

School Newsletter



Dear Parents,

Happy New Year to you all and welcome back to a brand new term. I hope you all had a wonderful Christmastime with your families. The start of the spring term is exciting, and, behind the scenes, we are busy planning some wonderful events and learning opportunities for the children. Our stay and craft event in December was very popular and we hope to invite you back into school again soon.

On Wednesday, we gathered together for a welcome back assembly which provided the opportunity for everyone to reflect on the possibilities of the upcoming year. We encouraged the children to think about setting New Year's resolutions, embracing a fresh start, and, most importantly, believing in themselves as they set themselves goals. In Roman mythology, Janus was the god of gates and doorways, beginnings and endings. He was often pictured with two faces, one looking forward, the other looking back. There's something of Janus in all of us. It's good to look back upon past achievements - but we can also enjoy looking forward to new beginnings!

Mrs Honywill

Headteacher



Diary Dates

Spring Term 3

3.1.24	Children return to school
15.1.24	Primary school admission closes
17.1.24	Individual school photos by Jelly Photos
24.1.24	DEAR (Drop Everything And Read – all classes). Parents invited to read/share stories with their child from 8:45-9:30. This is a good opportunity to ask your child's class teacher for any support/advice on how you can support your child/ren with their reading at home.
12.2.24	Half term
19.2.24	Non Pupil Day
7.3.24	World Book Day (Dress up) Details to follow
11.3.24 and 13.3.24	Parent's Evening Appointments
25.3.24	Cricket Workshop – all classes (PE kits) Details to follow
28.3.24	Easter Service at the Church (TBC)

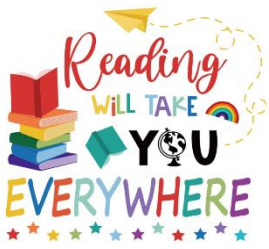
Teachers are planning upcoming trips. Details will be sent separately.

Forest School

Tuesday 9 th January	Years 4, 5, 6
Tuesday 16 th January	Years 1, 2, 3
Tuesday 23 rd January	Years 4, 5, 6
Tuesday 30 th January	Years 1, 2, 3
Tuesday 6 th February	Years 4, 5, 6



News



Reading, Reading, Reading

As we start a new calendar year, it's a great opportunity to reaffirm the importance of good reading habits at home with your children. All the staff know how much our children enjoy reading in school but we also know how valuable it is for them to read themselves or be read to by another person when they are at home. Research consistently highlights the benefits of dedicating just 20 minutes a day to reading, regardless of age. Take a look at the research statistics for just 20 minutes of reading a day at any age. We encourage you to incorporate reading into your daily routine. Whether it's sharing a story together, listening to your child read, or allowing them some quiet reading time alone, these moments contribute significantly to their overall development. We are always looking for as many opportunities during the school day for our children to read to an adult. If you have any spare time and would like to volunteer some time during the week to listen to children read, please let the school office know. Thank you.



Class Dojo



Everyone should now have received a link to join Class Dojo.

What do you need to do?

1. You will need to either download the Class Dojo app from your device's app store or go to the classdojo.com website.
2. Inform school if you do not give permission for photographs of your child to go on Class Dojo.
3. You will need to setup a parent account using your personal email address. We'll send you a code so that you can connect your account to your child.



We will be using Class Dojo to communicate key messages and share learning moments and achievements with you so please let the office know if you need support accessing Dojo.

Aug 2024						
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Jun 2025						
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Jul 2025						
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Key: Peach - holiday periods; light green – weekends; blue - Trust NPDs; yellow - School NPDs

Important dates

Autumn Term Dates: Monday 2 September to Friday 25 October, then Monday 4 November to Friday 20 December

Term 1 40 days (inc. School NPD Mon 2 Sept and WeST NPD Tues 3 Sept)

Term 2 35 days

Spring Term Dates: Monday 6 January to Friday 14 February, then Monday 24 February to Friday 4 April

Term 3 30 days (inc. School NPD Monday 6 January)

Term 4 30 days

Summer Term Dates: Tuesday 22 April to Friday 23 May, then Monday 2 June to Tuesday 22 July (Note: NPDs on Mo 21 and Tu 22 Jul '25 are disaggregated for staff twilight training throughout the year. The last day of the academic year for students and staff is Friday 18 July 2025)

Term 5 23 days

Term 6 37 days

Helping children and young people with **MANAGING DEVICE STRESS AND ANXIETY**

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

The internet and advances in the capability of digital devices have afforded us arguably the fastest period of technological and social evolution in living memory: creating opportunities for us to interact with people anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day. It's also, however, blurred safety boundaries and added new stresses for young people, who are often less aware of the hidden hazards. With almost half of 10-15-year-olds experiencing bullying online and algorithms pushing content in front of our children every day, it's important to know how to address some of these challenges.

LIVING ONLINE

The internet is awash with sophisticated algorithms that learn from our online behaviour and try to predict our wants and needs. That's very helpful in some respects, but it can make the online world difficult for children and young people to negotiate. Content can be brought to them at any time – it may not always be appropriate, and children may not have the ability or the support to deal with it.

PUSHY NOTIFICATIONS

Content is also directed at us through notifications from our apps: letting us know we have a new message or social post to read, for example. While that's useful in some circumstances, it conditions us to keep going back online (and is designed to do so) and can be a non-constant demand on your child's attention. As such alerts become more common, are we experiencing an 'attack of the pings'?

BLURRED BOUNDARIES

There are now so many ways we can communicate online in real time (via instant messaging apps) or with a delay (such as on social media) that it's possible to be constantly in conversation. Young people often prefer quiet text exchanges of text – but using fewer words can cause distressing miscommunications through the lack of non-verbal cues like facial expressions or tone of voice.

DIGITAL DEPENDENCY

As devices allow access to immediate external help in challenging situations, it's a concern that children may not be developing the inner confidence to work things out for themselves. Likewise, group membership is hugely important to young people – both in digital and 'real' life – and being excluded from online conversations can cause damaging feelings of loneliness and isolation.

DISGUISED DISTRESS

Children often haven't yet developed the emotional resources to deal with many of the setbacks of everyday life, so identifying when it's specifically something online that's worried them can be tricky. A certain level of stress is a normal response to a problem: it spurs us into action to keep ourselves safe. If the stress is excessive, though, it can feel overwhelming and potentially lead to anxiety or depression.

ANTI-SOCIAL SOCIALS

Social media can bring people together in hugely positive ways. Sadly, it does also have a darker side, including 'flame war' arguments which can escalate quickly and have harmful consequences. With so many people looking on, 'group shaming' situations are also common – while there are continual opportunities for young people to compare themselves negatively with other social media users.

Advice for Parents & Carers

LEARN THE BASICS

It's impossible to keep up with every online change or every new app. The best option is to make yourself aware of the fundamentals of how the internet operates, so you can help your child to grasp how – and why – content reaches them. Devices and the digital world can be confusing, so learning to understand them better will give you the confidence to talk to your child about them.

TALK IT OUT

If a child mentions a comment that's been directed at them in a text chat or on social media, it may sound minor but can actually have a much bigger effect than we realise. In our evolved brains, any perceived threat can get internalised while our body reacts as if we were in physical danger – raising stress levels. It's always worth encouraging your child to get any concerns out in the open.

PUSH DISTRACTIONS AWAY

Notifications to our phones and tablets can be helpful, but they sometimes make one wonder who's really in charge: the person or the device? Checking our phones as soon as it goes off is an easy habit to fall into – especially for young people. Try switching off non-essential alerts on your devices and encourage your child to do the same; you should both feel less triggered and more in control.

LOOK FOR THE SIGNS

This is tricky – and may depend on the child's age – but any sudden change in behaviour is worth looking out for. If your child seems to be checking their phone or tablet more, doesn't want to be parted from them, or appears unusually secretive, anxious or withdrawn, it could be a sign that something is amiss in relation to their device – and, possibly, that they're in need of extra support.

KEEP CHECKING IN

Healthy emotional regulation balances three systems: threat, drive and grounding. Down the various rabbit holes of the internet, however, that balance can easily slip away – so it's important to help your child manage their emotions when they're online. Check in with them regularly when they're on their devices, and remember that 'distraction' and 'relaxation' aren't always the same thing.

BE KIND: UNWIND

Be kind to yourselves as parents and carers. Remember that we're all in the same boat, trying to safely guide our children through this complex, fast-moving digital environment. Getting into the habit of having nature, relaxed conversations with your child about their online life (and yours) can level the playing field and make it far easier for them to open up to you about any concerns.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Cande Franks-Birch is an experienced counselling psychologist who specialises in promoting safe and ethical online communications. She consults with and offers support to young people and organisations, supporting positive digital citizenship to young people – often by considering some of the more hidden aspects of the various mediums.



**National
Online
Safety**

#WakeUpWednesday