

Balksbury Federation



For

Academic Year
2026-2027



Dear Families,

As we approach the end of another academic year, I want to take a moment to reflect on what has been a truly positive and encouraging year for our federation. We feel incredibly proud of all that has been achieved, and it has been wonderful to see our shared hard work recognised beyond our federated community.

This year, both the Department for Education and the County Education Authority have acknowledged the strong progress made by our disadvantaged pupils. This recognition means a great deal to us, as it reflects our unwavering belief that every child deserves the opportunity to thrive. County visits to both schools also highlighted the federation's '*clear and ambitious vision for all pupils to achieve highly*' and praised the Leadership Team for maintaining '*a clear strategic oversight of school improvement at all times*'. These comments capture exactly what we strive for every day.

As you will know, this has been my final academic year in education. After 26 years in a profession I have loved, there is truly no other place I would rather have spent my last year than here, within Balksbury Federation. I want to take this opportunity to say a heartfelt thank you to the entire Balksbury Team. Their passion, conviction, and commitment to our shared vision have shaped both schools into great schools where children learn, grow, and feel proud to be Balksbury Citizens. It has been a privilege to lead such a dedicated group of professionals.

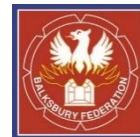
I will miss the children terribly. Their joy, curiosity, humour, and resilience have been the highlight of every single day I have been here. But, I leave knowing that the team behind me is strong, passionate, and deeply committed to giving every child the very best.

Thank you, too, to all our families, governors, PTA and volunteers. Your support over the past seven and a half years has meant more than I can express. Your encouragement, your trust, and your partnership have helped shape this federation into the vibrant, nurturing community it is today.

As the federation looks ahead to September, I know the federation will continue to flourish as I hand the baton to Mrs Whitlock. It has been the greatest honour of my career to serve this community, and I am immensely proud of everything we have achieved together.

And to the children of the federation, I say to you all: '*Look up at the stars and not down at your feet*' Stephen Hawking.

Best wishes,
Miss Katy Thompson
Executive Headteacher



Dear Parents, Carers, Staff, and Friends of the Balksbury Federation,

As we reach the end of another academic year, I want to take a moment on behalf of the Governing Body to look back and celebrate everything our school community has achieved. It has been a busy, vibrant, and incredibly successful year, and none of it would have been possible without the collective effort of every single one of you.

Firstly, I would like to say a massive well done to our fantastic young people. You've been real superstars this year. You were excellent with your flexibility during the building upgrades and the disturbances to daily routines. And when the extreme heatwave hit, it was your persistence and optimistic mindsets that blew us all away. You continued smiling, you kept learning and we are very proud of you. You are always polite and happy to share what you are working on when we have visitors around the school.

To our amazing staff: Thank you. It has been so inspiring to see your dedication throughout these difficult times. We see your passion for our young people every day and the work you do with them from their first days in Year R to their final days of SATs. You don't just teach, you nurture, assist and inspire. The reassurance you give to parents when they leave their children with you for the day, knowing that they are in safe hands, and the delight on the young people's faces when they see their teachers in the morning says it all.

This time of year, always brings mixed emotions as we prepare to say some goodbyes. To our Year 6 families, as your children prepare to transition into secondary school, we send you our warmest wishes for this exciting next step. They all leave us ready, resilient, and fully prepared for the adventures ahead.

We also bid a very fond, bittersweet farewell to Miss Thompson, who is leaving the Balksbury Federation at the end of this term. She has been an integral part of our community and will be deeply missed by colleagues, parents, and children alike. We know she will embrace her next journey with open arms, and we hope she thoroughly enjoys getting used to a routine that does not involve setting an early morning alarm!

A community like ours thrives on the generosity of others, and I want to extend our heartfelt thanks to our volunteers and governors. Your gift of time, guidance, and unwavering support keeps our school moving forward. Likewise, to our parents and carers, thank you for your ongoing partnership and everything you contribute to your children's education.

It has been another fantastic year for the Balksbury Federation. I wish you all a safe, happy, and incredibly restful summer break, ready to take on the next academic year with the same passion and commitment that you have shown this year.

Best wishes,

Chantele Adams
Chair of Governors



Dear Families

As the academic year draws to a close, Balksbury Federation can look back with great pride on all that has been achieved. The progress, growth and successes of the children are evident in so many ways, and I am sure you will join me in recognising the commitment, compassion and dedication of the staff team who make these achievements possible every day.

It is with genuine pleasure and great excitement that I introduce myself as the new Executive Headteacher of Balksbury Federation from September. I feel incredibly proud and privileged to be joining such a special school community.

From my very first visit, it was clear to me that Balksbury Federation is a place where children flourish. The warmth, energy and joy of learning can be felt throughout the school, and the sense of belonging within the community is something truly special. As a school leader, I am passionate about creating learning communities where every child feels valued, challenged and inspired; where a love of learning is nurtured; and where every member of the school community is empowered to achieve their very best. I am delighted to be joining a Federation that already embodies these values so strongly.

I am fortunate to be joining Balksbury as a member of the Andover community, having worked in a range of schools across Hampshire and West Berkshire, including both mainstream and specialist settings. Throughout my career, I have seen first-hand the transformative power of education and the importance of strong school communities in shaping the lives and futures of our children. I am excited to bring that experience to Balksbury and to work alongside staff, families and governors as we continue the Federation's journey together.

I would also like to express my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has welcomed me so warmly. The generosity, professionalism and care shown by staff have reinforced everything that drew me to Balksbury in the first place. Their unwavering commitment to children, their high aspirations and their dedication to ensuring every learner succeeds are truly inspiring. It is because of these qualities that Balksbury has become such a special place, and I feel deeply grateful to be joining this remarkable team.

I would also like to take this opportunity to wish Miss Thompson every happiness in her retirement. The lasting legacy she leaves is evident throughout the Federation. Her vision, determination and commitment have helped shape Balksbury into the thriving and caring school it is today, and I know how much affection and appreciation the community holds for her leadership and service.

As we look ahead to September, I wish all of our children, families, staff and the wider school community a restful, happy and well-deserved summer break. I look forward to meeting you and beginning this exciting new chapter together in September.

With warmest wishes,
Mrs Whitlock

Who's Who for 2026 - 2027

Leadership Team

Mrs Caroline Whitlock	Executive Headteacher Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead Teaching and Learning Leader Curriculum Development Leader Health and Safety Leader Attendance Team
Mrs Fran Farrell	Federated Deputy Headteacher Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead Teaching and Learning Leader Curriculum Development Leader Pupil Premium Leader Health and Safety Leader Attendance Team
Miss Amy Bolton	Assistant Headteacher Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead Community Development Leader Reading Leader Phonics Leader
Mrs Sarah MacDonald	SENDCo Designated Safeguarding Lead Mental Health Lead Attendance Team Health and Safety Team Protected Groups Leader EAL Leader
Mrs Tara Woodhams	Federated Business Manager Data Protection Officer (DPO)

Senior Leadership Team (Year Group Leaders)

Year R: Miss Emily Smith
Year 1: Mr James Watkins
Year 2: Mr Ollie Mackrill
Year 3: Mrs Harriet Shield
Year 4: Miss Hannah Shehata
Year 5: Mrs Chloe Andrews
Year 6: Miss Emily Romain

Early Years Teaching Team

Miss Emily Smith Admiral Class	EYFS Leader Senior Leadership Team Federated Music Lead
Mrs Sharon Palmer Emperor Class	Federated History Leader
Mrs Helen Cordner Skipper Class	Federated Geography Leader

Year 1 Teaching Team

Mr James Watkins Robin Class	Year 1 Leader Senior Leadership Team Federated English Leader
Mrs Rosie Baker Heron Class	Federated Maths Leader
Mrs Emma Stokes Heron Class	Federated History Leader Andover Dance Festival Leader
Mrs Alice Kew Tawny Class	Federated Teacher

Year 2 Teaching Team

Mr Ollie Mackrill Kingfisher Class	Year 2 Leader Senior Leadership Team Early Careers Leader
Miss Olivia Coombes Nightingale Class	Federated Computing Leader
Mrs Emma Damen Merlin Class	Federated Teacher

Year 3 Teaching Team

Mrs Harriet Shield Oak Class	Year 3 Leader Senior Leadership Team Federated Art and Design Leader
Mrs Katherine Cowley Oak Class	Federated Design and Technology Leader
Miss Emily Hackman Elm Class	Federated Geography Leader
Mr Jack Brown Ash Class	Federated Computing Leader

Year 4 Teaching Team

Miss Hannah Shehata
Pine Class Year 4 Leader
Senior Leadership Team
Federated Science Leader

Mrs Hannah Barry
Palm Class Federated French Leader

Miss Beth Thain
Lime Class Federated Religious Education (RE) Leader

Year 5 Teaching Team

Mrs Chloe Andrews
Olive Class Year 5 Leader
Senior Leadership Team
Federated Health and Wellbeing Leader
Federated Sustainability Leader

Mr Liam Cook
Maple Class Federated Maths Leader

Mrs Zoe Milsom
Aspen Class Federated Geography Leader

Year 6 Teaching Team

Miss Emily Romain
Willow Class Year 6 Leader
Senior Leadership Team
Federated Health and Wellbeing Leader
Federated Sustainability Leader

Miss Ella Cruz
Spruce Class Federated Art and Design Leader

Mr Chris Townend
Poplar Class Federated Maths Leader

Cover & Support Teachers

Mr Nick Bensaid Federated Sports & PE Leader

Mrs Charlotte Scott
KS1 & KS2 Cover Federated Cover Teacher
Federated Writing Leader

Mrs Deirdre Shannon
KS1 & KS2 Cover Federated Cover Teacher
Federated Science Leader

Mrs Debbie Sanderson
KS1 & KS2 Cover Federated Cover Teacher
Federated Design and Technology (D&T) Leader

Mrs Faye McKay
KS1 & KS2 Cover Federated Cover Teacher
Federated Design and Technology (D&T) Leader

Mrs Lisa Whittington
KS1 & KS2 Cover Federated Cover Teacher
Federated Reading Leader

Mrs Den Buck
KS1 & KS2 Cover Federated Cover Teacher
Andover Dance Festival Choreographer

Mrs Max Young
KS1 & KS2 Cover Federated Cover Teacher
Andover Dance Festival Leader

Support team: Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA)

Mr Simon Lunn	Special Education Needs Team & Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA)
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Classroom Support Staff

Mrs Sarah Morgan	Mrs Julia Mundy
Miss Jen Ritchie	Mrs Emma Hibberd
Mrs Jade Rawlinson	Mrs Denise Douthwaite
Mrs Sam Cutting	Miss Kerry Beatson (maternity)
Mrs Jo Prosser	Miss Lindsey Juliff
Miss Tracey Hill	Mrs Michelle Hudson Special Education Needs Team
Mrs Steph Morgan	Miss Donna Burns Special Education Needs Team
Miss Emma Clarke	Mrs Louise Walker Special Education Needs Team
Mrs Lucy Whitchurch	Miss Kassie Powell Special Education Needs Team
Miss Lauren Juliff	Miss Shannon Chalkley-Dyer Special Education Needs Team
Mrs Sam Russell	Mrs Demi Kearley Special Education Needs Team
Mrs Stacey Reilly	Mrs Zoe Holloway Special Education Needs Team

Community Support Leads & Attendance Officers

Mrs Cheryl Grinham	Family Pastoral Care, Attendance Officer & Young Carers and Forces Leader
Mrs Rosie Elcock	Family Pastoral Care, Attendance Officer & Young Carers and Forces Leader

Admin Team

Mrs Tara Woodhams	Federated Business Manager
Mrs Claire Foster	Federated Admin Officer - Infant School
Mrs Sarah Fleet	Federated Admin Officer - Junior School
Mrs Charlotte Guyatt	Federated Admin Assistant
Mrs Trish Williams	Federated Admin Assistant

Library and Reading Support

Mrs Victoria Davies

Site Management and Maintenance

Mr Alex Frowd	Site Manager
Mr Michael Mackay	Site Maintenance and Support

Lunchtime Supervisors

Miss Claire Moger	Mrs Julia Mundy	Miss Shannon Chalkley-Dyer
Mrs Louise Walker	Miss Kassie Powell	Miss Donna Burns
Mrs Stacey Reilly	Miss Tracey Hill	Miss Lindsey Juliff
Mrs Zoe Holloway	Mr Michael Mackay	Mrs Donna Light
Miss Laruen Juliff	Miss Emma Clarke	Mrs Michelle Hudson
Mrs Sam Russell	Mrs Jade Rawlinson	Miss Kerry Beatson (maternity)
Miss Emma Hibberd		

Drop Off Club and Pick Up Club

Mrs Louise Walker	Miss Claire Moger
Mrs Michelle Hudson	Miss Kerry Beatson (maternity)
Miss Kassie Powell	Mrs Sam Russell
Miss Emma Clarke	

Curriculum News

Department for Education National Curriculum Changes

You may have seen the news about upcoming national changes to what children learn in school. The government has reviewed the curriculum to better prepare children for the future, while maintaining strong foundations in Reading, Writing and Maths. The revised curriculum will be published by **Spring 2027** and fully implemented from **September 2028**.

What is the aim of the government's changes?

The changes aim to:

- Provide a rich, broad and balanced education for all children
- Strengthen reading, writing, speaking and maths
- Make learning more relevant to modern life, including digital skills and wellbeing
- Ensure the curriculum supports all learners, including those with additional needs

What does this mean for Year R?

The Early Years Foundation Stage is not being rewritten, but priorities include:

- A stronger focus on communication and language with continued emphasis on early reading and phonics
- Building confidence, curiosity and a love of learning
- Supporting a smooth transition into Year 1 through secure foundations in number and language



What does this mean for Years 1-6?

The government aims to promote stronger core skills by increasing the focus on Reading, Writing, Maths and spoken language to ensure that children become confident communicators. There will also be a focus on depth of understanding through a broad and balanced curriculum with adequate time for subjects such as Science, History, Geography, Arts and PE.

Children will gain life skills and modern knowledge by learning more about digital and media literacy, financial awareness and citizenship and community. They will also be expected to learn about climate and sustainability



What is Barksbury Federation's view?

The federation welcomes these changes. The priorities identified are already central to our approach. The Barksbury team is committed to enriching learning through memorable experiences, extending beyond the school day through a wide range of after school clubs.

How does the federation promote PE and enrichment?

Sport is a key focus for the federation. To ensure that every child enjoys and benefits from physical activity, Mr Bensaid supports the skilled team to ensure that PE lessons are high

quality alongside providing opportunities for children to participate in inter school competitions and intra school matches. Through the Positive Playground Initiative, children also have a wealth of opportunity to be active during social times

How do we develop language and communication?

Language is embedded across the curriculum. Building on EYFS foundations, children develop skills through:

- Talk Toolbox sessions
- A structured progression in communication and explicit teaching of vocabulary
- Opportunities to apply language in different contexts



Assemblies and our Positive Playground Initiative also support children's personal, social, emotional and moral development, reinforcing our Barksbury Citizen values.

How does the curriculum reflect modern life?

The federation's curriculum already reflects the review priorities across all phases. Through high quality teaching and real world meaningful learning it supports confident, curious learners with strong language development.

Children benefit from opportunities such as:

- STEM and Arts Weeks
- 3D printing and VR
- Data loggers and programmable robots
- Coding technology (e.g. Crumble kits, Makey Makey)



How does the federation promote wellbeing, sustainability and citizenship?

Barksbury's Health and Wellbeing curriculum develops life skills, including financial awareness. The aim is that children develop a strong understanding of caring for the world around them. Sustainability is embedded through:

- A whole federation Climate Action Team
- Links across Geography, Science and Health and Wellbeing
- Assembly themes on environmental responsibility



What do the changes mean for Barksbury Federation?

The review confirms we are on the right path. These priorities are already embedded in our practice, and we remain committed to ensuring every child succeeds, now and in their future.

Benedict's Law

In February 2026, the Government approved Benedict's Law and said it would introduce compulsory allergy guidance for schools in England. While the full guidance is due to be released in July 2026, there are key actions that schools will be expected to take from 1st September 2026.

What is the aim of Benedict's Law?

The main aim of Benedict's Law is to keep children with allergies safe in school by making sure that all schools follow clear, consistent rules.

In simple terms, it aims to:

- **Prevent allergic reactions** as much as possible
- **Ensure quick, safe responses** if a reaction happens
- **Make sure all staff are properly trained**
- **Protect and support children with allergies every day**
- **Make allergy safety the same across all schools**

What does this mean for schools?

From 1st September 2026, all schools are expected to:

- **Have a clear whole school allergy policy**
- **Train all staff biannually, covering:**
 - Recognising allergic reactions
 - Emergency response procedures, including using adrenaline auto-injectors (AAIs) safely and confidently
- **Keep spare emergency medication - adrenaline auto-injectors (AAIs) on site**
- **Put Individual Healthcare Plans (IHPs) in place, alongside Allergy Action Plans** – for children with serious, diagnosed allergies, which includes food, animal and venom allergies. IHPs should include the child's specific allergy triggers, symptoms, medication, and the emergency actions to take
- **Improve communication and record-keeping** – ensure all allergy information is shared with the relevant staff and that there are procedures in place for recording incidents



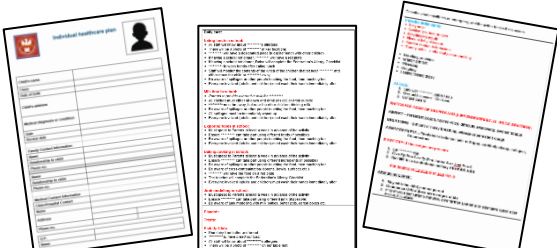
Who will this help?

Children with known allergies	Teachers with known allergies	Children without known allergies
Only 64% of children with a history of anaphylaxis are prescribed AAIs. The changes will mean that all children have access to AAIs.	Staff with allergies face similar risks as children. The changes will mean that all school environments are safer and more inclusive for adults with allergies too.	Around 30% of allergic reactions in schools occur in children who were undiagnosed with a food allergy at the time. The changes will mean that all children have access to AAIs.

All school staff All staff will be trained and supported, with clear protocols and access to spare AAls. This will enable all staff to have the confidence to support children with known (and unknown) allergies in school.	Parents of children with known allergies 2/3 parents worry about their child's safety at school every day due to their allergies. The changes will mean that parents will have peace of mind that schools are properly prepared to protect their child. When all staff are trained, AAls are accessible and clear protocols are in place, parents will no longer have to rely on their own vigilance.
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What do the changes mean for Barksbury Federation?

We welcome these changes. Keeping our children and staff is our first priority. We have been working hard to prepare for the changes coming in September.

Have a clear whole school allergy policy	This will be shared with families in September and will work alongside our Supporting Children with Medical Conditions policy.
Train all staff biannually	The federation currently has over a third of our staff trained in recognising allergic reactions and how to use AAls. There is a rolling programme of training in place so that all the staff will have received their training by the end of the Autumn term.
Keep spare emergency medication - adrenaline auto-injectors (AAls) on site	The federation is purchasing 4 AAls for each school, and these will be in place for 1st September. Each school will have 2 x 150mcg and 2 x 300mcg.
Put Individual Healthcare Plans (IHPs) in place, alongside Allergy Action Plans 	Federation children with severe allergies already have Allergy Action Plans in place, which have been shared with all staff. The federation has already completed IHPs with some families and will complete IHPs for the remaining families.
Improve communication and record-keeping 	The federation has already put into place additional checklists for when staff give food to children. These are already in use during class lessons, Pick Up Club and Dolce. These checklists ensure that a member of staff who is giving food to a child with a known allergy, has followed our protocols and expectations.

Attendance



Regular attendance at school gives children the best possible start in life. Being in school every day supports not only their learning, but also helps them to build friendships, feel a sense of belonging, and develop important life skills such as resilience and good habits for the future.

Every day in school matters. When a child is absent, they miss valuable lessons, experiences, and opportunities to connect with others, and these missed moments can add up more quickly than parents may realise.

The Attendance Team understands that all children will have times when they are unwell and unable to attend. However, working together to support strong attendance wherever possible helps ensure that children can thrive both academically and socially. The federation is here to work in partnership with families and offer support where needed, so that every child can make the most of their time in school. Recently, the government has released information to support families with understanding attendance:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3g_tfUyroZM&list=PLXjcCX3hH9LVaClua1fZ2H6pgD7I4mDMP&index=1

Attendance Days and what they mean?

Balksbury Federation follows both national and county expectations. This supports promoting good progress and means that:

- A leave of absence during term time **will not** be granted except in the **most exceptional circumstances**. Families who take holidays, may be issued with a penalty notice. *Please note that money from penalty notices **does not** go to the federation, which is often the belief; instead it goes to the Local Authority*
- Requests for leave must be made in writing to the Attendance Team - an absence request form is available from either school office. Please note that permission **cannot be granted after the leave** has been taken and you should leave good time for your request to go through

0 days of school	100%	Perfection
Equates to 2 days off school each year	99%	Excellent
Equates to 5 days off school each year	97%	Good
Equates to 10 days off school each year	95%	Slight Concern
Equates to 20 days off school each year	90%	Concerned
Equates to 30 days off school each year	85%	Very Concerned

Did you know...

95%	10 days from school
90%	20 days from school
85%	30 days from school
80%	39 days from school
75%	49 days from school



If you're struggling with the morning routine or you're worried about your child's attendance, speak to **one of our Community Support Leads**. We're here to help.



This Year's Attendance - at the time of writing

Infants: **96.4%** National: **94.5%**
Juniors: **95.7%** National: **94.5%**

Persistent Absence
Infants: **3.2%** National: **15.7%**
Juniors: **8.4%** National: **15.7%**

Just a reminder...

Infant School

8:45am Doors open and school starts

8:50am Classroom doors close. Families will need sign their child into school at the office

8:55am School registers close

8:55am onwards Late zone

Junior School

8:40am Doors open and school starts

8:45am Classroom doors close. Families will need to sign their child into school at the office

8:50am School registers close

8:50am onwards Late zone

After School Clubs

The federation is pleased to provide a range of clubs once again, which have been chosen by children. The vast majority of these will have no cost to families. As last year, **clubs will run in two blocks**:

Block 1: September until Mid-February	Block 2: Mid-February until July
Start: Monday 28 th September Block 1 Christmas Pause: Friday 4 th December Restart: Monday 11 th January End of block 1: Friday 12 th February	Start: Monday 22 nd February Block 2 Easter Pause: Friday 26 th March Restart: Monday 12 th April End of block 2: Friday 2 nd July
All clubs will run from after school until 4:15pm	

For a preview of clubs on offer, see the table on the next page. Please note that there **may be** some slight changes up until the time that clubs are released for booking.

Timeline of club booking:

1. **Monday 7th September** - Description of clubs released to support family's choice via the APP. A paper booking form will come home with your child ready to go, and a copy will be placed on our website.
2. **Tuesday 8th September** - Booking **opens via paper application**
3. **Friday 11th September** - Booking **closes**. Your child's paper copy needs to be handed into your child's class teacher or Drop Off member of staff who will pass them on
4. **Wednesday 21st September** – You will be notified of your child's club - **the slip will come home with your child**

Picking up your child from a club: information about where to pick your child up will be on your notification slip.

We often have waiting lists for our clubs. Therefore, if your child decides they no longer want to do their club, please let the office know and their place will be offered to the next child on the waiting list.

If your child does not attend 3 sessions of their club, then their place will be offered to the next child on the waiting list.



Balksbury Federation Clubs Block 1 - Monday 28th September

Day		Name of club	Name of Team Member	Where	Time	Who for?	Max number	Cost	Equipment needed
Tuesday	Lunch	Young Carers	Mrs Grinham & Mrs Whatley	Junior Community Hub (Infants go with an adult)	12:00 – 1.00	Held at the Juniors	Young Carers	Free	Bring lunch (Infants hot lunch at Juniors)
	After school	Dance and Cheerleading	Miss Smith	Junior School Hall	3:20 – 4:15	Infants	20	Free	PE Kit/comfy clothes
		Construction	Mrs Cordner	Skipper Class	3:20 – 4:15	Infants	20	Free	None
		Art	Mrs Palmer	Emperor Class	3:20 – 4:15	Infants	20	£10 for the block	Old shirt
		Sewing	Mrs Sanderson	Heron Class	3:20 – 4:15	Infants	20	£10 for the block	None
		Football Club	Mr Bensaid & Mrs Andrews	Meet in Junior Library	3:20 – 4:15	Juniors	35	Free	PE Kit/comfy clothes
		Computing Club	Miss Shehata	Meet at Computing Suite	3:20 – 4:15	Juniors	30	Free	None
		Cooking Club	Mr Cook and Miss Thain	Lime Class	3:20 – 4:15	Juniors	24	£12 for the block	Apron/old shirt
		Technology	Mr Watkins	Robin Class	3:20 – 4:15	Infants	20	Free	None
		Gardening Club	Mrs Shannon	Meet in Infant Library	3:20 – 4:15	Infants	16	Free	Old clothes
		Homework Club	The Leadership Team	Kingfisher Class	3:20 – 4:15	Infants and Juniors	Infant and Junior children and families are welcome to drop in to this club to complete homework.		
Wednesday	After school	Basketball Club	Mr Mackrill	Meet in Kingfisher Class	3:20 – 4:15	Infants	20	Free	PE Kit/comfy clothes
		Outdoor Fun Club	Mrs Damen	Merlin Class	3:20 – 4:15	Infants	20	Free	PE Kit/comfy clothes
		Outdoor Fun Club	Mrs Shield	Meet in Oak Class	3:20 – 4:15	Juniors	20	Free	PE Kit/comfy clothes
		Netball	Miss Romain	Junior Playground	3:20 – 4:15	Juniors	20	Free	PE Kit/comfy clothes
		Gymnastics	Mrs Whittington	Junior School Hall	3:20 – 4:15	Juniors	20	Free	PE Kit/comfy clothes
		Guitar Club	Mr Townend	Meet in Poplar Class	3:20 – 4:15	Juniors	10	£20 Security Deposit for a Guitar Loan	None
		Art Club	Miss Cruz	Spruce Class	3:20 – 4:15	Juniors	20	£10 for the block	Old shirt
		Tie-Dye Club	Miss Hackman	Junior Group Room	3:20 – 4:15	Juniors	15	£10 for the block	Old clothes
Thursday	Lunch	Armed Forces	Mrs Grinham & Mrs Whatley	Junior Group Room	12:00 – 1:00	Infants & Juniors	Forces Children	Free	None
	After school	Pottery	Miss Coombes	Nightingale Class	3:20 – 4:15	Infants	15	£10 for the block	Old shirt
		Singing	Mrs Kew and Mrs Cowley	Tawny Class	3:20 – 4:15	Infants and Juniors	25	Free	None
		Dance and Cheerleading Club	Mrs Young and Mrs Baker	Junior School Hall	3:20 – 4:15	Juniors	40	Free	PE Kit/comfy clothes
		Origami Club	Mrs Barry	Palm Class	3:20 – 4:15	Juniors	20	Free	None
		Comic Strip Club	Mrs Milsom	Aspen Class	3:20 - 4:15	Juniors	20	Free	None
		Football Club	Mr Bensaid and Mrs McKay	Meet in Infant School Library	3:20 – 4:15	Infants	30	Free	PE Kit/comfy clothes
		Digital Technology	Mr Brown	Ash Class	3:20 – 4:15	Juniors	20	Free	None

Drop Off Club

Drop Off Club remains a hugely popular club that provides a facility for parents to ‘drop off’ and get on the road to work. The club is run by our federated staff who set different activities up each day for children to do. Please note, this club is **not a breakfast club and does not provide any refreshments**. However, you can send your child in with a healthy snack for them to munch, and of course their water bottle. Drop Off Club runs out of the junior school hall for both infant and junior children.

Bookings: Important Dates

Bookings for next academic year have been sent out to families but should you wish to book a place, or join the waiting list, please contact either Admin Office.

Places available

Infant School - 50 places

Junior School - 50 Places

Cost

The price is **£12.50** per child a week (including Bank Holiday weeks) paid in **advance for the half term**. You may then use the club as many days as you wish.



Drop Off Club starts on **Wednesday 2nd September** and opens at **7:45 a.m.** Your child will need to be signed in with an adult; please **do not** drop your child off at the top gate as we cannot accept responsibility for your child until they arrive with a club staff member.

Drop off point will be:

The hall door, which can be accessed through the side gate at the end of the car park. However, our Drop Off staff try to pick up from the car park as often as they can to support parents and this will still count as being signed in by an adult.

Pick Up Club Monday to Thursday

Pick Up Club is also extremely popular and is a paid club that provides parents with the facility to pick up later than the end of school day, **up to 5:30pm from Monday through to Thursday.**

The club is run by our federated staff and provides a range of activities both indoors and outdoors. Children are given a piece of toast to keep them going until they get home for dinner; the children often fondly refer to the club as Toast Club!

Bookings: Important Dates

Bookings for next academic year have been sent out to families but should you wish to book a place, or join the waiting list, please contact either Admin Office.

Places available

Infant School - 40 places

Junior School - 40 Places



The cost will be **£40 each week** paid on the 1st of each month.

Pick Up point will be:

Through the Year R gate at the front of the infant school and a quick walk around the outside of the school to the hall door at the rear of the infant school.

Scott Centre After School Club Monday to Friday

The federation works in close partnership with The Scott Centre, who offer wrap around care for longer hours than the federation can provide. They provide a range of activities including sport, craft, a quiet area, and both indoor and outdoor facilities, Monday through to Friday. They run an after-school collection service from both the infant and junior schools.

For more information, or to book, please call them directly on 01264 332188.



INSET Days

Understanding INSET Days

INSET days are special days when school is closed to children but open for staff training and development. INSET stands for **In-Service Education and Training**, and these are days that all maintained schools (a publicly funded school that is overseen and maintained by the local authority) in England are required to have.

As you will have read in the curriculum section of this newsletter, as a staff team we are constantly seeking to develop our curriculum and approaches to teaching and learning to ensure we provide the best possible opportunities for our children. All teachers are required to attend INSET training and it is not a day off for staff.



What Happens on INSET Days?

All staff are in school, to be part of a variety of important activities. Some of these will be essential annual training around keeping children safe and important training such as first aid. Here are a few examples of the sorts of training staff receive:

- Essential annual safeguarding training
- Certification for life guard training
- Outdoor education training
- Curriculum development training
- Teacher knowledge and skills sessions
- Collaborative curriculum development
- Updating knowledge for protocol on the smooth running of the federation

Why are They Important?

INSET days support the professional development of our staff, which directly benefits our children. These days are essential in ensuring we continue to provide the highest quality of provision to support our children's development in all areas. By investing in our team's growth, we are able to deliver engaging, high-quality, and effective learning experiences both in and beyond the classroom.

When do They Happen?

Mostly, the federation's INSET day are either booked around the availability of county visitors, or to minimise disruption around family routines. We recognise that not all families will agree on when is best, therefore, we try to give as much notice as possible, and will always give the whole following year INSET days before the end of the academic year.

Dates for next year (already advertised)

Tuesday 1st September 2026

Monday 22nd February 2027

Friday 30th April 2027

Tuesday 20th July 2027

Wednesday 21st July 2027

Keeping Up with what Your Child is Learning

There are so many wonderful ways to keep up to date with what your child is learning. A great place to begin is our website: www.balksburyfederation.co.uk. Simply head to the 'Children' tab and explore the year group pages. Here, you'll find a half-termly overview that highlights the exciting themes and learning taking place across the curriculum. Each week, there is a snapshot of classroom life, usually with photos, so you can get a real feel for the experiences your child is enjoying. The federation newsletter, '**Across the Playground**' also contains wider federation curriculum news and updates.

Half Termly Overview



Year group weekly updates

Friday 12th June 2026

Year 5 have been exceptionally successful in both Maths and English this week! In Maths, we have been focussing on fractions. We have continued to develop our skills of adding and subtracting mixed number fractions with both like and unlike denominators, as well as looking at equivalent fractions. In English, our unit has been on Romeo and Juliet, and writing our own descriptive ending to the tragic tale. We used the VR headsets to really get ourselves into the mind of Romeo - it was great fun!



Friday 15th May 2026

This week, Year 5 visited their Longitudinal Study in the Poly Tunnel where pumpkin seedlings have been growing. At the start of the year, we watched three pumpkins decompose and since then, the seeds inside started to germinate and sprout. We measured the stems and drew a scientific sketch of the plant in our books.



Friday 27th March 2026

What a great week we've had in Year 2! We created our final outcome for our text Don't Let Them Disappear. The children produced beautifully written book reviews using an impressive range of vocabulary and shared thoughtful opinions that would inspire you to read the book.

During Art this week the children created their own masterpieces inspired by Pablo Picasso. They used charcoal and pencils to create tone and lines to express feelings. The outcomes were wonderful and really captured their individual creativity.



The federation truly values the partnership between school and home, as we know children thrive when we work together as a connected team. Open communication and shared understanding make such a difference in supporting every child's progress and wellbeing. Please remember that you are always welcome to request a meeting at any point if you would like to discuss your child's learning. We are here to listen and work alongside you every step of the way.

Housekeeping



Mobile Phones and Smart Watches in School

Mobile Phone Policy Update: Important Changes

As you will know from communications across this year, the federation has changed its policy on smartphones and smart watches in school. From September 2026, Barksbury Federation will be a smartphone and smart watch free school for children. This means that children are no longer allowed to bring any device that can access the internet.

What is allowed?

The federation understands that some families want children to have a way to stay in touch before and after school. Children can still bring a basic 'brick' phone (calls and texts only) to school. These must be **switched off** as soon as your child arrives at any school gate, **handed into the office** on arrival, and collected at the end of the day.



A simple **agreement form** must be completed before bringing one into school to ensure that the children know the rules for bringing their brick phone in. Please contact the admin office if you need a form.

What is not allowed?

Children must not bring:

- Smartphones
- Smartwatches (including those with messaging or app features)
- Any device that can access the internet or social media



What happens if a device is brought in?

If a child brings a smartphone or smartwatch into school, the device will be confiscated and a parent or carer will need to collect it from the school office.

Why is the federation making this change?

This policy is part of the federation's commitment to keeping children safe, focused and happy in school, while promoting healthy friendships and reducing the pressures and risks linked to smart devices.

Exceptions

Some children may need a device for medical reasons such as managing their diabetes through an app. In these cases, please speak to a member of the Leadership Team so that the appropriate agreement can be put in place.

Thank you for your continued support in helping us create a safe and positive environment for all children.

Uniform

The federation is committed to keeping uniform as affordable as possible for families. You can find the full uniform list on our website under the *Parents* tab, then *Essential Information*. The website also includes clear guidance on jewellery expectations.



Last year, a small update was made to the uniform policy to allow children to wear plain black trainers. White trainers are not permitted, and support in maintaining this expectation is appreciated. Hairbands should remain simple and small, and children should not wear make-up to school.

The PTA runs a uniform swap shop with a range of good quality preloved items. It takes place after school each Friday at The Hive and is a great way to pick up uniform in a cost effective and sustainable way.

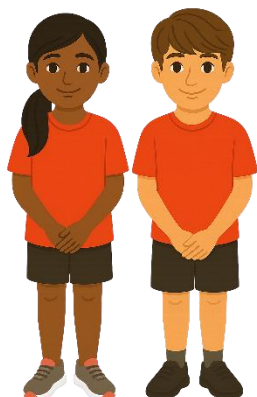
Parents can support by ensuring that uniform is clearly labelled. There is always a large amount of uniform in lost property that is unnamed.

Please support us
by labelling items.



PE – Hair and Earrings

Again, the federation is committed to keeping costs as low as possible for families. All you need to buy is a red t-shirt (no logo) and black shorts for PE. When it gets colder, please put any warm, comfortable jumper in your child's kit and some jogging bottoms or leggings. A gentle reminder that children with shoulder-length hair or longer should have it tied back for PE, for both safety and comfort.



In line with county and national health and safety guidance, earrings are not permitted during PE. If your child finds it tricky to remove them independently, it's helpful if they can be left at home on PE or swimming days.

Any jewellery that is removed at school should be safely stored in your child's drawer (Infant School) or locker (Junior School). If your child wears a bracelet for religious or medical reasons, please ensure that a sweatband is worn over it during PE.

Thank you for your support in helping us keep all children safe and ready to take part fully.

Shirt for Art and Messy 'Stuff'!

The federation requests that all children keep an old shirt in school for 'messy stuff' such as art. This needs to be large enough to go over your child's school uniform. It could be an adult size one; please do not go out and buy anything, just send in something old to protect their uniform.



Healthy Snacks and Packed Lunches

As a federation, we promote healthy lifestyles through assemblies, the Health and Wellbeing curriculum, science lessons, and the many opportunities the federation provides for children to stay active and fit. Developing lifelong healthy habits starts early, however enjoying occasional treats is part of a balanced approach. There are special times when this is appropriate, such as birthdays, PTA Friday treats, and events like the Christmas Jingle. In support of this, we ask that families to follow us with the food policy which can be found on the federation website.

Infant School break time snack



Your child will be provided with a piece of fruit or vegetable through a government scheme so you do not need to provide your child with a snack. These include seasonal fruit and vegetables such as peoppers and tomatoes as well as favourites such as apples and bananas.

Junior School break time snack

Please provide your child with **a piece of fruit/vegetable, or plain biscuit** such as a digestive or cheese biscuit.

Packed lunches

Thank you for your continued efforts in reducing the amount of plastic packaging in your child's lunchbox. Please continue to ensure that you do not provide your child with items which contain nuts as we are a nut-free site.



Dolce



At Balksbury, we understand how important it is for children to enjoy a nutritious and appealing lunch, and we are pleased to continue our partnership with **Dolce** for a fourth year. Their meals are carefully prepared using ethically sourced ingredients, providing a high standard of quality and variety each day.

Dolce remains committed to keeping costs as low as possible for families. However, due to rising expenses in food, the National Living Wage, and utilities, a small price increase is necessary.

From September 2026, the cost of a two-course school meal will be £3.14.

Dolce has worked hard to maintain affordability while continuing to deliver the same high quality and choice. If you are new to the school, please do contact the admin office for support.

Infant School Dinners

If your child is in the infant school, they will receive a Universal Free School Meal. This means that you will not have to pay for their meal. It is paid for by a government grant, which is paid to the school based on the number of meals ordered on a daily basis.

The federation kindly asks for your **support** by ordering your child's lunch through School Grid. Orders can be placed in advance for as many days as you wish, making it quick and convenient to stay organised.



While teaching staff will always try to check whether a child has brought a packed lunch if no order has been made, this does take time away from supporting learning in the classroom. In addition, any meals not ordered before the cut off time are still charged to the school and we won't be able to use the grant to pay for them. By placing orders in advance, you help us ensure a smooth lunch service and enable staff to focus fully on your child's learning.

Junior School Dinners

If your child has a hot lunch, the cost of the dinner from September will be £3:14. Please note that if you order and your child does not have the lunch due to being ill or brings a packed lunch in, then you will be charged, so please **ensure** that you cancel the lunch on School Grid.

Junior School Free School Dinners for Eligible Families

Free School Meals are paid for by a government grant, which is paid to the school based on the number of meals ordered on a daily basis.

Please can you **support the federation** and ensure that you order your child's dinner on School Grid; this can be done ahead of time for as many days in advance as you wish. If your child comes into school but has not ordered, and Dolce feeds them a lunch, the school **does not** receive the grant and instead is charged for every meal not ordered.

Good News for Families

From September 2026, more families will be eligible for Free School Meals (FSM). If you receive Universal Credit, your child may now qualify.



Lower income households (under £7,400) will continue to receive what is called Targeted Free School Meals and now other households on Universal Credit will qualify for what is called Expanded Free School Meals.

What you need to do...

If you are already receiving free school meals, then you don't need to do anything because this will continue in September. If you think you may now qualify, you can apply via the Hampshire portal: <https://apply.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/hants>. If you are successful, then your child will receive free school meals from September. Please do let the Admin Office know if you have applied and been successful.

Important for Infant School parents...



As mentioned above, all children in the infant school already receive free meals. However, applying could unlock extra school funding (Pupil Premium) to support your child.

Balksbury Federation Dolce Cook
Emily Penn.

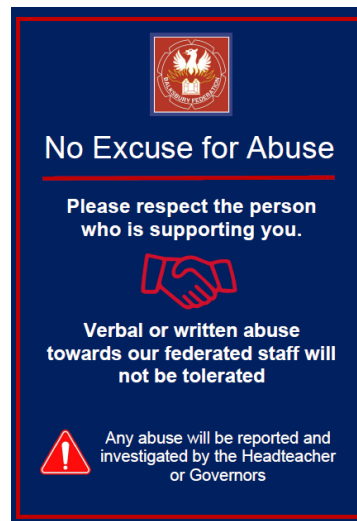
Communication

At Balksbury Federation, children are placed at the heart of everything that is done. The federation knows how precious each child is, and that when things go wrong right, it can bring strong emotions for families. Our top priority is always to ensure that every child feels happy, safe and supported at school. We value working closely with families, as you know your child best, and by working together we can find the right way forward.

Clear, respectful communication helps us do this well. Most of the time, this works very positively, but there have been a small number of occasions where communication towards staff has not been appropriate, including raised voices, hostile messages, or negative comments shared publicly.

The federation understands that concerns can feel urgent or upsetting, and we are always here to listen and help. However, we ask that all communication remains calm and respectful so that we can work together in the best interests of the children.

The federation will continue to promote a calm and respectful approach through our shared expectations poster. Any incidents involving aggressive or abusive communication will be formally investigated by the Executive Headteacher or the Governing Body, and all staff will cease communication with any individuals that cannot conduct themselves in a calm manner. By working together respectfully and positively, we can achieve the very best outcomes for every child.



Means of Communication	When	Reason	Our Response Time
Visit either the Infant or Junior Office Reception	Monday and Friday 8:30am - 3:30pm Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 8:30am – 4:15pm	For example: Drop off medicine you would like administered during the day; deliver a forgotten PE kit; collect an absence request form; drop off a child after registration closes. You can use the Office Reception to request paper copies of documents from our website.	Same day
Phone Office Infant: 01264 352801 Junior: 01264 365642	Monday to Thursday 8:30am – 4:20pm Friday 8:30am– 3:45pm	For example: Request a meeting or telephone conversation with a staff member (e.g. you need to discuss some news about your child that may affect their school day, or you are concerned about your child's school day). You can leave a brief answer phone message when admin staff are away from their desk.	Same day
Email via @adminoffice (see our website for email addresses)	Anytime	For example: We will email important messages and information as and when needed to the email addresses listed for primary guardians on Arbor. You can email the admin team to request a meeting or telephone conversation with a staff member (e.g. you need to discuss some news about your child that may affect their school day, or you are concerned about your child's school day). You can also use this email for notifying or updating information that you feel that school needs to know.	Email checked daily. Response within 2 school working days.
Across the Playground (fortnightly newsletter)	Every Two Weeks	For example: Every two weeks, the federation's newsletter will be sent out electronically via email. This includes, key messages, classroom news, diary dates etc.	N/A
Website	Anytime	For example: Looking at federated calendar, looking at your child's year group page or finding information about federated school life within both Infant and Junior School.	N/A
Reading Diaries	Anytime	For example: Mini posters or flyers for events or reminders	N/A

Some of the things you have shared and said...

'I can't praise your school enough for all you've done for both of my children; I will truly be devastated when our journey comes to an end. But thank you again for creating an environment where they can thrive and be celebrated for trying their best - from the stickers, to the feedback from teachers, the certificates, the well done's, and the constant belief you all give the kids.'

'The school stands out above all the rest in Andover and we wouldn't want to be anywhere else.'

'We have been, and continue to be delighted with the education and opportunities that our children have been provided with. It is an amazing school with a friendly yet driven atmosphere; we feel very lucky to be a part of the community.'

'Please could you pass on my thanks to the members of staff who run Homework Club, I found it really useful to see how they support the children to complete their work and it will hopefully help me provide more effective support at home!'



Date for your diary: Monday 21st September 3:15pm – 4:00pm

Open classroom door to meet your child's new teacher