



CASTLE NEWS

Friday 22 May 2026 V22 No.32

www.castleschool.info

Our thought of the week is:

'National Photography Month'

Message from the Headteacher



Dear Parents and Carers,

Thought of the Week: National Photography Month

This month we celebrate the power of photography to capture moments, tell stories and preserve memories. A photograph can help us remember a special person, a favourite place or a happy experience. We are very excited to have launched our 'Castle School Photography Competition' and I am already looking forward to seeing the wonderful entries from our pupils and families. Whether it is a picture of nature, an unusual scene or a treasured memory, every photograph has a story to tell.

Theme of the Week: I can share a memory

This week's theme encourages us to think about memories that are important to us and how we can share them with others. Memories help us understand our experiences, celebrate special moments and connect with the people around us. A photograph can often be the perfect way to share a memory, and I hope many of our pupils will use this opportunity to take part in our photography competition and show us the world through their eyes.

It was a privilege to attend our Pre-Formal Art Exhibition this week. I left the evening feeling both proud and full of awe at the incredible creativity, imagination and joy on display. The artwork showcased the unique talents of our pupils and demonstrated just how much can be communicated through art, colour and creativity.

What made the evening even more special was seeing so many pupils, parents, carers, grandparents and extended family members come together to celebrate the achievements of our young people. Events like these remind us what a remarkable community Castle School is. I feel incredibly fortunate to serve as Headteacher and to work alongside such dedicated staff, wonderful pupils and supportive families. My sincere thanks go to everyone involved in organising the exhibition and to all the pupils whose hard work made it such a memorable occasion.

At last, it seems that summer has finally decided to make an appearance! The forecast suggests we are in for an unusually sunny and warm Bank Holiday weekend. I hope everyone has the opportunity to enjoy

some time outdoors, relax with family and friends, and make the most of the sunshine. Please remember to stay safe in the warmer weather, keep hydrated and enjoy!

We look forward to welcoming everyone back to school on **Monday 1st June** as we begin a new month and the final half-term of this academic year. It is hard to believe how quickly the year has flown by. We have an exciting few weeks ahead with plenty of learning opportunities, visits, celebrations and special events still to come, and I know our pupils will continue to amaze us with all that they achieve.

Have a wonderful Bank Holiday weekend and half term break.

Charlotte.



Duke of Edinburgh Awards at Buckingham Palace

A huge shout-out to our Deputy Head, Anne Haberfield, who received a Duke of Edinburgh Award at Buckingham Palace in recognition of her outstanding contribution to championing the award for SEND students.

This special honour comes as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award celebrates its 70th anniversary — a fantastic achievement and a truly well-deserved recognition. Congratulations, Anne!



Castle School Art Exhibition

Yesterday, Thursday 21st May 2026, we were so proud to host our Pre-Formal Pathway Art Gallery, celebrating the amazing creativity and individuality of our Pre-Formal students. The gallery showcased artwork from all five classes: Bees, Foxes, Carisbrooke, Pembroke and Trinity, with students exploring colour, texture, student-created SoundBeam music, movement, and sensory art in lots of different ways.

We were also excited to officially open our new immersive sensory space, where visitors could experience sensory projections and interactive elements.

A huge thank you to everyone who came along to support the event, view the students' work, and help make the evening so special. It was wonderful to see our school community coming together to celebrate the creativity, achievements, and expression of our students. We received £93 in donations! Thank you!



Castle School Swimming Galas

This week we have held 2 Swimming Galas for students who have been swimming at Chesterton this year. Well done to all our students for competing fairly but also competitively. After each Gala we also held a fun swim which the students really enjoyed.



Castle School – Talk from a Marine Biologist

We had the pleasure of welcoming Jenna Silk to school to talk about her amazing job as a marine biologist. The pupils loved hearing about her work with seaside and field trips to both polar regions. We have a full careers week after half term with a variety of visitors, trips and activities.



Castle School – Guardianship Event – 20 May 2026

We hosted a careers event looking at guardianship and moving into adult services on Wednesday 20 May. We are very grateful to the speakers who came in and give presentations as well as answering questions the parents and carers had. We had visitors from the NHS, Social Services, Occupational Therapy, supported living as well as a governor who had done a lot of research into power of attorney and mental capacity. Please click on the link for [Ruth Jordan's slide presentation on Post 18 Decisions](#).



Stirling Class News

In Stirling Class, over the past few weeks, there has been a focus on direction and finding our way to places. A way to remember North, East, South and West is;

Never
Eat
Stirling's
Waffles.

Stirling practiced by working out directions from Castle School to the river in Cambridge.



This has been very good preparation for Stirling Class going on their Duke of Edinburgh trip this week. This involved Stirling travelling by train to the Norfolk coast and setting up camp.

Stirling's map reading skills and understanding of direction was so important in helping them to find their way from one checkpoint to another as they completed their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze.


Cooking and hiking on the Duke of Edinburgh trip this week.



General Messages

Castle School Careers Week : 1 – 5 June 2026

We will be having a careers week after half term, a whole week of activities, visitors, trips and workshops has been organised for all pupils in key stage two and above. The aim is to be inspired and learn about different jobs; the formal pathway will be having interview practice and CV writing workshops. We are all really looking forward to a week of events.



CASTLE SCHOOL CAREERS WEEK

EXPLORE • INSPIRE • ACHIEVE

- jobs
- activities
- visitors
- workshops
- careers
- trips to workplaces

1st june - 5th june

Be inspired

Inspiration

Castle School Photo Competition: 21 May – 4 June 2026



CASTLE SCHOOL PHOTO COMPETITION

CAPTURE. CREATE. INSPIRE.

CASTLE SCHOOL
TOGETHER WE LEARN

CATEGORIES

- NATURE & LANDSCAPE
- STREET PHOTOGRAPHY
- UNUSUAL SCENES

COMPETITION DATE
21ST MAY – 4TH JUNE 2026

OPEN TO ALL
Castle School students and their families

PRIZES FOR ALL CATEGORIES!

- Prize for each Category
- Featured display for Parents Evening
- Winning designs used for greetings cards

HOW TO ENTER

- EFL Enter via Evidence For Learning using the Tag- Photo Competition 2026
- Or email ahaberfield@castle.cambs.sch.uk with Photo Competition in the subject

SEE THE WORLD. SHARE YOUR VISION.

OPEN TO ALL CASTLE SCHOOL STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES



Castle School Tabletop Sale – Tuesday 9 June 2026



Tabletop Sale



Castle School will holding our first Tabletop Sale on Tuesday 9th June 10am-12pm.



Students, staff and parents will be running stalls.
All proceeds from the sale will be split between Castle School classes for community outings and wellbeing activities.
The students have been busy making items and gathering preloved items to sell.

We would love your help!

We need the following donations:

- Books for Teens and Adults
 - Cuddly Toys
 - Toys and Games
 - Plants
- Preloved Summer Children's Clothes
- Preloved Summer Adult's Clothes
- Preloved Bags and Purses – all sizes
- Sports Equipment/Summer Leisure
- Homeware – no electricals please
 - Plastic Cups
 - Plant Pots
- Preloved SEND items/equipment
- Beads & elastic for bracelet making
- Your own handmade pre-made crafts

If you have any of the above items to donate, please send them into school in a bag marked 'Tabletop Sale'. Thank you for your amazing support!



Castle School Sign and Chat June 2026 dates



Free Parent/Carer Support Session



Sign and Chat

Come and learn and practice Makaton signs and visuals to use at home with your child.

Led by Meriel Charlton, Specialist Teacher at Castle School

All Welcome – Suitable for Beginners to Experienced Makaton Signers

All sessions are 10:30 – 11:30 am at the Castle School Main Site

Session dates:

Thursday 4th June

Thursday 25th June

Please sign up to register your free place:

<https://forms.office.com/e/8Y3Bbu9H8T>



Mersea Island Festival: Sunday 23–Monday 31 August 2026

This year's Mersea Island Festival is being held on the coast of Essex from Sunday 23 to Monday 31 August.

The festival brings together people of all ages, with and without a disability, to try new inclusive activities and make new friends. There will be another great programme of inclusive activities, including archery, zipwire, paddleboarding, music workshops and a large art tent. There are not many places a wheelchair user can go up a climbing wall, down a zipwire or out on a paddleboard. You can stay for the week, the weekend or come for a day visit.

What is it?

Running for over 40 years on the Essex coast, the Festival brings together those with or without a disability to try out new and challenging activities, develop their independence, make new friends – and all while having loads of fun!!!

Over 300 people come from all over the UK to the week-long camp, the weekend camp, a day visit, or the whole Festival! The Festival is ideal for Phab and Gateway clubs, youth groups and families with young people with a disability.



What's on offer?

A wide variety of exciting activities and workshops that are fun but also challenge and stimulate, helping to build self-confidence and develop self-esteem in participants. Take a look at our website for some examples and more details.

Activities and workshops take place during the day, and in the evening there is live music, discos, themed nights or our legendary Camp Concert!

Accommodation and food

Accommodation is mostly under canvas, with some beds in cabins for those who find it impossible to sleep in a tent. Meals are provided by our catering team and all dietary requirements are catered for. Snack and drinks are available during the entertainment each evening, as well as a licensed bar.

Accessibility and support



The whole site is on one level and all facilities are wheelchair accessible. First Aid cover is provided. Our team of volunteers are on hand to make sure that everyone can have a fun and great experience, whatever their ability. Unfortunately they are not able to provide individual support and those who receive regular assistance should come along with a friend, supporter or as part of a group. **Please contact us to discuss any individual needs to make sure you get the most from your stay.**

Fun for everyone!

Mersea Island Festival

A great escape on the Essex coast!



new challenges



new thrills



new experiences

Inclusive Summer Activities



friends made

Camp prices include activities, meals and accommodation



friends reunited

Sponsored places available
See website for details

Day places from
£44.50 per person

Week Camp
Sunday 23rd to
Friday 28th August 2026

Prices from £329.00 per person

Weekend Camp
Friday 28th to
Monday 31st August 2026

Prices from £198.00 per person

Archery • Zipwire • Circus Skills
Climbing • Paddle Boarding
Music Workshops • Swimming
Speedboat • Fishing • Art Tent
Kayaking • Pedal Karts
Band Workshop • Live Music
Discos • And much more!



For further information or to book
Telephone: 01206 383226
Email: info@merseafestival.org.uk
Website: www.merseafestival.org.uk

 [merseaislandfestival](https://www.facebook.com/merseaislandfestival)

 [mifcamp](https://www.instagram.com/mifcamp)



New Meaning Foundation Summer Clubs (July/August)

These clubs are free. The general club (for boys and girls) will run from 09:30-16:00 and the girls-only club will run from 10:00-15:30.

It is important to note that the general club is still open to girls. Girls are free to attend both clubs or even just the general club if this is preferred for them. Secondly, it is not vital for participants to attend for every session. This is especially true of the general club, as they are not working towards a qualification in this club. We suggest that if a young person is unsure about attending because they don't know if they can always attend, that they come along anyway and try it out. Each day there will be a 30-minute lunch break.



Summer Holiday Club

Are you interested in learning some construction skills?

This summer, New Meaning Foundation is running a construction club. Young people will be learning and applying construction skills to build a shepherd's hut!

Every Monday and Tuesday from 20th July - 25th August

divya.george@newmeaningfoundation.org



Girls in Construction

Learning the foundations of construction skills through a hands-on project in a safe and supportive environment.
Because construction is for everyone.

Every Wednesday and Thursday from 22nd July - 27th August

divya.george@newmeaningfoundation.org
zoe.robinson@newmeaningfoundation.org

Please bring your own lunch, as we are not located in an accessible location for external lunch options.

Useful Information

Safeguarding & Wellbeing

If you have a concern about a child's safety or wellbeing, please contact:

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

safeguarding@castle.cambs.sch.uk

01223 442400

Family Support

Our Family Support Team is here to help with:

- Attendance
- Behaviour
- Emotional wellbeing
- Support at home

familysupport@castle.cambs.sch.uk

✉ Contact Us

Have a question? We're here to help:

office@castle.cambs.sch.uk

01223 442400

Term Dates 2025-26

Summer Term 2026	
Training Day*	Monday 13 April*
Term Starts	Tuesday 14 April
Bank Holiday	Monday 4 May
Half Term	Monday 25 – Friday 29 May
Training Day*	Friday 3 July*
Term Ends	Monday 20 July
*School will be closed to pupils on Training Days	

Term Dates 2026-27

Autumn Term 2026	
Training Day*	Tuesday 1 September*
Term Starts	Wednesday 2 September
Half Term	Monday 26 – Friday 30 October
Training Day*	Monday 2 November*
Term Continues	Tuesday 3 November
Last Day of Term	Friday 18 December
Spring Term 2027	
Term Starts	Monday 4 January
Half Term	Monday 15 – Friday 19 February
Term Continues	Monday 22 February
Term Ends	Thursday 25 March
Summer Term 2027	
Training Days*	Monday 12 and Tuesday 13 April*
Term Starts	Wednesday 14 April
Bank Holiday	Monday 3 May
Half Term	Monday 31 May – Friday 4 June
Term Continues	Monday 7 June
Training Day*	Friday 2 July*
Term Ends	Tuesday 21 July
*School will be closed to pupils on Training Days	