

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to another school year and a special welcome to our new families in Nursery and Reception or across the wider school; we look forward to working in partnership with you.

It has been amazing to see the way the children have returned to school and to hear all their news of the summer holidays. The team at St John's are excited to start new learning journeys with our children. Through Class Dojo and on the school website, year group teachers will be sharing curriculum maps for the autumn term. These curriculum maps will identify the topics being taught and will perhaps support conversations at home around, 'What did you do at school today?'

The children have come back to school looking very smart. Please may I remind you that children should be in the correct uniform which includes a St John's sweatshirt or cardigan with logo (available from www.pmgsschoolwear.co.uk). Black school shoes should also be worn, not trainers.

It has been a very busy summer here on the school site and I would like to thank all staff who have worked so hard through the summer to make the school ready for the start of term. A particular thank you to Mr Watters, School Site Manager, for coordinating the many projects taking place and Mrs Wilson and the cleaning team for making the school so clean and welcoming for the pupils and staff.

This week we have welcomed a number of new staff to the St John's family:

Early Years – we welcome Mrs Wills as Beech class teacher.

Key Stage 1 – we formally welcome Miss Isabella Meeks as a Year 2 teacher

Lower Key Stage 2 – we welcome Mrs Corrinne Flavell, and Mrs Keighley Hobson-Jones as teaching assistants.

Upper Key Stage 2 – we welcome Mrs Joanne Ryan as teacher in Year 6, Miss Rosie Marriott as teacher in Year 5.

We have also sadly said goodbye to Ian Hayes, who after 16 years of dedication to the hundreds of children, he has decided to retire. Mr Hayes will always be remembered for his musical and sporting expertise: he had a song for every occasion! Mr Hayes, you will be greatly missed and we wish you all the very best in your retirement.

From time to time as a parent you may wish to discuss an issue or raise a question about your child's education or school policy. The first line of enquiry should always be with the class teacher or the School Office.

Should you need further information or do not feel a query has been resolved, an appointment can be made with your child's Phase Leader through the School Office.

VALUE OF THE TERM

UNITY

We are individuals with a sense of belonging, united through cooperation.



'May the God who gives endurance and encouragement, give you a spirit of unity.'

Romans 15:5

PHASE LEADERS

Nursery and Reception	Mrs Katie Greenhalgh
Years 1 and 2	Mrs Sophie Monk
Years 3 and 4	Mrs Rosie Clarke
Year 5 and 6	Mr Chris Mackie

Following this, a meeting can be arranged with the Assistant Headteacher (Mrs Amy Peace), Deputy Headteacher (Miss Kayleigh Smith) or the Headteacher (Mr Mark Smith).

Parents can also request a meeting with Mrs Gemma Challender, in-regards to any Special Educational Needs questions or concerns.

Newsletters are published to the school website. The easiest way to receive newsletters is to subscribe to the newsletter through the school website, <https://www.st-john.oxon.sch.uk/communication/newsletters> - this way you will be notified when a new letter is uploaded. In addition, our school website has all the recent newsletters and class letters on it, as well as lots of other information. Add us to your favourites: www.st-john.oxon.sch.uk

We also use a text message service to send reminders to parents and Facebook to communicate school events and notices.

Find us on Facebook



at: @stjohnsschoolcarterton

Class Dojo is also used now from, Nursery to Year 6, to share with you what your children have been doing in school as well as a means to share notices and reminders. **Please remember though that we do not use the messaging facility on Dojo. All messages for teachers should be directed to the school office in person, by phone (01993 843124) or email (office.2613@st-john.oxon.sch.uk)**

My colleagues and I look forward to a purposeful and exciting term ahead and to working in partnership with you all.

Best Wishes

Mark Smith

Headteacher

Thank you for all your support in starting the new school year.

Upcoming Events

Harvest Festivals

Harvest festivals will take place at the end of September which parents are invited to. To accommodate the children and parents in the hall we have organised the celebrations with two year groups at a time:

Monday 28th September 2.30pm: Reception Classes

Tuesday 29th September 2.30pm: Year 5 and 6

Wednesday 30th September 2.30pm: Year 3 and 4

Thursday 1st October 2.30pm: Year 1 and 2

Friday 2nd October 9.30am and 2.45pm Cherry Nursery



After School Clubs

Our After School Clubs this term will commence on Monday 21st September and we would like your opinions on the clubs we offer.

Participating in after-school sports clubs is a fantastic way for children to boost their physical health, build lasting friendships, and develop crucial life skills like teamwork and resilience. At St. John's School, we are fully committed to making these opportunities accessible to everyone, which is why all of Mr. Lamb's sports clubs are completely free of charge.

We want to make sure our clubs are packed with activities the children truly love. If your child has any ideas for different sports or fun, active games they would like Mr. Lamb to introduce, please use this survey to let us know! Your feedback helps us shape a vibrant, active term for everyone. Please complete the below form by **Wednesday 9th September** so we can plan our clubs around your responses.

[Annual Sport After School Club Survey – Fill in form](#)

General Reminders and Information

Government Free School Meals Provision

Free school meals are available to all children in Reception, Years 1 and 2. Menus can be found on the School Grid website and meals should be booked in advance on the School Grid website.



For children in Years 3 – 6 dinners cost £2.80 per day. Payment for meals should be made in advance of meals being taken via School Grid.

Where children choose to bring their own packed lunch, we encourage your child to eat healthily. We do not expect lunch boxes to include fizzy drinks and sweets or solid or sticky chocolate bars. Chocolate covered biscuits such as Penguin and KitKat are acceptable.



Reminder: We are a nut free school due to severe allergies children in school have.

Snack

Children have a snack time each morning. Children in Reception, Year 1 and 2 are provided with a free piece of fruit each day. Children in Years 3 to 6 are asked to bring a piece of fruit to eat mid-morning.

Water Bottles

Please provide your child with a drinks bottle, filled with water for each school day. These can be refilled in school throughout the day as needed. Water bottles must be labelled please.

Pupil Premium and Forces Premium

The school receives extra funding for children who are entitled to free school meals or whose parents are serving in the armed forces. This is a major source of funding for our school, allowing us to provide additional support for the children.

Now that our younger children all receive a free school lunch, it may seem less important to apply for free school meals. This is not the case and failure to register will result in the school losing funding for each eligible pupil. If you are eligible, you may also get access to subsidised trips and music lessons.

There are several criteria for entitlement, including if the parent receives income support, or income-related allowances, but from September 2026, free school meals will be available to **all children** from households in receipt of Universal Credit regardless of household earnings. If you are eligible and you have children in Years 3 to 6, they will also receive a free school meal. Please complete the Free School Meal form emailed home and return to the School Office as soon as possible.

In addition, if you are a parent and are employed in the Armed Forces, please let us know.

Uniform Reminder

We are very proud of the smart appearance of the children at St John's. Our uniform policy reflects the high expectations we have as a school.

St John's green sweatshirt or cardigan with school logo - compulsory (purchased from PMG Schoolwear)

White polo top

Grey school style trousers, skirt, pinafore dress (*where girls prefer to wear trousers these must be grey and regular fitting or boot cut in style (leggings or skinny fit trousers are not permitted)*)

Grey socks, bottle green or dark grey tights, or white socks

Hair accessories must be dark green, black or white.

Children should not wear make-up, nail varnish or tattoos to school.

Footwear

Children are required to wear black school style shoes. (Trainers, ballet pumps, open-toed shoes and boots are not permitted)

P.E. Requirements

Black shorts

Plain white T-shirt

Trainers or plimsolls

In the winter months children should have black tracksuit bottoms/leggings and a grey or black sweatshirt in school for outside P.E. lessons.

It is essential that all clothing is named. Where particular sports are played during the year, additional items may be required for health and safety reasons e.g., shin pads for older children.

Thank for your support.



Parking

Please can we politely remind parents & carers that you must not park in the private residence parking of Thornhill Close OX18 1AR which is adjacent to St John's School. Please also refrain from parking in the specifically marked disabled spaces unless you are entitled to do so.

Administration of Medicines

Prescription and Non-Prescription Medicines

Prescription and non-prescription medicines will only be administered at school:

- When it would be detrimental to the pupil's health or school attendance not to do so and
- Where we have parents' written consent

Pharmacist Medicines:

Medicines should always be provided in the original container as dispensed by a pharmacist and include the prescriber's instructions for administration. **We are unable to accept medicines that have been taken out of their original container or make changes to dosages on parental instructions.** All medicines (with the correct measuring spoon attached) should be delivered to the school office by the parent or carer. Parents or carers must complete and sign a parental agreement form. In no circumstances should medicines be left in a child's possession. *We would request that parents respect the school policy on medication and do not challenge members of staff about this policy. Thank you!*

Bringing belonging from home to school

We continue to ask that children do not bring oversized bags to school due to lack of cloakroom space.

Pencil cases or toys should not be brought into school from home, unless agreed as part of an individual support plan.



PE kit is needed for children and should be in a drawstring bag and in school from Monday to Friday.

PCSO Jo Donohoe - Your School's Local Support



About Me

I'm PCSO Jo Donohoe, part of your neighbourhood policing team. I work closely with schools to support pupils, staff and families

What I Can Offer

- Safety talks for all year groups
- School visits and drop-ins
- Attendance at school events (assemblies, fairs, parent evenings)
- Support with community issues
- Storytelling sessions for younger children
- Reassurance patrols at key times

Working Together

I'm here to help strengthen safety, confidence, and positive relationships between pupils and the police.

✉ Joanne.donohoe@thamesvalley.police.uk



Road Safety Advice from Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service Road Safety Team

As Autumn approaches and the mornings and evenings get darker, parents and children walking to and from school need to be even more aware of the potential dangers they face as pedestrians and the importance of wearing bright or reflective clothing to make it easier for other road users to see them.

It is never too early to start talking to your child about road safety as, having a good understanding of road safety skills, could one day save their life.

Our **Footsteps** guide will give you some ideas of how to begin to support your child in developing the decision-making skills that will help them become a pedestrian able to keep themselves safer when they eventually walk to school or a friend's home independently.

If they are ill-prepared, children are more likely to be killed or injured in a road traffic incident, as seen by the fact that the number of child pedestrians injured rises significantly around 10 -12 years of age – the time at which they begin to go out unaccompanied by adults.

The **Footsteps** programme is simple to use as it can be carried out in normal everyday situations such as walking to school or to the local shops. Rather than *telling* children what to do, you are encouraged to *ask* lots of open questions to make the children think about the decisions they are making. Making these decisions safely, while in the company of a supporting adult, will mean they will be better prepared for dealing with roads and traffic once they begin going out on their own.

Learning to cope with traffic is a practical skill, which cannot be learnt in the classroom. As parents / carers, you are the best people to help your child develop this knowledge as you spend the most time out and about with them.

Please follow the link to the **Footsteps** guide [Footsteps](#) and start giving your children the skills and knowledge they will need to stay safer on our roads.

Remember – Be Bright Be Seen.



Pastoral Team News

Safeguarding Children

If you have any concerns about a child relating to Safeguarding, please get in touch with one of our Safeguarding Leads immediately by contacting the school directly on 01993 843124.

If you are unable to speak to a member of our Designated Safeguarding Team at school and have a safeguarding concern, please contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) directly who will be able to advise you. If you have a concern about a child, please call MASH on 0345 050 7666.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is Kayleigh Smith (Deputy Headteacher)

Our Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are Mark Smith (Headteacher), Amy Peace (Assistant Headteacher) and Alaina Tabern (Child and Family Support Worker)

Over the course of the last school year, the Pastoral Team put together a series of videos detailing many of the topics covered in the Family Links Nurturing Programme. Those videos can be found via the following links:

Overview of topics - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DkxFqxbWt6w&t=2s>

Praise is Magic - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvqVCJVPhYq>

Creating Boundaries - <https://youtu.be/HGs1VVqZXGo>

Time to Calm Down - <https://youtu.be/8vPEf0XUydw>

Using Rewards - <https://youtu.be/-iphIEq4HXU>

Listening: <https://youtu.be/kWy7DYqvInM>

Choices: <https://youtu.be/wADKfAbIBn0>

Understanding Feelings: https://youtu.be/Fk88KH_cM3c

Understanding the Feelings and Behaviour of Children - https://youtu.be/Z0lIyaK_QVY

Taking Time for Ourselves - <https://youtu.be/Ozpa8Ncrm6o>

The Power of Play - <https://youtu.be/-VezCWn7wvo>

Diversion and Distraction - https://youtu.be/FrMQ8_aNGDs

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators SUPPORTING CHILDREN GOING BACK TO SCHOOL

Returning to school after the summer holidays can be both exciting and daunting for children of all ages. Different routines, classes, schools, and academic pressures can cause anxiety or uncertainty. Parents play a vital role in easing this transition. This guide will help you support your child emotionally, mentally, and practically as they return to school.

1 RE-ESTABLISH ROUTINES

Gradually shift back to school-time routines a week or two before term starts. Regular bedtimes, wake-up times, and mealtimes can help children feel more secure and reduce the shock of change when school begins. Having a routine creates predictability and stability, helping to reduce anxiety while improving sleep and concentration.

2 TALK ABOUT FEELINGS

Encourage open conversations with children about their feelings. Ask them how they feel about returning to school, such as what they're looking forward to and anything they might be feeling unsure or worried about. Validating their emotions can help reduce anxiety and show them it's okay to talk about their emotional wellbeing.

3 SUPPORT WITH SLEEP

Children need adequate sleep for concentration, brain function, memory, and emotional regulation. Establish a wind-down routine without screens at least an hour before bed, and encourage relaxing activities like reading or listening to calming music.

4 LOOK OUT FOR SIGNS

Some children hide their anxiety. Watch for changes in their behaviour, such as withdrawal, stomach aches, and irritability. If worries persist, speak with their teacher or the pastoral team early to ensure your child receives support.

5 REFRESH SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Help children reconnect with school friends by arranging playdates or video chats in the week before school starts. Familiar faces and social interactions help the transition and provide emotional comfort on that first day back.

6 CREATE A CALM MORNING

Mornings set the tone for the day. Plan ahead with a consistent morning routine that allows time for breakfast, getting dressed, and talking calmly about the day. Avoid last-minute rushing to reduce stress for everyone.

7 FOCUS ON POSITIVES

Talk about the fun and interesting parts of school – seeing friends, favourite subjects, or exciting activities. One simple but powerful change parents can make is swapping “How’s your day been?” for “What’s been good about your day?” This invites more of a positive, open response. Focusing on positives can help shift children’s anxious thoughts and reframe school as a safe and engaging place.

8 VISIT OR VISUALISE SCHOOL

If possible, encourage visits to the school grounds before the first day, especially if it’s a new school. Walking the route or even looking at photos of classrooms and teachers can make the environment feel familiar. The school website is always a great go-to place for this. This is particularly helpful for younger children or those with additional needs.

9 PLAN AHEAD TOGETHER

Involve children in preparing for school – buying supplies, packing their bag, or choosing lunch options. This gives them a sense of control and builds excitement. Use checklists or calendars to prepare together, helping reduce last-minute stress.

10 STAY POSITIVE AND PRESENT

Children pick up on your outlook. Stay calm, positive, and present, especially during drop-offs. Avoid lingering goodbyes, and let them know you’ll be there at pick-up. A consistent, reassuring presence builds their confidence and resilience.

Meet Our Expert

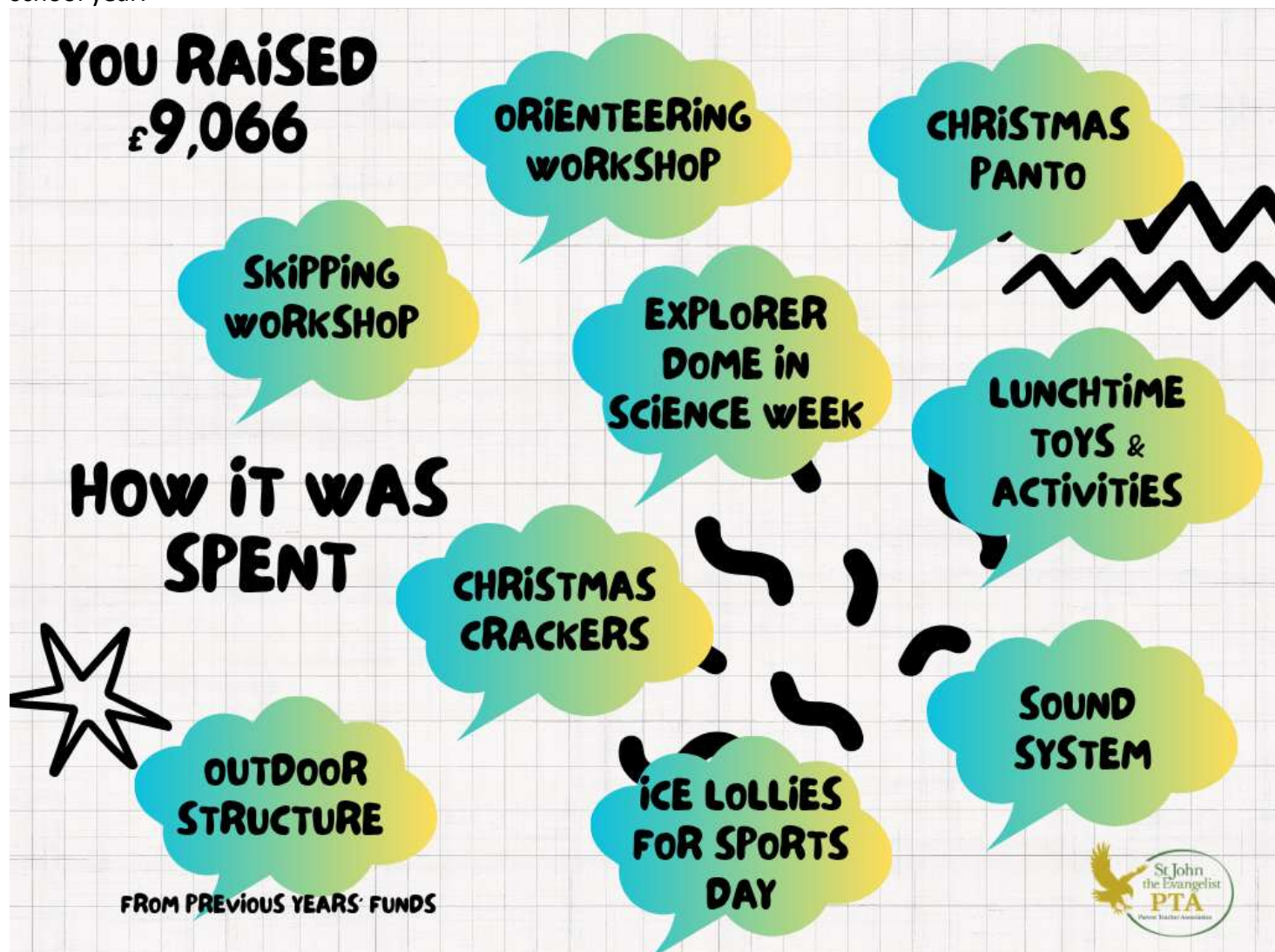
This guide was created by Jo Morton-Brown, an Emotional Health Practitioner with nearly 15 years’ experience supporting children and young people’s mental health. She produces uplifting YouTube content for pupils and trains adults to better support young people’s wellbeing, with a mission to help every child feel valued and understand their emotions.



The National College

PTA News

A very warm welcome back! We hope everyone had a wonderful break and is feeling refreshed for the new school year.



We're excited to share a snapshot of what the PTA has been up to. The image shows just some of the fantastic ways your support and fundraising has helped our school community. From outdoor structures and Explorer Zone activities to Christmas events, workshops and lunchtime toys, the PTA has been able to put funds towards a wide range of exciting opportunities for our children.

We're also delighted to share the many ways our school community has raised funds, including the first ever St John's Fest, Easter Fun Run, Christmas Fair, discos, school lottery, tombola and sports day. A huge thank you to everyone who has supported these events and helped make them possible!

AGM & Getting Involved

Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be taking place soon, with the date to be announced shortly. We would love to welcome some new faces and encourage anyone who might like to get involved to come along. Being part of the PTA doesn't mean a big commitment. You could simply lend an hour at an event, help behind the scenes when you can or if you'd like to get more involved, take on a role on the committee. Every bit of help makes a difference.

We're really looking forward to the year ahead and all the fun & fundraising it will bring.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support

Contact PTA@st-john.oxon.sch.uk with any questions.

Attendance and Punctuality

ATTENDANCE MATTERS



Thank you to parents for getting your children into school on time so that they do not miss any learning or feel unsettled because they have arrived after routines have been established for the day.

In line with our school policies, please remember to communicate your child's absence everyday by 9am at the latest. If your child is absent and has a school lunch booked, please remember to cancel their lunch via SchoolGrid. This saves on wasted food and an unnecessary charge.

Reporting your child as absent: As a school we have a duty of care to safeguard all our children. Ensuring children attend school regularly is part of the safeguarding duty for both school and parents and absences **MUST** be recorded in registers with reasons for the child not attending each day.

Please can we politely remind parents that you must contact the school and notify us of your child's absence before the school day starts. Lateness is recorded from 8.45am when registers are taken.

Any child absent without a valid reason provided by parents or carers by 9.15am has to be marked as an unauthorised absence. The Local Authority monitor the school registers and if you are not reporting your child's absence this could result in families being referred to the Attendance Team as your child is then classed as 'Missing Education'.

This is why it is so important we are notified on each and every morning of absence please.

We do not authorise family holidays in term time, long weekends, or special visits/trips/half days for example.

DIARY DATES

Term Dates for 2026-2027

Term 1

Wednesday 2nd September to Wednesday 21st October 2026

Term 2

Monday 2nd November to Friday 18th December 2026

Term 3

Tuesday 5th January to Friday 12th February 2027

Term 4

Monday 22nd February to Thursday 25th March 2027

Term 5

Monday 12th April to Friday 28th May 2027

Term 6

Monday 7th June to Tuesday 20th July 2027

INSET Days: Tuesday 1st September 2026, Thursday 22nd & Friday 23rd October 2026, Monday 4th January 2027, Wednesday 21st July 2027

May Day Bank Holiday (school closed): Monday 3rd May 2027

Term Dates for 2027-2028

Term 1

Tuesday 7th September to Wednesday 20th October 2027

Term 2

We may add to the following dates as school and community events are confirmed.

Monday 7th September: Year 5 Brass Lessons start

Thursday 10th September: Year 5 Swimming Lessons start

W/C Monday 14th September: Year 6 PGL Residential

Monday 21st September: After School Clubs start for 4 weeks

Thursday 24th September: Year 4 Visit to Cogges Farm

Friday 25th September: Year 3 Visit to Buscot and Coleshill

Monday 28th September: Year 6 Visit to Junior Citizens

Monday 28th September: Reception Harvest Festival

Tuesday 29th September: Year 5 & 6 Harvest Festival

Wednesday 30th September: Year 3 & 4 Harvest Festival

Thursday 1st October: Year 1 & 2 Harvest Festival

Friday 2nd October AM: Harvest Festival for Morning and All Day Cherries

Friday 2nd October PM: Harvest Festival for PM Cherries

Friday 9th October: World Mental Health Day

W/C Monday 12th October : Year 6 Bikeability

Wednesday 21st October: Non-uniform day for Sobell House 50th anniversary Pot of Gold Day

Thursday 22nd October: INSET Day

Friday 23rd October: INSET Day

Monday 1st November to Tuesday 21st December 2027

Term 3

Wednesday 5th January to Friday 11th February 2028

Term 4

Monday 21st February to Friday 7th April 2028

Term 5

Monday 24th April to Friday 26th May 2028

Term 6

Monday 5th June to Thursday 20th July 2028

INSET Days: Friday 3rd September 2027, Monday 6th September 2027, Thursday 21st & Friday 22nd October 2027, Friday 21st July 2028

May Day Bank Holiday (school closed): Monday 1st May 2028

Monday 26th to Friday 30th October – Half Term holiday

Monday 2nd November: Back to School

Monday 9th November: After School Clubs start for 4 weeks

Tuesday 10th November 3.30pm to 5.30pm: Parents Evening

Wednesday 11th November: Remembrance Walks

Thursday 12th November 3.30pm to 7.30pm: Parents Evening

W/C 16th November: Anti-bullying Week – Break the Silence

Monday 16th November: Individual and sibling photographs

Monday 16th November: Odd Sock Day

Wednesday 18th to Monday 23rd November: Scholastic Book Fair

W/C 23rd November: Parliament Week

Wednesday 2nd December: Reception Visit to Chipping Norton Pantomime

Friday 4th December: Flu Immunisations

Tuesday 8th December: Travelling Pantomime

Wednesday 9th December: Oak Class Christmas Play

Thursday 10th December: Beech Class Christmas Play

Friday 11th December: Cherry Nursery Christmas Songs

Tuesday 15th December: Year 1 & 2 Christmas Play

Wednesday 16th December: Year 1 & 2 Christmas Play

Thursday 17th December: Christmas Dinner

Friday 18th December: End of Term - School Finishes at 1.30pm