

THE OTTER

THE NEWSLETTER OF OTTERBOURNE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL.



Dear Families

It's been an exciting week for our older children this week with our Year 6's facing challenges and spending time away from home at the Fairthorne Manor residential. This has then given our Year 5's the chance to take on the role of 'buddy' for our Otter Class children, which will no doubt have been a lot of fun, and given them something to look forward to for next year.

It's been lovely for me too, as I've spent more time with the children, having been with two of the groups at Fairthorne and then spending time with Year 3/4 in maths and yesterday at lunchtime - if there was ever to be a Mr G's highlight of the week, it would have been yesterday when one of the year 4 boys thanked me for playing cricket with them. It's a real testament to the culture of respect we have at the school!

I hope you have a safe and fun weekend!

Mr Geraghty

Please have a chat at home about toilets – sadly, as much as we have talked about toileting behaviours many times, we have had a couple of issues this week with toilets being filled and clogged with toilet paper. This kind of thing could be an outlet for anxiety, which we would want to support, so it is really important we try and understand who is doing it. There are also costs associated with wasted paper and repairs, and it makes the other children very upset to see their school treated in this way. We will be talking to the children about this and will be doing what we can to stop it being an ongoing problem, and it would be appreciated if you could back this up at home.

Safe routines - This week, I was made aware that one of our children was supported by a parent to leave the school grounds over the flint wall on to the church path. This is clearly unacceptable for a number of reasons so can I please remind you that the children's safety is my primary responsibility and we have routines for pick up time that I ask you to adhere to. For our new parents, can I please ask that you wait for the teacher to release the children to you at the end of the day. This is to help us continue to get to know the adults who are collecting and get the children into a safe routine. If you have older children in the school, please don't ask them to take their siblings from the line. We will get quicker at releasing the children over time; if you are in a rush, we would always try and support this, but in the right way.

Lost property – we have had an issue this week with a water bottle being damaged in lost property. We do seem to gather a lot of different items at the end of each day, and as much as we try to return everything quickly, it is incredibly difficult if things are not named. It would also be in everyone's interest if the children could be taught about being more organised and having routines so that items don't find their way into the box in the first place. This is also why we have been taking steps to reduce the amount of things that are brought in from home and would always recommend a low-cost plastic water bottle in school, rather than a bulky or expensive metal one.

This extends to fidget toys too, which should not be brought in from home please. These are generally small items, that are easily lost and due to the nature of them being used frequently, they can easily be broken if not cared for. Miss Pascall (SENDCo) will provide children with fidget toys if there is a recognised need for one, so please stop sending in items from home – this week we had a late finish as one of the children's Needoh fidgets broke during worship, which is something we really don't want to have happen again.

And now for some great news.....

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...YES! Our calendar of events, being organised by our wonderful PTA, is almost complete and the first of these, will be advertised very soon. We are very excited about what's to come and I really hope that you will also enjoy the fun and fundraising activities this year. As always, we rely on parent support to bring everything together, so if you can spare a little bit of time, please let your Year Rep know, or contact the school. THANK YOU!!!

FOS PTA Get Involved!

We have a fantastic year of events planned and we'd love to see you there!

Events:

- Otterfest
- May Fair
- Quiz Nights
- Disco
- Car Boot Sale

All of these events raise valuable money for our school!

Dates for these events will be sent out in the next couple of weeks.

If you would like to volunteer at any of these events, please let your Year Rep know. Thank you.

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Do you know someone looking to start in Year R next September?

Our school tours start very soon, and I would love to show any prospective parents around the school. If you do know of anyone looking for a school space, please forward them the poster below or ask them to call the school.

Thank you.

Starting school in September 2027?

Through our core Christian values of Trust, Respect and Determination, we provide all children with the space to flourish, find inspiration, know themselves and find their place in the world.

Choosing a school for your child is one of the most important decisions that you will make as a parent, and the only way to best understand which school is right for your family is to see for yourself. I welcome the opportunity to show you around our wonderful school, and our fabulous Otter Class, so you can understand just what makes Otterbourne a special school community to be part of.

Mr Geraghty

TOURS AVAILABLE NOW

September and October tour dates available.

Please visit our school website or phone the school to book a place.

www.otterbourneprimaryschool.com

01962 712020

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KS2 School Uniform

For a number of years now the school uniform for KS2 children has been a shirt and tie combination. Previous parent surveys have indicated that this continues to be the preference. I am intending on getting your feedback on this and other aspects of school life later in the year, but in the meantime the uniform remains as shirt and tie – and shirts need to be tucked in. Please help us maintain a high standard of appearance across the school, by ensuring children are ready for school in this way, as we continue to remind children throughout the day. We recognise that some children have sensory needs and this can be related to fabrics so please contact the school if you have questions about this. Thank you.

Harvest Collection

On the 9th October, our Harvest Service is taking place. This year we will be making a collection of food for Eastleigh Food Bank.

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LEARNING FROM AROUND THE SCHOOL AND AWAY FROM SCHOOL

Year 6 at Fairthorne Manor

Year 6 have embraced their residential experience at Fairthorne Manor this week, making the most of the sunshine and the great outdoors. The children approached all the new challenges with enthusiasm, developed their teamwork skills and grown in confidence and independence. It has been wonderful to see them supporting one another, stepping outside their comfort zones and creating lasting memories together.

Well done Year 6 and thank you to all the amazing team of staff that gave up their own time to support them at different points during the week including Mrs Holland, Mr O'Dowd, Mrs Simpson, Mrs Davenport, Mrs Armstrong and Miss Whitwham – I enjoyed spending time with them too!



Many more photos were shared with Year 6 parents through the week.

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Learning in Action



As part of their English, Year 1 have been reading the story Scaredy Squirrel and exploring the woodland to discover the things that Scaredy Squirrel is frightened of.



They have also been comparing sizes and amounts in maths using natural objects.



Year 5 have had a different week in school this week and taken part in new learning experiences such as creating their own Dragon's Den pitches and carrying out a geography fieldwork enquiry into which part of our school grounds would be the safest to be in if we were to experience an Earthquake. They plotted the data from their enquiry onto Digimaps for schools and drew conclusions.

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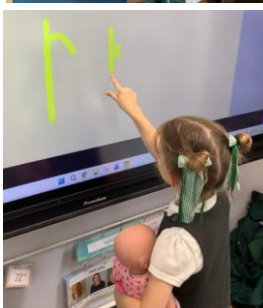
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Eco-Council have worked together to recreate the log circles for classes to gather round.



Wren Class then enjoyed reciting and performing poetry as part of their guided reading session in this new space.



Otter Class are continuing to discover within their continuous provision and have had a wonderful time cooking creations in their mud kitchen, building their upper body strength on the monkey bars and beginning their mark making journey including how to hold their pen correctly.

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Art Exhibition 2026

We are delighted to announce the return of our Art Exhibition for its second year! This year, we are inviting pupils to use their creativity to explore one of our three curriculum pillars:

Sustainability and Change – caring for our world and making a positive difference.

Aspiration and Wellbeing – achieving our goals while caring for ourselves and others.

Diversity and Equality – celebrating differences and ensuring everyone feels valued and included.

Your Challenge

Create a piece of artwork inspired by one of the pillars. You can choose any creative form – painting, drawing, sculpture, collage, textiles, photography, digital art or your own idea!

Please include a 2–5 sentence artist's statement explaining:

Which pillar you chose

What inspired your artwork

How your artwork represents the pillar

This is an optional home project. Children can work independently, with a sibling, buddy or friends, using materials of their choice.

Exhibition Showcase

Families are warmly invited to celebrate our pupils' creativity and see all the artwork on Friday 6th November at 3.30pm.

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IMPORTANT SAFEGUARDING PARENT INFORMATION

Netflix Safeguarding Warning

I want to share a concern that has been brought to my attention regarding a series called ***The Amazing Digital Circus***, which is currently available on streaming platforms including Netflix. At first glance, the programme may appear to be aimed at young children due to its colourful animation, cartoon-style characters and playful title. However, the content is intended for an older audience and includes themes and scenes that many parents may find unsuitable for primary-aged children. The show carries a **12 rating** on Netflix and includes content warnings for **violence, language and drug misuse**. Some episodes contain scenes that could be upsetting for younger viewers, including depictions of injury, threatening situations and other disturbing imagery presented in an animated format. This series is 12+ and not suitable for younger viewers.

Apps linked to sexual abuse

The NSPCC has published figures showing which platforms children name when they talk to Childline about online sexual abuse. Between April 2025 and March 2026, Snapchat came top with 324 mentions, up 19% on the year before. It was followed by TikTok (234), Instagram (197), Discord (92) and WhatsApp (39). Between them, these five platforms came up in nearly 900 counselling sessions. The minimum age for using these Apps is 13 years old.

More information can be found by following this link.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/about-us/news-opinion/2026/new-childline-data-reveals-top-five-platforms-apps-linked-to-online-child-sexual-abuse/>

A DATE FOR THE DIARY FROM THE SCHOOL'S MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TEAM

We would like to offer your parents our Emotion Regulation/ Managing Behaviour Workshop on Tuesday 3rd of November at 09:00AM. We anticipate this workshop will last for 90 minutes. It would be helpful if we could have a room with a screen/ projector as we will be using a presentation in the workshop.

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At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about DISCORD

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

A CHANNEL FOR EVERYTHING

While Discord is strongly associated with video games, it also hosts communities for almost anything you can imagine, such as books, music, influencers, cooking and sport. Some large servers focus on popular games like Minecraft or Fortnite, but many are private, invite-only spaces where friends or communities with shared interests can chat across phones, computers, and gaming consoles.

REAL-LIFE DISTRACTION

Like many social platforms, Discord can become a real time-sink. Although it does not rely on endless scrolling in the same way as some apps, constant messages, group chats, and voice channels can keep young people engaged for long periods, especially in larger servers. As Discord is closely linked to gaming, it may also increase the time they spend playing games.

STRANGER DANGER

Users can choose to stay within private servers with only people they know, but joining public servers will most likely bring them into contact with strangers. Many users are just friendly enthusiasts, yet others could have harmful intentions, including grooming, extortion, or radicalisation. In these types of environments, anyone can claim to be another teenager, which can make it harder for young people to judge who is safe to talk to.

Launched in 2015, and with over 90 million daily active users, Discord has become one of the main ways gamers communicate – with text, voice, and video chat helping people connect around shared interests. For many young people, Discord can be a useful way to talk with friends, join communities, and explore hobbies. However, like any online platform built around communication, it also carries risks around strangers, inappropriate content, spending money, and time spent online. This guide looks at what parents and educators need to know.

A HARASSMENT RISK

There is also a risk from people a young person already knows in the real world. Bullying in the real world can continue online, and Discord servers can make this feel more intimidating, especially if someone uses anonymous or multiple accounts to carry out threatening behaviours. Because Discord works across computers, phones, and gaming consoles, unwanted contact can follow young people into online spaces that should feel safe and private.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

This huge amount of choice can help young people "find their tribe", especially when they have niche interests. However, because users can create servers around almost any topic, younger users may still encounter unsuitable or distressing content. Even in spaces linked to child-friendly games, Discord cannot directly control every conversation, image, or video shared by other users.

A MONEY DRAIN

Discord is free to use, but users can still spend real-world money on it. This may include Discord 'Nitro', a monthly subscription that unlocks customisation features and larger media uploads, or purchases through the 'Shop' for profile cosmetics and game-related items. Small purchases can add up quickly, especially if spending controls are not in place.

Advice for Parents & Educators

USE FAMILY CENTRE

Parents and carers should make use of Discord's 'Family Centre', which gives an overview of a younger user's activity while respecting their privacy. Messages are not shared, but adults can view an activity feed and receive weekly email summaries. Discord says this is designed to support conversations about online behaviour, rather than be about constant monitoring.

CHECK, TALK, REPORT

Review Discord's privacy settings together, including who can send them friend requests or private messages. Use this as a chance to talk to them about strangers, privacy, and personal information, making sure young people know to question suspicious behaviour, such as requests to keep conversations secret. Show them how to block and report these kinds of users and reassure them that asking for help will not get them into trouble.

MANAGE TIME ONLINE

Agree clear expectations around when and how Discord can be used, especially during homework, bedtime, and family time. Encourage young people to turn off unnecessary notifications and leave servers that feel overwhelming. If Discord is mainly used alongside gaming, discuss healthy limits for both activities so that schoolwork, sleep, and offline friendships are not affected.

REVIEW SPENDING CONTROLS

Talk openly about paid features such as Discord Nitro, profile cosmetics, and in-game purchases. Make sure the young people in your care understand that digital items still cost real money. Check payment settings on the device they use, avoid storing card details where possible, and consider adding approval requirements for purchases, particularly for younger or more impulsive users.

Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, TechRadar, Tom's Guide, The Evening Standard, and The New Statesman.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

See full reference list on our website

@wake_up_weds

/www.thenationalcollege

@wake.up.wednesday

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Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 23.09.2026

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October Timetable

All regular sessions delivered live online via zoom. 90 minutes long

£24 each or FREE with School Membership

Book online at facefamilyadvice.co.uk

Recordings available for 48 hours

Raising Self-Esteem	5 Oct 10am
Supporting Healthy Sleep	5 Oct 7pm
Decreasing Depression	6 Oct 10am
Introduction to OCD	6 Oct 7pm
Improving Family Communication	12 Oct 10am
What is ACT?	12 Oct 7pm
Understanding Addictive Behaviour	13 Oct 10am
Supporting a Child with ADHD	13 Oct 7pm
Understanding Anger	19 Oct 10am
Understanding the Teenage Brain	19 Oct 7pm
Supporting Healthy Screen Use	20 Oct 10am
Autism: Improving Communication	20 Oct 7pm
FREE - ADHD and Homework	22 Oct 7-8pm
Facing Defiance	26 Oct 10am
Cannabis & Ketamine Awareness	26 Oct 7pm
School Anxiety	27 Oct 10am
Anxiety Explained	27 Oct 7pm

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£15 ticket
£35 family
(2 adults & up to 3 children)

HARVEST HOEDOWN

SUNDAY 4 OCTOBER 26
6PM – 9.30PM, OTTERBOURNE VILLAGE HALL

- ◆ LIVE MUSIC / CALLER
- ◆ SUPPER INCLUDED
- ◆ DRINKS AVAILABLE TO PURCHASE

PUDDING COMPETITION
If you would like to take part please let us know and bring a pudding to the event!



 St Matthew's
Otterbourne

To order tickets, email:
fundraising@chobenefice.co.uk

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TROJANS
18 74
RUGBY

YOUTH RUGBY
AT TROJANS RUGBY CLUB

MAKE NEW FRIENDS
GET MUDDY
HAVE FUN

THEN COME AND GIVE RUGBY A GO!

AGES 4-18
BOYS AND GIRLS

MIXED U6 - U11
THEN SINGLE SEX
FROM **U12** UPWARDS

SUNDAYS
FROM SEPTEMBER TILL MAY

TROJANS RUGBY CLUB
STONEHAM LANE,
SOUTHAMPTON

www.trojansfc.rfu.club

RUGBY BRINGS US TOGETHER

Consider an alternative choice for Year 7

THE KING'S SCHOOL
WISDOM STATURE FAVOUR

Open Evening
Weds 30th September | 4:30pm - 7:00pm

- Small Class Sizes
- Nurturing Environment
- Excellent Academic Progress
- Christ Centred Curriculum

"There is a culture of kindness throughout the school"

ISI Independent Schools Inspectorate ISI Inspection Report March 2020

VERY GOOD
The Telegraph
BEST VALUE PRIVATE SCHOOLS
2025

The King's School, Allington Lane, Fair Oak, Hampshire, SO50 7DB
023 8060 0986 | www.thekingsschool.org.uk

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After School Art Club

Otterbourne Primary School

Mondays: 3.30-4.30 pm

12 weeks

Book and pay on our website
www.flyingcolourseducation.co.uk

07387325331 hello@flyingcolourseducation.co.uk

Open Events



Thornden Open Evening will take place on Thursday 8 October, from 4:00pm to 7:00pm. There is no need to book as this is a drop-in event.

Our Headteacher, Caroline Lowing, will be delivering presentations at 5:00pm and 6:30pm. Attendance is optional, but these presentations provide valuable information about the school and everything that Thornden has to offer.

Open Evening is our main admissions event and provides a fantastic opportunity to:

- Explore the entire school
- Take part in interactive activities with your child
- Meet and speak with our teachers
- Experience our school environment and community first-hand

For families who are unable to attend the Open Evening, we are also offering two Open Mornings on 15 and 16 October. These sessions run from 9:00am to 10:15am, and attendance is required for the full duration. As places are limited, booking is essential. To reserve a place, please email info@thornden.hants.sch.uk.

During the Open Morning, you will hear a short presentation from our Headteacher, Caroline Lowing, followed by a guided tour of the school. As lessons will be taking place, it will not be possible to visit classrooms. If you would like the opportunity to explore more of the school and speak directly with teachers, we recommend attending the Open Evening.

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October Half Term 2026

3 day courses for boys & girls Years R to 6

Closing day to book your place, the Thursday before course starts.

9am to 4pm each day!!

NEW Sibling discount!!

NEW!! 1/2 day bookings

9am to 12pm = £13.00

1pm to 4pm = £13.00

(Please circle the No. of days you wish to attend)

Monday 26th October to Wednesday 28th October 2026

10% Sibling discount applied for the second or third child from the same family

*Halterworth Primary School (SO51 9AD)

*(Multi Sports or Football Course)

3 Days 2 Days 1 Day

£62 £43 £25

*Otterbourne Primary School, Otterbourne (SO21 2EQ)

*(Multi Sports or Football Course)

3days 2days 1day

Please circle the course you wish to do:

Otterbourne (MS) or Otterbourne (Football Course)

Halterworth (MS) or Halterworth (Football Course)

Confirm dates/days wishing to attend on 1 or 2 day bookings

Dates/Days wishing to attend single days:

Children will be grouped in school year/age appropriate groups;

Equipment & rooms will be cleaned end of each day.

Please provide a Packed lunch & drink each day.



Follow us @R&R Sports



Booking Details



*Child or Children's name/s:	*Age:	*Yr. Group: R, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6
Address:	Post Code:	
School:	*Parent Contact Number:	
Email Address:		
*Illness/Allergies or Disabilities:		
*(R&R will occasionally take pictures of the course & attendees for future marketing/promo use, please circle NO if you do not wish to have them taken of your child/ren: NO)		

Payment Details: Place confirmation by text or email from R&R Sports

Method	Details	Where to send
BACS	Account Name: R&R Sports Courses Ltd Acc. No: 699 651 09 Sort Code: 09-01-28	Ref: OTTOCT & (Your child surname) Ref: HALTOCT & (Your child surname)
CHEQUE	Payable to: R&R Sports Courses Ltd	Please contact for further details via the contact information
CASH	In a sealed envelope marked for R&R Sports	School Office Let R&R know to allow them to collect
CONTACT INFO	Send via email: info@randrsportscourses.co.uk ENQUIRIES: Contact Robbie 07515 881 574	Send via email: info@randrsportscourses.co.uk

Please note that once an application has been processed refunds cannot be given. I understand that no liability in respect to loss or damage to personal property or effects (eg: mobile phones, electrical devices or trading cards/stickers) is accepted by the course organisers or their servants whilst the above named person/s are attending the course.



If you're in need of a professional massage then R&R Sports Massage can provide this for you. To make an appointment or to find out more information then please contact R&R sports.

R&R SPORTS BIRTHDAY PARTIES

From just £70 per hour, we come to you and deliver a party tailored exactly to your requirements.

Please contact R&R sports for more info or to make a booking.