

# City of Rochester School Newsletter



## Autumn 2 2023 – Academic Year 2023-2024

### Introduction from the Head:

It has been a busy term and I would like to extend my thanks to all our parents and carers supporting our young people to get the best out of their education at City of Rochester School, working in partnership with you all makes such a difference.

Some highlights this term have been:

- Welcoming new pupils to the school
- Welcoming new staff to the school
- Pupils volunteering at Friston House Retirement Home
- Our end of term Christmas performance
- Signing our lease on the building for our new vocational/technical offer
- Christmas jumper day
- DaBase Music Workshops

A number of our pupils have trained to be Peer Mentors and we are very much looking forward to rolling this initiative out in the new year.

I would like to extend my thanks to one of our parents Michelle who has helped us out preparing lunches on a Friday. Thank you for giving up your time, it really is appreciated. If we have any more parents who have any spare time and would like to help out in school, then please let me know.

As we look forward to Christmas and spending time with loved ones, it is also a time for reflection. I know that some pupils and indeed staff have lost loved ones this year. Our thoughts go out to you all at this time of year.

On behalf of us all at City of Rochester School, we wish you a wonderful Christmas break. We look forward to welcoming all our pupils back to school on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

Alicja Emmett  
Headteacher

### Safeguarding:

If you have any concerns about the safety or welfare of a child, please call our safeguarding team on

016434 570706 in school hours or 0794 7144640 out of hours.

Our safeguarding and anti-bullying policies can be found on the school website

[www.cityofrochesterschool.org/policies](http://www.cityofrochesterschool.org/policies) and also on the school Facebook page.

### What is Cyberbullying?

- Using e-mail, chat rooms, websites and other forms of *electric communication* to:
  - send mean-spirited messages
  - make cruel and harmful remarks about individuals
  - post unflattering or derogatory photos
  - make direct threats or encourage acts of violence
  - sexually harass



### Key Dates

**Term 2:**  
06/11/23-  
14/12/23

**Christmas Break:**  
15/12/23-  
03/01/24

**Term 3:**  
04/01/24-  
09/02/24

**Half Term:**  
12/02/24-  
16/02/24

**Term 4:**  
19/02/24-  
28/03/24

**Easter break:**  
29/03/24-  
15/04/24

**Term 5:**  
16/04/24-  
24/05/24

**Bank Holidays:**  
25/12/23  
26/12/23  
01/01/24  
29/03/24  
01/04/24

## Peer Mentors:

A group of pupils volunteered to be Peer Mentors and took part in a 2 day training programme delivered by Salus. Our mentors will go on to support pupils across school. We are very excited to be able to roll this out early next year and our Peer Mentors are keen to get started. Benefits of peer mentoring are:

- Improve communication skills
- Increase self-esteem and confidence
- Encourage and develop peer relationships
- Increase ability to understand and empathise with others
- Develop decision making skills
- Develop conflict resolution skills
- Instil a sense of responsibility
- Develop a sense of community and belonging

## Pen Pals:

Before the summer holidays, one of our teachers, Georgia spoke to all classes about her trip to Bali. During the trip, Georgia planned to volunteer at two schools. She asked students if they would like to draw a picture or write a letter to give to 'Pen pals' on the other side of the world. The students wrote letters talking about life in the UK, school in the UK and their hobbies. Whilst in Bali, Georgia gave the letters and pictures to the Bali children, and they responded. These were then shared with classes and teachers.



## DaBase:

Pupils from across the school have taken part in a music workshop this term and have been working on how to write lyrics, produce a piece of music and work collaboratively in a team. Pupils have produced a piece of music for the end of term Christmas performance.



## Placements:

Pupils continue to thrive out on their various placements. At Squirrels Riding School and at Creepy Claws, pupils continue to make progress towards their qualifications; at Catch 22, one of our pupils is making excellent progress on her hair and beauty programme. A new work experience placement at Gillingham Street Angels Café in Chatham is a recent addition to our offer and we have two pupils working there in a hospitality and catering capacity. Well done to our pupils for their hard work and levels of engagement.



## Equality and Diversity Calendar:

Our Cultural & Diversity Calendar celebrates and commemorates important dates across the year as a whole school. This term we have had Anti-Bullying Week, with the theme being 'Make a noise about bullying!' Pupils took part in various workshops and discussions across the school, including drawing an outline of a person and taking turns to write how that person may feel if they were being bullied. They also wore and designed odd socks to show that it is okay to be different. There were some great posters designed to share their feelings about bullying.

Pupils dressed up for Children in Need, raising money to donate. They learnt where the money goes and how it helps others. Pupils and staff all enjoyed Christmas Jumper Day. They ate a Christmas dinner with their peers and enjoy lots of fun Christmas activities on the day.



## Life Skills lessons:

This term's life skills lessons have focused on Community. The pupils have one week learning in school and the next week offsite, visiting various locations to learn in different environments.

The offsite trips have included a visit to a charity cafe to order food, a walk in Rochester to find the various charity shops and to learn about who they are raising money for and why people volunteer, and pupils have worked with Medway Council's Green Spaces team litter picking at a local park. They will be finishing the term with a Christmas shopping trip to Bluewater where they will have an opportunity to buy gifts for family members.

In school, they have been learning about the benefits of volunteering and have designed a mascot for the Green Spaces litter picking team.





Some of the older pupils in Earth Class requested to study for ASDAN short courses. They researched and chose their own courses and we are very proud of how they have taken responsibility for their own learning. Charli chose to study 'Citizenship'. She says that she chose this course as it will give her "more understanding of the people around me."

Alfie P chose to study 'Road Wise'. This is a varied and interesting course. Alfie says he is keen "to learn more about the impact of roads on the environment."

Zac chose to study 'Manufacturing'. This complements the work he is doing in Construction lessons.

Grace is continuing to study 'Animal Care'. Grace takes great pride in the presentation of her work. Pupils have made a fantastic start to their courses, developing independent research skills and showing a mature attitude to their studies.

### City of Rochester School College (CoRC):

We are planning to open our new vocational/technical space towards the end of January 2024. A number of pupils from KS4/KS5 will be transferring to the classroom spaces on the first floor as we prepare these pupils for the world of work, and the next stages of their pathways together with a full integrated life skills programme. All pupils who take part in vocational studies such as construction trades will have their lessons at the new facility on the ground floor. We look forward to welcoming our parents to visit the space early in the new year.

### Trustee News:

Trustees came to school to carry out a Deep Dive on Personal Development in the school. They met with a number of pupils, staff and parents. Thanks to all our parents who came along and were open and honest with their feedback about our wonderful school. Trustees were delighted with their findings and are very proud of all we do.

### Community Projects:

This term pupils at Eternal Lakes have been asked to build a duck House. They had lots of great ideas and settled on a duck house modelled on Rochester Castle. They have built a model of their design and have visited several DIY stores looking at where best to purchase the raw materials needed to build the full-size duck house. The next job is to work out how to make it float and then to build and paint the house.

### Hello & Goodbye:

We welcome Nadine, our new Performing Arts teacher and to Niz, our new Phase Leader to the team, both will be joining us in January.

We say goodbye to Ben from our learning support team who is moving back to Australia and Jo D'Amiral, who is moving onto a new school. We wish them both all the best in their new ventures.

*hello*

*Goodbye!*