



Oak Lodge Newsletter

5th October 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you are all enjoying this wonderful late-summer weather, long may it last!

Last week, we took our school photos. Thank you for ensuring that all our pupils looked so smart for the occasion.

Looking ahead, our Parents' Evening is coming up on Tuesday 20th October. This evening offers a valuable opportunity to meet with your child's pastoral teacher and discuss how they are settling into the new academic year. The school office will be in touch shortly with further details.



Wishing you all a wonderful week ahead.

Caroline Rowlandson

Important Dates:

Parents Evening	20 th October 2026
Half term holidays	26th October – 30th October
Christmas Fair	10 th December 2026
Last day of Autumn term:	18th December 2026



PHOENIX HOUSE
RESIDENTIAL SERVICE

Residential Newsletter

This week at Phoenix House we have been busy with our cooking workshops and enjoyed eating it all!

We also took a group of students to have a chilled evening ride on the Cable Car



20 FREE tickets for Deaf students to attend + 20% OFF their accompanying tickets (for parents/guardians)
20% OFF COUPON 20 x 20% off for those without free tickets

Please see the poster, festival page and trailer below for event details:

Link to Trailer: [DR Festival Trailer](#)

Link to our Website: [Festival Page](#)



DEAF RAVE FESTIVAL

ACTIVITIES

ARTS AND CRAFTS | CINEMA |
FACEPAINTING | PET CORNER |
POP UP ARCADE | TECH HUB |
TREASURE HUNT | WORKSHOPS

PERFORMERS

DEAF MIMO | DJ JEFFO |
ERIN DANCER |
JALAL THE MAGICIAN |
LYDIA MACKETT | MC GEEZER |
MUSIC WITH SARAH | PIRATE CREW |
YOUTH MUSIC TAKEOVER | ZUMBA

FAMILY FESTIVAL

ALL AGES WELCOME

11 AM – 5 PM

31ST OCTOBER 2026

RICH MIX, LONDON, E16LA

CHILDREN UNDER 3 GO FREE

SPONSORS



TICKETS VIA SKIDDLE





Katherine O'Grady is currently working with the Education Department at **Micro:Bit** who are keen to work with a range of disabilities within education. They asked if we could film two of our students signing the newly developed BSL signs for '**Micro:Bit**' and '**MakeCode**'. The signs were developed by SSC to promote the **International Week of Deaf People**:

<https://www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk/BSL/computinghome.html>

Sebastian and Ibrahim signed '**Micro:Bit**' and '**MakeCode**', and their videos is now published.

Please praise them for being so brave and for representing the school so positively.

As a result of this collaboration, the Micro:Bit Foundation has kindly offered to donate a number of **Micro:Bits** for us to use in the Computing Department as part of our new curriculum. This will provide a fantastic opportunity for our students to develop their pre-coding skills.

Please take a look and follow this link on LinkedIn:

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/micro-bit-educational-foundation_new-signs-for-microbit-and-makecode-activity-7507871862773829634-lqLi

I will also share the video during Assembly on Thursday afternoon so that all students can view it.

Laura, deaf BSL researcher working on a research project with Open Inclusion for Ofcom.

We're looking for 3 deaf young BSL users 12-15yrs to participate in research about access to TV/streaming, in early October.

I'm wondering if Oak Lodge School can support us with recruitment, by sharing info (as below) with parents?

Hello! Ofcom are looking for deaf young BSL users 12-15yrs to participate in research (in October) about access to TV/streaming. Participants would receive a voucher to thank them for their time. Interested? Parents can add contact details here (more info in link with BSL):

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RHXVG2N?S1=S1>



We want to understand how deaf young people use live TV and streaming services. We also want to hear about what works well and what could be better.

FREE British Sign Language Courses



Small friendly classes

Next class starts Wednesday 4th November

Morning or afternoon - for six weeks



When:	Course:	Venue:
9.30 – 12.00	Beginners BSL	Battersea Arts Centre Lavender Hill SW11 5TN
1.00 – 3.30	Beginners BSL	

Book your free place today!

Contact: Sue Hillyar

Text/WhatsApp/video: 07568 230681

Email: shillyar@oaklodge.wandsworth.sch.uk

Wandsworth
Lifelong
Learning



ONLINE SAFETY NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2026

CapCut

CapCut is a video editing app. Their services are intended for those over the age of 13 (those under the age of 18 must have consent from their parent/legal guardian). It is rated as 13+ on the App store.

What can I do on CapCut?

CapCut is used as a video and image editing tool allowing users to edit their videos/ images as well as add music, sound effects, text and stickers.

What should I be aware of?

- The templates are user generated, therefore they may not always be appropriate for your child to view, for example may contain adult themes.
- CapCut includes access to a library of music that may include explicit lyrics.
- Premium content – CapCut does include in-app purchases/monthly subscriptions to allow users access to premium content.

Further information

Wayne Denner provides further information about the social side of CapCut including a comments section:

<https://www.waynedenner.com/cap-cut-parents-guide/>

Would you like to read this newsletter in a different language? You

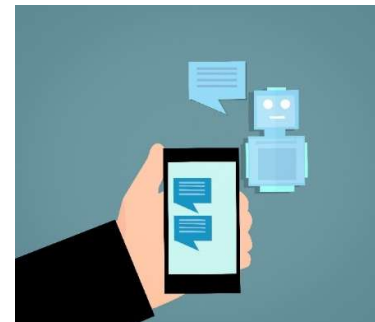
can use the translate tool on our web version:

<https://www.knowsleycitylearningcentres.org.uk/october->

AI companions

What are AI companions?

AI companions are artificial intelligence services designed to interact with users to simulate friendship or romantic relationships. There are many different AI companions available, accessible via apps or websites. **Many of these apps are intended for adults and have an age rating of 18+.**



Why are children using AI companions?

There are many reasons a child might want to use an AI companion, including:

- To ask advice and questions that they may be embarrassed to ask another person. It may be easier to talk to an AI companion, so it is imperative children understand the difference between AI and real people.
- They feel lonely and are looking for friendship.
- Children may just be curious and want to try new technology.

What should I be aware of?

- **Age restrictions:** it is important to check the age rating to see if it is appropriate for your child.
- **Inappropriate content:** there is often a lack of moderation so users could be exposed to content/language that is not suitable for their age.
- **Emotional dependence:** AI companions are designed to act as a friend, encouraging an emotional dependence. This may lead to your child becoming over reliant on the service. A chatbot should never replace a parent, a medical professional or other trusted adult.
- **Relationships:** repeated use of AI may influence a child's understanding of relationships and consent in real life.
- **Privacy and personal information:** children should not share personal or confidential information with AI companions.

What can I do?

- Check the age rating and any privacy settings.
- Set up appropriate parental controls on their devices/ broadband.
- It is crucial to have regular conversations with your child about the risks outlined above and about what they are doing online. Ensure your child knows that they should talk to you or another trusted adult if anything concerns them.

Further information

<https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/ai-chatbots-and-virtual-friends-how-parents-can-keep-children-safe/>

Discord

Discord is a social networking app originally designed for gamers, but is now used by lots of different people to **chat to each other online**. The minimum age to access Discord is 13.

The App store rates it as 17+.

Discord is made up of servers, which are spaces for groups to chat, upload files and share images etc. Anybody can set up a server, and it can be set as either public or private. Users can video call and send direct messages to other individuals or groups. Children who play online games such as Fortnite may use Discord to chat whilst playing the game (**rather than using the game's own chat facility**). In-app purchases are available through Discord's subscription service called Nitro.



How can I make it safer?

Discord have created a Family Centre, which provides further information about what Discord is, as well as information about different safety settings available:

<https://discord.com/safety-family-center>

As always, we would encourage you to chat to your child to see why they use Discord and ensure that they know how to block users and what to do if they see any inappropriate content. It is important to be aware that Discord does include video/voice calling which cannot be filtered. **Discord is used by an array of users and therefore adult content can be found on Discord, as well as inappropriate language.** Discord have produced this article, which answers frequent questions:

<https://discord.com/safety-library>

5 fun online activities

Whilst we must be aware of the negative aspects of the internet, it's also important to remember that it can also be a great place to have fun or learn something new as a family. Why not try the following?



1. Play a game together.
2. Take a family quiz – it could be around the topic of online safety (e.g. from Childnet) or you could use Kahoot to create your own.
3. Learn something new – explore BBC Bitesize, National Geographic Kids or Khan Academy.
4. Create something – make a digital drawing or video.
5. Read an Audio book.

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date released 01.09.26. The inclusion of any links does not imply any affiliation with or endorsement of the linked websites, documents, or videos, nor are we claiming any ownership or copyright in the content of the linked materials.

Doki Doki Literature Club

Doki Doki Literature Club is a game that, due to its cartoon anime appearance, may appear to be a game suitable for all. However, as the game progresses, it contains much darker and potentially distressing themes. The game includes references to suicide, self-harm and death.

The App store rates it as 18+ as it has cartoon or fantasy violence and horror/fear themes as well as infrequent profanity and crude humour. The game is described as psychological horror. You should also be aware that the app also includes in app purchases.

The game's own website also states that it "is not suitable for children or those who are easily disturbed."

Please ensure you have set up appropriate parental controls on any devices and platforms that your child uses to ensure they can't access games that are not suitable for their age.

Happy Tree Friends

Happy Tree Friends is another animated series that might look harmless because of its cartoon graphics, but the programme contains violence, death and blood. Clips of Happy Tree Friends are also circulating on social media platforms.

As above, we would recommend that you have set up appropriate parental controls to limit exposure to content like this. Also, chat to your child about what they are watching online and ensure they know that if they do see something online that upsets them, then they should talk to you or another trusted adult.

Further information:

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/website-reviews/happy-tree-friends>

Special School Eyecare Service

School service information

Introduction

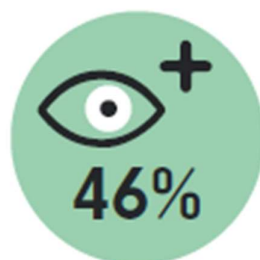
The NHS in England have committed to transforming eye care and vision for students and young people in special schools in England by delivering a **free**, eye examination **on the school premises** which will include the supply, fitting and support with glasses for every student who needs them.



Students with a learning disability and/or autism are 28x more likely to have eye health issues



44% of students have no history of eye care provision



46% of students have a significant eye problem



Please watch this short film to see the impact the service has had on a young man named Terence. 



When SeeAbility fitted Terence's glasses I was so happy, I was in tears of joy! It was incredible, the way they worked with him, the care was incredible, they were so gentle. This is life-changing for Terence. With his glasses he can see the world clearly. He is smiling all the time! You can see so much difference in him. It is like a miracle, that's the only way I can describe it. Without exaggeration, SeeAbility have given my son the gift of sight. I am so incredibly grateful.

Terence's Mum



We'd love to support your child's eye care at school. To do this, we need your consent – please scan the QR code or go to seeability.org/opt-in to complete the form, even if your child is being seen elsewhere.

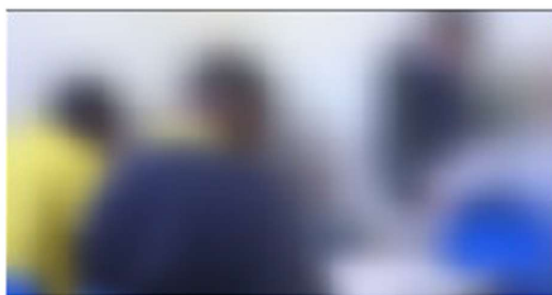


Why is an eye test important?

Children often don't say if they can't see well. Poor vision can stop them joining in or make it harder to move around safely.

Regular eye tests (at least once a year) check how well they can see, their eye health, and if they need glasses.

All students can have an eye test – they don't need to read or speak to take part.



Who carries out the eye checks?

Eye checks are done by a trained Eye Care Team, including an optometrist and a dispensing optician. They are specially trained to support students with learning disabilities and/or autism.

- **Optometrist:** checks eye health and whether glasses are needed.
- **Dispensing Optician:** measures for glasses, fits them well, and provides free frames, repairs, and support.

What happens during the eye check?

Eye checks take place at school, with a staff member supporting the student. Parents/carers are welcome to attend. The team helps the student feel safe and comfortable.

They will check:

- how well the student sees
- if glasses are needed
- how the eyes move and work together
- the health of the eyes

What happens after the eye check?



The team will send a clear, easy-to-read report to parents/carers and the school.

If needed, the student may be referred for further care, and information may be shared with other professionals to support their needs.

For further information, please contact: eye.clinics@seeability.org 

LIBRARY
HSIBIRB

Stories, Sign and Shine

FAMILY FESTIVAL



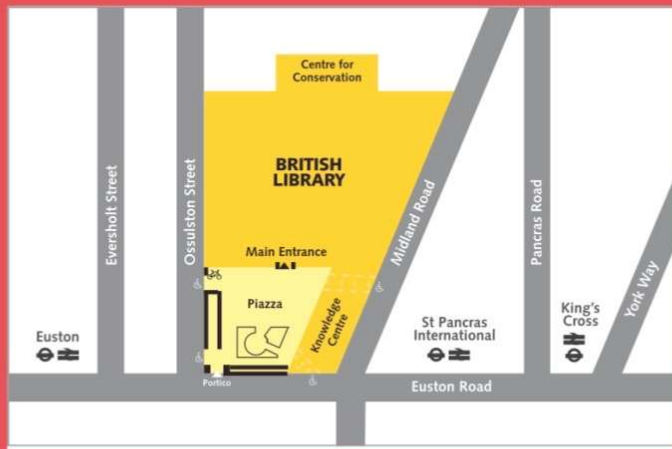
Saturday 17 October, 12.00 – 16.00

FREE | Drop in | All ages welcome

Enjoy an exciting family day inspired by books and stories – both real and imaginary – as you make, move, sign and explore.

This is a D/deaf accessible event delivered in British Sign Language and spoken English.





How to get here

The British Library
96 Euston Road
London NW1 2DB

• **King's Cross St Pancras and Euston**

Bus routes: 10, 30, 59, 73, 91, 205, 390 and 476

Changes to holiday free school meal vouchers

We are writing to inform you of a change to holiday Free School Meal (FSM) support, following national government policy changes.

Recent changes to the national rules on spending mean that, disappointingly, central government funding can no longer be used to provide holiday Free School Meal vouchers. As a result, Wandsworth Council is having to discontinue the holiday voucher scheme from the Summer 2026 school holidays onwards.

This change applies only to holiday vouchers and does not affect Free School Meal support during term time, which will continue as normal.

We recognise the importance of this support and remain committed to helping families access alternative provision.

Wandsworth Council will continue to provide a range of support for families, including:

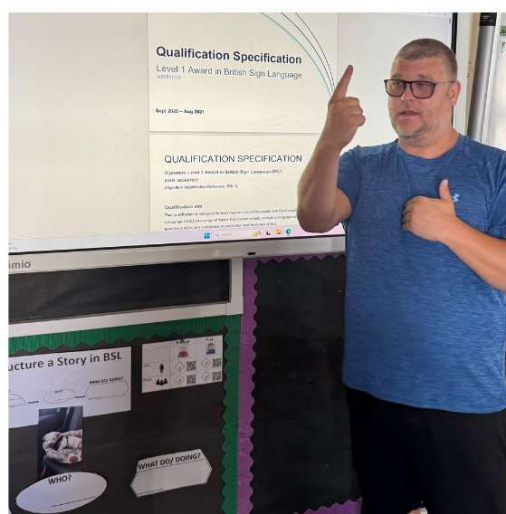
- Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme, which offers:
 - o Free, fun activities for eligible children and young people
 - o Healthy meals during sessions
 - o Opportunities to stay active, socialise and learn new skills
- Magic Breakfast holiday packs, available for families whose children attend schools participating in the Magic Breakfast scheme.

Further information about these programmes and how to access them is available on Wandsworth's Family Information Service website: fis.wandsworth.gov.uk.

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Signature accredited

BSL LEVEL 1 COURSE



Start your Sign Language journey today!

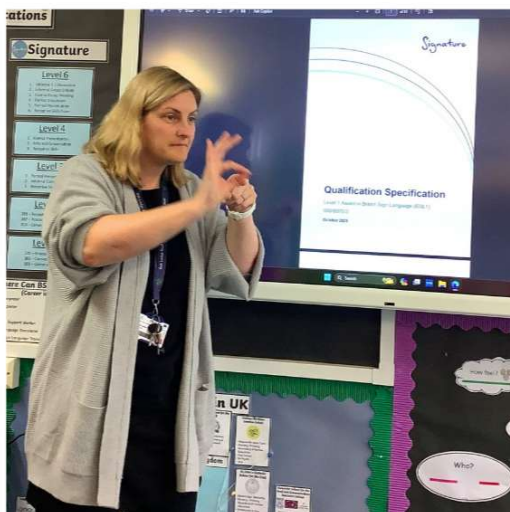


£550.00. October 2026
Tuesdays 5-7pm
At Oak Lodge School

To book your place email:
BSL@oaklodge.wandsworth.sch.uk

Signature accredited

BSL LEVEL 2 COURSE



Continue to develop your BSL skills today!



**£675.00. October 2026
Tuesdays 5-7pm
At Oak Lodge School**

To book your place email:
BSL@oaklodge.wandsworth.sch.uk



Oak Lodge School
Term Dates for Academic Year 2026/2027



Autumn Term	Date/s
Staff INSET Days	<i>Wednesday 2nd September 2026 (Staff only)</i> <i>Thursday 3rd September 2026 (Staff only)</i> <i>Friday 4th September 2026 (Staff only)</i>
First day of Autumn Term 1 (Pupils start)	Monday 7th September 2026
Half-term (School closed)	Monday 26th October – Friday 30th October 2026
First day of Autumn Term 2	Monday 2nd November 2026
Last day of Autumn term	Friday 18th December 2026
Spring Term	Date/s
First day of Spring term 1	Monday 4th January 2027
Half-term (School closed)	Monday 15th February– Friday 19 th February 2027
First day of Spring term 2	Monday 22nd February 2027
Last day of Spring term	Thursday 25 th March 2027
Summer Term	Date/s
First day of Summer term 1	Monday 12th April 2027
May Bank holiday (School closed)	Monday 3rd May 2027
Half term (School closed)	Monday 31st May 2027 – Friday 4th June 2027
First day of Summer term 2	Monday 7 th June 2027
Last day of Summer term	Thursday 22 nd July 2027

The timetable allows for the legal 195 school days. This includes the 190 days when the school must be open to pupils and 5 staff training days. The staff training and development days are decided by the school's governing body according to the school's development planning cycle. 2 Inset days are still TBC.



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