

Our School

Welcome to The Bridge SEN School Newsletter

Fortnightly News: 18th June 2021

Hello to you all from The Bridge. Summer officially begins in one week and there is every reason to believe the coming months will be warm and sunny. Although the full lockdown restrictions will likely be delayed by several weeks, it is reasonable to assume that an end is in sight and that we will soon enough be returning to normality. This June sees many Pride celebrations taking place, both online and in person, across the UK. We at The Bridge would like to express solidarity with our brothers and sisters in the struggle for equality. Equality is at the heart of everything we do, and we strive to promote our values of fairness and tolerance among our staff and students alike. I wish you all a blessed and fulfilling summer term.

-Edith Eneanya-Bonito – Principal



Educational

This week the learners have been exploring Pride Month. As well as recognising all the different kinds of healthy relationships that can exist they have been exploring the concepts of embracing difference, tolerance, equality and community spirit. We've also gone out into the community again to explore the local facilities and take advantage of the good weather. As it is the local and community history month, the learners have been compiling a book called 'My Community Helpers' recognising supportive figures in the community.

The Bridge SEN School to Offer School Meals from Summer 2021

Although students to The Bridge SEN School up to now have either brought packed lunches or ordered pre-prepared meals from a third party caterer, from this half term we have made the decision to provide meals ourselves. We are using this half term as a transition period in order to smooth over any potential issues and ensure that we can have our new system in place for the beginning of the 2021/2022 academic year. We are still finalizing who we will use to be our suppliers but whomever we choose, we will be aiming to prepare meals on site. We also intend to involve our learners as much as possible in the choices, and to some degree, the preparation of the school food. This will help develop a sense of community and build independence for our learners as well as enabling us to keep an eye on their nutritional support. Please see our first menu below!

Alan Turing to be Added to £50 note

This month the new £50 note will enter circulation and codebreaker and computer pioneer Alan Turing will replace [Matthew Boulton](#) and [James Watt](#). Turing has been adopted as an icon among computer scientists but also by the LGBT+ community for his honesty about his sexuality at a time when such honesty could be [dangerous](#). He's also been seen as an icon for autism largely due to his reportedly socially-challenged ways.

There has been a lot of speculation about whether Turing was actually autistic. Proponents of this idea point out that as well as being socially awkward, he also reportedly displayed repetitive, restrictive and obsessive behavior such as his love for deciphering and decrypting or the fact he chose to run every day to 'make his brain quiet' – classic description of stimming. This isn't conclusive evidence, and does somewhat strengthen the misguided notion that gifted autistic people can't be social or empathetic. However, the possibility that Turing could have been autistic allows the opportunity to perceive what someone with autism can be. It allows us to see the person behind the achievement in greater depth and appreciate their uniqueness.



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

Activities & Advice

Promoting Positive Interaction

Sharing, taking turns and even talking to others can be big steps for young learners with autism. However, positive interaction with others is an important part in learning for all of us. All children must learn positive interaction. Those with autism sometimes need a little more practice. Supporting your child through this process will help them have a better social relationship with peers.

Barriers to interaction

Autistic learners may:

- Prefer not to interact with other people.
- Have difficulty communicating or recognising social cues, which makes it more challenging to invite others or ask to join others.
- Be resistant to changes in routine that can make playing with others difficult, since people and events can be unpredictable.
- Have keenly focused interests or repetitive play habits that keep others from enjoying themselves.

Benefits of interacting with others

For children and adults play and positive interaction is a foundation for many learning opportunities. Some of the skills learnt through interactive pastimes are:

- Cognitive skills—like problem solving and playing games
- Communication skills—like asking and answering questions
- Social skills—like taking turns, sharing and cooperative play
- Improved self-esteem

It's best to start early building such skills and awareness but even if your child is older here are some strategies you can use to help your child develop interactive skills:

Pairing This can teach that a partner can give him things that are wanted and needed, and that spending time with others can be rewarding. If the partner has preferred or required items or activities, this will increase the desire to have the partner in the learner's environment.

Sharing Ask another young person to share his favourite snack or item on several occasions to demonstrate sharing.

Common interests As common interests are important for developing and maintaining friendships being around others with similar interests to your child can be greatly beneficial and improve the chances for such interaction. Sport, art and science and other 'hands on' activities can be great for this.

Meet up This requires the cooperation of another parent but is a great way for your child to become more comfortable interacting with peers. They can also provide chances to build and practice social skills. Invite someone who is patient and flexible and who will model positive behaviour and social skills. Start small then build the group.

Group activities These should be activities that all involved enjoy and require communication and interaction.

Once any activities are scheduled, it's important to inform the young person about the activity, what he/she should expect and what the rules are. It's a good idea to clearly mention how long the activity will last, who will be involved, and whether a reward can be earned for good behaviour.

The more opportunities that can be created the better as developing social skills takes time and they change as people get older. Someone with autism may also struggle with the abstract idea of what a friend is, so this too can require groundwork and involve social stories and concept questions of what a friend is.

Obviously, everyone is different so what works for one individual may not work for another but this is why creating opportunities and persevering with your child's growth is important. Nothing happens overnight, but the journey shouldn't feel like work. If making friends was stressful no one would do it! Help your young person recognise how rewarding positive relationships can be and support them by making it as engaging and enjoyable as possible.

As the weather has improved there is plenty of opportunity for interactive games outside at the moment and if the young person is properly prepared it could lead to a very rewarding day!

MENU for week 14th June 2021*

<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>
Penne with meatballs	Chicken and coriander pilaf with wholemeal rice	Sausages, onions, mash potato	Penne with broccoli pesto, parmesan and chicken	Home-made pizza with sausages and aubergines and chili
Spinach with olive oil	Green salad with tomatoes	Broccoli with olive oil	Green salad with tomatoes	Rocket and tomato salad
Greek yoghurt and fresh fruit	Greek yoghurt and fresh fruit	Fruit; home-made cookies	Greek yoghurt and fresh fruit	Greek yoghurt and fruit

*In subsequent issues we will publish the upcoming menus for the weeks ahead.

New Teacher

From the next academic year we are happy to welcome a new SEN teacher and acting SENCO to the Bridge SEN School. Rosalind Broughton has been working with SEN learners for many years and has a keen interest in the transition to adulthood for autistic and LD learners. We look forward to welcoming her in the school community.

New Film Adaptation of The Reason Why I Jump

The autobiographical book by [Naoki Higashida](#) has now become a film. This adaptation by British Filmmaker, [Jerry Rothwell](#) is an ambitious documentary exploring autistic perception, both communicative and sensory. Focusing on five autistic individuals around the world rather than one, the film doesn't claim to speak for all autistic learners, but hopes that it will allow many neurotypical people a chance to consider autism in a fresh light. The film is already getting a lot of attention and will soon be available in the UK. See the trailer [here](#).

Our Activities Centre



This week in the activity centre, the clients have been exploring the parks around the centre and caring for the centre garden. Both activities provide opportunities for sensory exploration, social skills and community interaction. We have also been using TEACCH methodology to help our clients navigate community facilities like supermarkets and public toilets with less dependence on support.

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

THE BRIDGE ACADEMIC CALENDAR

EDUCATION

- End of term 23rd of July
- Beginning of New Academic Term 1st September

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

ACTIVITY CENTRE

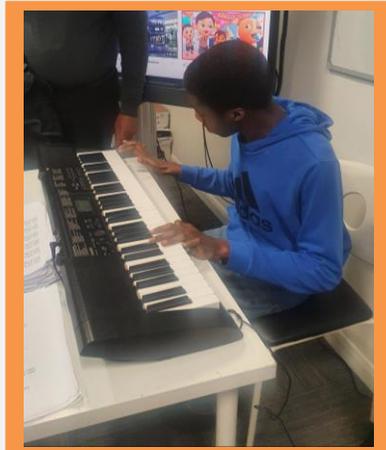
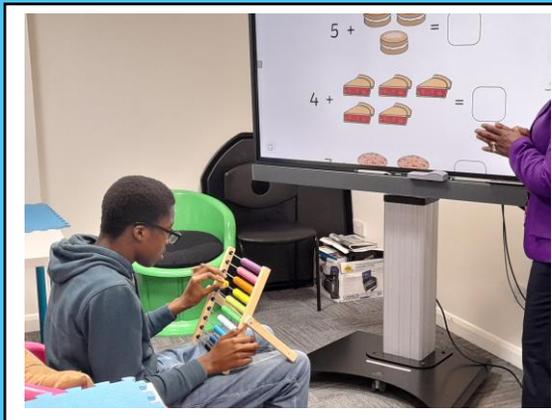
Our activity centre in Thornton Heath is open throughout the year, Except on Bank Holidays.

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.

- Weekly tests are carried out on learners and staff
 - 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**

Drawings/Pictures of the month



OPENING TIMES AT LIRAL VEGET COLLEGE LONDON

Liral Veget College Limited 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

“The pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity. The optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty.”

– Winston Churchill

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.