitored and it's always a good idea to talk to your child if you feel they are spending too much time on the game or showing signs of addictive behaviour.
- CREATE A PRIVATE SERVER**  
The best way to avoid unwanted strangers or grievers in a server is to simply create your own. Private servers do exactly what they say on the tin by offering a safe, secure place for children to play and interact with their friends, free from outside play. Parents can also create their own server and set up a whitelist of people they can play with. This is the closest thing Minecraft offers to parental controls.
- LEARN TO PLAY YOURSELF**  
Minecraft is an incredibly easy game to pick up and play. Furthermore, it doesn't require an expensive console or computer, with versions available for smartphones and tablets. Learning to play yourself and play with friends is the best way to understand the game and will help to put your mind at ease in respect of what your child is viewing and who they may be interacting with.

**CREATE SERVER WHITELISTS**  
Sometimes you know to be safe, like your child's friends or relatives, can have their accounts whitelisted as safe. Essentially, this means that server moderators can create a community made up of people they know to be friendly and children will only be playing alongside people both they and you know, reducing any risk of contact with strangers or experiencing griefing.

**Meet our expert**  
Mark Foster has worked in the gaming industry for 5 years as a writer, editor and presenter. He is the current gaming editor of two of the biggest gaming news sites in the world, LINEAD Gaming and GAMINGLIFE. Starting gaming from a young age with his siblings, he has a passion for understanding how games and tech work, but more importantly, how to make them safe and fun.

## USEFUL RESOURCES

### **Autism Level UP!**

<https://www.autismlevelup.com/#tools>

### **Beyond autism**

<https://www.beyondautism.org.uk/blog/>

### **Making friends**

<https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/information-about-autism/preparing-for-adulthood/making-friends-as-autistic-young-person>

Website dedicated to raising autism awareness, appreciation and acceptance. Offers tools for communication, regulation, etc.

Blog telling stories from people with autism, their families, and the people who work with them.

Blog post offering advice on how to make friends as a young autistic person. Covers tips regarding meeting new people, starting conversations and maintaining friendships.