



# Balksbury Federation

## Across the Playground

Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May

### Farewell to Mrs Whatley

It is with a heavy heart that we say goodbye to Mrs Whatley our Community Support Lead. We would like to say thank you for all you have done in supporting our Balksbury children, staff and families. You will be sorely missed.

Mrs Whatley, we wish you 'the best of luck' in your new adventure within the Wiltshire Children Services.

We would like to reassure our families that we are currently in the process of recruiting and we will introduce our new Community Support Lead very soon. In the meantime, Mrs Grinham is here to provide support.



### Smart School Council

This week, the children had Smart School Council meetings in their classes to discuss our libraries and decide which books they would like more of.

Miss Bolton has already begun analysing the minutes taken by each class, and will meet with the Junior Leadership Team after half term to begin placing orders for the children's requests!



### Sports Day

The field has looked like the Olympic games over the past few weeks! The children have definitely enjoyed getting ready for Sports Day in their PE lessons.

A reminder that Sports Day is taking place on the slightly earlier date of **Friday 5<sup>th</sup> of June** this year.

If you have not yet returned your lunchtime arrangements slip for the day, please do so as a matter of urgency for the first Monday back.

There will be programmes on sale on the day, as well as ice-pops and water. Please bring change, as this will be a cash only event.

The guide for families can be found on our website by clicking the link below:



<https://balksburyfederation.co.uk/letters/>

We can't wait to see you there!

### Happy Half Term

We would like to wish all of our families a restful May half term break. We hope you enjoy the sunshine and we will see you back at school on **Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June**.



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# Classroom News



## Across the Playground

### Year 1

As part of our year-long longitudinal study, the children visited **Rooksbury Mill** to observe the seasonal changes of spring. During the walk, the children noticed how the environment transforms at this time of year. The trees were beginning to grow fresh green leaves, and new buds were appearing on branches. This visit helped them continue to understand how nature changes across the **seasons**.

One of the questions we explored was: How are the hours of daylight changing?



### Year 2

In Year 2, the children have been learning about the **Green Cross Code** and how to stay safe when crossing the road. The children explored different scenarios, thinking carefully about the safest places and times to cross. Once they felt confident, they went outside to practise our skills on the playground, making sure to look both ways and choose a safe place to cross.



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# Classroom News



## Across the Playground

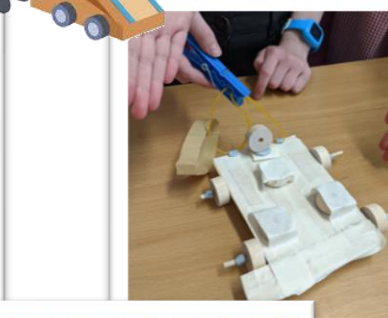
### Year 4

This term, Year 4 have been busy exploring and making cars in design and technology. In their first lesson the children were given: wheels, dowels, straws, blutac, masking tape, lollipop sticks and pegs and **NO** instructions other than make a car that moves! Since then, they have made lots of different prototypes with different mechanisms from a simple push to a slingshot and even a wind-up toy! The children have made sure they carefully plan their designs and thoroughly tested each part to make sure they work. You can see some of their creations here!



### Year 5

Year 5 have shown fantastic effort and enthusiasm this half term. In science, the children have been **exploring** the life processes of reproduction in plants and some animals. The children carried out a plant dissection to identify the different reproductive parts of a flowering plant, acted out the process of pollination, and created engaging comic strips to explain asexual reproduction in plants. In art, Year 5 have taken inspiration from the artist Hundertwasser, producing some wonderfully **creative work**; they have particularly enjoyed designing and making their own clay tiles and sculptures, showcasing both their imagination and developing artistic skills.



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# Sporting Highlights

## Summer Sports

It has been a brilliant start to the summer term across the federation, with children embracing new skills in a range of striking and fielding games. At the infant school, children have been learning that the attacking players are the *strikers* (whether using a tennis racket, cricket bat or rounders bat) while the defending players form the *fielding team*, using agility and quick reactions to minimise attacking play.

These transferable skills have been clearly evident in the junior school, where children have taken part in and watched Year 3 and 5 rounders matches, as well as Year 4 and 6 cricket fixtures. Two key vocabulary words this term have been **power**, linked to striking the ball, and **accuracy**, essential when bowling or throwing in the field. It has been wonderful to see so many children enjoying sports they may not usually play, all giving their full effort in PE and contributing to competitive, enjoyable matches.

## Sports Day

With Sports Day fast approaching on **Friday 5th June 2026**, year groups have been using their second weekly PE session to prepare for the events. All children across the federation have now been racing around our brand-new 100-metre track. From these heats, teachers have selected the four fastest boys and girls from each house to compete in the relay races, as well as those completing a full lap of the track.

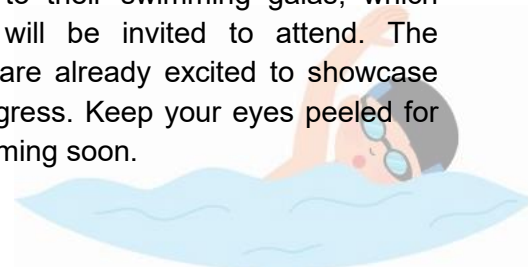
Children have also been developing their jumping skills in the long-jump pit and are now ready to take flight on the day. We look forward to welcoming you all to share in the excitement.



## Swimming

We are delighted to announce that the swimming pool is now open. Children have already enjoyed their first sessions, focusing on water confidence and water safety. Having attended several lessons myself, I can confidently say the children have thoroughly enjoyed being in the pool. They have shown great focus, responded brilliantly to the guidance of their class teachers, and given their all while having plenty of fun.

Their hard work over the coming weeks will lead up to their swimming galas, which families will be invited to attend. The children are already excited to showcase their progress. Keep your eyes peeled for dates coming soon.



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# Sporting Highlights Continued..

## Celebrating Sporting Success

Finally, we would like to share how proud we are of all our sports teams who have represented Barksbury this year. Our football teams, in particular, have had an exceptional season. The boys' team went undefeated throughout the year, earning a place in the semi-finals of the Andover Town Cup at Portway.

On the day, the boys were outstanding. They demonstrated our learning values of collaboration, perseverance and respect. Not only towards the opposition but also towards themselves and their teammates. After a strong victory against Pilgrims Cross in the semi-finals, they faced St John the Baptist School in the 'Floral Way Derby' final. The boys kept their composure, took control of the game, and secured a well-deserved win, lifting the trophy and being crowned **Andover Town School Champions 2026**.

*Mr Bensaid*



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# The Reading Corner



## Recommended Reads

This week our recommended read comes from Esmae who loves the 'Investigators' series. She says that *'These books are so funny...the Investigator is also a chef, my Mummy who makes cupcakes might like it too'*.



## Spotlight on...

### Dana Simpson

Dana Simpson is a cartoonist from America. She is best known for her graphic novel series Phoebe and her Unicorn. These books follow Phoebe and the amazing (and amusing) adventures that she has with her unicorn. Dana still lives in America with her partner and their cat.



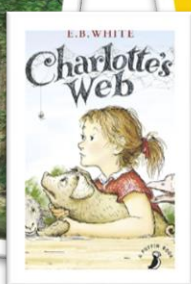
## Easter Reading Competition

Congratulations to Eddie and Ayla who were the winners of our Easter reading competitions. They both received a £10 book voucher. Well done and a big thank you to everyone who took part!

## Focus Bookshelves

### Being Fair

Being fair means treating other people in a way that is honest. It is sharing, taking turns and following the rules. How can you be fair in school and at home? Could you take turns with any siblings? Could you include people who are being left out? **Mr Stink** by David Walliams makes us realise that we can't judge people by the way they look. **Charlotte's Web** proves that friendship can be found in unlikely places and **The Secret Garden** shows how people can change for the better.



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# ESafety

## Pinterest

Pinterest is an image-sharing social media platform.



Pinterest was launched in 2010.

Pinterest has over half a billion monthly active users worldwide.

80% of users have discovered something new on Pinterest.

### What is Pinterest?

A visual discovery engine and social media platform for finding ideas like recipes, home decoration, fashion, holiday destinations and much more.

Users can discover, save and share visual content such as images and videos.

It is like a virtual pinboard or digital scrapbook, where users can collect and organise content related to their interests or hobbies.

### How does it work?

Pinterest works in a similar way to other social media platforms.

The more a user interacts with certain Pins, the more related Pins they will see.

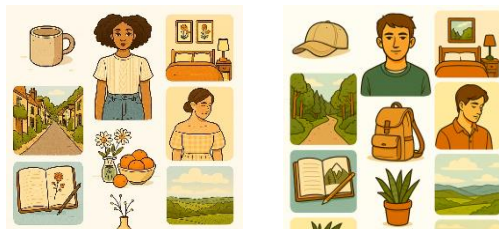
The user's home feed will feature topics that the user has chosen e.g. cooking or D.I.Y. As the user engages with more content, their feed will update to reflect this.

### Pinterest vocabulary

**Pins** – individual visual bookmarks. Any piece of content (typically an image or video) that a user adds to their collection. Each pin represents an idea, concept, or inspiration that the user finds interesting and wants to save or share with others.

**Boards** – where the user saves their Pins in collections. Boards are like virtual folders which allow the user to organise and arrange their Pins according to specific themes or topics, such as new kitchen ideas, summer clothes or recipes to try.

**Visual search** - where the user uses an image to search for similar images online, rather than typing words



### Secret boards

Secret boards are private collections, only visible to the user and any collaborators they invite to see it.

### Minimum age

To be eligible to sign up for Pinterest, you must be at least **13 years old**.

Letting your child use the platform before they are old enough leaves them open to risk of harm.

**13+**

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## What are the risks of using Pinterest?

### Exposure to inappropriate content

Your child could see or hear harmful or upsetting content. Due to how the platform shows users' content, it is easy to come across inappropriate or adult posts.



### Spreading misinformation

As Pinterest will update a user's feed with similar content, a user is at risk of seeing content that may lead to close-minded thinking, inaccurate ideas about the world or ideas that may harm a person's physical or mental health.



### Direct messages - unwanted contact

Pinterest includes a direct messaging feature, where children are at risk of receiving unwanted messages from people they do not know. Even if the account is set to private, other users can still request to send you direct messages.



<https://www.thewhitehatter.ca/post/what-parents-didn-t-know-about-pinterest-matters-for-all-caregivers>

### Sharing private information

Your child could accidentally reveal private information about themselves in photos that they share e.g. a photo of them in their school jumper which reveals the school logo and therefore which school they go to



### Spending too much time scrolling

Pinterest uses what's called persuasive design - techniques to keep users engaged on the platform e.g. the endless scrolling feature. As you can keep scrolling to reveal new content, you can accidentally spend hours engaging with content.



## Keep your child safe



**Set a parental passcode** – makes it easier to manage screen time, block inappropriate content and stops your child from changing their privacy or social permissions without your knowledge.

**Set content preferences** - Ensure that the selected interests/topics are positive for your child's mental wellbeing.

Remember that these change as Pinterest is used and preferences can be updated or topics removed in settings.

**Use social permissions settings** - Limit who can interact with your child and how.

**Filter comments** - set up manual filters to reduce comments on Pins which may cause harm or offence.

**Customise privacy settings** - hide your child's account from Google searches, customise cookie settings and manage or delete the account data.

**Manage push notifications** - to help promote balanced screen time, turn off or limit notifications.

**Take a break** - set reminders to take a break away from the app.

**Talk** – about what they are seeing on Pinterest.

**Show how to block/report inappropriate Pins or a user**

## Setting parental controls

<https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/social-media/pinterest-privacy-and-safety-settings/>

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 <https://balksburyfederation.co.uk/esafety/>

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# CSL Messages

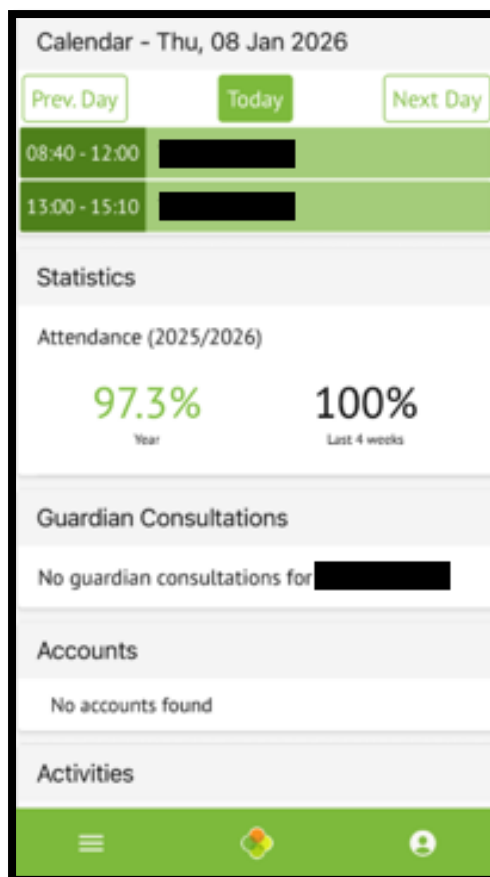


## Reporting Your Child's Absence

As of Monday 19<sup>th</sup> January, you will be able to record absences via the Parent Portal and Arbor App. **You will only be able to record same-day absences**, so for any extended or future absences, please contact the admin offices and complete a Request for Absence Form.

Please see the separate email for instructions on how to use the App.

You will still be able to phone and leave a message on the absence line.



## Can my Child Come to School?

### Anxiety and Worry

Children can sometimes feel a little bit worried about going to school, but prolonged periods of absence are likely to make them worry more. Being in school with the support of their friends and teachers are likely to make them feel less worried than letting them stay at home.

### Coughs and Colds

Children and young people with mild symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat, or slight cough, who are otherwise well, can continue to attend their education setting.

Children should be given paracetamol, plenty of fluids to drink and can be sent to school.

### High temperature

A normal temperature in babies and children can vary slightly from child to child.

### A high temperature is 38c or more

Children and young people who are unwell and have a high temperature should stay at home and avoid contact with other people, where they can. They can go back to school or childcare and resume normal activities when they no longer have a high temperature and they are well enough to attend.

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# House Points and Tokens

## House Points

The House with the most points across the Federation to date is: Fosbury.



## Tokens - Infants

The class with the most tokens in the Infant School to date is: Kingfisher Class.



## Tokens - Juniors

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



# PTA Message



## 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](mailto:balksburypta@balksbury.org)

**THANK YOU!**



We would like to say a big thank you for those of you who donated to the Bags2School. We raised £32.50. Thank you for your continued support.



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# Achievements from Outside of School

We would like to say a huge congratulations to Oscar, who attended the Saints vs Ipswich game a couple of weeks ago with his Dad and out of the whole stadium, he was chosen to win a prize of a cruise to the Fjords. We hope you have a wonderful time.



We would like to say a big well done to Max. He was awarded the Andover Rugby Club, Under 8s team, coaches Player of the Year. What an achievement, congratulations.



Lucas recently took part in his very first triathlon race at the age of 7 and achieved an outstanding result by finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> in his age group. The event included swimming, cycling, and running, and Lucas showed great determination, enthusiasm, and sportsmanship throughout the competition. Taking on such a challenging multi-sport event at a young age is a fantastic achievement, and we are extremely proud of his effort and commitment. Lucas thoroughly enjoyed the experience and is already looking forward to taking part in more events in the future. Well done Lucas what an amazing achievement.



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# Diary Dates

## May 2026

**Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May – Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

May Half Term

## June 2026

**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

Openbox Production: Moon Landing – Year 1

**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

Year 3 Butser Farm Trip

**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

Butterflies Parent Information Evening (for new Year R families)

**Friday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

Sports Day and Family Picnic

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June – Friday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

Year 1 Phonics Screening Check Week

**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

Openbox Production: Dinosaurs – Year R

**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

Butterflies Transition - Session 1

**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

Year 3 Parent Transition Meeting (3:30pm – 4:30pm)

**Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

Fraser Portraits Class Photos

**Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June – Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

Bikeability Week – Year 6 (more information to follow)

**Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2026**

Year 4 Mini First Aid

**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

Andover Dance Festival 4:00pm – 9:00pm

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

Butterflies Transition - Session 2

**Monday 29<sup>th</sup> June – Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2026**

Swim Gala Week (more information to follow)

## July 2026

**Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2026**

Year 5 Taster Day at John Hanson 9:00am – 12:00pm

**Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2026**

Year 2 Production (2:00pm)

**Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2026**

Year 2 Production (2:00pm)

**Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2026**

Year 2 Country Dancing Festival

**Monday 6<sup>th</sup> – Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2026**

STEM Week (12:00pm – 4:00pm)

**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2026**

Change Up Morning and Butterflies Transition - Session 3

**Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2026**

STEM Festival 2:00pm – 4:30pm

**Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2026**

Balksbury's Got Talent

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## July 2026

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

## September 2026

<b>Tuesday 1st September 2026</b>	INSET Day
<b>Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September</b>	First day back at school for all children

## February 2027

<b>Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2027</b>	INSET Day
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## April 2027

<b>Friday 30th April 2027</b>	INSET Day
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## July 2027

<b>Tuesday 20th July 2027</b>	INSET Day
<b>Wednesday 21st July 2027</b>	INSET Day

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