

Friday 4th September 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back to what I hope will be a very positive and productive school year. I hope that you have all enjoyed what has been a lovely summer. It was lovely to see the children back in both schools yesterday. They had a really good first day back and behaviour across both schools was excellent.

Today's update includes information about the Friends of St John's and St Nic's September fun day, attendance, as well as general information for the term and key dates. There is also information about some staffing opportunities that are available.

September Fun Day

As the Summer Fair was unable to take place, there will be a September fun day at St Nicolas School on Saturday 19th September from 2pm until 4pm. As part of the event, there will be a number of stalls, as well as food and ice creams available to buy. There will be some performances from children and a disco available. We hope that everyone across our two schools will be able to come along and enjoy the event and would be grateful for anyone that is available to volunteer to help out.

Staff Vacancies

We currently have a part-time teaching assistant vacancy at St John's (3 days per week). If you are interested in this role or know of someone else that might be, please visit our school website for information and an application form: <https://www.stjohnandstnicolasschools.org.uk/vacancies/>

There is also a vacancy for a member of lunchtime staff at St Nicolas School. If you are interested in this, the details and application form are also on our website.

Attendance

Attendance at school is the single most important factor in children achieving well. Without good attendance in school, children miss key learning and are not able to make the progress that they are capable of.

Alongside this, arriving at school, on time, is also essential. If children arrive even a minute late for school, it can have a huge impact on their day, as they will be playing catch up from the start.

Please ensure that your child arrives in school, on time, every day for school.

Our attendance at both schools last year was lower than we would have liked, with attendance at 94.2% at St John's and 95.0% at St Nic's. This year, we would like to target 96% attendance in both schools. This is a challenging target and means that there will be a large amount of focus on whole school and individual children's attendance. I believe that this figure is achievable, but it will mean

that tough decisions will need to be made in terms of whether absence from school can be authorised.

In particular, no time out of school will be authorised for any child except in very exceptional circumstances. For example, we have had parents asking to take children out of school to another country for weddings and funerals. Whilst we will authorise the funeral or wedding and 2 days for travel, we will not be able to authorise anything beyond this. Additionally, we are very aware that some families have requested leave for events such as these, which often tie in with the beginning or end of school holidays. In these circumstances, we will be asking for evidence of the event before authorising any time.

Reading Books

Please be aware that St John's will not be sending any reading books home until teachers have completed their assessments and can ensure children are reading the correctly matched books. We anticipate that this will be no longer than a couple of weeks.

Doodle Maths

We would like to let you know about a change to our use of Doodle Maths across the federation this year. Going forward, Doodle Maths will now be used with children in years 2, 3 and 4 and children in other year groups will no longer have access to this resource. Our aim in doing this will be to use the programme to identify and address any gaps in children's mathematical understanding as early as possible, helping to build strong foundations as they progress through the school.

Children in Years 5 and 6 will continue to receive regular maths homework, but this will take a different form. We are currently finalising the details of this and will provide further information once the new arrangements are confirmed.

New Doodle Maths logins will be given to children over the next few days, where applicable, so please look out for these.

We appreciate that many children have enjoyed using Doodle Maths and that it has been a useful way for families to support maths learning at home. If you have found Doodle Maths particularly useful, you are still able to sign up for an individual account for your child so that they can continue to use the programme at home. I believe the cost for this is around £7.99 per month for a subscription.

We would also like to reassure children who completed the Doodle Maths Summer Challenge that they will still receive their well-earned badges and certificates.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support with your child's learning.

Kind regards,
Mrs Gillman
Y6 Teacher and Maths Lead

New Gates - St Nicolas

You may have noticed that new electronic gates are now in operation at St Nicolas School. These will provide a higher level of security for our children and we are really pleased that we have been able to put these in place.

During school hours, the gates will be locked. If you need to access the school site, we would ask that you use the pedestrian gate to avoid any vehicle accidents. Simply press the call button and office staff will be able to let you in.

After school hours, for example with after school club, the gates will be shut. You should ring the After School Club phone number when approaching the school and a member of after school club staff will let you in.

Breaktime Snacks – St Nicolas

If you would like your child to have a snack at breaktime at St Nic's, we would ask that you do not send in chocolate, crisps or sweets. Ideal snacks at break time would be a piece of fruit, plain popcorn or a healthier cereal bar.

Dates for the Coming Term

Below is a list of the key dates that we are currently aware of for the Autumn Term:

Monday 7th September 2026:	Rose class Half Day and KS1 Meet the teacher 8.45am
Tuesday 8th September 2026:	Daisy Ccass Half Day
Wednesday 9th September 2026:	Rose class in half day plus lunch
Thursday 10th September 2026:	Daisy class in half day plus lunch
Friday 11th September 2026:	All EYFS children in for full day
29th Sept to 5th Oct 2026:	Book Fair
Wednesday 30 th September 2026:	St John's Harvest Service 9am
Wednesday 7th October 2026:	St Nic's Harvest Service 2pm
Friday 9th October 2026:	Phonics talks to parents
Thursday 22nd October 2026:	Year 2 Great Fire of London Workshop
Friday 23rd Oct to Sunday 1st Nov 2026:	Half Term
Monday 2nd November 2026:	Start of Autumn Term 2
WB 9th November 2026:	Year 6 early mock SATs
WB 16th November 2026:	Year 1 and 2 Share and Celebrate
WB 23rd November 2026:	KS2 Share and Celebrate
WB 23rd November 2026:	Assessment Week
WB 1st December 2026:	Parents' Evenings days tbc
Wednesday 3rd December 2026:	Foundation Stage Nativity 9.30am
Thursday 3rd December 2026:	Foundation Stage Nativity 9.30am
Tuesday 8th December 2026:	Year 1 Nativity 2pm
Tuesday 8th December 2026:	Year 4 Play 5.30pm
Wednesday 9th December 2026:	Year 1 Nativity 6pm/Year 4 Play 6pm
Thursday 10th December 2026:	St John's Christmas Lunch
Friday 11th December 2026:	St Nic's Christmas Lunch
Tuesday 15th December 2026:	St John's Christmas Service
Wednesday 16th December 2026:	St Nic's Christmas Service
Friday 19th December 2026:	1.15pm/1.30pm End of Term
Monday 4th January 2027:	INSET Day
Tuesday 5th January 2027:	Start of Spring 1

Mosque Open Day



West Berkshire Muslim Centre

Visit My Mosque

**Saturday
19 September 2026**
10:00AM - 02:00 PM

Riverside Community Centre, 1st Floor
Rosemoore Gardens, RG14 2FG
Newbury

www.wbmc.org.uk

Girls' Football Camp



WEST BERKSHIRE

GIRLS FOOTBALL CAMP

**MONDAY 26TH OCTOBER TO
WEDNESDAY 28TH OCTOBER. 9AM - 3PM.**

YOUTH AGE
Ages 5 (yr 1) - 12 (yr 6)

Venue: Park House School
Andover Road, Newbury, RG14 6NQ

PRICE:
£23 PER DAY
£65 FOR 3 DAYS
Sibling discounts available

Early-Bird Discount:
Book by 6th September
Get £5 off with code
OTN064

Book by 18th October to secure your place,
Book Now: west-berks-football-camp.classforkids.io



Yours sincerely,

Keith Harvey
Executive Headteacher