



Europa School UK
Thame Lane
Culham, Abingdon
Oxfordshire
OX14 3DZ
Tel: +44 (0)1235 524060
E-mail: reception@europaschool.uk
Website: <https://europaschooluk.org>

21st October 2022

Dear Europa parents,

The start of this term has been quite refreshingly normal after the restrictions during the Covid pandemic years. The new students who joined us across the school but particularly in reception, Secondary 1 and 6 have settled in well and are showing great enthusiasm. Teachers are settling into the new IB Middle years Curriculum, now taught to S1, S2 and S4.

School life

The Primary school has enjoyed the freedom of trips and visits this term. Highlights have included the Tring Natural History Museum and the Oxford Museum. Additionally, we have welcomed inspiring visitors for story-writing workshops and the children's author Mini Grey. All Y5 had a story workshop with Hannah Murray and Y1 went to the Sutton Courtenay Environmental Centre. We have held assemblies for all KS2, where children are thinking about our school values, and the focus for next term is the three R values "Respect, Responsibility and Resilience".

It was lovely to see the lower secondaries enjoying the Junior Ball in the Schuman Hall and the German national day with the Bratwurst lunch last week. The school has also participated in several other visits including the S5 Ecology Trip and the S6 and S7 virtual Model United Nations Conference.

Six S2 girls were involved in the Faraday Challenge, an annual STEM competition with a real-world challenge for pupils aged 12-13, run by the Institute of Engineering and Technology (IET). Our Europa team beat the strong local competition to win the area design challenge round with a design on a drone delivery system to hospitals. See our position in the league tables via the link [League tables - IET Education \(theiet.org\)](https://theiet.org).

Covid and Absences

I am very pleased to inform you that school attendance is good at nearly 96%. However, COVID has not disappeared, and we do expect more cases during the winter. The current advice is that pupils who are unwell and have a high temperature should stay at home and avoid contact with other people as much as possible. There is no need to take a Covid test. Students can come back to school when they no longer have a high temperature and are well enough to attend. All absences must be reported to the school via the absence email absence@europeschool.uk.

Site

This academic year the school took over the premises management from our site contractors CBRE. We are delighted to welcome our new facilities manager, Mrs Wendy Wright, who has worked in this role at another Oxfordshire school. Wendy is now developing her site team and has made a significant improvement, particularly in addressing cleaning issues.

During the summer there was extensive work on the school site, including a fire door programme which is continuing this half term, the replacement of the Tower Block doors with new automatic doors with a disabled ramp, and a toilet improvement programme in the Key Stage 1 areas.

This half term we have several works scheduled, including the installation of netting in the primary quad staircase, fencing work to provide a safer access to the school field and some work in the kitchen to improve capacity.

Utility Costs

Our energy costs have been high over the last academic year, this is due to the age of our buildings, as well as the need to keep classrooms well ventilated due to COVID infections. The school is covered by the energy price cap for electricity over the next six months, but there is not a framework available for our heating oil which we must buy at market prices. We need to minimise these costs this winter by reducing energy consumption through a range of measures, this includes turning off lights and devices overnight, cutting heating times and reducing thermostat settings. We are also considering energy efficiencies including LED replacement and solar panel schemes, but those will take longer to impact our energy costs. The school will be colder than normal over the winter months and so we advise that your children should wear warm clothing and plenty of layers.

School Budgets

All Schools are facing financial pressures due to significantly higher salary and overhead costs as well as the substantial increase in utility bills, whilst school funding is only expected to increase by 2% each year. We welcome higher than anticipated salary increases for all our staff, who have seen their wages fall in real terms over the last 10 years. These cost pressures will mean that the school will need to seek more revenue but also make tough decisions about control of costs. We are still addressing the non-funding issue of the top class in the Spanish stream as they go through secondary and expect to submit an updated business case to the ESFA. One of our main concerns is how to protect our enhanced curriculum that we have invested so much in.

It is only through the continued generosity of so many families making regular donations to Europa that the school is still able to offer our unique blend of state funded, multilingual, IB education. We also appreciate that many families will find this autumn very tough given the current cost of living crisis, but if it is in your capacity to offer £1 per day per pupil this will reduce the number of hard decisions facing the school which may affect the education we can offer.

If you can please continue or think about starting to contribute to Europa's School Fund. More details can be found here. <https://europaschooluk.org/fundraising/>

I do wish you and your children a relaxing half term break and look forward to the start of the new term on 31 October 2022.

Best wishes

Lynn Wood (Principal)