

Our School

Welcome to The Bridge SEN School Newsletter

Fortnightly News: 26th February 2021

We are finally coming to the end of our third national lockdown. With the vaccination programme in full swing and March just around the corner, we have every reason to be cautiously optimistic. Children are returning to school, hospital admissions are decreasing, and it looks, finally, as if the world is beginning to regain control. Although now is not the time to let our guard down, perhaps we can embrace a healthier and happier spirit than the darkness which so oppressed us throughout 2020. At the Bridge SEN School we continue to help our learners, keeping them safe and keeping their spirits up. As the new season beckons, I would like to thank you all for your patience and good will, and wish you all a blessed and more prosperous year to come.

-Edith Eneanya-Bonito – Principal



Educational

This week the learners have been celebrating Chinese New Year and practising recognising the passing and recording of time. They are expanding their visual calendars to include the whole week rather than just a day. This means they can plan events in advance and be aware of what is going to happen on each one, allowing them more opportunity for making choices and building their independence. Even though restrictions are lessening, learners still need to be safe in the community so we are reminding them of how to do so once we are able to mingle once again.

Return to the Class!

Although the majority of our learners have been studying in the classroom environment despite the restrictions of the recent lockdown, some have been studying remotely. For many this has been a confusing time where they have had to study somewhere they usually associate with relaxing. Due to the announcement of the government on Monday 22nd February and the subsequent [announcement](#) by Gavin Williamson, the Education Secretary on Tuesday the 23rd, school children in England will be returning to schools on the 8th of March and Special Education institutions like The Bridge SEN School will be able to recommence in-person teaching from the same day. So we're looking forward to welcoming our students back soon!

As welcoming and supportive as it is, a classroom can sometimes be an overwhelming place for an autistic learner. An autism-friendly classroom should be **spacious** and **low-arousal**. So that it does not have too many distractions for the learners and allow personal space (especially these days!). Equipment should be stored properly, **well organised** and **clearly labelled** with easy access to promote **independence** as learners do not need to rely on others to get what they need. Learners should have access to **visual schedules** in order to help the learner structure their days, appreciate a **routine, reduce anxiety** and have some degree of control of their choices. It's also vitally important that learners have a **break out** or **chill out** space where they can go if they begin to feel overwhelmed. This is probably a separate room and may have **sensory equipment** to help regulate moods. Knowing there is a safe space to go to is an important part of **emotional development** and **regulation of feelings**.



The Bridge SEN School runs an **ASD Activity Club** on **Saturdays**, 10am to 4pm. There are lots of activities available for young learners within the ages of 16 to 25 years. These activities range from bowling, snooker, photography club, Art and Crafts, Museum visits, Cooking, Interior Decoration, etc. We receive referrals from members of the public and local authorities; please contact the school on admin@thebridge-school.co.uk or Tel: 02077038587

Arts&CraftsIdeas

St David of Wales

Spring is near, and so is [St David's Day](#) – on **1st March**. But who was St David, and why do we care about him? And did you know that he once made a mountain?

David was born in the 6th century

We don't know the exact date of his birth, but David was probably born in the year 520AD – 1,500 years ago. He was born on a cliff during a thunderstorm. He was also apparently the son of a nun. And a king.

What did David do?

When he was young, David became a monk. He created a monastery in the year 560, near where he was born. This area (in west Wales) is now called 'St Davids'.

Britain's smallest city is named after him

London may be Europe's biggest city, but St David's, in Exeter, is Britain's smallest. Because of the Cathedral, St David's is classed as a city, and that makes it the tiniest city in Britain, where only 1600 people live. The church bell weighs more all the people put together. Maybe.

St David was very skinny

Because of his monkish diet, David only ate bread and water. Even meat and beer were forbidden.

David moved mountains

While preaching to a crowd in the village of Llanddewi Brefi, David performed his most famous miracle. Some of the listeners couldn't hear David's sermon very well. Then a white dove landed on David's shoulder. As this happened, the ground on where David stood rose up and turned into a gigantic hill. Suddenly, everyone in the crowd could see and hear St David. The dove became St David's emblem, often appearing in pictures of him on stained-glass windows. Today, on top of this special hill, there is a church.

Finally

There are many more things to say about St David, such as that his name appears in Shakespeare, or that his name inspired a nickname for the Welsh – Taffy. But let's end by saying that St David's Day is a great way of learning more about Welsh history and culture.

For a list of activities you can do, click [here](#).



However, if...

...you are still stuck inside because of lockdown, why not try your hand at making [paper daffodils](#), a flower associated with Spring and with Wales to celebrate the end of winter and practice your children's fine motor skills and creativity. Perhaps have a go at making some delicious [Welsh Cakes](#). Then you can eat these buttery treats while you learn about the infamous [Welsh Dragon](#).

7 Challenges in 7 Days!

As part of [AUTISM AWARENESS WEEK](#) we are encouraging our learners to take part in the [Super 7 Challenge](#) to raise money by doing a challenge for every day of the week. This is a good opportunity for your young adults to put their minds and bodies to it and set themselves challenges in the name of a good cause. Perhaps they could attempt to bake seven different dishes on Monday, sing seven Billie Eilish songs on Tuesday walk seven kilometres on Wednesday. There are plenty of creative ideas out there and they don't all have to be limited to seven. We'd love to see what you might have in mind and remember it's all for a good cause as any funds raised go to the National Autistic Society, the UK's leading charity for people on the autistic spectrum.

Our very own Claire Tillman, **Makaton** superstar, and her family are taking up the challenge and their JustGiving page can be accessed [here](#) if you have a few quid to spare.

Our Activities Centre



This week in the activity centre, the clients have been practicing their literacy by matching pictures with letters and attempting to write their own signs. As the weather improves and the lockdown restrictions lessen, we are helping the learners plan for what to do in the coming weeks.

Geovannessa Wedderburn - Activity coordinator

The Bridge SEN School admits students all through the academic year between the ages of 14-25. If you are interested in placing a student at the school or obtaining more information, please contact admin@thebridge-school.co.uk

COVID 19

We are in regular contact with the local authorities to ensure that we react appropriately and in a timely fashion to any development. We observe the most up-to-date rules concerning COVID 19.

- Social Distancing measures are in place
 - Regularly handwashing is mandatory
 - NHS Track and Trace QR Code are signposted around the school.
 - Face masks are worn throughout classes
- Our Full Policy is available on our Website**

THE BRIDGE ACADEMIC CALENDAR

EDUCATION

EASTER HOLIDAY – 5th April

AUTISM AWARENESS WEEK - 29th March – 4th April

Please visit our website: www.thebridge-school.co.uk for full Academic Year 2020/2021 Calendar)

ACTIVITY CENTRE

Our activity centre in Thornton Heath is open throughout the year, Except on Bank Holidays.

Drawings/Pictures of the month



OPENING TIMES AT LIRAL VEGET COLLEGE LONDON

Liral Veget College is the sister company of Right Support Management, under which The Bridge SEN School is now operating. We offer a variety of **English language courses**, **After School Club** and **Life in the UK Preparation classes**. Our current opening times are 8.30am – 18.00pm Monday to Friday and 10.00am - 14.00pm on Saturdays. **Academic Manager** - James Nuttall.

QUOTE OF THE FORTNIGHT

‘Why should I cry for not being an apple, when I was born an orange, I’d be crying for an illusion, I may as well cry for not being a horse.’

— **Donna Williams, Writer, artist, singer-songwriter, screenwriter and sculptor.**

We publish our newsletter fortnightly. Copies will be emailed to you and made available on the school’s website (<https://www.thebridge-school.co.uk/our-school>). Thank you for your feedback. If you would like to contribute to our newsletter, please email me at admin@thebridge-school.co.uk - Maryanne Orakah.