

PARTNERSHIP BULLETIN

The County High School Leftwich



Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of the Central Team Partnership Bulletin. We are delighted to share some of the key priorities and initiatives that our central teams have been working on this term. These projects are designed to provide valuable support to both staff and students across the school. Take a moment to explore the updates below and see how these efforts are making a difference.

Richard Warburton, Headteacher

ESTATES UPDATE

CHSL has been selected as one of 200 schools in the North West to take part in the **GB Energy Solar Partnership** scheme. The scheme is a national programme supporting schools on their journey to **Net Zero** and is fully funded by the DfE. As a result, a large number of solar panels are being installed across the roofs at Leftwich and it is anticipated that the school will be able to offset the electricity generated against electricity costs by up to **40%**. As part of the scheme, **Let's Go Zero**, a charitable organisation helping schools to become net zero by 2030, are working closely with Laura Measures. As our Sustainability Leader for the school, Laura is working on developing a **Climate Action Plan** and further potential energy savings. Site Manager **Darryl Boylan** has been invaluable in accommodating the surveys required for the works to get underway for this scheme and also working with the central finance team collating all the data required to complete our Count Your Carbon exercise.

Health & Safety

Keeping on the Net Zero theme, CHSL completed its external **Health and Safety Audit** with Cheshire West and Chester at the end of last term and had zero actions! Well done to the whole estates team for their hard work and also to the science and art departments who were able to showcase their expertise in regard to risk assessments and utilising CLEAPSS guidance.

IT DEVELOPMENTS

Microsoft Licenses Alignment

We now have in place a trust-wide Microsoft licensing arrangement, giving us more tools to ensure files and data are safe. One of the first new tools to be used was the phishing test system – **congratulations to all of you who passed the test!** We will run these tests throughout the year to help keep us all vigilant when opening emails.

Arbor for Education

As a Trust we are moving away from SIMS and will be working with Arbor for Education from February 2026. Arbor is a modern, **cloud-based** MIS designed specifically for UK schools and trusts, offering intuitive workflows,

real-time analytics, and powerful trust-level oversight to improve decision-making and reduce administrative burden. It provides secure, DfE-compliant data management with seamless integrations to other EdTech tools, enabling schools to centralise attendance, behaviour, safeguarding, assessment and communications in one platform. This should improve efficiency and drive innovation within the school.

Windows 10 & 11

We have extended our Windows 10 operating system using a Microsoft approved program so we can continue our association with Windows 10 for the next 12 months. Meanwhile we are testing Windows 11, which should be available at some point next year – so look out for more information when we come back for these exciting changes!



Finance Team, from left: Hieu Hickey, Athene Atkinson, Angela Dillon, Liz Woods, Rosie Hay Rachael Ryder, Liz Whitehurst, Andrea Moores. Also in the team but not pictured Rachel Goulbourne and Lindsay Manford

FINANCE UPDATE

With thanks to all staff, we're pleased to report that CHSL finished the year better than forecast. These are difficult times for our sector, and a full re-forecast has already been prepared for the 2025-26 financial year (Sep-Aug), taking into account the latest pay awards and additional funding as well as changes to staffing and non-staff costs.

All 2025-26 budgets have been confirmed and uploaded to the finance system. The finance team are currently working on new developments that should give budget holders direct, live access to their budget reports, along with visibility of orders and invoices. The team are aiming to roll these out before Christmas.

Trips & Visits

The team continue to support with all the financial aspects of educational visits. Work is underway on four **overseas visits** for **190 students** and the **Bronze D of E** for **70 students**. Work is also continuing on a central charging and remissions policy. This is a statutory requirement for all 11-16 academies and we currently have one for each academy. The central policy will replace the individual versions, saving time for senior leadership teams and local governing bodies.

Compliance

Part of the benefit of the centralised model is that the central team takes a lot of the public sector compliance burden away from each academy. At the time of going to print, the annual budget forecast return has been submitted on time to the DfE, the year end process has predominantly concluded and the auditors have been and gone, all (hopefully) with minimal impact on the school and maximum efficiency. We're awaiting our audit report currently.

HR NOTICES

Mandatory Training

The start of the academic year sees the organisation completing significant CPD and mandatory training updates. A big thank you to everyone who has completed the requirements and to colleagues for facilitating the in person sessions. Any certificates for completed mandatory training courses should be returned to humanresources@sjbf.org.uk

Performance Reviews

This year we have continued to roll out additional functionality within SAM People, including the appraisal process and values based objectives. Thank you to all staff and managers for taking part in this process.

Staff Consultative Association

Alongside the local staff forums, CHSL nominates staff representatives who meet with the Foundation leadership once a term to champion the voice of their colleagues. The aim is to shape a better working environment and support communication across the

Foundation. SCA Representatives will be talking to colleagues throughout the year to both share information as well as take feedback/themes and suggestions from colleagues. The minutes are available on **The Brunner Free Library**.

Health & Wellbeing

Earlier this term, we informed colleagues of our enhanced health and wellbeing offer, which can be accessed on a new digital platform called **Spark**. Amongst many services, Spark offers 24/7 access to a **virtual GP, physiotherapy, children's mental health assessments and support, support with long-term health conditions and expert financial and legal information**. It also provides a rich supply of **resources** including nutrition planning, fitness tracking, meditation, online gym and wellbeing podcasts. Colleagues can access Spark from their phones, via an app or from a desktop. More information, including how to register, can be found on **The Brunner Free Library**.