

Ancora House School

Newsletter

December 2023

Merry Christmas!

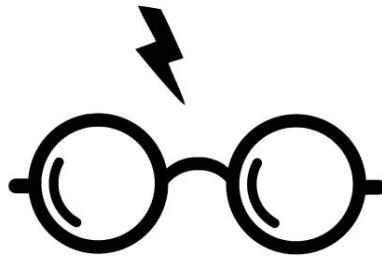
Hello from everyone at Ancora House School. It has been a packed Autumn term here at Castle Park, with the young people getting involved in lots of different activities. PE has continued every Friday afternoon with Mike from Vara Sports. Learners have played football, badminton and table tennis, to name a few. Our Education Transitions Worker has taken some of our year 10s and 11s to careers fairs and to visit various colleges over the course of this term, supporting learners to plan for their future after their GCSEs. Our Post-16 group has grown this year and have been taking part in various activities to promote life and social skills, as well as academic lessons. Passion for Learning have provided a wonderful opportunity to visit their Imaginarium on a weekly basis, as well as cooking us a lovely Christmas Dinner! Learners have been taking part in work experience at Frodsham Manor School, and with CEPD at Guilden Sutton School. This has been invaluable for building skills and confidence. A range of learners have also been attending Spirit of the Herd for wellbeing sessions. These sessions have supported the young people in ways that we can't in the school building. Two of our year 10 learners are also involved in the Storyhouse Young Leaders project again this year and have been enjoying attending there every Wednesday afternoon. To celebrate Christmas approaching, we had a Wear Something Christmassy Day on 7th December in aid of Save the Children. We also have a Christmas Tree at Chester Cathedral, so please go along and have a look! Finally, all the staff at Ancora House School would like to wish you a happy holiday. Thank you for all your support and we look forward to seeing the young people back in school on Monday 8th January.

Life at Ancora...

Whether you're temporary or full time at Ancora House all students are treated equally here at Ancora. This school is recommended for children who need a calmer, more relaxed area and curriculum to learn. We can also add once-a-week outings to the Spirit of the Herd which is a sanctuary where students enjoy grooming and pampering rescue ponies. Every Friday, if you want to, we all go to the Frodsham Brio Centre. PE is another example of a calming curriculum as you can do anything you like E.g: basketball badminton table tennis football and curling. Also, we have wellbeing where children can explain any worries if they would like to play games, do jigsaw puzzles or just chill in your wellbeing time. Written by one of our young people, age 12.



Harry Potter



Harry Potter Day

On the 12th of October, Ancora Hub hosted our annual Harry Potter Day, with students and staff alike dressing up in costumes for the occasion, mirroring their favourite character. Lessons were tweaked to contain a Harry Potter style task, from potions in Science to creating a spell in English.

Harry Potter is considered a phenomenon; a series that attempts to cater for everyone. From romance, to action, adventure, magic, friendship, school experiences, eclectic families, sport, mortality and humour. It is also peppered with mystery and horror! JK Rowling has amalgamated all of the above elements to make a rather believable story, particularly for those who crave escapism and/or who wish an alternate world existed.

Why is this? Particularly when most young people would rather watch a film than read a book. Harry Potter is such an action-packed story that it motivates and spurs young people along so they willingly tackle words, sentences, and paragraphs that by any other measure would be above their readability level. When a young person reads text, they practise decoding, learn to read with less effort and with expression (what reading specialists call fluency), and are more likely to want to read more.

Tips for reading at home:

Select a text that can be a shared experience, whether that be football newspaper articles or air fryer recipes- all reading counts!

Reading begins with decoding words with ease. *The Five Finger Test can help determine whether a child is able to successfully read the book independently.

Books grow with readers. Rereading books offers opportunities for greater insight and practice with reading text fluently.

Asking questions about the story can help adults determine whether a child comprehends what he or she reads.

*Reading the first page of a book, hold up one finger for every word they don't know or can't pronounce. The number of fingers they're holding up by the end of the page tells them if the book is the right level:

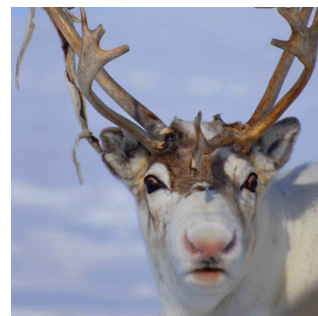
0-1 fingers: It's too easy.

2-3 fingers: It's just right.

4-5 fingers: It's too hard (or best read aloud with a buddy).

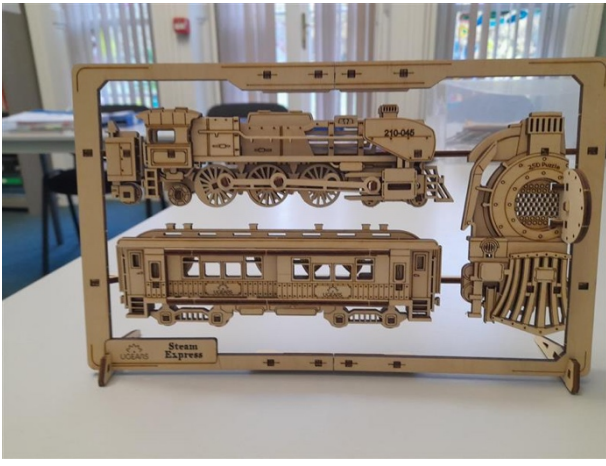
Is it possible to have a red nosed reindeer?

Some reindeer really do have a red nose because of more blood vessels in their nose. Scientists discovered this when comparing the noses of reindeer and human volunteers. They found that reindeer have 25% more blood vessels in their noses. When they exercise their noses become warmer to help the reindeer to regulate their temperature. This can make their nose look red at times.



Music lessons with Passion for Learning...

Passion for learning deliver weekly music sessions here at CP. One pupil said she hadn't had music lessons before but she's really enjoying them. Stuart is fun to chat to, patient and teaches me really well. He shows me different ways to learn and I can tell I'm improving.



Wellbeing

Many of our young people engage in well-being activities of their choice. Jewellery making, jigsaws and puzzles are some of their favourites!

Christmas bakes!



Baking - Christmas is coming early to Ancora, we've been baking Christmas biscuits for the staff and pupils to try and next time we'll be making mince pies and cupcakes. The staff like sampling what the pupils have made, especially on a Friday afternoon!

Helping rescued ponies recover, rehabilitate and find new homes. Come and visit!



Spirit of the Herd

Spirit of the herd is a sanctuary for rescued ponies. Every week students have the opportunity to go and pamper ponies and horses. If your child likes the opportunity, then you can book personal pampers and birthday parties at spirit of the herd. There are lots of fields you may visit with lots of ponies included. Spirit of the herd also gives children the opportunity to be themselves. Even though some may think horses are dangerous and unsafe creatures, your child will always be safe around the horses.



Ancroa Christmas lunch



Staff and students were treated to a delicious Christmas lunch from the kind staff at Passion for Learning. Everyone at Ancora would like to say a massive THANK YOU to Diane, Sue, Kirsty, Louise and Ben for their kindness, their generosity and for bringing Christmas cheer to us all.

Sport at Ancora



Quite a few pupils of all ages from Ancora House visit the leisure centre each week. We go into the large sports hall, and we can take part in football, badminton, curling, shoot some hoops or table tennis. We all enjoy going to the leisure centre and we all have a go at the different things on offer. Staff also join in too, which is a great way to get to know them better. We have a young coach called Mike who encourages us and supports us with the activities.

All of the sports are a great way to have fun, laugh, stay fit and make friends while exercising. I find that team sports and activities are good at keeping me motivated and helps to have the support of staff and the other pupils around me.



Work Experience

Several of our young people carry out work experience in various settings including local schools. "I have been doing my work experience at a local Primary school. I do a variety of sports with the children. At the moment we are doing basketball and body management. The children learn to work as a team and to enjoy the sports.

I enjoy doing this type of work experience as I am a sporty person, and it builds my confidence and skill".

Year 11 student.

[Tomorrow's Women Wirral \(tomorrowwomen.org.uk\)](http://tomorrowwomen.org.uk)

We are a charity for women, run by women, offering support with a range of issues including domestic abuse, mental health, substance misuse, wellbeing & confidence, and social isolation.

We have a vision to support and empower women and girls from all backgrounds, facing any personal issues, to live equal and fulfilled lives.

If you need support and want to make positive changes in your life, Tomorrow's Women are here for you.



Instagram account to support ASC learners can be found at: [autism_happy_place](https://www.instagram.com/autism_happy_place)





Post 16 News

Our Post 16 group have settled in really well this term, making new friends, working as a team and accessing a varied and personalised curriculum.

As well as our academic studies, we have been working on Digital Skills, learning about digital footprints and e-safety for our Prince's Trust Award.

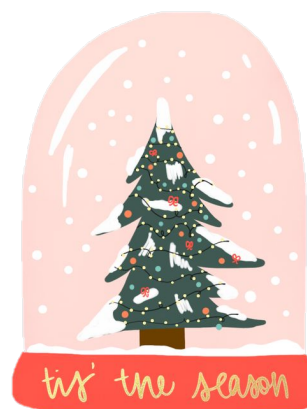
We've had some great cooking sessions – from samosas to school cake and fudge (we have a few sweet teeth in the group!)

Our Halloween themed hot chocolates were a true winner too!

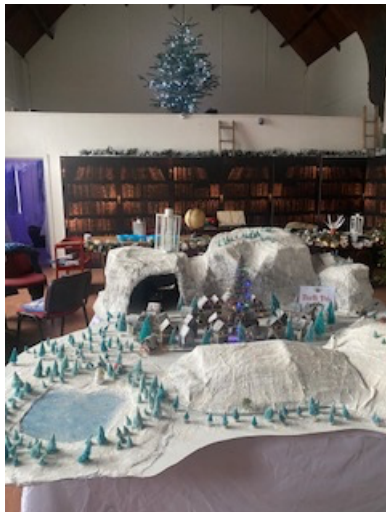
If you are in Chester over Christmas, get into the festive spirit and pop into the Cathedral to see the Christmas Tree Festival. We have decorated a tree with the theme of sustainability using dried oranges, salt dough and recycling sheets of music paper – it's quite beautiful!

We have had an additional furry member to our Post 16 group (a very well-behaved rabbit!) who has brought lots of smiles and laughter to the whole school. One of our Post 16 students have created an information sheet and poster around rabbit behaviour and have then explained this to others both staff and students around the school. Have you ever heard of a rabbit binkying before?

Interview skills is another skill we have been looking at – well done for the professionalism! This will really help when we start looking at work experience too in the New Year.



Visit to the Imaginarium !



Many of our students enjoyed weekly visits to the Imaginarium, provided by Passion for Learning.

Transitions Update

This term has definitely been a busy one! We've had a number of visits to different colleges to get a feel for campus life and find out more about the courses and support available. The next steps and thoughts of college can be a daunting prospect for students, therefore supported visits can be a positive step in the transition process. There are Open Events at local colleges available in the months leading up to GCSEs, which provide an opportunity for families to visit and gain more information about the courses of interest. More information can be found on the college websites.

The next open evening event for Cheshire College (CCSW) is on 11th January at all three campuses. <https://www.ccsw.ac.uk/events/open-evening-11-january/>

The next open day event for Reaseheath College is on Saturday 13th January.

<https://www.reaseheath.ac.uk/college-course-open-event-13-january/>

Coleg Cambria also offer accessible open events to support neurodiverse students. Their next events are in March and April.

<https://www.cambria.ac.uk/events/accessible-open-event-deeside-deeside-sixth/>

<https://www.cambria.ac.uk/events/accessible-open-event-northop/>

Applications are now open for Year 11 students to apply. If any student needs support with this, please just get in touch. rachael.birdsey@ancora.cheshire.sch.uk.

The following links provide information and advice to parents/carers about supporting young people with their next steps.

https://www.livewell.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/Information/Information_Webinars_Progressions_to_Employment

<https://www.talkingfutures.org.uk/>

Jane Forgham, from the Young People's Service is our appointed Career Advisor and will be visiting school regularly next term to meet with our Year 11 students in supporting next steps. She will also attend review meetings for our students. Jane can be contacted on jane.forgham@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Parents & Carers of Children and Young People with SEND.

Your child/young person doesn't need to have a diagnosis to access the PCF.



Parent Carer Forum
Cheshire West & Chester

2023-2024

The aim of the PCF...

- Be the voice of as many parents/carers as possible
- Influence decisions about gaps in services
- Provide info & signposting to Professionals and Voluntary Organisations
- Co-produce improvements to SEND services.

In-Person Events

2023

Wed 22 Nov, 10:00am - 02:00pm
Vicars Cross Golf Club, Chester

SEN Team
Attendance & Exclusion

Alternative Provision - What is it

2024

Wed 7 Feb, 10:00am - 02:00pm
Hartford Golf Club, Hartford

Live Well - Meet the professionals who support your child

Mental Health Services Update

Wed 22 May, 10:00am - 02:00pm
Holiday Inn, Ellesmere Port

Preparation to Adulthood
Supported Internships - What happens when my EHCP ceased?

Social care - Supported Living/Direct Payments

Transitioning to Adulthood services



Virtual Events

2023

Wed 11 Oct, 10:30am - 11:30am

Where do I go for support?

IASS

Carers Trust

2024

Wed 20 March, 10:30am - 11:30am

Short Breaks and Wrap around care update.

ETOS - Education other than at School -
What is it?

July - Date TBC

AGM

2023 Parent Carer Survey results

Coffee Events



2023-24

Schools, Charities, etc.

List of dates will be on our website,
new dates added throughout the year.

Check our website for more information, previous events,
or watch again on our YouTube channel.

To book any of our events or for more information,
scan the QR code, or visit our website.

www.pcfcheshirewest.org

