

ANCORA CASTLE PARK NEWSLETTER

Summer

Hello from us all here at Ancora Castle Park.

We have had a busy time since our last Newsletter. Our amazing Year 11 and post-16 learners have sat their GCSE exams which is a fantastic achievement. Many have had offers from their chosen colleges, and others are looking at alternative pathways, including apprenticeships. We wish them good luck with their future, and would love to hear how they are getting on over the coming years (admin@ancora.cheshire.sch.uk)

We have welcomed our largest cohort of post-16 learners to date this year. The course has been a great success with the young people growing in confidence over the year. They have been involved in various activities such as DofE and work experience, and have also been studying hard for functional skills and GCSEs. We say goodbye to some of our cohort and welcome new year 12s for September.

All of our learners have been taking part in a variety of activities over this academic year. The young people have been learning about caterpillars turning into butterflies while we wait for our very own caterpillars to sprout wings, attended careers fairs, volunteered at Spirit of the Herd and been to the Ellesmere Port Boat Museum for a water safety session. We have also had Gareth Cheeseman from ACET in to deliver RSE sessions with small groups.

I would like to personally thank all of the staff here at Castle Park who go that extra mile every day for every young person.

However, I could not sign off without saying good bye to our Headteacher Sian Thomas, who is retiring at the end of this academic year. Sian has led our school from strength to strength over the last few decades, and we would not be the service we are without her hard work and complete dedication to the young people. She will be missed.

A big thank you for all the parents and carers for the support we have had this year, and all the lovely end of term gifts we have already received.

Have a wonderful summer holiday and we look forward to welcoming the students back from Tuesday 2nd December.

Carli

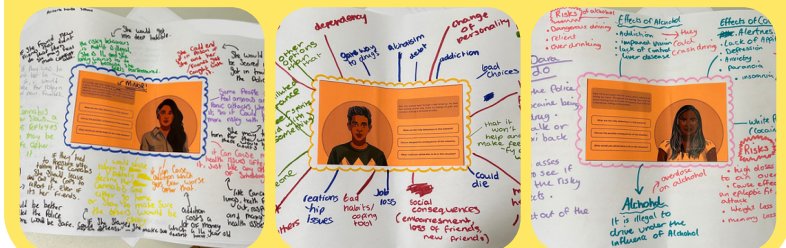
ART + DESIGN



Our year 11 students have completed their external exam and finalised their portfolios ready for submission. There has been some incredible work created over the duration of the course, from 3D sculptures to textile wall hangings and everything in between. We are immensely proud of all the art students in gaining what will be some excellent results! Well done everyone!

PSHE

This term has been focussed on looking after ourselves in PSHE, with students focussing on how to take care of their mental well-being. This has been especially important for the Year 11s whilst working towards their GCSEs. PSHE lessons have taken place in our outdoor classroom regularly this term, allowing students to enjoy the warmer weather and forge new friendships. Students have enjoyed creating their own breathing bracelets. Earlier in the term, students spent time studying the effects of drugs and alcohol and used independent research to produce informative posters on a range of topics.



REPTILES OFFROADING VISITS YEAR 11 LEAVERS



S.T.E.M

Students have completed a project about the environment in which they identified a concept that they were concerned about or positive actions that are used to help the environment. Another activity that students have completed is learning how to make windmills.



BOAT MUSEUM

The Y11 students enjoyed a trip to the National Waterway's Museum in Ellesmere Port. The museum showcased a number of boats and engineering tools; students got to go inside a barge and see how families would have lived and worked on the canals in early 20th century life. The highlight for most students was getting the opportunity to use an under water camera to look for fish and plant life and everyone enjoyed a go trying to make the next discovery! Thank you Sarah for hosting us again this summer.



MEET OUR NEW S.E.N.C.O

I am very excited to have joined such an amazing team at Ancora House School Castle Park. I can't wait to get to know all the young people and families and do all I can to support you through your learning journey. I have come from a post in a mainstream secondary school where I have been for the last 3 years. However before that, I worked for the medical education service in Trafford so coming to Ancora Castle Park feels like coming back to where my heart lies in education and supporting young people at a time when they need it most. It really is an amazing school with an amazing team who have made me feel so welcome already. Thank you for having me everyone.

Kerry

SPIRIT OF THE HERD LEAVERS PARTY

We were lucky enough to have some of the shetlands -Ruppert and Maddie- from Spirit of the Herd attend the Year 11 leavers whole school celebration.



LEAVERS ART



Year 11 leavers enjoyed an arty afternoon on Monday 16th June. We welcomed Kate, our Art Therapist in to explore a range of techniques to make a Year 11 jigsaw leavers mural. The young people started by testing their coordination using bilateral drawing. Then students used; collage, printing, paint, chalk and more to create their mural. Young people enjoyed getting creative after a busy exam period and the mural looks incredible.

"NOT SPORT'S DAY"



On Wednesday 18th June, Ancora House School held it's annual 'Not Sport's Day' event for our current year 11 student's. The weather was shining and the competitions were in full flow. There were several stations: from launch the rubber chicken the furthest; hula-hooping; team building games; grandfather's footsteps- to hook a duck (timed for extra competition) and lastly, downtime for the students to catch up with one another and relax. It was wonderful to be able to enjoy some time in nature and away from recent exam stress with GCSE's. The students (and staff) thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon!



YOUNG PEOPLES SERVICE SUMMER SCHEME

Young Peoples Service is planning to deliver a Future Focus Summer Scheme. The programme is aimed at young people age 16-19 who are currently not in employment, education or training or leaving Year 11 this summer and have not yet secured a post 16 placement for September. They will be delivering sessions one afternoon per week in the following locations: **Blacon - contact Lindsey Charnock, Chester - contact Sally Kemp, Ellesmere Port - contact Nicola Holyoak, and Winsford - contact Karen Entwistle.**

youngpeoplesservice@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

TRANSITIONS UPDATE

A busy half term for some of our Year 11 and Post 16 students, taking part in guidance interviews at the colleges they've applied for. Some of our students have found the word 'interview' quite daunting. Even though the colleges call them an interview, in reality it is more of an informal meeting with one of the subject tutors to talk through the course in more detail, find out more about the student and check whether it is the right course for them! It's an important step in preparing for college.

Colleges are now offering some extra transition sessions for students that they have confirmed a place for in September. This is to help with familiarisation and reduce anxieties around next steps. Our top tip is to keep a close eye on emails from college to make sure you know the important dates coming up prior to September. Official enrollment day at college is usually on the same day as GCSE results day in August. This is when your child will officially confirm their place at the college and be added to the college roll!

Websites with ideas for Summer Activities:

<https://www.livewell.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/Categories/3415>
<https://youthfed.org.uk/our-programmes/>

ELSA SUMMER CHALLENGE

CUT OUT AND SEE HOW MANY YOU CAN DO!

WALK UNTIL YOU
SEE A
PLAYGROUND OR
PARK

GO GET A FUN
DRINK WITH FAMILY
OR FRIENDS

BAKE SOME
SUMMERY FAIRY
CAKES

TRY 3 NEW FOODS
OR HOBBIES

LISTEN TO YOUR
FAVOURITE MUSIC
OUTSIDE

HAVE A PICNIC
SOMEWHERE YOU
DON'T USUALLY GO

GO CHARITY
SHOPPING OR
DONATE
SOMETHING

FILL A WHOLE PAGE
FULL OF DOODLES

HAVE A MOVIE/TV
SHOW MARATHON

MAKE AND GO ON
A SCAVENGER
HUNT

D OF E



What a way to end the year, with an expedition along the meadows and Dukes Dive the following day. The weather was kind to us - if a little warm at times, resulting in a well needed paddle in the Dee.

Our students learned to cook outdoors on Trangias, read maps, and pack bags appropriate to the expedition - lots of water and suntan lotion for this one! The goal was to collect rubbish along the way and the impact on the Greenway in particular was huge, with lots of comments from appreciative people impressed with the difference our young people made to the environment along the way.

As well as celebrating all the section certificates achieved by our students, we are very proud to say that 3 of our young people have been awarded the full Bronze Award, a globally recognised award.

What a fantastic achievement Team Ancora!

BUTTERFLY RELEASE

Students enjoyed hatching and releasing Painted Lady butterflies this term.



What Parents & Educators Need to Know about EMOJIS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

GENERATIONAL MISCOMMUNICATION

An emoji like 👍 (thumbs up emoji) might seem friendly to adults, but teens often interpret it as sarcastic or passive-aggressive. These differing interpretations can create confusion or unintended tension in cross-generational conversations.

SHIELDING BULLYING OR PEER PRESSURE

When embedded in emojis, mean-spirited jokes or exclusionary language can fly under the radar. Terms like 'mid' or 'delulu' may seem harmless, but they can be used to undermine peers in subtle ways.

RAPIDLY SHIFTING MEANINGS

Emoji meanings can change overnight. A person standing emoji (🧑) once signified awkwardness but might now be repurposed for something entirely different. This ever-changing lexicon can leave adults in the dark and young people vulnerable to misunderstanding or misuse.

MASKING DISTRESS OR HARM

Some emojis are used to discreetly signal troubling behaviours. For instance, 🍃 (falling leaves emoji) or 💊 (pill emoji) might suggest drug use, while 🌵 (wilted flower emoji) could hint at emotional struggles. Such usage can obscure serious issues, making them harder for trusted adults to detect.

NORMALISING RISKY BEHAVIOURS

Emojis can make harmful actions seem light-hearted or fashionable. Strings like 🍷🍷🍷 (wine + 'weary' face + pill emojis) may appear humorous but can reference partying, intoxication or dangerous challenges, which might otherwise raise red flags.

Advice for Parents & Educators

LEARN THE LINGO

Stay updated with emoji trends and definitions using resources like emojipedia.org or Urban Dictionary. Knowing current meanings builds confidence when engaging with young people and helps spot potential concerns early.

ASK, DON'T ASSUME

Approach unfamiliar emojis with curiosity rather than suspicion. A light-hearted "What does 🍷 (juice box emoji) mean these days?" can open conversation and show that you respect their knowledge.

CREATE SAFE SPACES FOR DISCUSSION

Encourage casual chats about emojis, online slang, memes, or social media trends. Showing interest without judgement reassures young people that they can talk about their digital world openly and safely.

PRIORITISE TRUST OVER SURVEILLANCE

While parental controls and monitoring tools can be useful, emotional safety matters most. Be someone children and young people feel they can come to — not just someone who's watching them.

EMOJI CHEAT SHEET - The following slang terms and emojis are some common examples - please be aware this isn't an exhaustive list.

COMMON EMOJIS:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 🤡 (Clown face) Foolishness or clowning around | 😘 (Kissing face) Over-affectionate or 'simping' |
| 😎 (Cool face) Cool, stylish or ruthless | 👁️ (Eyes) Watching drama unfold |
| 😍 (Hot face) Intense attraction or excitement | 🐐 (Goat) Greatest of all time (G.O.A.T.) |
| 😐 (Meh) Stone-faced, unbattered | 👉 (Nails) Confidence, sassiness, or indifference |
| 👑 (Crown) 'Slaying', as in doing great | 🚩 (Triangular flag) Red flag, a warning sign about someone's behaviour |

POTENTIALLY CONCERNING EMOJIS

- | | |
|--|---|
| 🍷 (Ear of corn) Slang for pornography (avoids censorship algorithms) | 🌵 (Wilted flower) Often used to convey emotional struggle or sadness |
| ❄️ (Snowflake, snowman, snow cloud) Can symbolise cocaine | 🐍 (Snake) Can represent betrayal or being 'two-faced' |
| 🗝️ (Key, lying face) Related to cocaine use | 🔫 (Water pistol) Sometimes used to reference violence or self-harm |
| 🍃 (Falling leaves, herb, maple leaf) Can symbolise cannabis | ⚠️ (Warning) Used to emphasise drama, threats or emotional turmoil |
| 💊 (Pill) May reference drug use or prescription misuse | 🍜 (Steaming bowl) Refers to nudes ('noods' is an abbreviation of noodles) |

Meet Our Expert

Keith Broni is a globally renowned emoji expert and the Editor in Chief of emojipedia.org, the world's number one emoji resource. He has an MSc in Business Psychology from University College London and an MBA from Quantic School of Business and Technology.



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Summer water safety

Accidents are mostly preventable with the correct knowledge and judgment and here are our tips to staying safe in the water during the summer:

To enjoy the water safely and make the right call...

- **Enter slowly and carefully**
Think carefully about your ability to splash or swim in cold outdoor water. 49% of those who lost their life were classified as swimmers*. Are you really a good swimmer?
- **Stay within reach**
Don't go too far and stay within a standing depth.
- **Always be supervised**
Over 70% of fatal accidents occur in the absence of professional supervision. Seek life guarded areas and always make sure some one is available to raise the alarm.

Summer is an amazing time to enjoy our beautiful waterways but we must be mindful that warmer weather is directly linked to an increase in fatal drowning incidents.

Rivers and Lakes/Lochs pose the greatest statistical risk as there are often hazards that the average person is equipped to handle and there is a lack of professional supervision.

In an emergency...

- **Call 999**
If you are at the coast, call 999 and ask for the Coastguard. Don't enter the water to rescue.
- **If you're in trouble FLOAT and call for help**
Fall in or become tired – stay calm, float on your back and call for help. Throw something that floats to somebody that has fallen in.



STOP AND THINK



STAY TOGETHER



CALL 999



FLOAT