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Welcome from Jenny Nimmo, Principal



Dear Parents and Carers,

I would firstly like to wish you and your families a restful half term, and hope that with the crisp autumnal days ahead, you are able to benefit from the milder temperatures as we lead up to Halloween. It is always important for our students, staff, and respective families to have time to “recharge the batteries” and have time to spend together. I am aware that many of our young people will be celebrating Halloween or are looking forward to attending Halloween related events, therefore can I remind you of the guidance published by Northamptonshire that supports our young people having a good evening and staying safe [Halloween 2021 - Northamptonshire Neighbourhood Alert](#).

It has been another busy term at Potterspury Lodge, we have welcomed no fewer than eight new students to the school this term, and have enjoyed getting to know each young person as an individual. All are making great progress in the residential and education settings, and it is a pleasure to witness each individual grow in confidence each day with us. Thank you to our students and staff for making each new student feel very welcome.

This term has also marked the start of our new curriculum at each Key Stage which is based on student, parent, and staff voice, mandatory components such as the Independent School Standards and Ofsted standards, and our pathway to adulthood components. You will be able to read and see some of the hard work of our staff and young people on the following pages of the newsletter. You will also be able to read about our new sensory room.

It has been a real highlight for me accompanying a number of visitors around the site this term including prospective parents/local authority representatives/and Cambian stakeholders (including the national managing director) to see the curriculum in action. GCSE Psychology, GCSE Statistics, Horticulture, SALT sessions at KS3, Forest School, and Friday Enrichment sessions based on student voice (eg – coding, gym sessions, rock climbing, and role play games known as RPG) are just some of the new options on our busy curriculum for the 2021/2022 academic year.

On Thursday, 21st October we were visited by nurses from the Northamptonshire Public Health SAIS Team to administer the first doses of the COVID vaccine to our students who, after consent from families, opted to have the vaccine. Any parent/carer who wishes for their child to receive the vaccine can book an appointment over half term through the following link: [NHS England » NHS opens online COVID-19 vaccination bookings for 12-15 year olds](#) or by calling 119.

I have also included with this newsletter a letter sent to all Headteachers and Principals today for parents/carers, from the Director of Public Health in Northamptonshire. The letter addresses the rising rate of COVID in Northamptonshire, testing over half term, and general advice about the vaccine and other Covid related matters.

Please can I ask that any positive cases that arise over half term are emailed directly to me (jenny.nimmo@cambiagroup.com) so that I can keep abreast of all COVID matters, I shall respond to any COVID related matters immediately.

The new half term starts on Monday, 1st November, we look forward to seeing our students next week.



Primary Update:

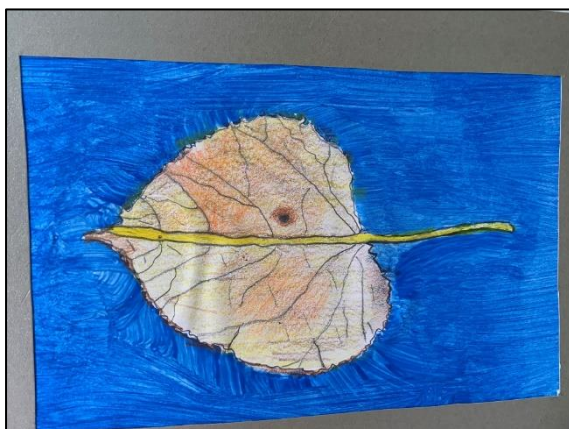
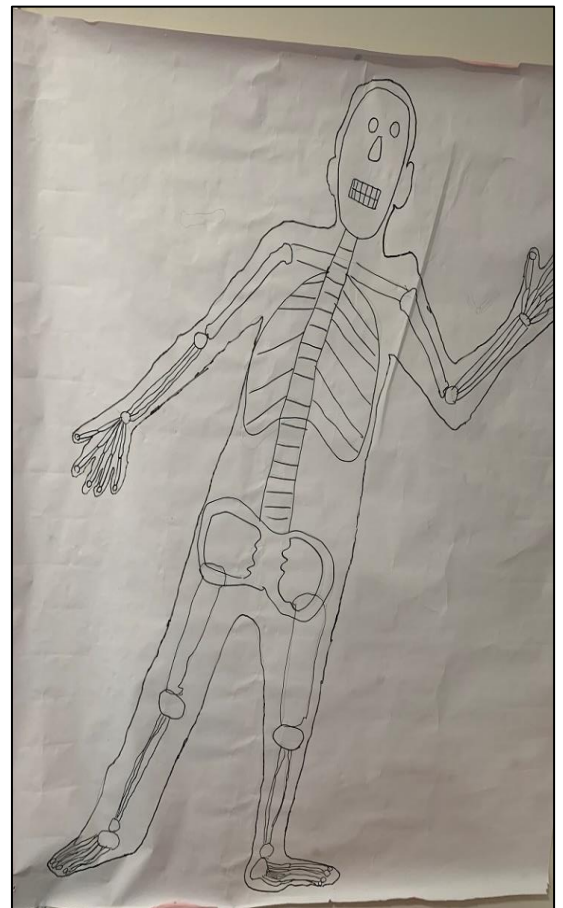
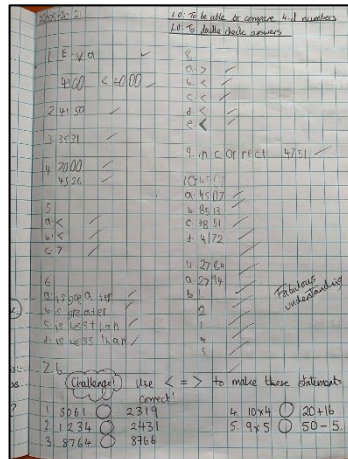
In the KS2 department we have had a very busy start to the school year and enjoyed looking at a wide range of topics across many subject areas.

In English we have been looking at Roald Dahl and in particular we have been focussing our studies on Charlie and The Chocolate Factory. Through looking at this book we have been able to complete instructional writing, diaries, and fictional writing. We are also planning a school visit to the Roald Dahl Museum after October Break.

In Mathematics we have been looking at Place Value, Addition and Subtraction. As well as learning or recapping the basic strategies we have also been applying these concepts to 'Real-Life'.

As part of our Topic curriculum we have been looking 'Extreme Earth!' Here we have focused on how the Earth is 'made up' as well as looking at different natural disasters-WE even experienced an earthquake in class!

Scientifically we have been 'spooked out' as we have been studying bones-for both humans and animals. This has including learning scientific names for each bone compared to the common bone names that we usually use-It has been mandible dropping to say the least!



Next term we look forward to studying Rainforests, States of Matter, European Art and Artists, The Nativity and we are also going to brave - improving our recorder playing skills!

Subject Updates:

Maths:

The new academic year has gotten off to a great start in the maths department with every student developing and strengthening their knowledge in the relevant topics they have been studying. A particular mention needs to go to Mr Mackey's Year 8 class who have been working very hard and recalling complex pieces of information regarding the method for dividing fractions. Let's hope this continues for all the groups for the rest of this year.



English:

What an exciting year for the English department! Our Year 11s have stolen the show, as they are getting ready for both their Literature and Language GCSEs in the summer, despite all the uncertainty they faced last year. They deserve nothing less than our utmost commendation for knuckling down in their final year of GCSE studies. Our Year 10s are just beginning this journey, exploring for what the English Language papers entail: structural and language analysis and creative writing. Key Stage 3 are finishing off their poetry units with their end-of-unit assessments coming up next week, and have been honing their language analysis skills with a hard focus on Spelling and Grammar. After half-term, they will be looking at canon literature, namely Beowulf, Don Quixote or The Odyssey: exciting, challenging classics!



Psychology:

New to Potterspurty Lodge School, Psychology is a GCSE option for our students, further expanding our curriculum. This first half term, students have focused on Social Psychology, looking at obedience, conformity and prosocial behaviour. It has been fantastic watching our students apply what they know about group dynamics to their daily lives. We have now started exploring memory, considering different models and learning about the different types of encoding and retrieval. Excellent information that can be applied to all revision and learning!



ICT:

In ICT this Half Term the Year 10 and 11 students have been working towards their OCR Cambridge National ICT qualification and have been designing websites and using ICT to create business solutions.



Key Stage 3 students have been working on their Functional Skills programs with the Year 8s and 9s working on understanding and inputting solutions that include statistical functions working on Microsoft Office software applications

Food:

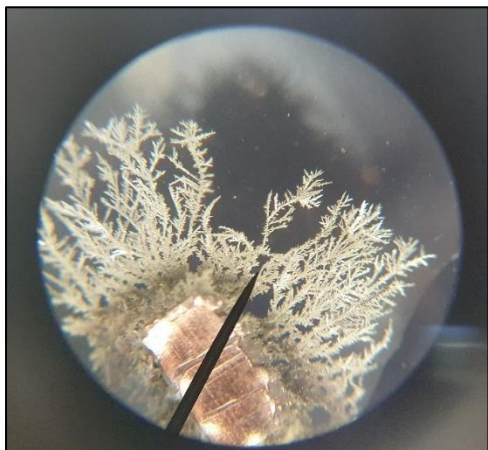
This half term in Food and Cookery the Year 10 and Year 11 students have been creating French cuisine in their practical lessons and have made sauces, such as hollandaise and bearnaise from scratch. They have applied their theoretical learning for their NCFE Food and Cookery qualification, focusing on personal and environmental hygiene practices and hazard awareness successfully in their practical lessons.



The Year 7s have been learning about the Eat Well Guide and what constitutes healthy eating, as well as looking at nutritional values between different foods. They have created healthy, nutritionally balanced dishes including vegetable crumble and a couscous salad.

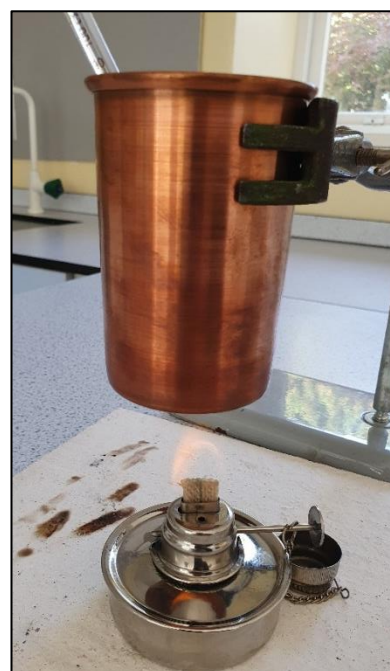
Science:

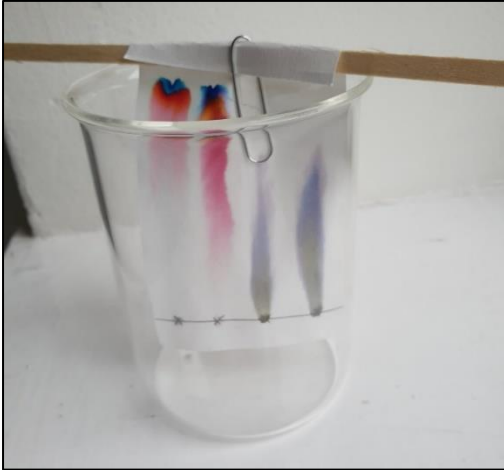
The new term has seen a flurry of practical work in Science lessons.



Year 7 students have used microscopes to observe cells and silver crystals.

Year 8 students have carried out some chemical reactions, such as burning fuels, decomposing copper carbonate and a range of exothermic and endothermic reactions.



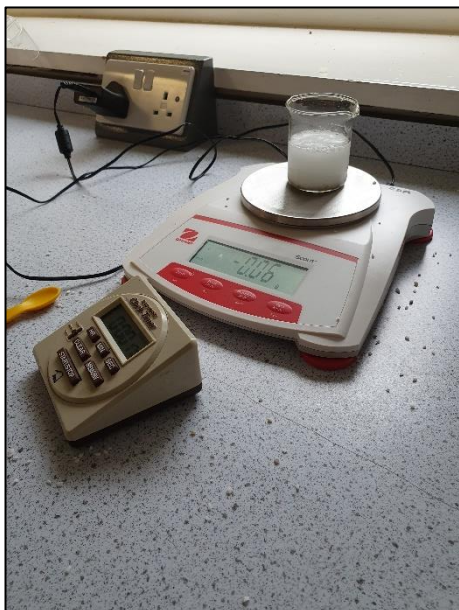


Year 9 students started the GCSE course and have separated mixtures by chromatography, filtration and crystallisation, and have investigated energy transfers in a range of devices.

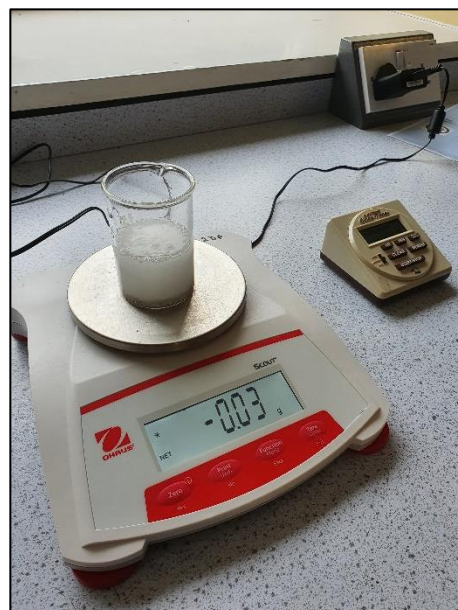
Year 10 students progressed through the GCSE course. They have performed a range of tests to identify proteins, fats, sugar and starch in different foods and have investigated the effect of pH on the digestion of starch.



Some Year 11 students continued with their GCSE studies and viewed the stomata from the underside of a leaf under the microscope.



The rest of Year 11 continued with their Entry Level course, investigating how various factors affect the rate of reaction.



Head of Year Update:

Key Stage 3:

Over the past term we have seen many new students join the KS3 group; as their Head of Year I am delighted to say each and every one of them has had an amazing start to the school year and they should all be so proud of their positive transition into PLS. Within tutor time all KS3 students have taken part in Jeans for Genes Day, Recycling Week and Roald Dahl week. They have produced some outstanding Recycling posters for the competition. Next term we are looking forward to taking part in Children in Need day where we will be planning some fun activities for all year groups to join in - Miss Harvey

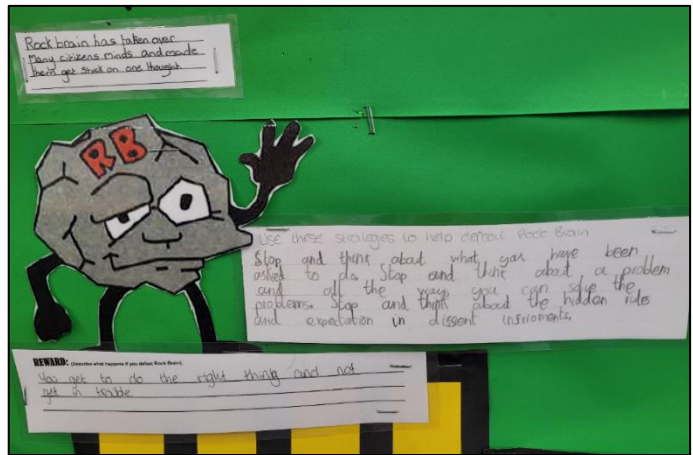
Key stage 4:

It has been a lovely first term back working with the students in key stage 4, they have settled back into the routine at PLS and have made some great progress already. The atmosphere in lessons has been lovely, students hard at work, engaging with teachers and asking some great questions. Over the past term the students have realised that these two years are important and all the effort they put in now will help them in the future. I look forward to working with the students in key stage 4 on their continued journey to gain their qualifications. – Miss Rock

Clinical Update:

Social Thinking:

Our Primary, Yr 7 and Yr 8 students are all been learning about 'Superflex and the Unthinkables' this year. Superflex is a social superhero who helps the residents of Social Town to think flexibly and defeat the Unthinkables, a bunch of baddies who aim to influence thoughts and actions to stop people from achieving their best. So far this term, the students have learned about Rock Brain, who makes people get stuck on one idea, and strategies to defeat Rock Brain and become Superflex themselves.



Occupational Therapy Service:

Our New Sensory Space

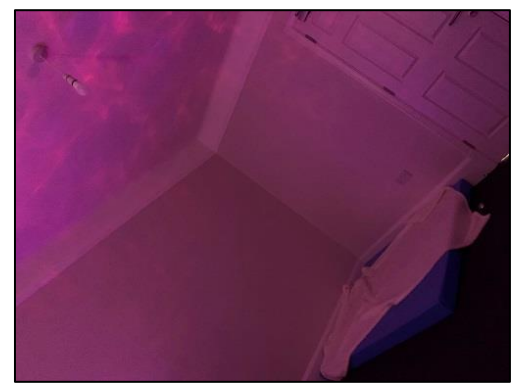
I am absolutely thrilled to introduce you all to our new underwater-themed Sensory Space at Potterspurly! Our brief was quite simple – to create a space where the students could access sensory feedback to help them focus better in class and regulate their emotions and energy.

Collaboratively, we have managed to create a sensory room that both calms the senses and lifts arousal levels (depending on their mood!) so our children can quickly re-join their peers.

I have delivered training to all our staff, so they know how to support the children to use autogenic relaxation strategies, mindfulness and breathing techniques in times of stress or anxiety.

Now we have the bare bones of our Sensory Space, we can begin to add some texture, fishy accessories, bubbles and lots of comfy cushions!

The children are mesmerised by our jellyfish tank, which slowly changes colour as the jellyfish float around the water. So far, we've really enjoyed pretending to be sharks or jellyfish and have even mastered our shadow puppet skills using the wave and ripple projector.



Staff Update:

At the end of term we are always sorry to bid goodbye to members of staff who are moving onto pastures new. We would like to thank them all for their dedication and commitment to Potterspurty Lodge during their time with us.

Ms Lorraine Cronin – Ms Cronin leaves us with over 10 years of distinguished service to the sixth form students of Potterspurty Lodge School. Her impact in supporting countless young people to progress to college, an apprenticeship, or into the world of work has been impactful, and appreciated by the young people and their families for over a decade. Last year Ms Cronin also guided our Sixth Form to pass their Employability Skills at Level 1 with an impressive 100% pass rate. She will be missed by staff and students alike, but she leaves us to take up a promoted post with the YMCA, where her talents will be utilised with young adults. We wish her well in her new post.

Mr Dan Saul – Mr Saul moves on from the school with just over 10 years of esteemed service to the school community at Potterspurty Lodge. Mr Saul has been a key member of the pastoral staff where he has provided counsel and guidance to multiple students who have attended the school since 2011. Students regularly turn to Mr Saul due to his ability to relate to each individual and provide excellent advice as a listener and a trusted member of staff. Mr Saul has also supported and led horticulture, outdoor and adventure, and school trips over his time with us alongside expanding his resume in staff training, visits off site, and supporting staff in their general practice. He will be missed by students and staff. Mr Saul leaves us to take up a promoted managerial post with an outdoor company; I have no doubt that his attributes will be quickly deployed and that he will have a measured impact in the position. We wish him well in his new post.

Miss Alex O`Connor (RSW) – Miss O`Connor moves from a Residential Support Worker to a bank (part time) Residential Support Worker after the half term. We look forward to continuing to work with her going forward.

Miss Phoebe Griffiths (RSW) – Miss Griffiths is on maternity leave after the birth of her son, both mother and baby are doing well, and are in good health. We wish Miss Griffiths well, and look forward to welcoming her back in due course.

New Appointments

After half term we look forward to welcoming Ms Sharon Taylor to the newly created Assistant Principal (Designated Safeguarding Lead) position. Ms Taylor is a highly experienced DSL who is currently working across across two schools as a DSL, has been an assistant SENCO and family liaison officer, and has twenty years of experience of working in schools, specially with SEND young people. She looks forward to meeting and working with each of you and our young people in the weeks ahead.

Miss Ellie Faulkner has been promoted from LSA to Pastoral Co-ordinator (Instructor) and begins her new role from 1st November. We look forward to working with Miss Faulkner as the Pastoral Co-ordinator.

Term Dates 2021 – 2022:

<u>Autumn Term 2</u> Monday 1st November to Friday 17th December 2021
Monday 25 th October – Friday 29 th October – Half term holiday
Residential students back Sunday 31st October between 6-8pm
Monday 1st November – Friday 17th December – Term 2
Monday 20 th December – Friday 31 st December – Christmas holiday
<u>Spring Term 2022</u> Monday 3rd January to Friday 1st April 2022
Monday 3 rd January – Please note this is a Bank Holiday (for students and staff)
Tuesday 4 th January – Staff Training Day
Residential students back Tuesday 4th January between 6-8pm
Wednesday 5th January – Friday 11th February – Term 3
Monday 14th February – Friday 18th February – Half term holiday
Residential students back Sunday 20th February between 6-8pm
Monday 21st February – Friday 1st April - Term 4
Monday 4 th April – Monday 18 th April – Easter Holiday
<u>Summer Term 2022</u> Tuesday 19th April to Friday 22nd July 2022
Residential students back Monday 18th April between 6-8pm
Tuesday 19^h April – Friday 27th May – Term 5
Monday 2nd May – Bank Holiday (For students and staff)
Monday 30 th May – Friday 3 rd June – Half term holiday
Residential students back Sunday 5th June between 6-8pm
Monday 6th June – Friday 22nd July – Term 6
Monday 25 th July – Staff Training Day
Start of summer holidays for students Monday 25 th July

* Teacher Training days are subject to change but parents will be notified in advance