



Message from the Federation Principal

Dear Families,

Whilst there never seems to be a quiet time in school, the month of May is always exceptionally busy with the week of national assessments (SATS) for our Year 6 pupils and the start of GCSE written exams for Year 11. We are confident that everybody is well prepared and so we hope that stress is kept to a minimum whilst we all know that a little bit of nervousness is natural and helps us to do our best!

In the last couple of weeks we've had residential trips for Year 4 and for our Year 10 Duke of Edinburgh Award group and, as usual, Castle Newnham pupils impress all who meet them with their warm and respectful conduct of which we are so proud.

At this time of year leaders in school are also very busy with recruitment, making sure that we fill any vacancies which inevitably occur as we reach the change over from one academic year to the next and ensuring that we continue to attract excellent candidates for our teaching and support roles. Please do check on our website and share with friends and family who might be looking for an opportunity to join our dedicated staff team. As usual we will provide a summary of those leaving us and joining us at the end of the term.

Plans are now moving quickly towards our aim of joining BEST on or as near as possible to 1st September. We are already working together in a number of key areas and behind the scenes ensuring that our staff have all of the information they need about being part of a trust.

Meanwhile, I wish all of our families a very happy half-term break and see you all again on Monday June 3rd.

With best wishes

Ruth Wilkes
Federation Principal





TRUST ANNOUNCEMENT: **Castle Newnham School**

We are delighted to inform you that Castle Newnham School has been given the go-ahead to join the Bedfordshire Schools Trust (BEST) by the Department for Education. The school's application has this week been formally approved by the DfE's Regional Director for the East of England, Jonathan Duff.

We are absolutely thrilled to be the newest member of the BEST family. This is hugely positive for both the school and the trust, as well as the local communities in Bedfordshire. When Castle Newnham officially joins, the BEST learning community will grow to over 7,500 children and more than 1,000 staff, giving many more opportunities for us to collaborate and 'grow the BEST in everyone'.

A comprehensive formal process is already under way and an operational working group has been set up featuring key colleagues of the school and members of the BEST Central Team, to enable a smooth transition for the school into the trust. We are now working hard towards officially joining BEST at the start of the next academic year.



THANK YOU!

Many families will know and have had help from Romana Tomei over the years. Romana has been at my side as Executive Assistant and central to the work of Castle Newnham from our early days as a federation to now our plans to join a trust. Not surprisingly Romana has been snapped up for a promoted post in another school but will be sorely missed here for her professionalism, knowledge and care for people and for high standards. We wish her every success and happiness in her new role.

Mrs Wilkes



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WE WILL INCLUDE YOUR BUSINESS IN
ANY ADVERTISING ON THE DAY OR AFTER
AND WOULD LOVE IF YOU'RE ABLE TO
CONTRIBUTE TO OUR RAFFLE



Secondary uniform store

Should you have any of the following uniform items, in good condition, we would very much welcome them as a donation to the uniform store.

- Grey Trousers
- Grey Skirts
- CNS Tie
- CNS Blue Blazer
- CNS Grey Jumper
- CNS Performing Arts Top
- Navy PE shorts
- Black school shoes

We would ask that you or your child please drop donated uniform items off at the main reception in a carrier bag.



Library

At Castle Newnham School we have two libraries across our primary sites. Both libraries are a calm environment and cosy space for the children, from Reception to Year 6, to relax in and enjoy.

We have a wide variety of literature available including picture books, graphic novels, non-fiction books, and fiction books for young readers up to advanced readers. We also have foreign language books and a large range of Barrington Stoke books catering for dyslexic needs.

Each year group has a timetabled library lesson either weekly or fortnightly. There is also a library club for Years 3 and 4 on a Wednesday lunchtime, and Years 5 and 6 after school on a Monday. This allows children time to look at books and have a quiet area to read. Also available during these sessions, are a selection of magazines and comics, including The Week Junior and The Phoenix.

At Castle Newnham School, we are very grateful for donations, from parents, of pre-loved books that the children are always eager to read. Castle Newnham Library has a Book Wishlist for each school site; this is a list of books, put together by the children, that they wish to have in their library. We have set-up this amazing scheme with [lovereading4kids](http://lovereading4kids.com) which allows you to purchase books for the library and they are delivered directly to us. The school also receives 25% of the price of every book, to enable us to buy more books for our libraries!

Please visit www.lovereading4kids.co.uk and take a look, along with following our Instagram page @cn_primlibrary, to keep up-to-date with the Primary Libraries.





The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

A busy time for our Bronze and Silver participants! At the beginning of May, we had 17 Year 10's complete their Silver Qualifying expedition in the Peak District, without rain. The Bronze Qualifying expedition took place on the 23rd and 24th May and was very successful with over 45 pupils taking part. Please support your child in getting their assessor reports submitted as we have our first ever Awards Evening on the 26th June.

College of Motorsport Open Day

It was our pleasure to take along 14 pupils to the National College of Motorsport at Silverstone this month as part of Year 10s considering their next steps for bright futures. It was helpful for pupils to get a tangible feel for what the course would look like, and if they could see themselves studying there next. The course is extremely practical, and comes with assessments including practical scenarios around circuit setups and car damage repairs. Please keep an eye out for all other post-16 provider open days taking place in the autumn term so that you pupils can attend to make as informed choices as possible!



Year 7 visit Kenilworth Castle

The year 7's went on a trip to the 12th century Kenilworth Castle. The trip forms part of our topic on castles, where we discuss castle features, sieges and development. The pupils were very well behaved, we received compliments from staff and the general public and enjoyed their day out.





Year 4 visit Caythorpe Trip

Pupils had an adventure packed three days away on the Year 4 Residential trip to PGL at Caythorpe Court. They participated in a whole host of activities during the day, such as climbing, orienteering, abseiling, sensory trail, vertical challenge, problem solving and survivor (building a den/lighting fires in the woods). Pupils were a real credit to the school with many of the instructors commenting on their positivity, encouragement of others, manners and respect.

It was a great opportunity for pupils to develop new skills and interest and build their independence by staying away from home.



Business Language Leaders visit RAF Henlow

Year 10 pupils visited RAF Henlow for the International Space Station Challenge where they used STEM and language skills to design and present a low orbit space hotel in French. They learned that these skills are highly employable and practiced teamwork, communication and leadership. Congratulation to Team 2 who won the best design award.



Performing Arts

UPDATE

Dance Showcase

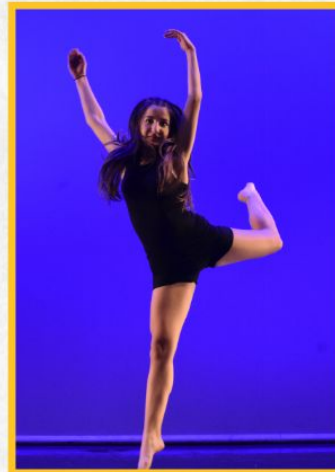
All-through excellence was on display at the Dance Showcase. Pupils from across primary and secondary performed to a sold-out audience at the University of Bedfordshire Theatre.



Tickets for our final show of the academic year, *Oliver Jr.*, are now on sale! Please head over to our Box Office (through the school website or our instagram @CN_PerformArts) for tickets

Year 10 Theatre Trip

Year 10 Performing Arts pupils had a nice end to their half term getting to see Bedford College's performance of 'The Lightning Thief: A Percy Jackson Musical'. It was a great chance for the pupils to explore an avenue for Performing Arts post-16, see the facilities and enjoy some theatre.

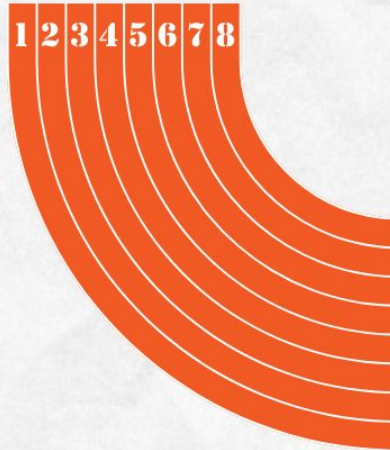




PE & SPORT UPDATE



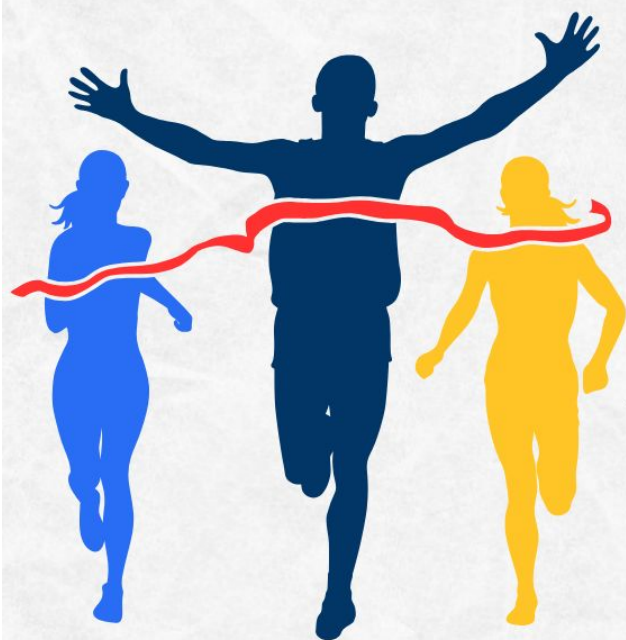
Reception and Year 1 have been lucky enough to receive a visit from the Riverside Tennis Foundation who provided a tennis coaching session for each of the classes. All of the children had a great time and enjoyed their tennis sessions.



A small number of Year 4 athletes competed at the QuadKids Athletics event held at Bedford International Athletics stadium at the end of April. All of the athletes recorded some fantastic results against other schools within the borough and thoroughly enjoyed the event. A special mention to Esme, in Year 4, who finished third out of all the girls in the combined events during the morning session.

Year 7 and 8 athletes have been competing weekly down at the track with some excellent results. A special shout out to our Year 7 girls who have been competing for the top spot in most weeks. A highlight being the relay team who are the quickest in the district. A big thank you to all our Year 10 leaders who are giving up their own time to officiate the event too!

Year 9 & 10 Athletes have been competing weekly at the Bedford Athletics track against schools across Bedfordshire. It is amazing to see pupils trying new track and field events and pushing them out of their comfort zone and showcasing the CORE Values . There have even been some PBs made in a variety of events. Excellent work from all athletes that have participated well done!





What Parents & Educators Need to Know about **SCHOOL AVOIDANCE**

Emotionally Based School Avoidance is a term used to refer to reduced attendance or non-attendance at school by a child or young person. It's often rooted in emotional, mental health or wellbeing issues. The rate of children who miss school more than 10% of the time in England has more than doubled since before the pandemic: rising from 10.9% in 2018-19, to 22.3% in 2022-23.

UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL AVOIDANCE

REASONS FOR ABSENCE

School avoidance is sometimes underpinned by several factors rather than one single cause. This could include something going on for the child or young person within the family or at school. A child may have caring responsibilities at home, for instance, or a change in family dynamics; bullying and friendship difficulties at school; pressure to achieve in schoolwork and exams; or moving from primary school to secondary school.

PATTERNS OF ABSENCE

You may notice patterns in regular absences or children regularly expressing that they don't want to attend school (particularly being reluctant to leave home on school days). If a child or young person is neurodiverse, there is some evidence to suggest there are more aspects of school life which can cause distress – such as changes in the environment, changes of routine and sensory stimuli.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

There may be an increase in a child or young person's complaints about physical symptoms, particularly on school days or the evening before school. These could include complaining of a tummy ache, headache, or saying they feel ill when there doesn't appear to be a medical cause. Always check with the GP first to rule out medical causes or illness.

IMPACT OF SCHOOL AVOIDANCE

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

School refusal can negatively impact a young person's learning and development. Attending school on a regular basis not only supports academic attainment but is also important for the development of key life skills and the growth of children and young people as citizens.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

The difficulties associated with school non-attendance can be far reaching and may have a negative impact on long-term outcomes. It may, for example, lead to reduced future aspirations, poor emotional regulation, mental health difficulties, limited academic progress and restricted employment opportunities.

CYCLE OF ABSENCE

Consistent absences may contribute to sustained school avoidance over time. Further to this, the longer a pupil is out of education, the more likely it is that there is a rise in their ongoing need to avoid the activity which is making them anxious – increasing their desire to stay at home.

Advice for Parents & Educators

WORK TOGETHER

If there's a concern about a child's absence and emotional wellbeing, it's important that there is clear communication and a consistent approach between the child's parents and the school, so you can take a child-centred approach together towards a plan of support or reintegration. This ensures a consistency of approach from both home and school, creating better outcomes for the child.

MANAGING OVERWHELMING FEELINGS

While there may be times you feel frustrated or angry, try to stay calm; acknowledge the child's worries, listen and discuss a range of coping strategies together to help them face the discomfort and overwhelming feelings. These could include mindfulness, deep breathing or going for a walk and practice the strategies in less overwhelming situations first.

FOLLOW REGULAR ROUTINES

Children can benefit from a regular and consistent routine. This could be a morning routine, from waking up and having breakfast through to getting dressed, packing their bag and leaving the house. A consistent evening routine which is calm and limited time on screens can also give children much needed predictability and familiarity. Schools can help create a timetabled routine for the child's school day, if required.

REDUCE STIMULATING ACTIVITIES AT HOME

If a child is avoiding school, reduce their access to more stimulating activities (such as watching television, playing games and spending time with friends) during school hours, where possible. This reduces the potential for the child having rewarding experiences at home, which could be interpreted as a positive aspect of avoiding school.

Meet Our Expert

With 30 years' experience as a teacher, trainer, consultant and interim executive board member, Anna Bateman has a superb understanding of what works in pedagogy, school improvement and leadership. She has also advised the Department for Education on their mental health green paper.



Source: See full reference list on guide page at nationalcollege.com/guides/school-avoidance



Respect

CN CORE Values

Family Hubs Parent Survey



This survey is aimed at parents and carers of children aged 0-19 years, and up to 25 years if they have a Special Educational Need or Disability, as well as anyone who is planning to become pregnant or is already expecting a baby.

Visit the link:

<https://online1.snapsurveys.com/interview/ca784809-58c1-431e-a2b2-1090828124fe>

Castle Newnham School Safeguarding Team



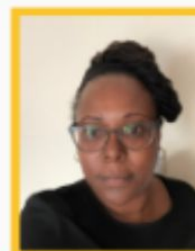
Mr M Cleaver
DSL Primary



Mrs K Edwards
Head of School - Primary
DSL Primary



Mrs R Wilkes
Federation Principal
DSL



Mrs B McWilliams
DSL Secondary



Mrs S Levesley
Head of School - Secondary
DSL Secondary

All members of the Senior Leadership Team have the appropriate DSL training and can support safeguarding questions or concerns



GCSE Exams



GCSE exams began on Thursday 9th May and are now well under way. Pupils are engaging well with the process attending the variety of support sessions we have in place including 8am sessions with a light breakfast.

The rest of the school have been very supportive, adjusting well to the new lunchtimes to facilitate the afternoon exams.

Year 6 SATs

Well done to all the Year 6 students who were completing their SATs assessments last week. You all have worked incredibly hard over the past few months, and we look forward to receiving your results in July.

Undefeated! Castle Newnham secures second District Plate title in a row



Castle Newnham's football team beat Sandy Secondary School 2-0, defending their title of District Plate champions.

The Year 10 boys celebrated their undefeated victory in the District Plate Championship earlier this week (13 May) for the school's second year in a row.

It was the team's first year winning, but the school's second and it's said they performed incredibly well and showed high levels of respect towards the strong Sandy side.

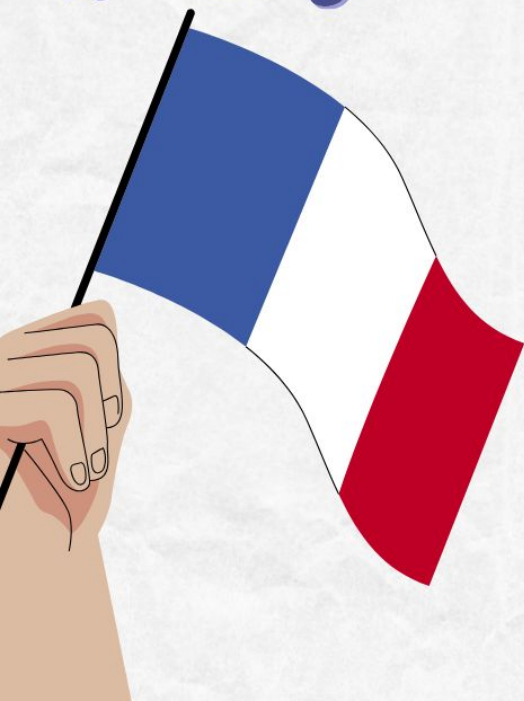
Jamie Saunders, the coach for the team boasted: "It's been a pleasure and an honour coaching the Year 10 team this year, their dedication and drive to excel has been infectious throughout the school and I couldn't think of more deserving winners. Well done to all involved."



Speaking Exams

April was GCSE speaking exams month: it was an opportunity for our pupils to demonstrate their skills, communicating in a range of different languages from Arabic and Greek, to Spanish and Polish. The Modern Foreign Languages team would also like to congratulate Year 11 on the impressive level of French and German speaking in this year's exams: with the vast majority of our pupils taking French GCSE, the speaking element of this examination never fails to disappoint. We've been treated to tales of past holidays, accounts of future ambitions and opinions on anything from school rules to climate change. A terrific effort from our pupils, and a real pleasure to see the fruits of their labour.

bonjour
merci



FLIP to French Day

We held a “**FLIP (Foreign Language In Perspective) to French Day**” to celebrate French language and French-speaking culture. Pupils took part in French themed learning activities in all subjects, learning about French philosophers, key historical figures, current French music and prominent artists. At lunchtime we were able to taste French food in the canteen, the Poulet Basquaise and Boulangère potatoes proving a real hit!

Everybody rose to the challenge and it was fantastic to hear French being spoken throughout the school!
Bravo tout le monde! Look out for FLIP to Spanish Day soon!