

Friday 11th September 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

With the arrival of our new Reception children, this week has been full of joy at St John's. It is always so lovely to see our new children eager to start their time in school and this year group has settled particularly well. Across both schools, the children are calm and working hard, already and I have been very impressed with their focus.

This week's update is a bumper one, with lots of information included. Hopefully, you will find it useful.

September Fun Day

The September Fun Day next Saturday is fast approaching and we look forward to welcoming families from both schools on the St Nicolas School playground from 2-4pm. There will be a number of stalls, as well as food and ice creams available to buy, with performances from children and a disco available. We would be very grateful for anyone that is available to volunteer to help out.

SIAMS Inspection

A reminder that the SIAMS inspection for St Nicolas School will be happening on Wednesday 16th September. The day should not be any different to normal, but parents coming into school may see the inspector at some point during the day.

Staff News

Miss Knight, who has been at St John's for over 11 years will be sadly leaving us in early October to take up a new role. Miss Knight has worked in several different roles over the years, but most recently has been our ELSA as well as working in breakfast club. We will be sad to lose her and over the coming weeks, we will be looking at how best to replace her ELSA role. Please see below for information about the breakfast club position.

Staff Vacancies

Applications for our teaching assistant and lunchtime controller roles close this coming Wednesday. If you would like to apply for one of these roles, please do so using the application form available on our website: <https://www.stjohnandstnicolasschools.org.uk/vacancies/>

As mentioned above, we have a 5-day-per-week position available in our breakfast club at St John's, from early October. If you are interested in this role, the information about hours, job description and an application form are available on our website.

Please note that we can only accept fully completed application forms for roles in schools. We are unable to accept CVs. This is due to safer recruitment practice.

Uniform

School uniform is a really important tool to support school identity and good behaviour and discipline. Our uniform policy is very clear, but I want to take the opportunity to remind parents of some key areas for focus:

- Children should not wear nail varnish to school.
- P.E. kits should only be worn in school on the day of P.E. lessons – if children have a before or after school sports club, the expectation is that they would wear their school uniform during the day.
- Children may wear shoes or trainers to school but these should be black.
- Long hair (hair longer than shoulder length) should be tied back and not cover children's eyes.
- If children have pierced ears, they may wear stud earrings (hoops and other styles are not allowed). These should be removed or covered for P.E. lessons.
- If religious necklaces are worn, these should be worn under school uniform (not on display) and must be removed for P.E. or swimming lessons.

Federation Award

This term, we will be introducing a federation award to the children, which will normally be aimed at children in Years 2, 4 and 6. Because it will be the first opportunity that children have had to participate, for this year only, we will allow children in all year groups from Year 2 to 6 to take part.

The purpose of the award is to encourage children to aspire to the federation vision with awards at three potential times during children's time at school – Year 2 (Bronze), Year 4 (Silver) and Year 6 (Gold). Children will receive badges to wear when they have achieved the award and these will be a positive sign of achievement – they will be awarded in celebration assemblies.

For this year, children in Years 2 and 3 and enter the bronze award, Years 4 and 5 for the silver award and Year 6 for the gold award.

In the coming weeks, I will meet with children that are interested in taking part and a letter will be sent out to them with further details.

Celebration Worship

Each week, we join together as two schools on Zoom for our weekly celebration worship. This is an opportunity for the children to see each other and for parents to join, as well as certificates to be awarded. Every child will receive a certificate during the year, as we feel it is important to celebrate every child's achievement. When your child is due to receive a certificate, the office will let you know so that you can join the assembly. However, all parents are welcome to join each week. The Zoom joining details are as follows:

Meeting ID: 779 1392 4306

Passcode: Worship

Please remember that if you are joining the worship, you should do so without video and on mute, and that the session should not be recorded.

Book Buzz

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are excited to be offering children in Years 3–6 the opportunity to take part in Bookbuzz, a reading for pleasure programme run by BookTrust.

The programme gives every participating child the chance to choose and keep their own book from a selection of 16 fantastic titles. The books have been carefully chosen to appeal to a wide range of interests and reading abilities.

During September, the children will have the opportunity to look through the selection of books in school and choose the one they would most like to receive. Their chosen books will then be ordered and will arrive in December for the children to keep.

The cost of the programme is £3.65 per child. Children in receipt of Pupil Premium funding will receive their book free of charge.

If you would like your child to take part, please make payment via ParentPay by the 16th of September. We need to place our Bookbuzz order shortly after this date, so unfortunately, we will not be able to accept payments after the deadline.

Some families may also wish to make an additional voluntary contribution to help fund a book for another child. This is entirely optional, but if you would like to do this, there will be an option on ParentPay to make an extra donation.

We would love as many children as possible to take part and are really excited to share this opportunity with them. We think this is a lovely way to encourage reading for pleasure and help children discover new books and authors.

Kind regards,
Mrs Gibbons
Literacy Lead

Extended Day Clubs

St John's

We currently have spaces available at Breakfast Club on a Monday and Thursday.
After School Club is fully booked every day.

St Nic's

We currently have spaces available at Breakfast Club and After School Club every day.

If you would like to book any sessions, please contact finance@stjohnandstnicolasschools.org.uk

West Berkshire Foodbank

Over a number of years, we have had collection boxes for the West Berkshire Foodbank in the entrance areas to our school. Once again, this year, we will be asking parents to donate items to the Foodbank for our harvest services. However, we would encourage parents to regularly donate items, if possible, as it is very much appreciated by the Foodbank. In particular, they are looking for non-perishable food items as well as toiletries and cleaning products. Thank you for your support.

Read to the Beat – Summer Reading Challenge

I have been very impressed with the number of children that I hear have taken part in the library summer reading challenge. Ms King, Mrs Allen and I really enjoy handing out the certificates to children that have completed the challenge. If your child has participated, please encourage them to bring in their certificate so that it can be awarded to them in school.

Walk to School – Living Streets

Our schools participate in Living Streets, which aims at encouraging children to walk or cycle/scooter to school. Every Wednesday, children in all classes across both schools are asked how they have travelled to school and this is recorded. Every child who has walked or wheeled to school each week in a month will receive a badge. We are very proud that nearly 60% of our children across both school travel sustainably to school every day.

Travel Survey

We have been asked by the National Centre for Social Research to encourage parents of children in Reception, Year 1, Year 5 and Year 6 to complete their travel survey. If you would like to do this, the link for the survey is below. Our school reference number is: 122147

<https://natcen.ac.uk/ActiveSchoolTravel>

Walking to and From School

We are aware that several of our older children (Year 5 and 6) walk by themselves to and from school. We believe that this is a very positive step to supporting children to develop their independence.

If your child does walk or cycle to school by themselves, can you please ensure that they have a good understanding of the importance of road safety and are aware of how to respond if a stranger speaks with them and the importance of reporting this to you or an adult in school, if they are worried.

Writer of the Week

Our writer of the week competition will be restarting from this week for children at St Nicolas School. The stimulus for this week is below. If your child is inspired to write from this, please encourage them to do so and pass their entries to Mrs Gibbons. The writer of the week will be announced in our celebration worship on a Thursday.



Write a story about a flock of sheep who suddenly discover that eating some strange grass makes them float up into the sky.

Reading Certificates

Congratulations to Elaine C and Sanvi D in Year 5, who have both received their bronze reading certificates for 150 reads. Please remember that reads carry over and continue to build up from the previous year.

Attendance

Each week, we will be sharing the name of the class at each school with the highest attendance, as well as looking at the overall attendance at each school and the number of late marks across the federation.

Well done to Beech class at St John's with 97.3% attendance and 6N at St Nic's with 98.2%. A particular well done as well to our reception children, whose attendance has been excellent so far.

18 children have been late across both schools in the first 5 days of the school term. This is worrying at this early stage. Please ensure that your child arrives in school on time, each day.

Overall attendance for each school was as follows:

- St John's: 95.2%
- St Nic's: 94.2%

Both of these figures are below the 96% attendance target that we have set for the year, so we already have some catching up to do!

Upcoming Dates

Wednesday 16 th September:	St Nicolas School SIAMS inspection
Thursday 17 th September:	Celebration worship 10.10am
Saturday 19 th September:	September fun day

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

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

Yours sincerely,

Keith Harvey
Executive Headteacher