



Balksbury Federation

Across the Playground

Friday 9th October

Hedgehog Heroes!

This week, the federation welcomed a rather adorable visitor: a tiny baby hedgehog who seemed determined to tour every corner of the federated site!

Thankfully, our wonderful Balksbury community was keeping a close eye on him. The adventure began when Bradley spotted the little traveller and took it upon himself to ensure he had a safe place to spend the night. With help from Mrs Kearley, Bradley carefully created a cosy habitat, helped relocate our prickly friend to his new abode and even brought in some fresh water for him the following day. Now that's kindness in action!

However, the young hedgehog clearly wasn't ready to settle down just yet. The next day, Mrs Sanderson spotted him wandering through the staff car park, continuing his grand tour of Balksbury. Mrs Whitlock kept a watchful eye from her Infant School office window and, sure enough, caught sight of four tiny feet scuttling past!

Fortunately, the Randall family were on hand to help. After successfully navigating a piece of litter along the way (more on that from later!), our determined explorer eventually made his way back to a safe leafy spot. Locryn stopped by for a look and promptly gave him the perfect name: **Stick!**

Concerned that our little visitor might need a bit of extra support, Mrs Whitlock and Miss Bolton took Stick on one final adventure to Strathmore Vets. The team there were incredibly impressed by the care and kindness shown by the Balksbury community and reassured us that Stick would be receiving the help he needed before heading to a Wiltshire wildlife sanctuary.

We're delighted to report that Stick is now in safe hands. A huge well done to everyone involved in looking out for one of nature's smallest visitors. Bradley, Locryn, the Randall family and all of our hedgehog helpers showed exactly what it means to be part of Team Balksbury.

Who knew we had so many wildlife experts among us?



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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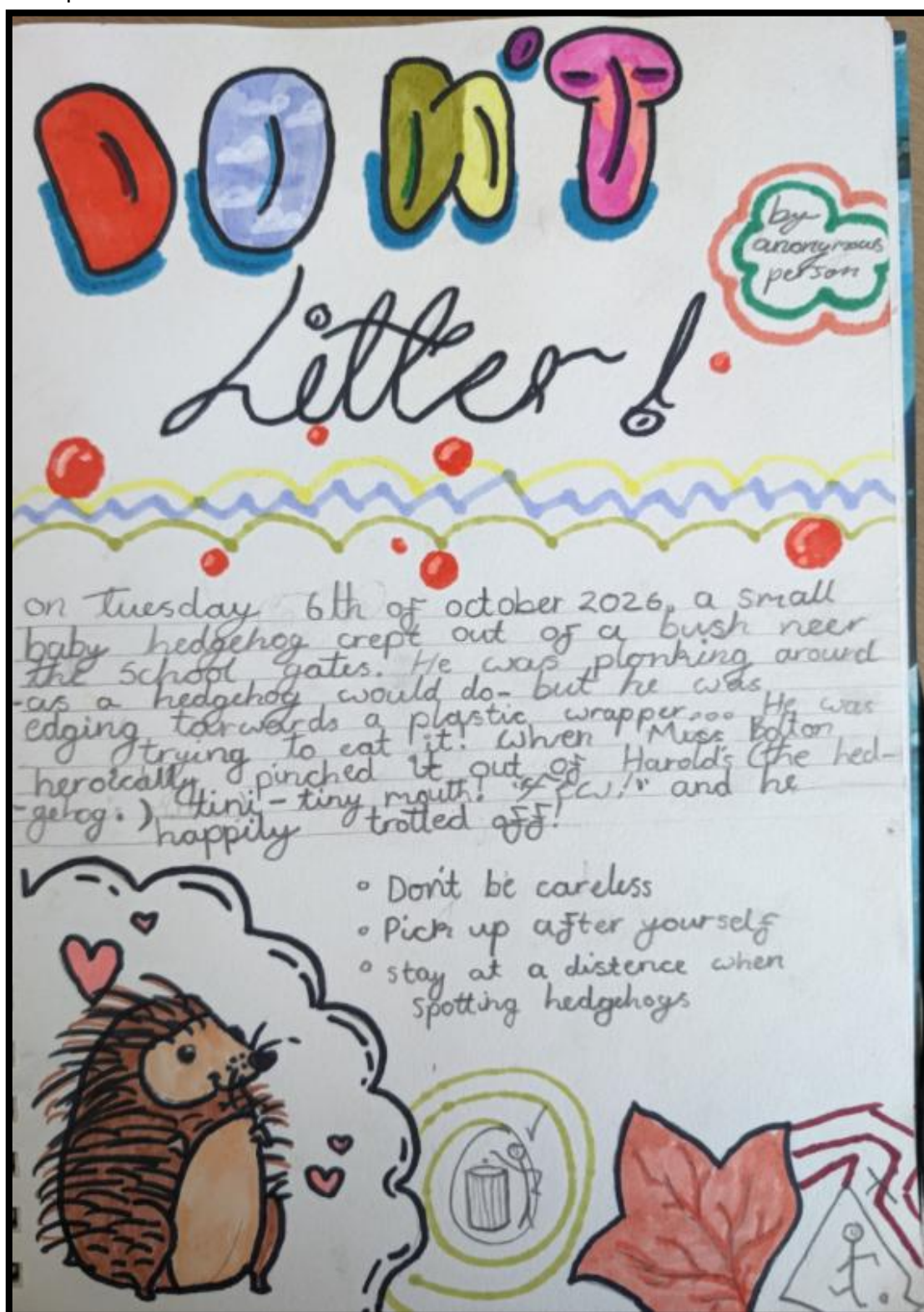
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Don't Litter!

Whilst rescuing Stick, we couldn't help but notice him having to navigate a plastic wrapper on his way to safety. This raised a wider discussion around how we can look after our school community and the wildlife in it. Thank you to our amazing Balksbury artist (who wishes to remain anonymous) who has created this poster to raise awareness..



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Additional Year R Tours



We will be putting on additional tours for prospective Year R families, if you or someone you know would like to come and see our amazing federation in action! Tours will take place on the following dates:

- Tuesday 20th October (9:30 – 10:15 **or** 9:45 – 10:30)
- Wednesday 21st of October (9:30 – 10:15 **or** 9:45 – 10:30)

Year 3 Tours

We will be hosting open mornings for our current Year 2 parents to look around our Junior School on the following dates:

- Tuesday 3rd November (9:15-10:00)
- Wednesday 4th November (9:15-10:00, 11:00 – 11:45)
- Thursday 5th November (9:15 – 10:15)

A reminder that if you are a Year 2 parent and you are planning for your child to attend the Junior School in Year 3, you must re-apply for their place.

If you would like to book a tour please speak to a member of the junior admin office team.

Homework Club

Homework club is up and running again this academic year and open to children (and families) who would like support with homework.

If you would like to understand more about the strategies your child is being taught at school, we are always happy to show you so that you are able to support at home.

Homework Club runs out of Kingfisher (Year 2) Classroom on a Tuesday from 3:15pm to 4:15pm.

Children and families do not need to sign up and can drop in.

We hope to see you there!



Christmas Cards

Children from Year R to Year 6 will once again be making handcrafted Christmas cards for families to purchase. Children's Christmas card will be available to purchase in packs of 10, for only **£5**. The Christmas card packs come carefully tied up with twine, along with crisp white envelopes to send out to friends and families.

Christmas card orders will open to families on **Wednesday 21st of October** and will close on **Friday the 13th November**.

Packs of Christmas cards will come home with your child on Monday 23rd November.



P.E Kits

As the weather is finally starting to turn a little cooler, please remember to send your child with a fleece or sports jumper to wear during their P.E lessons. These do not need to be branded or a specific colour.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. We really appreciate your help in ensuring the children are comfortable and able to enjoy their time outdoors whatever the weather.



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We need your help!

Well done to all of our families who have been taking part in Walktober and walking, wheeling, scooting or park and striding to school!

It has been particularly great to hear that families have been utilising our morning Park and Stride sites at The Anton Arms and the Chestnut tree. More information regarding Walktober and Park and Stride can be found on our letters page by clicking the link below:

<https://balksburyfederation.co.uk/links-and-information/>

Design our new road safety banner

The Federation works closely with the Hampshire County Council Travel Planning Team to ensure that families are able to travel to school safely. We are very excited to be receiving two new banners to display at the front of both school sites to remind road users of the importance of safety around the federated site.

At Balksbury, we value the voice of our community, which is why **we want you to design the slogan for our new banners!**



To submit your slogan:

- Send your slogan into either of our admin offices, who will forward on to Miss Bolton.
- The winner will be announced after half term!



We need a slogan for our banner which is:

- Short and memorable (maximum of 12 words)
- Clear and relevant to parking safety

Rhyming is encouraged but not essential.

A few examples:

- *Don't you know the zig-zag rule? Please don't park outside our school*
- *Be a nice fellow, don't park on the yellow!*
- *Hey there! Park with care*



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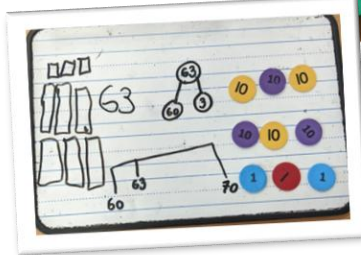
Classroom News



Across the Playground

Year 1

The Year 1 children have made a fantastic start to the new school year and we are incredibly proud of how well they have settled into their new routines. They have shown enthusiasm, confidence and a real eagerness to learn, making a wonderful start to their time in Year 1. This week, we began our exciting new English learning journey by exploring the four seasons through a range of immersive, multisensory experiences. The children used VR headsets to visit spring, summer, autumn and winter, helping them to build a rich understanding of each season. They enjoyed crunching autumn leaves, touching ice to experience winter weather and feeling the effects of a windy winter day created with several fans. These hands-on experiences sparked lots of discussion and curiosity. Over the coming weeks, we will be building the skills needed to write a sentence about each season. The children will develop their vocabulary, explore exciting descriptive language and practise turning their ideas into clear, well-formed sentences. We are looking forward to seeing their confidence and creativity as writers continue to grow.



Year 2

Year 2 have made a fantastic start to the term, approaching their learning with enthusiasm, determination and plenty of imagination. In English, the children have enjoyed exploring the traditional tale *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. We stepped into the shoes of Goldilocks and composed thoughtful letters of apology to the Three Bears because of our actions. We hope the Three Bears can find it in their hearts to forgive her!

In Maths, we have been strengthening our understanding of place value by representing numbers in a variety of ways. Using these skills, the children have gone on to compare numbers before beginning to solve addition calculations involving a range of one and two-digit numbers. Meanwhile, in Religious Education, the children thoroughly enjoyed bringing in and sharing books that are meaningful to them. This provided a wonderful opportunity to discuss why certain texts hold special value in our lives. We have then turned our attention to Christianity, exploring the significance of *The Bible* and beginning to consider why it is regarded as a special and important book by Christians around the world.



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Classroom News



Across the Playground

Year 4

Year 4 have begun an exciting new learning journey in English based on the beautiful book *The Promise*. The children have been exploring the story's themes and characters and will soon be using their creativity to write their own sequels, imagining what might happen next.

They also had a fantastic time at Ufton Court, where they immersed themselves in a range of Viking activities, including bow making, Viking battles, games, fire making, jewellery making and a Viking feast. These hands-on experiences helped bring their history learning to life and created many wonderful memories.

In P.E, the children have started their indoor gymnastics unit and have been developing their skills by practising partner balances and creating gymnastic routines. It has been a busy and engaging start to the term, and the children have shown great enthusiasm in all areas of their learning.



Year 5

Year five have begun the term with enthusiasm, curiosity and a real love for learning. In English they have enjoyed the challenge of writing the opening of their undersea narratives and crafting creative, descriptive settings. This week we have jumped straight into our new learning journey; a highlight was discovering the mischievous and rather obnoxious Stinkwarts hiding around the playground.

In Science, we have been busy investigating forces carrying out hands on enquiries to explore water resistance and air resistance. Their team work, predictions and careful observations have been impressive.

Meanwhile, in Geography, we have been exploring the enquiry questions 'What is a mountain and what is a hill?' We have worked hard to read contour lines and use them to choose our preferred routes up some of the highest peaks in the UK – a brilliant blend of map skills and geographical reasoning.



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Sporting Highlights

Sporting Success

We have made a fantastic start to the sporting year across the federation.

Our Year 3/4 boys' football teams began the season in impressive fashion, with Team 1 securing a 10-2 victory and Team 2 earning a hard-fought 2-1 win. The children showed excellent teamwork, determination and sportsmanship throughout.

Our Year 5/6 football team has also continued its strong form, recording a commanding 9-0 victory against local opposition.

We are equally pleased to see growing participation in girls' sport. Our netball team won its opening two fixtures, while the girls' football team earned a well-deserved draw in its first match of the season.

Positive Playground

Our Positive Playground Initiative continues to thrive, with children enjoying new activities including trampette, rugby conversion kicking and Castle Ball. These opportunities help children stay active, develop new skills and have fun with their friends.



P.E Lessons

Staff continue to work together to strengthen P.E provision across the federation, and this half term have been focusing on how fundamental movement and ball skills develop from the infant school through to the junior school. As a Federation, our priority remains helping children to build confidence, competence and a lifelong enjoyment of physical activity.

Feedback from Visitors

We have been delighted to receive positive feedback from prospective parents visiting for tours, who have commented on the enthusiasm, skill and positive attitudes displayed by children in P.E lessons.

The children should be extremely proud of these compliments. Their effort, commitment and enjoyment of sport are a credit to themselves and to the federation.

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The Reading Corner

Reading Recommendations

This week it was a treat to visit Year 4 during their Free Reading Friday session. I caught up with two children who were loving their library books and told me all about them! Olivia told me...

- *"I really like the zoo rescue book series. We have a few different ones in the library but there are loads of different animals to read about."*

We will definitely be getting a few more to add to our collection! Holly told me that...

- *"This book is perfect for this time of year, it is spooky!"*

Don't forget we have a suggestions box in the library, so recommendations are always welcome!



Spotlight on...

Jasbinder Bilan

Jasbinder is not only an author but a teacher as well! She loves to create magical worlds that lead to exciting adventures. Jasbinder was born in India near the Himalayas where she had lots of animals including a camel and a monkey! She is the author of **Calling the Whales**, **Xanthe and the Ruby Crown** and **Nush and the Stolen Emerald**.

Her advice is to 'keep your eyes open and your imagination alive'.

Focus Bookshelves

Harvest

Harvest is the season when the crops are gathered in, but here at Barksbury it means more. It is a time of reflection when we consider the food we eat and the people that might not have enough. This means that as a community we share the food we have and this means that no-one goes hungry. It is not us that celebrates harvest, communities all over the world do too!



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Managing Screen Time

Average Screen Time

According to data, children are spending increasing amounts of time on digital devices. Recent figures show that the average screen time for children is:

- **Ages 0 – 2:** about 1 hour per day
- **Ages 2 – 4:** about 2 hours and 8 mins per day
- **Ages 5 – 8:** about 3 hours and 38 mins per day
- **Ages 8 – 12:** about 5.5 – 6 hours per day
- **Ages 13 – 18:** about 7.5 – 9 hours per day



How does screen time affect my child's development?

Too much screen time can have a negative effect on children's development. It can affect:

Language and Communication skills

- High screen use is linked to reduced verbal ability, lower vocabulary and speech delays

Cognitive and Attention skills

- Heavy screen use (over 2 hours a day) is associated with lower working memory, reduced processing speed and shorter attention spans
- Fast-paced digital content can trigger stress responses or behavioural dysregulation in children, making it harder for them to self-regulate i.e. they are overstimulated

Social and Emotional Well-being

- Heavy screen dependence is linked to higher rates of tantrums, emotional dysregulation, anxiety, and symptoms similar to ADHD
- Relying on a screen to soothe a child who is dysregulated, often worsens behaviour over time
- Spending less time in person reduces a child's ability to read facial expressions, body language, and tone of voice

Physical Health and Sleep

- The blue light and mental overstimulation close to bedtime reduces total sleep time and quality
- Excessive screen time replaces active physical play, outdoor exploration and motor skill development, which contributes to risks associated with childhood obesity

Recommended Screen Time

The UK government recommends the following screen time:

- **Under 2 years:** avoid screen time completely, except for shared moments that encourage bonding and conversation e.g. video calls with family members
- **Ages 2 – 5:**
 - Keep screen time to 1 hour a day (less if possible)
 - Avoid screens during mealtimes and the final hour before bed (to protect sleep quality)
 - Watch or use screens together, rather than leaving them to watch it alone
- **Ages 5 – 12:**
 - Keep recreational screen time to about 2 hours per day
 - Have consistent boundaries like phone-free bedrooms at night, regular physical play and family time
- **Ages 13 – 18 (and adults too!):**
 - Keep recreational screen time to about 2-4 hours per day
 - Have consistent boundaries like phone-free bedrooms at night, regular physical play and family time

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Managing Screen time

Get out and about

- Spend time in the garden
- Go for a walk
- Go to the shops
- Go to the park



The main thing is to get out in the fresh air and have a break from the screen

Be mindful of time

Stay aware of how long your child has been on their device. Control how long they can use the screen for



Screen free bedrooms at night

Collect all devices from everyone in the house and put them in a central place away from the bedrooms. This reduces the temptation for late-night scrolling



Switch on Do Not Disturb

Research shows that micro-distractions like message alerts and push notifications can chip away at our concentration levels. Put phones on Do Not Disturb to reduce this



Have a family tech break

Set aside times when the whole family puts their devices away and enjoys an activity together – play a board game, go for a walk or go to the beach



Lead by example

Let your child see you managing your screen time – read a book, do something in the garden or cook a favourite recipe!



Set time allowances on the device

Most devices will allow you to set time limits. Click on the link below for step-by-step guidance and instant help setting up parental controls for your family's devices



<https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/>

Set a bedtime cutoff

Stop your child using screens at least 1 hour before bed to protect their sleep from blue light



Create a phone free zone

Create at least one phone free zone in the house such as the dinner table, where no one has their phone or device



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



A Message from Mrs Elcock

I would like to thank everyone for the warm welcome to Balksbury Federation; it has been an absolute pleasure getting to know the children and their families. I am very much looking forward to meeting more of you over the coming weeks and months.

When I visited the federation back in June, I was overwhelmed by the incredible level of support we offer our families and the amazing team behind Balksbury Federation.

Mrs Grinham and I will be hosting a coffee and cake morning after half term. Further details regarding the date and timings will be confirmed closer to the time. We hope to see you there!

Mrs Elcock



Community Cupboard

At Balksbury Federation, we are very aware of the continuing rise of the cost of food and utility bills. If this is having an impact on your family, we are able to help.

It could be the day before payday and the cupboards are looking empty – come in and grab something for dinner. The Community Cupboard is available to all our families because there are times when we all struggle.

Our 'Community Cupboard' is stocked with food and toiletries, all you need to do is bring a carrier bag to reception and ask for Mrs Grinham or Mrs Elcock and we will be happy to help. Alternatively, you can contact us via our confidential email community@balksbury.org



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

Tokens - Juniors

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



Achievements from Outside of School

Aria has had a fantastic few weeks, with some brilliant achievements to celebrate! She recently tried out for her local swimming club and secured a place in the Learn to Compete Group. She did so well that she skipped Level 1 and went straight into Level 2, where she is one of the youngest in the group. To top it off, Aria has also passed her latest martial arts grading and earned her Twin Orange Stripe belt! We're incredibly proud of her hard work, determination and the confidence she is showing as she takes on new challenges.



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PTA Message



Can you help your PTA?



Your PTA is a very small team trying to deliver lots of great things for our families.

Please consider if you could help us by volunteering for any of the following:

Uniform Swap Shop / Treat Sales - 10 to 15 minutes

Friday's from 2:50pm to 3:15pm

Christmas Jingle - any amount of time
28th November from 2pm

Raffle Prizes

Helping to source from businesses or donating items

Please either come and visit us in The Hive on a Friday or email balksburypta@balksbury.org

Thank you.

BALKSBURY FEDERATION PTA



Annual General Meeting

EVERYONE IS WELCOME

Stay informed and get involved.

Tuesday 3rd November 2026

3:30pm

Junior School

We look forward to seeing you



Parenikind
Member Association

In the Community



SCHOOLS OUT FREE TASTER

TRY OUR AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS AT THE SCOTT CENTRE & PILGRIMS CROSS SCHOOL

Our After School Clubs are the perfect place for children aged 4-13 to play, learn, make friends and grow after the school day until 6pm. From baking and STEM projects to sports, crafts, gardening, and forest school, there's something for everyone!

New families can enjoy free taster sessions at select schools to discover what we offer and see how their children can thrive.

Spaces are limited - contact Paige to book and come and join the fun! Email: scottcentre@youthoptions.org.uk

- ✓ Part of a trusted CPSTED registered charity with 85+ years experience
- ✓ Safe, nurturing environments where children feel they belong
- ✓ Wide range of daily clubs - active, creative and educational
- ✓ Local school pick-up from participating schools

YOUTH OPTIONS
A better future

www.youthoptions.org.uk
Youth Options is a registered Charity (1054463)

PRESCHOOLS & CHILDCARE **PREVENTION** **TARGETED** **PROGRESSION** **OUTDOOR LEARNING**

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Diary Dates

October 2026

Monday 26th October – Friday 30th October 2026	Half Term
Tuesday 20th October 2026	Tour for Year R 2027-2028 9:30-10:15am
Tuesday 20th October 2026	Tour for Year R 2027-2028 9:45-10:30am
Wednesday 21st October 2026	Tour for Year R 2027-2028 9:30-10:15am
Wednesday 21st October 2026	Tour for Year R 2027-2028 9:45-10:30am

November 2026

Tuesday 3rd November 2026	Openbox – Year 5 Egyptians
Tuesday 3rd November 2026	PTA Annual General Meeting 3:30pm
Tuesday 3rd November 2026	Tour for Year 3 2027-2028 9:15-10:00am
Wednesday 4th November 2026	Tour for Year 3 2027-2028 9:15-10:00am
Wednesday 4th November 2026	Tour for Year 3 2027-2028 11:00-11:45am
Thursday 5th November 2026 at	Tour for Year 3 2027-2028 9:15-10:15am
Thursday 5th November 2026	Fraser Portraits Individual Photos
Wednesday 7th November 2026	Flu Immunisations
Monday 9th November – Friday 13th November 2026	No After School Clubs (Pick Club will run as normal)
Monday 9th November 2026	Year R- Height, Weight & Vision Screening
Monday 9th November 2026	Parents' Evening 3:30-6:30pm
Wednesday 11th November 2026	Parents' Evening 3:30-6:30pm
Thursday 12th November 2026	Openbox – Year 3 Early Man
Thursday 12th November 2026	Year 5 Winchester Science Museum Trip
Tuesday 17th November 2026	Flu Immunisation
Friday 20th November 2026	Jingle Dress Down Day
Friday 20th November 2026	Year 1 Tree Planting
Monday 23rd November 2026	Year 4 Tree Planting
Friday 27th November 2026	The Christmas Jingle (2pm for families, 3pm - 4:30pm for children)

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December 2026

Wednesday 9 th December 2026	Year R Nativity
Thursday 10 th December 2026	Year R Nativity
Tuesday 15 th December 2026	Christmas Jumper & Lunch Day
Wednesday 16 th December 2026	Openbox Pantomime
Thursday 17 th December 2026	Christmas Disco Day
Friday 18 th December 2026	Children's Last Day of School for Christmas

January 2027

Monday 4 th January 2027	Children Back to School
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February 2027

Friday 5 th February 2027	Anti-Bullying Day
Monday 8 th February – Friday 12 th February 2027	Year 6 Fairthorne Manor Residential Trip
Monday 15 th February – Friday 19 th February 2027	Half Term
Monday 22 nd February 2027	INSET Day

March 2027

Wednesday 10 th March 2027	Year 1 Army Flying Museum Trip
Date TBC	Year 1 Production 1:30pm to 3:00pm
Date TBC	Year 1 Production 1:30pm to 3:00pm
Thursday 25 th March 2027	Children's Last Day before Easter break

April 2027

Monday 12 th April 2027	Children Back to School
Tuesday 20 th April 2027	Year 2 Titanic Trip
Friday 30 th April 2027	INSET Day

May 2027

Monday 10 th – 14 th May 2027	KS2 SATs Week
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June 2027

Monday 1 st June – Friday 7 th June 2027	Half Term
Monday 7 th June – Friday 18 th June 2027	Year 4 Multiplication Test
Monday 7 th June 2027	Openbox – Year R: Pirates
Tuesday 8 th June 2027	Openbox – Year 1: Moon Landing
Thursday 10 th June 2027	Fraser Portraits Class Photos
Thursday 10 th June 2027	New Year 3 Parent Transition Meeting
Monday 14 th June 2027	Phonics Screening Check Week
Friday 18 th June 2027	Sports Day and Family Picnic
Tuesday 29 th June 2027	Year 5 John Hanson Taster Morning

July 2027

Monday 5 th July – Friday 9 th July 2027	Arts Week
Friday 9 th July 2027	Music and Arts Festival 2:00pm - 4:00pm
Monday 12 th July 2027	Balksbury's Got Talent Final (In school event)
Tuesday 13 th July 2027	Year 2 Fun Day
Wednesday 14 th July 2027	Year 2 Graduation
Thursday 15 th July 2027	Year 6 Fun Day
Friday 16 th July 2027	Disco Day
Monday 19 th July 2027	Year 6 Graduation 9:15am – 10:00am
Monday 19 th July 2027	Children's Last Day of School
Tuesday 20 th July 2027	INSET Day
Wednesday 21 st July 2027	INSET Day

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