

PARTNERSHIP BULLETIN

Sir John Deane's Sixth Form College



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 college. Take a moment to explore the updates below and see how these efforts are making a difference.

Christopher Atherton, Principal

ESTATES UPDATE

Car Park & Access Control

For our first termly newsletter, the college's estates team wanted to say a big "thank you" for all of your continued support and co-operation with the implementation of our new car park barrier and access control system. This has undoubtedly made the college more secure and compliant with this new legislation, **Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 (Martyn's Law)** which became law on 3rd April 2025. It has taken a lot of hard work to achieve this and, whilst there will always be teething problems with such significant changes, the college has risen to the challenge.

Condition Improvement Fund

The college has secured a Condition Improvement Fund bid from the DfE to replace defective windows in **The Brunner Hall** with slimline double-glazed units and repair surrounding brickwork. The new windows will be designed and manufactured to match the building's original style. The competition for this funding should not be underestimated. This achievement reflects the collaborative effort across the Foundation and will deliver significant energy savings and carbon reductions. These savings will be reinvested into teaching and learning while preserving this historic part of the college for future students.

150 Years of Northwich Rowing Club

Northwich Rowing Club is celebrating 150 years (1875 to 2025) in the community. We would like to congratulate them on such a significant milestone.

Starbucks & Costa!

It's been great to see students enjoying the new facilities in The Brunner Hall, including a brand new Costa Coffee and improved seating area in Starbucks, which has created an inviting new social space for students.

IT UPDATE

WiFi

WiFi 7 was installed in the college over the summer and offers the very fastest performance with the latest devices. We have over **3,000 devices** registered so far. The wireless signal is more reliable, has greater coverage and, more importantly, we have increased the bandwidth by 5x meaning it is a lot quicker too. If you're not yet connected, pop down to the IT office, or you can find guides under the **My SJD** section of the website or in the library.

Helpdesk and the SLA

Thank you to all colleagues for supporting the SLA and Helpdesk process. Raising tickets in the Helpdesk allows us to review our performance and try to improve where we can. We handled **2,800 tickets** last year, with **98%** being handled in good time. These range from a simple account reset to full blown projects (WiFi being one). The comments from the surveys have been really positive. We are now in the process of developing a new Helpdesk system called **Halo**. The new system is much slicker than the current one, will link into Teams and even has some AI capability, which we are excited to see in action! Halo will be available in the coming months.



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

We are pleased to report that the college finished the year **ahead of budget**. 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 finance team continue to support with all the financial aspects of educational visits and college transport. This year we are operating **17 buses** transporting **980 students**. There have been ten trips in the first half term, involving **370 students**. Overseas and residential visits planned so far for this academic year include a **London** theatre visit, **New York, Iceland, Croatia** and **Gold D of E** expeditions, in total involving **220 students**. With a larger student cohort, the team have also processed a record number of bursary applications; **125 students** are being supported from the fund this year.

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 college and maximum efficiency.

HR UPDATE

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, the college 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, an 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 **Staff Hub** or **The Brunner Free Library**.