



Balksbury Federation

Across the Playground

Friday 8th May

Sports Day

It has been wonderful to see the children out on the field this week, practising and getting ready for Sports Day on **Friday 5th June**.

Further information including timings can be found in this issue of Across the Playground.

A parent guide containing everything you need to know about the event will be sent out to families next week, along with a slip regarding lunch time arrangements for the day. Please support us by returning the lunchtime arrangements slip to your child's class teacher by **Friday 22nd May**.

We can't wait to see you there!



STEM Week 2026

Dream It, Build It, STEM It!

Exciting plans are being made to ensure it's the best STEM Week and Festival yet. We love to involve the community with our Federated events, so if you or someone you know has experience in the STEM industry and might be able to offer time or support with the week, please do get in touch with Miss Bolton via either of our Admin Offices.



Swimming

The children are very much looking forward to starting their swimming sessions next week. Please support us by ensuring that your child has their swim kit on the correct day and that you have consented for your child to swim on Arbor.



Dolce Special Lunch

We are delighted to share with you Dolce's next themed lunch. On Thursday 21st May Dolce will be cooking up a delicious Summertime Fiesta themed lunch. You can order this via **SchoolGrid**.



For feedback, compliments and comments, visit our **Contact Us** page on our website or email one of the admin offices.

<https://www.balksburyfederation.co.uk/contact-us/>

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Sports Day 2026



When?

Friday 5th June



9:15am – 11:45am	Junior School Sports Day (Prize giving at 11:30am)
11:55pm – 12:50pm	Whole Federation Family Picnic
1:00pm – 3:00pm	Infant School Sports Day (Prize giving at 2:45pm)



Where?

Junior School Field

Picnic Lunch



We are excited to invite you to join us to have a picnic lunch on the playground with your child on Sports Day. Please check your child's reading diary for a lunch time arrangement slip to complete and hand back to your child's class teacher by **Friday 22nd May**.

Keep your eyes peeled for more information in the coming weeks.

We can't wait to see you there!



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Classroom News



Across the Playground

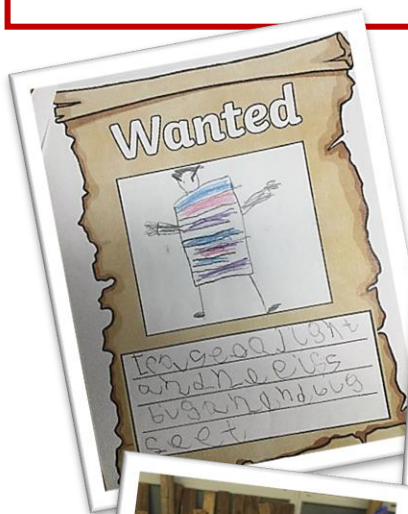
Year R

This term Year R children have absolutely loved **exploring life cycles**, beginning with the magical world of *Jack and the Beanstalk*. The story has sparked so much **excitement** and **imagination**, motivating them to write, create and investigate. They've thrown themselves into making **brilliant, wanted posters** for the giant and for cheeky Jack, who ran off with the hen and the gold. Their **creativity** didn't stop there, they even worked together outdoors to build giant-sized items, including the giant's enormous bed, using our construction bricks. Their writing has been incredible, their ideas have been bursting with **enthusiasm**, and we are so proud of everything they've achieved.



Year 3

Year 3 have made a fantastic start to the term. While we've been enjoying the sunshine here at home, the children have also been exploring another wonderfully warm part of the world - **Brazil**. They have learnt about the country's famous landmarks, its **physical** and **human features**, and its vibrant capital city, **Rio de Janeiro**. The children have shown great enthusiasm when using atlases to locate countries across South America and to pinpoint where Brazil's most iconic landmarks can be found. In P.E, Year 3 are developing their skills through **fielding games** and are eagerly counting down the days until the swimming pool opens. In Music, children have been working **collaboratively** to create their own **soundscapes** using different percussion instruments. They thought about the structure of their pieces and enjoyed performing them to the class.



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Classroom News



Across the Playground

Year 6

Year 6 have been working incredibly hard since returning to school after the Easter holidays. In Computing, they have enjoyed using **Micro:bits** to write code and then publish messages or images on the LED display. In Music lessons, the children have been very creative, **composing** their own pieces using boomwhackers and a range of percussion instruments. They recorded their ideas using graphic notation to represent the different instruments, as well as changes in pitch and tempo. Finally making the most of the sunny weather, Year 6 have also been developing their **cricket skills** outdoors. They have been learning how to field, bat and bowl, and have put these skills into practice during some very competitive matches!



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Curriculum Corner



Mathematical Discussions

Our Maths lessons are carefully designed to help every child develop a deep and secure understanding of key concepts. Through rich mathematical discussion, children learn to explain their thinking, ask questions, and justify their ideas.

By talking through their learning, they make connections, spot patterns and strengthen their reasoning. These conversations also help teachers address misconceptions, build confident, independent and curious mathematicians.

In Year 5, children have been developing their problem-solving skills by breaking challenges into smaller, manageable steps. They carefully identify the key information in each question, organise it clearly, and use this to work methodically towards a solution.

'I know that 6 lots of 4 are 24, because I know that 4 lots of 6 are 24. They're the same, just swapped around.' (Year 3)

Spotlight - Year 6

In Year 6, children take part in **rich mathematical discussions** that help them explain their thinking clearly and listen to the ideas of others. They **compare** different ways to solve problems and talk about which methods work best and why. This helps teachers understand how well the children are applying what they have learnt. Recently, the children have been solving reasoning problems using both **mental maths** and **formal methods**, explaining their answers and learning from each other's approaches to deepen their understanding.



'Look, there are 5 bears! These 4 are red and there is 1 blue bear and 4 add 1 makes 5!' (Year R)

Spotlight - Year R

In Year R, Maths comes to life outdoors, where **play and discussion** go hand in hand. Through conversations with their friends, children **explore** different ways to **represent numbers** and share their observations. During a recent outdoor session, children discovered 'bears in the wild' and used them to practise counting and develop their understanding of addition in a fun and engaging way.



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The Reading Corner

New Books!

Last half term, Miss Bolton chatted with children in their library sessions about which books they would like to see more of in the library, and they were loud and clear – more Graphic Novels!

Both federated libraries have now been updated with brand new series sets of Graphic Novels including: 'Pablo and Splash', 'Investi-Gators', Roy and the Rovers and 'Bunny vs Monkey'. These texts can be borrowed from the libraries as a reading for enjoyment book.

Children in Year 5 and 6 also requested new fiction titles, and series to enjoy, these are also now available for children to enjoy.



Focus Bookshelves

The planet and me!

We only have one body and we only have one Earth so looking after both of them is important. There are lots of things that we can do to look after ourselves and our planet. We can walk or cycle instead of using the car, being outside makes us feel good and eating fresh fruit and vegetables is great for our health. What change could you make to help yourself and the Earth?



Recommended Reads

This week's Recommended Read comes from Alice who has been really enjoying the Rainbow Magic series. Alice recommends these books to 'anyone who likes magic and fairies.'

Author Spotlight

John is the writer of the Investi-Gators graphic novels that follow Mange and Brash as they hunt down supervillains and uncover clues. John comes from America and loves to bake, make pizza and play video games.

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ESafety

What I wish my parents knew ...

Parenting today can feel overwhelming - especially when childhood looks so different from what we grew up with. There's no manual, and it can be hard to keep up with the fast-changing digital world your child moves through every day.

The Children's Commissioner, Dame Rachel de Souza, has published a guide to help parents and carers navigate the challenge of managing children's everyday online habits.

The guide is designed to make difficult conversations easier and more regular.

The guide covers setting boundaries around phone use, talking about harmful content, and building ongoing communication that goes beyond a one-off conversation.



<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/resource/what-i-wish-my-parents-or-carers-knew-a-guide-for-parents-and-carers-on-managing-childrens-digital-lives/>

YOUR ROLE AS A PARENT OR CARER

Being a parent or carer is both a responsibility and a privilege. Children tell me they need you to guide them, set limits, and make difficult decisions when things aren't clear-cut.

Parents today face a challenging dilemma:

- Allow your child online and risk exposure to harm
- Or hold them back from a space that is vital to how young people socialise, learn and play

It's understandable to feel uncertain — especially with constantly changing guidance and complex platform controls. But you are not supposed to be your child's friend.

WRITTEN WITH CHILDREN, FOR PARENTS

WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE WANT YOU TO KNOW

WHY COMMUNICATION MATTERS MORE THAN CONFISCATION

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide explores why children often struggle to talk about their online lives, and offers practical ways to help.

- SCREEN TIME PAGE 8
- WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPEN PAGE 12
- AI ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE PAGE 14

Following this, you'll find:

- The top platforms and AI tools children use PAGE 20
- Conversation starters PAGE 21
- A checklist of actions to take PAGE 24
- A link to the accompanying activity pack for young people that you can go through together PAGE 25
- Resources and further information including where you can get immediate help PAGE 26

Why talking about digital life is hard for kids ...

Parents and carers don't know enough

- 1 **Talk about both the good and the bad of life online** - and how to make it easier
- 2 **Be involved early and collaborate on key decisions**
- 3 **When in doubt, ask your child**
- 4 **If you're still unsure, speak professional!**

Fear of consequences

- 1 **Create a safe space for talking about what they see online**
- 2 **Set ground rules together**
- 3 **Be honest and explain**

It's awkward/embarrassing

- 1 **Start conversations early and keep them going**
- 2 **Keep it casual**
- 3 **Be a role model**
- 4 **Have a conversation and ask questions**
- 5 **It's okay to laugh!**

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MANAGING SCREEN TIME

Screen time is the amount of time someone spends on a screen of any kind – this can include smartphones, tablets and laptops.

69% of children aged 5-16 use a mobile phone or tablet every day.

23% of children aged 5-16 use a mobile phone or tablet every hour.

What children think

- Screen time is important because it helps me learn things and stay connected with my friends.
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- Screen time is important because it helps me learn things and stay connected with my friends.

Tips for setting rules on screen time

- Set clear and specific rules.** Children need to know what is allowed and what is not. Be clear about the rules and make sure they understand them. For example, "No phones at the dinner table" or "No phones in your bedroom after 8pm."
- Be consistent with your rules.** If you say "no phones at the dinner table," make sure you enforce it every time. Consistency helps children understand the boundaries.
- Have a plan for when rules are broken.** Think about what you will do if a child breaks a rule. It should be a fair consequence, like taking away the phone for a short time.
- Use technology to help.** There are apps and settings that can help you monitor and limit screen time. Use these to support your rules.

Children's ideas for rules at home

- No phones at the dinner table.** "Screens should be off at the dinner table. It's important to talk to each other without distractions."
- No devices in your child's bedroom.** "It's always hard to sleep if you have your phone in your room. It's better to have a charging station in the hallway so you can leave your phone there at night."
- Have some phone-free time.** "Parents should have some time where they are not on their phones. It's important to spend time together."
- Share why you're using your phone.** "Parents who spend a lot of time on their phones should share what they are doing. It's important to know what your parents are doing."

WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPEN ONLINE

The Online Safety Act is now in place, but the online world is still far from safe for children.

Parents and carers should be aware of the risks of online safety and take steps to protect their children. This includes setting boundaries and using parental controls.

What children think

- I've never had any bad things happen online.
- I've never had any bad things happen online.
- I've never had any bad things happen online.
- I've never had any bad things happen online.

Tips for dealing with bad things happening

- Use parental controls, but check in regularly.** Parental controls can help, but it's important to talk to your child about online safety. Check in with them regularly to see how they are getting on.
- Don't share anything online.** Don't share anything online, even if it seems harmless. It could be used against you or someone else.
- Confusing your child's phone.** If your child's phone is hacked, it's important to change the password and update the software. If you suspect your phone is hacked, contact your mobile network provider.
- Have a plan for when things go wrong.** If something goes wrong online, have a plan for what to do. This includes reporting the problem and seeking help from a trusted adult.

Here are some reporting services you can use in specific situations:

- Online sexual abuse or grooming:** Report to the NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children).
- Child sexual abuse:** Report to the Child Protection Unit (CPSU).
- Child sexual exploitation:** Report to the Child Protection Unit (CPSU).
- Child sexual abuse images:** Report to the Child Protection Unit (CPSU).
- Child sexual abuse material:** Report to the Child Protection Unit (CPSU).
- Child sexual abuse contact:** Report to the Child Protection Unit (CPSU).
- Child sexual abuse grooming:** Report to the Child Protection Unit (CPSU).
- Child sexual abuse exploitation:** Report to the Child Protection Unit (CPSU).
- Child sexual abuse material:** Report to the Child Protection Unit (CPSU).
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CHILDREN'S PREFERRED PLATFORMS & AI TOOLS

Some platforms and apps have minimum age requirements, but only some of them check that the people who use them are the age they say they are. It is useful for you to know what age your child has to be to use them.

Platform	Minimum Age
WhatsApp	16
Instagram	13
Facebook	13
Twitter	13
LinkedIn	17
Quora	13
Nextdoor	18
Zoom	13
Google Meet	13
Microsoft Teams	13
Zoom	13
Google Meet	13
Microsoft Teams	13

AI tools

AI tools can be used to help children learn and create. However, it's important to be aware of the risks of AI, such as data privacy and bias.

Age Assurance

Age assurance is a way of checking that a child is the age they say they are. This can be done using facial recognition technology or other methods.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

It's important to regularly talk to your children about these topics, as they are part of their everyday lives.

CREATE THE CULTURE BEFORE THE CRISIS

CHECKLIST

How I am taking action to help my child

Have discussions and conversations	Do activities
<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss screen time and phone use regularly.	<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss online safety rules and boundaries.
<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss reporting services and when to seek help.	<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss the importance of not sharing personal information.
<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss the risks of online safety and how to stay safe.	<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss the importance of using strong passwords.
<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss the importance of not sharing personal information.	<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss the importance of using strong passwords.
<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss the importance of using strong passwords.	<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss the importance of using strong passwords.


FINAL MESSAGE

Your role cannot be outsourced. Not to schools, not to politicians, not to tech companies. No one knows your child like you do.

Meet them with patience and compassion — and extend the same compassion to yourself. Stay curious, stay involved, and keep the conversation open.

If you are worried about what your child is doing online or need further advice, please speak to one of our DSLs who will be able to help you.

Or find further tips and advice on our website



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CSL Messages



Lateness

A reminder that School starts at **8:40am** at the Juniors and **8:45am** at the Infants.

Children who are late, **must be signed in by an adult via the school reception.**

What is my child missing if they are late?

Your child will miss registration and interaction with their teacher and peers that will help with any anxiety about the day ahead. They may miss instructions for tasks that need to be completed and lesson information for the day ahead.

Some children struggle walking into a classroom on their own knowing that the teacher may have already started the day. It may 'only be' 10 minutes late when signing in but walking to their class, putting away their belongings and finding out what they have already missed can add on another 10 minutes.

Lateness doesn't only affect the children, parents may be issued with a penalty notice for persistent lateness, which is 10 unauthorised late codes(U) within a 10-week period.

Please contact Mrs Grinham or Mrs Whatley if you would like to discuss any concerns you have with your child's attendance.

Get Together



For parent carers of children and young people (0-25 years old) with any additional needs (diagnosis not needed).

- ✓ These sessions provide a space for Parent carers the opportunity to share your views about the services that support our children and young people
- ✓ One of our trained parent representatives will be at hand to make you feel comfortable with refreshments, and will be there to facilitate and document any relevant information to feedback to services
- ✓ Professionals will be invited to join on occasions to update us on services or offer help and advice.
- ✓ Most importantly it is to be in a room with other parent carers who have that lived experience and understand first hand what life is like as a parent Carer

Please keep an eye on our website and Socials for any updates on sessions

Follow us on our socials:



HAMPSHIRE
PARENT CARER
Get Together

Participation@hpcn.org.uk



Stepping Into School

Online course

Tuesdays 2 - 23 June 7pm - 8:30pm

FREE

This is an online course using Microsoft Teams. Participants will be required to use Microsoft Teams.

Booking is essential, please visit <https://shop.hants.gov.uk/collections/library-courses> to book your place. If you have issues booking online please contact branch staff or call 02392 232957



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House Points and Tokens



House Points

The house with the most points across the Federation to date is: Sidbury.

Tokens - Infants

The classes with the most tokens in the Infant School to date are: Admiral, Emperor and Skipper.

Tokens - Juniors

The class with the most tokens in the Junior School to date is: Maple Class.



Achievements from Outside of School

We would like to say a big congratulations to Ophelia in year 2 for landing the role as Greta in the well known musical The Sound of Music. We wish her the best of luck for opening night.



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PTA Message



BAG 2 SCHOOL



Bag2School is a free eco-friendly fundraising scheme that helps schools, businesses, community groups, local councils, and charities raise funds through textile recycling as well as spreading textile recycling awareness.

Simply fill a black bag with old but good quality clothes, or textiles and Bag2school will make a donation to the PTA in exchange! It's a great way to de-clutter and support your PTA at the same time!

The following items can be donated:

- Clothes
- Paired Shoes
- Handbags
- Hats
- Bags
- Scarves and Ties
- Socks
- Belts

Our next collection will be on
THURSDAY 21ST MAY 2026

Please leave all donations **BEFORE 9AM** at the top of the junior school drive.

Thank you!

CAN YOU HELP YOUR PTA?

As a small team, we are always on the lookout for new volunteers to join us in raising funds for our schools. This could be by helping us at treat sales, helping with the ACE food donations or helping to source raffle prizes.

We also have our uniform swap shop which always needs a bit of support! Meeting attendance is optional and we really appreciate any time you can donate!

ACE food donations / Treat sales / Uniform swaps and sales all take place on Fridays at the hive. 3pm - 3.30pm.

If you are interested in lending a hand, please pop an email to balksburypta@balksbury.org

THANK YOU!



In the Community

Introducing **Wild about**

PART OF **ASTER GROUP**

Rallying our community together to boost local wildlife in a way that's good for nature and good for people in Enham Alamein.

Get involved:

- Join in our Big Wildlife Count
- Attend friendly gardening and wildlife talks
- Explore our Access to Nature trail
- Grow your impact in your own garden
- Enter the Wild About Art competition
- Plus so much more!

Want to be a part of something wild? Discover more at wild-about.co.uk or scan the QR code



Supported by **enham trust**




JOIN THE **LIGHTNING SPARKS**



GIRLS JUNIOR CRICKET

MONDAYS MAY 11 - JULY 20

YEARS 3 - 5 5.15 - 6.15
YEARS 6 - 8 6.30 - 7.30



ANDOVER CRICKET CLUB

FREE & **GRAHAM Co**

THANKS TO SPONSORS - GRAHAM & CO



BBQ & BAR OPEN

EMAIL: LIGHTNINGBOLTSCC@OUTLOOK.COM

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Diary Dates

May 2026

Monday 11 th May– Friday 15 th May 2026	KS2 SATs Week
Wednesday 20 th May 2026	Year 4 – Parents v Kids Timestable Challenge 2:30pm-3:15pm
Monday 25 th May – Friday 29 th May 2026	May Half Term

June 2026

Thursday 4 th June 2026	Openbox Production: Moon Landing – Year 1
Thursday 4 th June 2026	Year 3 Butser Farm Trip
Thursday 4 th June 2026	Butterflies Parent Information Evening (for new Year R families)
Friday 5 th June 2026	Sports Day and Family Picnic
Monday 8 th June – Friday 12 th June 2026	Year 1 Phonics Screening Check Week
Wednesday 10 th June 2026	Openbox Production: Dinosaurs – Year R
Thursday 18 th June 2026	Butterflies Transition - Session 1
Thursday 18 th June 2026	Year 3 Parent Transition Meeting (3:30pm – 4:30pm)
Friday 19 th June 2026	Fraser Portraits Class Photos
Monday 22 nd June – Friday 26 th June 2026	Bikeability Week – Year 6 (more information to follow)
Tuesday 23 rd June 2026	Year 4 Mini First Aid
Wednesday 24 th June 2026	Andover Dance Festival 4:00pm – 9:00pm
Thursday 25 th June 2026	Butterflies Transition - Session 2

July 2026

Wednesday 1 st July 2026	Year 5 Taster Day at John Hanson 9:00am – 12:00pm
Wednesday 1 st July 2026	Year 2 Production (2:00pm)
Thursday 2 nd July 2026	Year 2 Production (2:00pm)
Friday 3 rd July 2026	Year 2 Country Dancing Festival
Monday 6 th – Friday 10 th July 2026	STEM Week (12:00pm – 4:00pm)
Tuesday 7 th July 2026	Change Up Morning and Butterflies Transition - Session 3

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July 2026

Friday 10 th July 2026	STEM Festival 2:00pm – 4:30pm
Monday 13 th July 2026	Balksbury's Got Talent
Monday 13 th July 2026	Children's School Reports Come Home
Monday 13 th July 2026	Year 6 Production 6:00pm
Tuesday 14 th July 2026	Year 6 Production 6:00pm
Tuesday 14 th July 2026	Year 2 Fun Day (more information to follow)
Wednesday 15 th July 2026	Year 6 Fun Day (more information to follow)
Wednesday 15 th July 2026	Year 2 Graduation (more information to follow)
Thursday 16 th July 2026	Year 6 Graduation at the Lights 9:00am – 12:00pm (more information to follow)
Friday 17 th July 2026	Disco Fun Day
Monday 20 th July 2026	Year 6 Graduation 9:15am (more information to follow)
Monday 20 th July 2026	Children's Last Day of Summer Term
Tuesday 21 st July 2026	INSET Day
Wednesday 22 nd July 2026	INSET Day

September 2026

Tuesday 1st September 2026	INSET Day
Wednesday 2 nd September	First day back at school for all children

February 2027

Monday 22 nd February 2027	INSET Day
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April 2027

Friday 30th April 2027	INSET Day
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July 2027

Tuesday 20th July 2027	INSET Day
Wednesday 21st July 2027	INSET Day

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