



The Cornovii Trust

STRONGER & BETTER TOGETHER

Dear Parents / Carers, Colleagues and Students

As we come to the end of another academic year, we have much to celebrate and be proud of as a group of schools. The collaboration, support each school provides for one another, the sharing of expertise, knowledge, resources and staffing remains a real strength of our trust. This is down the amazing school leaders, staff and local governors we have working across our schools. Given all the many challenges schools and school leaders are facing, we definitely are 'better together' and 'stronger together' as a group of schools, rather than operating as separate institutions. Our core purpose and strategic priorities will always be, what we can do for our young people and staff as a group working together, which schools could not do in isolation? I really do feel that everyone in our 8 schools feels that we are **'stronger and better together'**.



The addition of Malbank High School and 6th Form College in Nantwich mid-way through the year, has really emphasized this point. Malbank have added a wide range of expertise, knowledge, skills and resources into our trust. We have already begun planning exciting

- Mobile-free schools
- Changes to free school meals eligibility
- Ofsted inspections & exam results
- Great British Summer Savings
- Cornovii Cup update

opportunities for the young people of Nantwich, especially around careers education and guidance, post 16 provision and curriculum developments. With both schools in Nantwich collaborating and working together as part of the same trust, it will be hugely beneficial to all young people in the town.



One thing that all the secondary schools in our group have collaborated on is making our schools mobile phone free. All of our schools already had in place restrictions on the use of mobile phones during the school day, however, the government's drive to remove access to them completely has been welcomed by our three secondaries. The negative impact of mobiles on our young people and the disruption they can cause in school during the day has been well documented at national level. Alsager and Brine Leas schools adopted the mobile free policy through the use of pouches from June this year, with Malbank following suit in September. I would like to thank all our young people and parents / carers for your support with this. Already, our early adopters have reported the positive impact this has had in school.

I would like to make all parents / carers aware of a national change to the eligibility for free school meals for all children at school and urge families to apply if you are eligible. From 1st September 2026, all children

in households receiving Universal Credit will be eligible for free school meals. Applications must go through the local authority. Please contact them on 0300 1235012 or via e mail freeschoolmeals@cheshireeast.gov.uk or through this weblink www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/schools/school-meals

The window for applications to Cheshire East opens on 1/8/26, please do not apply before this date.



FREE SCHOOL MEALS ARE EXPANDING

FROM SEPTEMBER 2026

Cheshire East County Council has confirmed changes to Free School Meals (FSM) eligibility.

WHAT'S CHANGING?

CURRENT ELIGIBILITY

Most families receiving Universal Credit only qualify for income-based free school meals if their annual earned income is **£7,400 or less** (excluding benefits).

FROM SEPTEMBER 2026

All children in households receiving Universal Credit will become eligible for Free School Meals.

FREE SCHOOL MEALS CATEGORIES

TARGETED FREE SCHOOL MEALS

Available to families who:

- Receive Universal Credit and earn **£7,400 or less per year** (excluding benefits), or
- Receive certain qualifying benefits, including:
 - Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
 - Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit)
 - Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

EXPANDED FREE SCHOOL MEALS

Available to:

- **All** other families receiving Universal Credit, **regardless of earnings.**

THIS MEANS **ALL CHILDREN** IN UNIVERSAL CREDIT HOUSEHOLDS WILL BE ELIGIBLE FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS **FROM SEPTEMBER 2026.**

IMPORTANT DATES

APPLICATIONS OPEN:
1st August 2026

EXPANDED ELIGIBILITY STARTS:
1 September 2026

Please note: Applications can be submitted from 1st August 2026, but meals under the expanded scheme cannot begin before 1 September 2026.

WHO WILL BENEFIT?

 More families receiving Universal Credit

 More students accessing a healthy meal during the school day

 Reduced pressure on household budgets

FIND OUT MORE OR APPLY
Visit: www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/schools/school-meals Email: freeschoolmeals@cheshireeast.gov.uk



There has been a national delay in the publication of key stage 2 SATS results this year, a situation that is far from ideal. Schools are due to receive them on 16/7/26, which is very late in the year and after the date for school reports. However, I know how hard the young people and the staff in our schools have worked and am very confident that we will see a great set of well-deserved results from our primary schools. This is reflected in other primary national key performance indicators – in terms of early years, phonics and key stage 1 outcomes, our schools were well above national and regional data in every measure.

Similarly, I would like to pass on my best wishes to all our young people collecting their GCSE, Vocational and A level results in August. Again, I know how hard our year students have worked, alongside fantastic support and dedication from their teachers to guide them through what is a very testing time. I am also very grateful for all the support, guidance and encouragement from home to help our young people through the exam season.

Over the course of this year, all of our 5300 young people from the age of 3 -18 have benefitted from countless experiences, trips, visits, events, activities and residential events. They have also experienced huge success in the fields of music, drama, sport and many other forms of competition. This is what we all remember about school, extracurricular activities

Brine Leas School were inspected by Ofsted in mid-June. The two-day inspection was part of the regular programme conducted by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools under a new framework. At the time of writing, the final report has not yet been released, however, I can state that the team of inspectors were very impressed with what they saw. Our young people and staff were exemplary and showed what a great school Brine Leas really is. I would like to thank and congratulate Mr Whitehead (Headteacher) and all the staff for doing such a great job. The report will of course be shared with parents as soon as it is published by Ofsted. We are expecting five of our schools to be inspected during 26/27, as part of the regular 4 year inspection cycle – so a busy year ahead for us all.





or non-classroom-based opportunities. None of these would be possible without the expertise, hard work, professionalism and willingness of our fantastic staff to provide these opportunities for our young people.

The government have recently announced the 'Great British Summer Savings' scheme. From 25 June to 1 September 2026, the Government is temporarily cutting VAT from 20% to 5% on children's meals in restaurants, children and family tickets to cinemas, theatres, concerts and exhibitions, and admission to a wide range of attractions. Combined with free bus travel during August for children aged 5 to 15 in England, families and young people will be able to enjoy experiences that make summer special, including visits to the kinds of cultural and educational attractions that enrich children's lives outside the classroom. As part of this campaign, the government have launched an attraction finder website which allows families to type in their postcode and find participating venues near them to make the most of summer savings. To use the attraction finder, please visit www.summersavings.gov.uk



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The Cornovii Cup, in which pupils from Alsager and Brine Leas compete against each other all year and in a wide variety of sports, reached its finale with the annual staff and pupil golf competition, which took place on 13th July. Alsager were once again crowned winners of The Cornovii Cup for 2025/26. Many congratulations to all involved and a special thank you to Mr Elliot (Brine Leas) and Mr Morris (Alsager) who have once again organised such a hard fought competition throughout the year. Next year, Malbank will be entering the competition, so it will become a three way event.



The Cornovii Trust

Cornovii Cup Update

Competition	Alsager	Brine Leas
Netball	26	34
6th form Netball	10	2
Football	45	13
Girls Football	12	12
Handball	20	4
Badminton	30	6
Table Tennis	6	30
Netball	22	14
Cricket	2	10
Athletics	32	16
Golf	24	24
Total	229	165

July 2026

Two of our schools received Gold Awards from Cheshire Young Carers this year. Both Alsager Highfields Primary and Alsager School, received this prestigious award to recognize the fantastic work they do in supporting our pupils who are young carers, ensuring they feel seen, empowered and supported every day. A huge congratulations to Mrs Woollam and Mrs O'Neill and the teams at Highfields and Alsager respectively. A special thank you to Mrs Potts, one of our trust Family Liaison Officers, who has led much of this work.



You can always find more details about our activities and work as a trust on our website www.thecornovii.org and you can follow us on social media, which will also keep you updated on job vacancies across all our schools.



Many thanks for your continued support. I wish you and your families a relaxing summer break, a chance to recharge the batteries ready to embrace 2026/27.



Richard Middlebrook
CEO The Cornovii Trust



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