09.01.2026 Issue No: 1180 The Link

Charles Darwin School

Aspire - Endeavour - Achieve

Headlines

A warm welcome back to all students, and Happy New Year to everyone. I hope you had a restful and enjoyable Christmas break, and that students have returned feeling energised and ready for the Spring term.

The start of a new year is a great opportunity for reflection and goal setting. At school, we encourage students to look back on their achievements from last year and set meaningful personal targets or New Year's resolutions for the months ahead. These might include joining a new club, maintaining attendance above 95%, developing a positive attitude to learning, or focusing more on wellbeing, sports, and healthy lifestyle choices. I encourage you to discuss these goals with your child and support them in staying motivated throughout the year.

This term will be a busy one, particularly for students preparing for upcoming public examinations. Staff are working closely with these students to ensure they feel confident and have a clear, structured approach to their revision. To further support them, we will once again be offering a range of revision sessions, including our Easter Revision school. I strongly encourage parents to take advantage of these valuable opportunities. Further details will be shared soon.

Wednesday 14th January Staff Training Day (INSET) – School closed to students
On Wednesday 14th January the school will be closed to students for staff training, which helps us continue to provide the best support and teaching for your child. Year 11 and 13 students will have work set via Satchel One and are encouraged to use the day productively to support their exam preparation.

Reminder to parents: School Closures
We ask that parents always check the official school website or Instagram for accurate information about school closures due to severe weather. Some Google searches may show the school as closed when viewed outside of opening hours (this is the same for shops and other organisations).
Key points:
- If there is **no message via official communication channels**, the school is **open**.
- The school will **always try to remain open in snowy conditions** whenever possible.

Mr Smith, Headteacher

Severe Weather Conditions

Charles Darwin School will stay open if at all possible when there is snow. The decision to close is not taken lightly and will be made with the health and safety of children and staff, many of whom do not live locally. We will try to make a decision by **7:30am** and communicate this through:

* **The school website - www.cdarwin.com (not the main school switchboard)**
* **X - x.com/CDarwinschool**
* **Instagram - www.instagram.com/CDarwinschool**

All students are expected to check Satchel One to complete school work from home

Otherwise - Students should wear appropriate clothing i.e. coat, hat, gloves and come to school. Suitable footwear to cope with pavements may be necessary if snow and /or ice are on the ground.
School shoes must be brought to change into.
Keep warm and safe on your journey

Transport
You are advised to check local transport information if you go to or from school by bus. The school will liaise with school bus companies to check whether the services are likely to be disrupted.

If weather conditions deteriorate whilst the school is in session, we will endeavour to contact parents via the website, social media and Call parent (txt).

There is a policy for users of the school minibus which parents/students concerned should be aware.

Year 9 Visit to the National Theatre

On Wednesday 7th January, 30 year 9 students visited the National Theatre on London's South Bank. Students went on a backstage tour learning about the 3 different theatre spaces in the building.

Students saw how they differ from each other and the different technical capabilities each space has for example they learnt about the revolving stage floor in the Olivier theatre, and the titled stage floor in the Lyttelton theatre. Students went backstage to where the dressing rooms were and saw props being made and set being painted. Students learnt about the different career pathways in theatre and saw the scale of work that goes on backstage to bring a professional production to life.

After lunch, students watched a performance of "Ballet Shoes". The show is based on the children's book and tells the story of 3 adopted sisters and their hopes and dreams as they grow up. The play was very imaginatively staged with lots of moving set, projection, and role swapping.

All the students were a pleasure to be with and were brilliant ambassadors for the school.

Miss Currie

Business Trip

On 16th December, 20 business students went to Chelsea Football Club for a fun day out to see how the club conducts business. This was due to students making progress throughout the year, coming to revision club after school, completing all their homework and being on track to get good grades at GCSE.

They learnt about marketing, sales, human resources and the finance that goes into making a football club a success. Taking a tour of the grounds, visiting the media box and sitting where some of the biggest players in the world have sat was just some of the highlights.

There will be plenty more trips to come from the business team for all GCSE and A-level business students – all we ask is that students continue to revise for tests, engage with the lessons, come to revision club for extra support and complete all homework for a chance of being selected. Next time it could be you.

Mrs North

CDS Library

2026 is the Year of Reading!

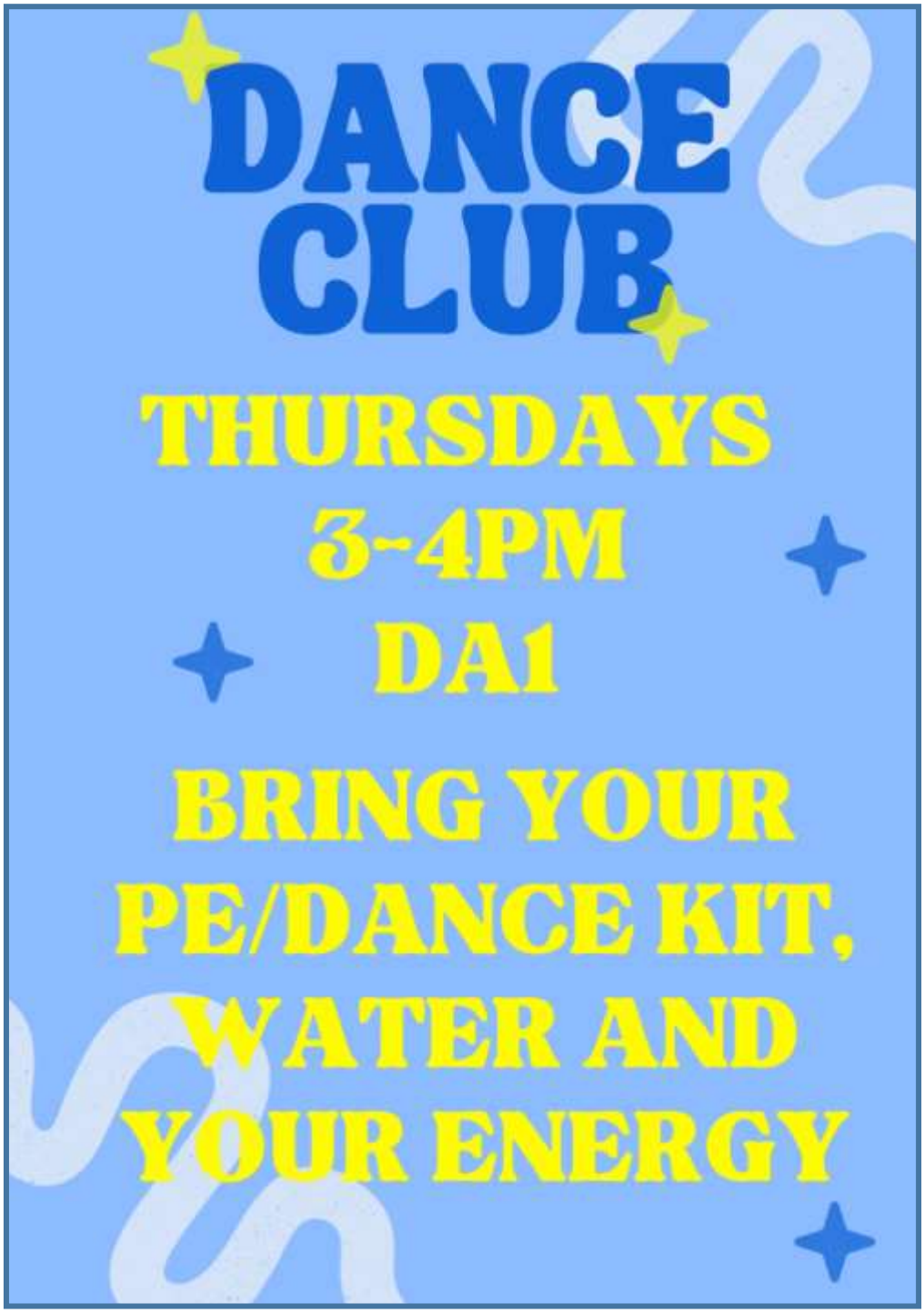
Students are encouraged to set a personal reading goal for the year and share it by adding a Post-it note to our library display.
Goals might include reading more often, exploring a new genre, finishing a favourite series, or discovering new authors.

We are asking families to support this goal by:

- Talking with students about what they enjoy reading
- Encouraging daily or weekly reading time at home
- Visiting the local library together when possible

Let's make 2026 a year full of great books and stories!
Happy reading!

Mrs Waite
Library Supervisor



Year 8 Duty Pupil

Frankie Johns
Alfie Webb
Amelia Wells
Elsie Laird
Maisie-Boo Williams
Daisie Wickham
Elias Richmond
Calum Giles
Poppy Witt-Morris

Student Services Duty Pupils

Maisie Cannon
Ava Ballard
Riley Selman
Jay Ngyou
Salome Ocampo Berney

They have been fantastic this week, and their help has been invaluable.

Attendance

Congratulations to the following Tutor Groups who have the highest attendance for week ending 19 December 2025.

7HEm/KSa	98.1%
8LBy	94.2%
9ARo/SFe	90%
10PDg/JSt	91.9%
11SAr	88.9%
12ARu	98.8%
13DWa	92.2%

As you are aware attendance is linked to a student's attainment and at Charles Darwin we work closely with the parents to keep students' attendance levels as high as possible. Please could we ask that if your child feels unwell in the morning (headache etc.) and they do feel better later on, that you send them in. This will benefit them as they will not miss a whole days learning.

Please can we also remind parents to call in before 8.30am for each day of your child's absence and clearly stating your child's name and form. Please do not rely on receiving a text from us chasing their absence.

A reminder that pupils **should not** contact home if they feel unwell but should be seen and assessed by Mrs Booth, our Health Care Lead.

Parents should be aware that pupils will not be sent home without being seen by Mrs Booth in the first instance.

Students Services Team

Pupil absence line: 01959 574043

Reminder – please can parents call the absence line each day of your child's absence **before 8.30am**, clearly stating your child's name and form. Please do not rely on receiving a text from us chasing their absence.

If you wish to report your child's absence, **OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS**, please call the school on **01959 574043** and when prompted to enter the extension number, please **dial 1** and you will be taken through to the student absence line where you can leave a message regarding your child's absence. This ensures we know your child is safe and their absence is authorised where possible.
Thank you for your support.

Parents should be advised that the school does not provide students with Paracetamol unless it is a medical emergency. We have a limited supply in school and prefer that medication wherever possible is administered at home.

Mrs Booth
Health Care Lead

CHARLES DARWIN PTA ARE DELIGHTED TO ANNOUNCE THEIR NEXT EVENT...

Bingo!

Friday 6th February.
Eyes down @ 7.30pm

Music from our DJ after the Bingo concludes!

Tickets £10 per person which includes one book of tickets
Bring your own food and drink.
Extra games and dabbers will be available.
Book Online Now: https://friends-of-charles-darwin-school.sumupstore.com

Dates for the Diary

January
14th January - INSET DAY
14th January - Trip: Year 10/Year 11 Drama Trip to see Blood Brothers, Churchill Theatre
16th January - Trip: Science & Technology Challenge Day Final - University of East London
22nd January- Immunisations - Year 9
23rd January - Trip: Year 10/Year 11 Science Live, London
29th January - Year 11 Parents' Evening

February
4th February - PTA Meeting
11th February - Year 9 Parents' Evening
16th-20th February - Half term
23rd February - INSET DAY

The SEN team at Charles Darwin:

Mrs L Thom, SENDCo
Mr B Frost, Assistant SENCo
Mrs J Patten, Senior Learning Support Assistant
Miss R Higgins, SEN Administrator

Should you need to make contact with us, please use the inbox below:
send@cdarwin.com

Term Dates 2025-2026

Spring 2026

Monday 5th January – Friday 13th February

Half term: Monday 16th February – Friday 20th February

Monday 23rd February – Friday 27th March

Easter Holiday: Monday 30th March - Friday 10th April

Notes:
Good Friday 3rd April 2026
Easter Monday 6th April 2026

Summer 2026

Monday 13th April – Friday 22nd May

[Monday 4th May Bank Holiday]

Half term: Monday 25th May – Friday 29th May

Monday 1st June – Friday 17thJuly

INSET Days:

Wednesday 14th January 2026

Monday 23rd February 2026

Friday 22nd May 2026

Friday 26th June 2026

Term Dates 2026-2027

Inicio Educational Trust Schools

Term Dates 2026-2027

Term 1

Start:	Tuesday 1st September 2026
Finish:	Friday 16th October 2026
Autumn break:	Monday 19th October 2026 to Friday 30th October 2026

Term 2

Start:	Monday 2nd November 2026
Finish:	Friday 18th December 2026
Christmas break:	Monday 21st December 2026 to Friday 1st January 2026

Term 3

Start:	Monday 4th January 2027
Finish:	Friday 12th February 2027
February break:	Monday 15th February 2027 to Friday 19th February 2027

Term 4

Start:	Monday 22nd February 2027
Finish:	Thursday 25th March 2027
Spring break:	Friday 26th March 2027 to Friday 9th April 2027

Term 5

Start:	Monday 12th April 2027
Finish:	Friday 28th May 2027
Early May Bank Holiday:	*Monday 3rd May 2027*
May break:	Monday 31st May 2027 to Friday 4th June 2027

Term 6

Start:	Monday 7th June 2027
Finish:	Wednesday 21st July 2027

Professional Development days will be allocated through the academic year