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THE HOLMEWOOD
SCHOOL



National
Autistic
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2020



Newsletter

Friday 12th March 2021

Dear Families,

We've now all been back at school for a week and it's been exciting, heartwarming....and exhausting! I'm sure you will have noticed your children returning home quite tired this week, and with that might come some emotion.

This week students have had to start getting up early again, get back into old routines, manage travel and transport to and from school, attend lots of different classes with different people, spend longer days working, get used to new staff and new students, get used to sharing attention again, and many other things. If they are feeling a bit out of sorts, this is no surprise. We ask that you continue to reassure them that in time, things will settle and school will start to feel normal again. In the meantime, please know we are continuing to be as flexible as needed to support our children and our families. Right now, our priority is ensuring your child settles and feels safe and happy in school. Please encourage them to talk to us if anything is worrying them and remind them they can trust in us to help make things better.

Coming up soon we have World Autism Awareness Week and Ms Wiltshire will be sharing plans for all our events. We are delighted to have Robyn Steward working with us for the week and she will be joining staff and parents for a remote talk. Details will come out soon but we hope you can join us. I have had the pleasure of spending a fair bit of time with Robyn when I worked for the NAS and I'm sure you'll find it worthwhile. If you'd

- The Independent Woman's Handbook for Super Safe Living on the Autistic Spectrum.
- The Autism Friendly Guide to Periods
- The Autism-Friendly Guide to Self-Employment (Out later this year)

Robyn also features in the following collaborations or books by other authors:

- Auti Power!
- Ultra Violet Voices
- Sisterhood on the spectrum
- Breaking the silence

For now I wish you all a happy and restful weekend. Stay safe with these wild winds!

Ms Camilleri

Executive Head Teacher

Dates For Your Diary

- **Fri 26th Mar** - Last day of spring term
- **Mon 19th Apr** - Inset day
- **Tues 20th Apr** - Summer term (1st half) starts

Mother's Day

Don't forget that this coming Sunday is Mother's Day!

Also known as Mothering Sunday, it is a day to honour mothers and other mother figures, such as grandmothers, stepmothers and mothers-in-law.

Mothering Sunday is also an occasion to fondly remember all mother figures who may no longer be with us.

Happy Mother's Day!



A student burst into my office angry. Using the [emotions wheel](#), we narrowed the feelings down to 'frustrated' and 'dismissed'.

He described a scenario where someone was referring to autism as an 'impairment'. Apparently the person went on to say that people on the spectrum were unable to show empathy or remorse. He assured me that he was not a psychopath and that he does feel remorse.

He lamented that he would rather not be seen as autistic. This young man was more than aware of his potential and he also went on to explain his needs clearly to me. He explained that he was in this school so that he could get the support he needs in order to achieve his many aspirations in life and he thought many other young people in mainstream schools could do with a little extra help too. I found this very empathetic.

Unfortunately, throughout his life this young person will be confronted with stereotypical views about autism. My first thought was to swoop in and save him, to make it better, to appease his feelings. However, it became clear to me that doing so would just be more condescending to him and reinforce the self-fulfilling prophecy of reliance. This sort of action speaks to the medical model of disability which focuses on the 'problems' that an individual has that require solving.

The social model of disability suggests that society creates barriers and that it is society that should change. This model suggests that the individual is the expert in what they need so they should be supported to advocate on their own behalf.

Therefore there are two things we can do to help become better advocates for those on the spectrum. These are: to work on creating a society which better accommodates neurodiversity, and to support our young people to advocate for themselves.

I acknowledged the young person's feelings and needs. Levelling with him, I said he wouldn't be in this school if he hadn't been diagnosed with autism, so in that respect the 'label' helps him to access support.

Moreover, I explained that when he approaches future employers, he will need to both adequately explain the many positive attributes that set him apart from other potential employees, while also explaining the adjustments to be made in order for his needs to be met.

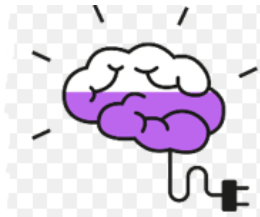
Together we came up with a script for him to use to explain how stereotypical comments make him feel, based on the [Non-Violent Communication](#) approach. In keeping with this approach, the script ended with a request -

'Would you consider rethinking the way you describe autism? Would you be willing to see me as being an individual rather than a label?'

Ms Young

Head of Upper School

Gender Bias



Be informed.



Be curious.



Be heard.

This week we have been discussing gender bias through our Votes for Schools programme. Our youngest students have been looking at gender stereotypes and our upper school students have been taking a closer look at what these assumptions and stereotypes equate to on an international scale, and how this could impact young people's prospects. They have also been considering whether gender will affect their future.

2 A breakout role



Sometimes, we call the **behaviours of girls or boys "roles"**, which is the **same term** we use for an actor **playing a character on screen or on stage**.

The actor may have to **wear certain clothes and speak and behave according to the role**. The same expectations are also often applied to **people in society**, even today.

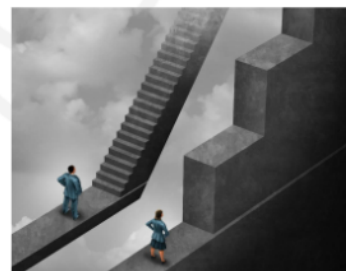
This is because **these "roles" have existed throughout history**. They encourage people to think that boys and girls are **suited to different jobs and lifestyles**.

Gender bias:
Being treated a certain way due to gender.

Over time, it is mostly **women who have faced unfair treatment and been limited as a result of these roles**. We call this unfair treatment **"bias"**.

Reflect (2-3 minutes)

Why could these "roles" be a problem for both young women and young men while they are growing up?



At Girls Club we read Dr Maya Angelou's brilliant poem 'Still I rise' celebrating an inspirational woman on International Women's Day/week 2021.

We had a great discussion about how her poem makes us feel and the huge steps she took in her extraordinary life for equality for all.



email. Hope is an author, multi award winning mental health campaigner & founder of [#dumpthescales](#). We are looking forward to inviting Hope back to speak with our students in the summer term.

Best Wishes,

Ms D'Silva

Assistant Head

The Appliance of Science - Ice

Circle Class this week were looking at the properties of water and its states - particularly the unique properties of ice.

Water is amazing. It is a liquid over the widest range of temperatures than any other substance and it expands when it becomes solid. Furthermore, you can use boiling water to make ice cubes faster.

Water literally is the stuff of life.



Circle students melted ice over a low bunsen flame and observed that as the ice melted from a solid to a liquid state there was no temperature change. Then when water turned from a liquid to a gas state there was once again no temperature change. This is because energy was being used to break bonds as it turned from one state to another!

Have a great weekend everybody!

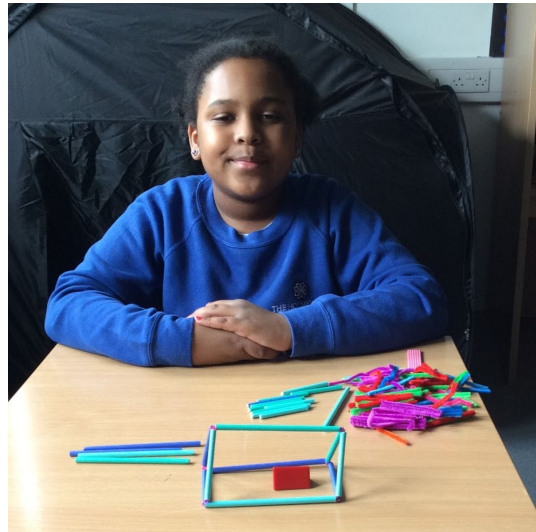
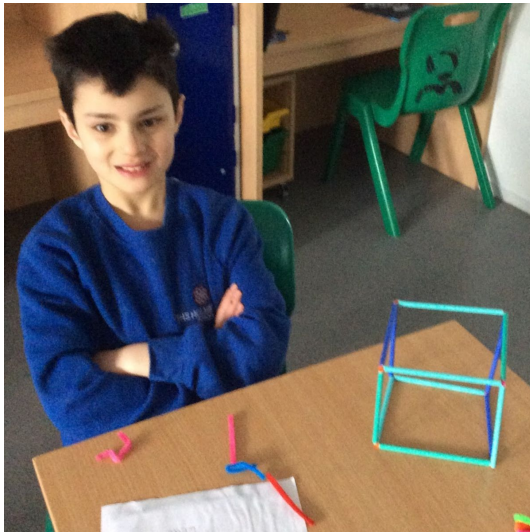
Mr Podichetty

Science Teacher

Welcome back to District Class, and our rabbits, Bank and Bond!

In English, District Class have been looking at two books based on Legends of the Sea; Selkie by Gillian McClure, and Can You Catch a Mermaid? by Jane Ray. This week, we have been recapping and comparing the stories, and have started creating characters for their own stories.

In Maths, we have been investigating 2D shapes, focusing on quadrilaterals. We have also looked at identifying 3D shapes by looking at their faces, edges and vertices. We have also been using straws and pipe cleaners to build models of 3D shapes.



In Science, we have been looking at different ways to classify plants and animals. This week the class has been classifying animals into mammals, amphibians, birds, reptiles, fish and insects.

Wishing you all a lovely weekend!

Ms Lutman

District Class Teacher





Following lockdown we have all settled back as though we had never left the school. However, it has been all new for, yours truly, their stand in form tutor and art teacher, who has been fitting faces and/or icons to real live people. I have been made to feel welcome and I must say that I really enjoy working with you all.

We are going to meet up remotely again with Ms Clack's beautiful daughter, Maisie, at form time this Friday afternoon! I know that Ms Clack is missing all the Bakerloo students immensely and, needless to say, they have missed her too!

Mr Kirwan, our hardworking caretaker, has been busy keeping the grounds looking lovely and tranquil and has provided Bakerloo and Metropolitan students with new benches. Chris's knitting is still there looking bright and cheerful, warming up the tree in our garden.

Josh L has gone back to plane production, but this time he is developing his own design, minutely thought through and named Sky Trout. Josh B has come back, and his dinosaurs are looking magnificent and fierce as well as delicate at the same time, Nico has entertained us all with his unique perspective on life, and Patrick and Joseph have settled back brilliantly. Amy gave a brilliant TED talk today on The Drake Equation! Well done Amy!

We have had Reagan, our delightful new student, join us too. She has fitted in seamlessly and is a very welcome addition to Bakerloo Class!

Wishing you all a great weekend!

Mr Tonkin

Bakerloo Class Teacher



Hello, Parents and Carers.

I hope you are well and keeping safe.

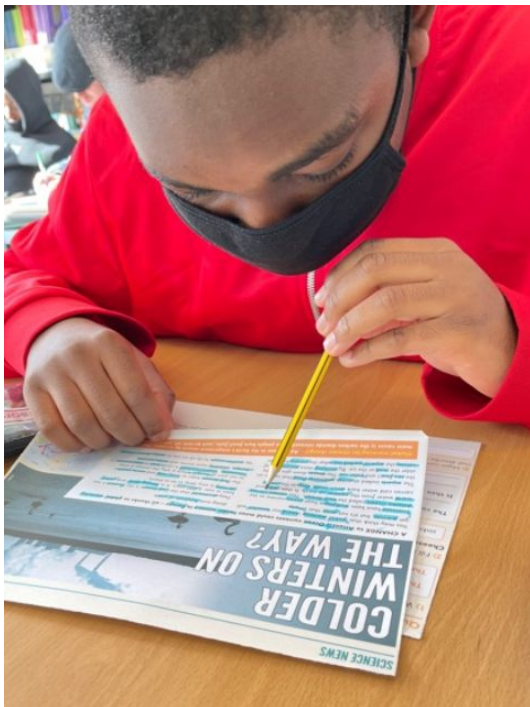
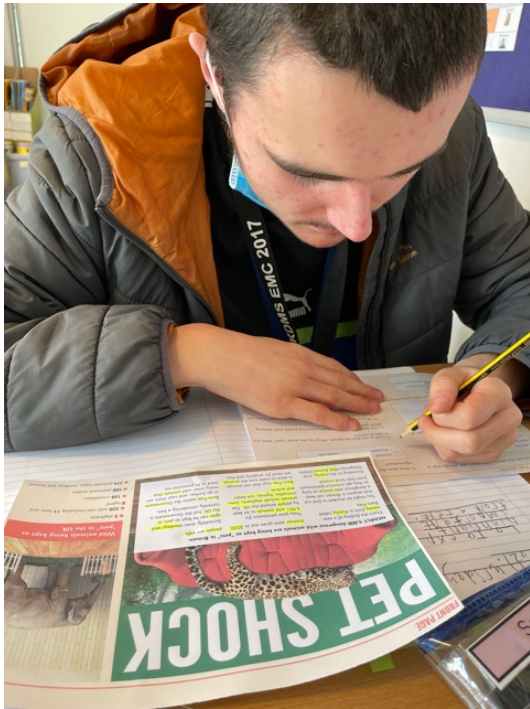
This week, we welcomed the students back to school. It has been so wonderful being back and enjoying each other's company. All the students have been interacting with one another and asking how each other is throughout the day, which has been lovely.

We began the week by making different types of smoothies and sandwiches for lunch. This lesson linked nicely with the Gardening session with Mr Tysman where the students had been looking at different recipes for smoothies and fruits/vegetables they could include in it.

On Tuesday the students restarted The Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. They were given maps to follow which led them to Alexandra Palace where they then found a patch of grass to continue their activity on. During the lesson, Chisom showed us how to set up the portable gas stove which was then used to make popcorn. The students are thoroughly enjoying the Duke of Edinburgh experience and have already given Mrs Mansfield a list of things they would like to learn!



During English, the students have been working on reading comprehensions as part of their exams or to secure the skills they have already learnt. It was wonderful to see them



Next week, on Friday 19th March, Metropolitan will be running the Comic relief fundraiser. Please ask your child if they would like to take part by wearing a onesie to school. Metropolitan have also organised activities for both Woodside park and Muswell Hill site, which will be within the classes to ensure safety for all.

On behalf of myself and the Metropolitan team, we would like to wish you a

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Best wishes,

**Ms Perera**

Metropolitan Class Teacher

Red Nose Day - Friday 19th March

To celebrate Red Nose Day, our staff and students will be wearing their Onesies to school. Please bring £1 on the day and join the fun!



As people, we love our fun and jokes,
But out in the world there are lonely folks,
Who all want love and support,
So as a school that's always full of life,
With staff and students, we can bring an end to strife.
Let's pool our pounds for our common belief,
So that we can all enjoy comic relief!

By Ms Irma Khalil



Therapy News

Last month, there was an interesting article in The Bulletin (The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists monthly newsletter) about the recruitment experiences of neurodivergent individuals. The article was written by a newly qualified Speech and Language Therapist with a dual diagnosis of a Specific Learning Difficulty and a Developmental Language Disorder. She voiced her frustration at the lack of adjustments made within the recruitment process and her difficulty in securing a job. Unfortunately, she is not alone. In 2018, the Westminster AchieveAbility Commission found 52% of those with neurodiverse profiles had faced discrimination in the recruitment process. Yet, some of our most celebrated business leaders have neurodiverse profiles; in fact 35% of US entrepreneurs identified as neurodivergent (2009, Cass Business School). So, why aren't more adaptations made within the recruitment process?

In SaLT sessions we support students in formulating their ideas, expressing their opinions and using persuasive language. Students are encouraged to express their opinions in a concise, coherent, succinct and appropriate manner. It also helps students to both understand and listen to different viewpoints and allows them to think more flexibly.



These skills will be incredibly useful when facing an interview. Ms Nash is supporting students in Bakerloo, Northern and Elizabeth class to specifically practise and develop their debating skills.

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- Set up a pre-interview discussion with the employer so they can adapt and accommodate individual needs.
- Ask the employer to break down questions involving two or more parts.
- Ask for at least 15 minutes before the interview to read through the interview questions, jot down ideas and to organise thoughts.
- Ask for a written copy of the questions during the interview, which must be tailored to individuals' needs (e.g by using big, bold fonts).
- Employers must give candidates a reasonable amount of extra time for interview tasks and questions.
- Employers must not penalise candidates who, due to their needs, show social interaction and non-verbal communication difficulties.

Ms Nash

Specialist Speech & Language Therapist

The Holmewood Gallery

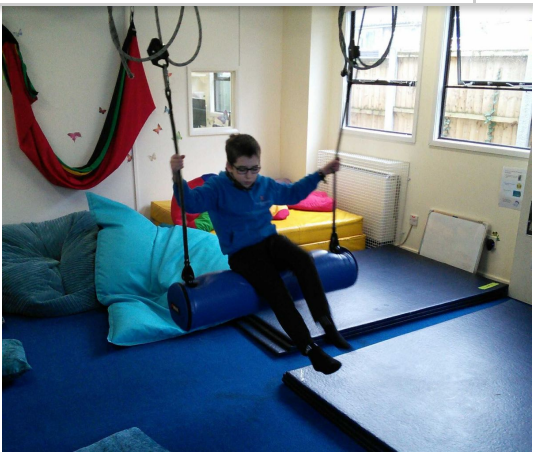




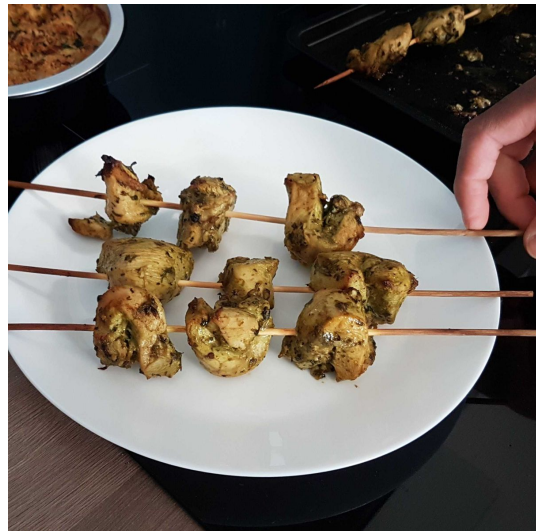
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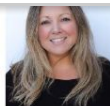








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Designated Team For Child Protection And Safeguarding

If you are a student and have been harmed, or are at risk of harm, these are the people who can help. You can also talk to us if you are worried that another student is at risk of harm.

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Ms D'Silva (Assistant Head and Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer for Lower School, Level 3)	Ms Lemposzek (Head of Welfare & Behaviour, Deputy DSO for Lower School, Level 3)	Mr Gibbs (Humanities & PSHE Teacher, Deputy DSO for Lower School, Level 3)	Ms Camilleri (Executive Head, CEOP Ambassador and Deputy DSO, Level 3)
Upper School			
			
Mr Lamb (Deputy Head and Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer for Upper School, Level 3)	Ms Young (Head of School and Deputy DSO, Level 3)	Ms Young (Assistant Head and Deputy DSO, Level 3)	Ms Camilleri (Executive Head, CEOP Ambassador and Deputy DSO, Level 3)

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