

Friday 24th April 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

This week, I have been predominantly at St Nicolas School, due to the Grittleton House trip and it has been really good to spend some more time focused in one school, allowing me to see the high-quality teaching and learning that is going on every day and the positive atmosphere around the school. I was particularly impressed in my assembly yesterday with the wind turbines created by Year 6 children, which certainly caused a wow moment for the whole school.

Non-School Uniform Next Friday

With the international evening taking place next Friday, we are asking children in both schools to come to school in an outfit that represents a country of their choice. This could be a traditional outfit representing a particular culture, a coloured T-shirt or a football shirt. This will enable us to start off our celebration of our federation's diverse culture in style.

Children in Reception Year are out on a trip next Friday and so are welcome to wear a top representing a country of their choice, but they will still need to wear long trousers/leggings and wellies please.

International Evening – Friday 1st May 6.30pm in St Nicolas School Hall

The International Evening for families of St John's and St Nic's is planned on Friday May 1st at 6:30pm in St Nic's School Hall.

Please join us in celebrating St John's and St Nic's rich cultures with an International Day and Evening. Joining our cultures together to create an eventful evening for the children and our school community. We'll be coming together to share food and fun, creating a wonderful evening for everyone.

EVENING SHARED SUPPER:

In the evening families have an opportunity to celebrate with a shared supper (potluck); all the families who attend the event will bring a dish that reflects your country of origin, or a dish that you enjoyed on a favourite holiday! Our lovely volunteers will be collecting all the food upon your arrival and issuing each member of your family with a ticket. You'll need to hand your ticket-in to enjoy the buffet so hold onto it!

Not sure how much to bring? It's best to make sure the meal you bring is at least large enough to feed the members of your own household - we want to make sure there's enough for everyone. Please bring your own plates, utensils, and drinks.

It's very important that you include AN INGREDIENTS LIST with the meal you bring to help anyone who may have dietary requirements or allergies.
NO NUTS PLEASE.

PERFORMANCE:

All performance slots are filled. Thanks for signing up. There will be a number of exciting performances on the evening, celebrating our rich and varied culture. We are really looking forward to celebrating this special day with you all.

Friends of St John's and St Nic's.

Mobile Phones and Social Media

There has been a lot of talk in recent weeks about the effects of mobile phones and social media on children. This week, the government have indicated that there will be a complete ban on mobile phones in school and I believe this to be good news. Over the coming months, I think that it is very likely that there will be a ban announced on social media usage for children.

There has been a lot of research on the dangers of too much screen time on children, alongside clear indications that primary children are not emotionally ready for using social media. We would ask parents in both schools to consider the following:

- Does your child have too much screen time? For our youngest children, there is some very good advice on the [Best Start in Life](#) website around this.
- If you are considering buying your child a mobile phone, we would ask you to reconsider. There is a lot of peer pressure from children themselves to persuade parents to do this. However, Smart phones can be addictive for children and we would advise against primary children having them.
- If your child currently has access to social media, such as WhatsApp, TikTok or Snapchat it would be worth considering reducing the time that they spend on this as well as keeping a very close check on their usage. We have often found that social media usage can lead to difficult behaviour such as cyber-bullying, which is then brought into school. We would advise against children using these platforms.

Grittleton House

It sounds as though our Year 5 children and the accompanying staff have had a lovely time at Grittleton House this week. Thank you to all of the staff for your hard work and making the trip so positive for the children.

Year 6 Parent Meeting – Osmington Bay and SATs

Last night, I held a parent information meeting on the Year 6 SATs tests and teacher assessments, as well as the residential visit to Osmington Bay in June. I understand that some people were unable to get into the meeting and I apologise for this. The PowerPoint presentations have now been put onto the school website. The Osmington Bay presentation can be accessed [here](#) and the SATs presentation can be accessed [here](#). A letter will be sent out today with the full information about the Osmington Bay visit, including a kit list and medical form for completion by Friday 1st May.

Suncream

Now that the weather is warming up, please can we ask that St John's children have suncream applied before they come to school. We cannot re-apply suncream to the children throughout the

day so please do not send your child to school with their own. Please could St John's children also bring a clearly named sun hat to school. No sunglasses please.

St John's After School Club children can send in a small named bottle of suncream which can be left with the ASC team.

Rail Safety Video

We have been sent a safety video by Network Rail, which we shared today with St John's children and will be sharing next week with our children at St Nicolas School. With St Nicolas School in particular so close to the railway line, it is important for our children to understand the importance of rail safety.

School Age Language Development Workshops for Parents

Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust are offering two online workshops on supporting the communication and language development of school age children.

Parents/ carers can register to attend these workshops by using the link below:

<https://www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/advice/communication-and-hearing/school-age-language-development-workshops>

Help for Personal Finances

- *Take control of your finances*
- *Create your own personal budget*
- *Learn how to live to your budget*
- *Transform your financial well-being*
- *Free course with on-site parking*

Newbury Baptist Church
Wednesdays from 7-9pm
May 13th, 20th and June 3rd

Register via QR code, or call
David Clark on 07803 838917



**Don't miss
money coaching**

capuk.org/trymoneycoaching

Attendance

Congratulations to Cherry Class at St John's with 97.8% attendance and 5N at St Nic's with 98.9% attendance. Both classes have won our attendance aardvarks for this week.

Attendance at each school last week was as follows:

- St John's: 95.5%
- St Nic's 97.1%

Across the two schools, there were 33 late marks last week. Every minute that a child is late can impact on their learning. Please ensure your child is in school, on time, each day.

Writer of the Week

Well done to Vira in Year 4, who was this week's writer of the week. The inspiration for next week's writer of the week is below:



Phonics Books for the Week

Reception: [https://parents.fft.org.uk/viewer/?pdf=S22 Bells and Buds&d=Bells%20and%20Buds](https://parents.fft.org.uk/viewer/?pdf=S22_Bells_and_Buds&d=Bells%20and%20Buds)
<https://vimeo.com/692012765/c5b29b3ffc>

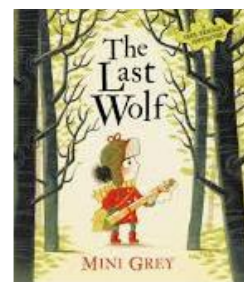
Year 1:

[https://parents.fft.org.uk/viewer/?pdf=S58 Warm Milk with Honey&d=Warm%20Milk%20with%20Honey](https://parents.fft.org.uk/viewer/?pdf=S58_Warm_Milk_with_Honey&d=Warm%20Milk%20with%20Honey)
<https://vimeo.com/731076581/888eb7e01c>

Year 2: <https://parents.fft.org.uk/viewer/?pdf=Lost&d=Lost>

Drawing Club

Drawing Club is a way of igniting joy and a love of stories with the early years and follows Greg Bottrell's beliefs and passions. Your child will be using their imagination to create new characters, settings, and events for this story. They will be adding marks, codes, labels, and messages to their work and realising that they are writers! Each week we will choose a different story or an animation, this week our animation is:



They will also be learning some exciting new vocabulary with actions. This week's vocabulary list is:

Seize; Skulk; Glide; Swoop; Meander; Rap; Snug; Slurped

See if they can teach you the actions!

Upcoming Dates

Friday 1st May:

Early Years Trip to Highclere

Friday 1st May 6.30pm:

International Evening

Monday 4th May:

Bank Holiday – no school

Week beginning 11th May:

Year 6 SATs Week

Yours sincerely,

Keith Harvey

Executive Headteacher