



CHALLENGE WEEK

**JUNE 23rd - JUNE 26th
2026**



YEAR 7 CREATIVE CHALLENGE

Dear Parents / Carers

Challenge Week is an Oaklands tradition dating back to 1987. Over that time successive dedicated teams of staff have formed a Challenge Week Group who work together to put together a fantastic week of enrichment activities.

Challenge Week is intended to allow students to have fun whilst learning; spending time with teachers and other students outside of the classroom environment, free from the constraints of a timetable. It is a genuine opportunity to work in a cross-curricular way and to learn new information and skills that we could not deliver through our normal curriculum and timetable structure.

All students in Years 7, 8 and 9 have had an assembly outlining the 'theme' of their respective weeks. This booklet is intended to give you all the information you need as parents / carers about what your child will be doing each day of the week and so I would encourage you to read it carefully and keep it somewhere safe. Copies can also be found on the school website.

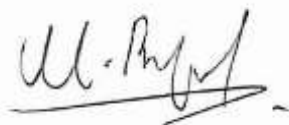
Staff have worked incredibly hard to put together imaginative, creative and student-friendly activities which have educational value as well as allowing students to have fun and work with each other to produce something which is both tangible and meaningful.

Parental support for the week is vital if it is to be a success. We hope that by reading through what your child will be engaged in you will recognise the wonderful learning opportunities that your son or daughter will be involved in and you will encourage them to take a full and active part in the week.

Finally, we have been able to subsidise Challenge Week again this year to try and offer a full and fun week at a reasonable price to yourselves. The cost of your child's activity is, we hope you will agree, excellent value.

My special thanks go to this year's Challenge Week Group and to all our dedicated staff who have worked hard to plan and prepare this week for our students.

With best wishes



Mark Bamford
Assistant Headteacher

The Theme

We've chosen **Culture, Conservation & Creativity** to be the theme for this year's challenge. We chose this because of the strong links held between ourselves and our sponsor school St John's in Korogocho, Kenya. This school has had a very important influence on our view of culture, our sense of community and building creativity via togetherness.

We know that lots of you may sponsor children in Korogocho and your influence to continue to make a massive difference to those who need it.

The Week

This week is called 'Creative Challenge' and that is just what it is. It is a time for expressing your ideas and exploring your interests. You are lucky to have talented groups of professionals and many drama, dance and music support teachers who will be leading you on this adventure and delivering a series of exciting workshops. You will be focusing on individual ideas and working in a team with your year group supported by the staff from the English, Performing Arts and Media departments. The key word is fun. Our motto is 'Have a go'. Drama, music, art and dance are all talents and gifts that we should be able to access all year round. Now is the time to share that brilliance.

There will be plenty of opportunity to develop your own special interest in the arts and to do what you like best.

The week will end with Year 7 producing their own portfolio of the week's challenges and inspirations.

Year 7 Information

You will be based on site, but there will be a day trip to Marwell Zoo on **Tuesday 23rd June** for the whole year group.

You will work with the class/group you are usually in for technology/design lessons over the week. This is because it is slightly smaller than your form group. You will be registered in the morning with this group and then move together around school to attend your different creative workshops. You will have a different member of staff acting as your Form Tutor for the week, taking your register in the morning and working with you during many of your sessions. Nearer to the time, we'll tell you where to register, and who with.

You may be asked to bring in materials suitable for making costumes and general art activities although most things will be supplied. These will be explained nearer the time but if you have any ideas, please bring them in anyway.

What will I do every day?

Just after half term, we will give you a special timetable explaining where you will go for each workshop, every day of challenge week.

The activities you will do are:

- An interactive visit to Marwell Zoo focusing on the conservation of wildlife.
- A daylong dance, drumming and music workshop with a Cultural Activities company.
- Working with drama teachers to prepare some sections of dance/scenes from other cultures to perform.
- Learning about culturally diverse songs and doing some singing and dance linked to this.
- Making works of art: these could include masks, poems, short stories.
- Learning about conservation and protection of the planet, wildlife and specific endangered species.
- Reading stories from other cultures, crafting calligraphy and exploring how to protect the environment.
- Learning to name all the countries in the African continent and appreciating their diversity.

Finally, we'll create a portfolio of the amazing things discovered about conservation, culture and creativity.

Information for students relating to the Marwell Zoo trip.

The whole of Year 7 will be visiting Marwell Zoo on Tuesday 23rd June 2026.

Before the trip

- Make sure you know who your group leader is and what coach you will be travelling in – this information will be given to you by your tutor.
- If you suffer from travel sickness, please make sure you take any medication required in good time.
- Please dress for the changeable British weather. Whilst we are in the zoo, this is not a problem but there is not a great deal of cover whilst outside so please be prepared for rain and wear sensible flat footwear.
- Make sure you have sun cream and a hat; there are shaded areas provided throughout the grounds.
- Bring along a packed lunch with you. Pupil premium students can collect a packed lunch from the canteen before 8:45am.

- Make sure you are suitably dressed. You will be walking around the zoo for quite a while, so wear comfortable clothes/shoes that allow you to move.
- **Marwell is now cashless.** If you wish to buy something from the gift shop, then you will need to bring a form of card payment with you.

Departure from Oaklands

- See Mr Osbourne if you have forgotten your coach number or group leader.
- Check in with your group leader and board the coach – which will depart from the drive - at **9am on Tuesday 23rd June**, so please ensure that you are **on the drive for 8:45am.**

On the journey

- Wear your seat belt at all times and sit in the seat properly.
- Use the rubbish bags provided.
- **NO** chewing gum.
- Make sure you have provided your group leader with your mobile phone number if you have one.

On arrival at Marwell

- Wait in seats until you are instructed to leave the coach.
- Make sure the coach is tidy and litter free.
- Be very careful to stay close to your group leader.

During the Day

- Stay in groups – do not leave anyone on their own and **stay with your group leader at all times.** You **MUST** be accompanied by an adult whilst looking around the zoo.
- Do not talk to or go away with strangers. The only people who will have messages for you are Oaklands teaching staff. If it is warm, make sure you apply sun cream and drink plenty of water.
- Watch out for slippery surfaces and stairs.
- Do not leave rubbish lying around – use the bins provided.
- Remember your manners at all times; say please and thank you.
- The highest standards of behaviour are expected; remember you are representing the school and inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with severely. Your cooperation will ensure that everyone enjoys the day.

At 1:45pm

- Groups to be accompanied by their designated staff members to the gift shop.
- Make sure you have been to the toilet.
- Make sure you have all your belongings.

- Register with your group leader who will lead you back to the coach.
- Wait there until you are asked to board the coach.

Return journey to Oaklands

- The same rules apply with regard to litter and chewing gum.
- **We expect to be back at Oaklands by 3:10pm at the latest. You will be dismissed at normal time (3:25pm). Please make sure your parents are informed of this and are available to pick you up.**
- You may bring a mobile phone if you wish so that you can call your parents if we are going to be late or early, but **you** must take care of it all day – neither the school nor the zoo will take responsibility if you lose it.

*Students may wish to bring their own spending money e.g. for the gift shop, and we would advise an amount of £10.00 **maximum** for the day. However, Marwell is now cashless so please bring along a form of card payment if you would like to purchase anything.*

Students are strongly advised to bring a packed lunch as we will not necessarily be near a convenient place to purchase food. If you have Free School Meals make sure you have ordered a packed lunch and that you collect it before you depart at 9am.

You need to wear comfortable clothes suitable for drama, dance and general creative activities. Art activities can be messy so don't wear your favourite outfits. Some of the activities may be outside so sun-cream and hat will be necessary. Please read the other information in this booklet for further details.

THE TOTAL (SUBSIDISED) COST FOR YEAR 7

CHALLENGE WEEK IS £29

Please note that although voluntary contributions are asked towards the week, these contributions are essential if the week's activities are to run. As with all trips and activities and in accordance with the Governors' Charges and Remissions Policy, if parents are reluctant to support these events through donations then planned activities will not take place due to lack of other funding being available.

**Pupil Premium students will have the cost of the week
funded from the Government grant.**

REMINDERS ABOUT CHALLENGE WEEK FOR PARENTS / CARERS

Whilst not wanting to produce a list of do's and don'ts, it is important to state the following so that everyone is clear about the expectations we have. Then we hope that all of us, staff and students, can have a safe and enjoyable Challenge Week and you, the parents and carers, know what is happening each day.

Challenge Week is compulsory – all students are expected to participate in every day and every activity. If your child is unwell, please follow the usual procedures and phone 02392 259214 and select the 'reporting absent student' option or email absence@oaklands.hants.sch.uk Parents of any student not in school without a valid reason will be contacted during the course of the morning. Students not present without a valid reason will be marked as unauthorised.

The School Behaviour Policy continues to apply during Challenge Week. Students will therefore be subject to the usual range of sanctions should their behaviour fall short in any way of what is expected of students at Oaklands. No monies can be refunded to parents whose child is excluded from subsequent activities.

Students will be allowed to wear their own clothes during Challenge Week, which should be **entirely appropriate** given the nature of the activities and the weather. Skimpy or revealing outfits, inappropriate logos on T-shirts etc are not deemed suitable and students may find themselves unable to participate in an activity if not appropriately dressed. Advice will be given in this booklet if your child is involved in an activity requiring specific clothing. Each day, students should bring in suncream/sunhats and a bottle of water to keep themselves safe in the sunshine.

All students on site can bring in a packed lunch or purchase food from the canteen. Students going off site should bring a packed lunch and drink with them. **No** fizzy drinks please. Chewing gum is **not** permitted.

Those students who have free school meals can get their lunch in the usual way. Mobile phones, as always, must be switched off and in bags. The school policy with regard to mobile phones is still in force during Challenge Week. Students will have their phones confiscated if they have them switched on or are using them during the 'school day' and parents will be notified to come into school to collect them.

The usual access arrangements in school apply. Morning drop-offs along the drive please. The gates will not open before 3.50pm in the afternoons, allowing cars to then collect from the designated pick up points once the buses have departed.

Thank you for your support in these matters.

WHAT NEXT....

- 1** If you have not already completed the annual Medical / Consent form then this must be returned as a priority. Copies are available from the school website.
 - 2** If any medical details relating to your child have changed since you submitted the original form, please complete and return a new one as it is parents' and carers' responsibility to update the school should this information change.
 - 3** Payment must be made online or via cheque (made payable to 'Oaklands Catholic School'). Total (subsidised) cost for Year 7 is £29
 - 4** Please complete the above by June 12th 2026 at the latest to assist with the administration of Challenge Week.
 - 5** Students who have not returned the above will not be permitted to participate in the activities.
 - 6** Keep this booklet and your son / daughters' timetable for the week (once it is published) somewhere safe.
- *Please contact Mrs Brettell - Business Support Manager - if you wish to discuss consideration for financial assistance.*
 - *Any other concerns / matters related to Challenge Week, please discuss with Mr Bamford.*

A REMINDER – CHALLENGE WEEK IS JUST 4 DAYS LONG (TUESDAY-FRIDAY), AS MONDAY IS A NORMAL SCHOOL DAY (MONDAY WEEK 2).