05.06.2026 Issue No: 1197 The Link

Charles Darwin School

Aspire - Endeavour - Achieve

Headlines

Welcome Back
A warm welcome back to all students and families following the half term break. I hope you were able to enjoy the wonderful weather and are feeling recharged for the final half term of the school year.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank again the staff who gave their time to support our year 11 and 13 students over the break with revision sessions.

Attitude to revision and exams has been good and it will be important to keep this going until the last exams are complete. Revision sessions continue in school, focusing on our predictions for what will be in the remaining papers. Please ensure your year 11 and 13 child gets to these sessions to ensure they make the most of final exam preparations.

Year 7 Induction Evening
It was a pleasure to talk with our new parents and speak to them about joining our Charles Darwin Community during the Induction Evening held on Wednesday. There was a real sense of excitement about the journey ahead, with many parents already expressing enthusiasm to get involved and support the school and our PTA.

Parent Survey 2026
I would like to thank parents that responded to the survey. We had 275 respondents, slightly higher than last year. The feedback will be shared with parents, staff and governors over the next few weeks.

Aston Smith, Headteacher

DofE Success at CDS

Through their volunteering, Charles Darwin DofE students contributed 1,443 hours to the local community between 1st April 2025 and 31st March 2026, delivering an estimated social value of £10,894. This achievement highlights the positive difference our students continue to make beyond the classroom.

If you haven't thought about DofE before, express your interest. Have a go, get involved. Learn new skills, build your CV. Take part!

Mr Culver
Lead DofE

Art and Design GCSE Development

On Thursday, we were visited by Mr Mike John, Senior Strategy Manager for Creative Curriculum at Pearson (one of the examination boards for GCSE and A Level qualifications). He met with Art and Textiles students at Charles Darwin as part of the development process for the new GCSE Art and Design qualifications.

Mr John spoke with a number of Year 10, Year 11 and Year 12 Art and Textiles students, asking a range of questions to gather their views and experiences of the current GCSE qualifications. Questions included: *Does the course meet your expectations? What do you enjoy about the GCSE assessment? What changes would you make?*

It was a valuable opportunity for our students' voices to be heard and to know that their feedback will contribute to the development process. Pearson is working with the Department for Education and Ofqual (the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation) to develop the new GCSE Art and Design specifications, which are due to be launched from 2028.

Mrs Broad
Head of Art & Textiles

CDS Library

Fiction for Every You
This month, our library is proud to feature a vibrant new display celebrating diverse voices, identities, and experiences through fiction. The display highlights books that explore themes of self-discovery, belonging, friendship, family, and love with a variety of engaging titles encouraging everyone to discover stories that reflect the many ways people experience the world.

Stories help us understand ourselves and others. By sharing books that celebrate a variety of perspectives and experiences, we aim to create a welcoming space where every reader can find relatable characters, journeys, and voices.

Happy reading!

Mrs Waite
Library Supervisor

Art Competition

Art Department Competition for the PTA

Design your own extruded Vase

DESIGN ENTRIES TO BE HANDED TO THE ART DEPARTMENT

TUESDAY 16TH JUNE

- 3 winners will be chosen by the PTA
- Winners will be able to create their final piece using our new clay extruder donated by Charles Darwin PTA at no cost
- Draw your design on to A4 paper

Make sure you include your name and form

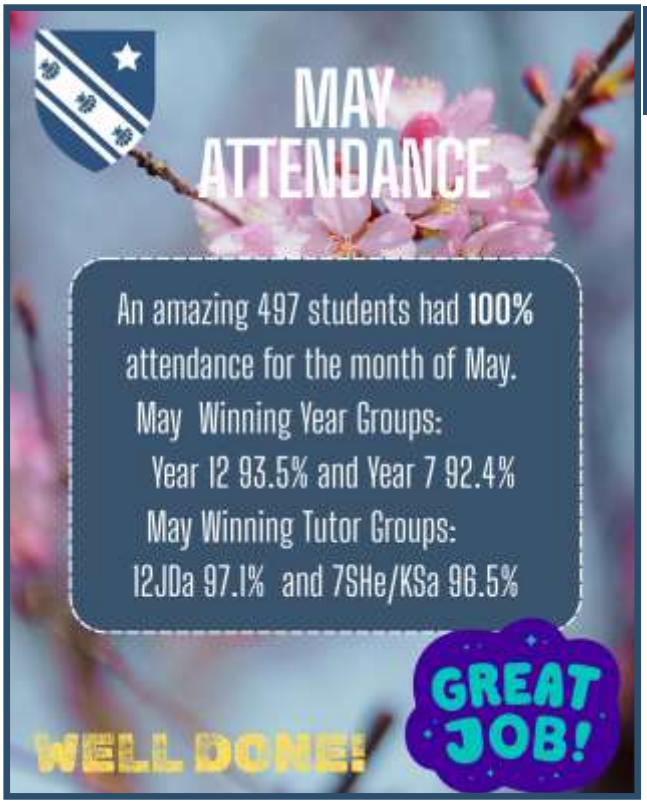
We have a variety of clubs and extra curriculum activities being run this term.

Details of all the clubs can be found on our website or click the link below:

Charles Darwin School - Clubs

A reminder to parents that as well as the LINK and the 'latest news' section on the website, you can follow the latest events happening in our school community on:

@CDarwinSchool



Attendance

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.

Hay Fever Season - Medication for Students
Hay Fever and the symptoms for children studying at school can be very uncomfortable, please ensure that if your child suffers with Hay Fever that they take any relevant medication/antihistamine before school. The school is unable to provide this medication to students.
Thank you

Mrs Booth
Health Care Lead

Dates for the Diary

June
15th June - Trip: Year 10 GCSE PE Kayaking Trip, Danson Park
16th June - Trip: Year 10 GCSE PE Kayaking Trip, Danson Park
16th June - Trip: Year 10 & Year 12 Drama Theatre Trip - 2:22 Ghost Story, Churchill Theatre
16th June - PTA Meeting, 7.30pm, The Crown
18th-19th June - Trip: Bronze DofE Expedition - Bewl Water
25th June - Year 11 Prom
26th June - INSET DAY
30th June - Sixth Form Taster Day
30th June - Sixth Form Parent's Information Evening

July
1st-3rd July - Trip: Silver DofE Qualifying Expedition, Adamswell Scout Site
3rd July - Sixth Form Summer Ball
6th July - Year 10 Walk/Run Charity Event
10th July - Sports Day
15th July - Year 10 Mock Interviews
15th-16th July - Trip: Year 7/8 Daytrip to France
15th July - Personal Development Day 1
16th July - Personal Development Day 2
17th July - End of term
Celebration of Success Assemblies, early finish

Exam dates:
8th-12th June - year 8/9 exams

8th-12th June - Year 7 exams
15th-19thJune - Year 7 exams

15th-19thJune - Year 10 exams
22nd-26thJune - Year 10 exams

15th-19thJune - Year 12 exams
22nd-26thJune - Year 12 exams

Year 8 Duty Pupil

Barrie Allen	Nizar Bouchikh
Mia Dyer	Millie Austin
Faerydae Severn	Lyla Chapman
Ava Hayden	Florence Jarred
Josh Smith-Creed	Liam Trimmings

Student Services Duty Pupils

Tyler Gregson
Katie Dauris
Angel Mensah
Layla Marsh
Edward Bell

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

Term Dates 2025-2026

Summer 2026

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

Monday 1st June – Friday 17thJuly

INSET Days:

Friday 26th June 2026

Term Dates 2026-2027

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
	Staff Development Day Tuesday & Wednesday 1st & 2nd September 2026

Term 2

Start:	Monday 2nd November 2026
Finish:	Friday 18th December 2026
Christmas break:	Monday 21st December 2026 to Friday 1st January 2027
	Staff Development Day Monday 2nd November 2026

Term 3

Start:	Monday 4th January 2027
Finish:	Friday 12th February 2027
February break:	Monday 15th February 2027 to Friday 19th February 2027
	Staff Development Day Wednesday 13th January 2027

Term 4

Start:	Monday 22nd February 2027
Finish:	Thursday 25th March 2027
Spring break:	Friday 26th March 2027 to Friday 9th April 2027
	Staff Development Day Friday 12th & Monday 22nd February 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
	**No inset Day this term*

Term 6

Start:	Monday 7th June 2027
Finish:	Wednesday 21st July 2027
	Staff Development Day Friday 25th June 2027

**Term 5 Staff Development Day – to be chosen by Headteacher*

There will be no inset day for CDS in Term 5 – we will hold our inset day on Friday 12th February

Apprenticeship Information Evening

London South East Colleges is hosting an **Apprenticeship Information Evening** at Bromley on Monday 15th June.

This event is designed to give parents and students clear, practical guidance on apprenticeships - whether someone is just starting to explore options or ready to apply.

Event details:
London South East Colleges, Bromley Campus, Rookery Lane, Bromley BR2 8HE
Monday 15 June
5:30 PM – 7:00 PM (presentation begins at 5:45 PM)

What attendees will gain:

- A full overview of how apprenticeships work, including eligibility
- Insight into current vacancies and progression opportunities
- The chance to speak directly with our Apprenticeship team
- Guidance for parents on how to support their child's decisions
- Advice on applications and next steps

This is a great opportunity for parents and students to feel confident about apprenticeships as a pathway and to get their questions answered in person.

Please note: Due to limited space, each booking allows one ticket, with the option to bring one guest.

RESERVE A SPOT HERE