

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope 2026 has started well for you, despite the wet and gloomy weather! It has been a wonderfully busy few weeks in school, filled with hard work, creativity and energy. It has been great to welcome so many parents to our reading and maths cafes across the school - we've enjoyed a record parent turnout- thank you! 2026 is the National Year of Reading and alongside our daily reading lessons using fantastic books and stories, we are providing some extra opportunities for reading at AJS. We have before school reading groups running for Year 6 children led by Miss Miles, Miss Nunn and myself (the reason I'm not on gate duty on a Tuesday and Thursday!); a reading buddy volunteer listens to children read in the library every Wednesday; teachers read stories and chapters of books every afternoon and we have some different activities lined up for World Book Day in March. Our reading leaders have included some top tips to support with reading at home later on in this newsletter. Your support of your child's learning at home and during holidays really does make a positive difference.



**Safer  
Internet  
Day**

This week schools up and down the country have been marking Safer Internet Day. At AJS, our Year 5 children in particular have been engaging with a range of online safety activities. We have been working with schools in March and Chatteris and the Fenland Twenty20 organisation to create a film called 'Online Voices - Kind Choices' which will receive it's premiere this week. Children are taking part in an online safety poster competition judged by the Mayor of March and also taking part in a poetry workshop to write poems and raps about staying safe online. We will share the excellent work of our Year 5 children on Instagram and in future newsletters. There are some helpful tips for parents on the Safer Internet Centre website giving advice specifically about the use of AI.

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/>

All of our children engage in online safety learning part of our Personal Social and Health Education curriculum. The framework we use is called Natterhub which also provides a site for parents to access at home - it's really worth checking this site out if you would like support in this area - [natterhub.com](https://natterhub.com)

I'd like to wish all our families a happy haf term break.

Best wishes

Mr Fry



# ATTENDANCE



## SPRING TERM 1 2026

Message from

Mr Isley

Attendance  
Officer



Class attendance  
this half term:

Y3 USA 97.1%  
 Y3 CANADA 96.4%  
 Y4 FIJI 96%  
 Y2 EGYPT 95.4%  
 Y2 MOROCCO 95.3%  
 YR JAPAN 94.9%  
 Y6 SWEDEN 94.7%  
 Y2 KENYA 94.5%  
 Y1 FRANCE 94.3%  
 Y4 AUSTRALIA 94.3%  
 Y6 NORWAY 93.8%  
 Y1 ITALY 93.6%  
 YR CHINA 93.4%  
 Y3 JAMAICA 93.2%  
 YR INDIA 93.2%  
 Y5 CHILE 92.1%  
 Y4 NEW ZEALAND 91.3%  
 Y5 PERU 90.9%  
 Y1 SPAIN 90.5%  
 Y6 DENMARK 90.1%  
 Y5 BRAZIL 88.2%

WHOLE SCHOOL  
ATTENDANCE TARGET FOR  
THIS YEAR



95%



OVERALL SCHOOL  
ATTENDANCE THIS TERM  
**93.3%**

Sickness absence has been  
high this half term -  
hopefully we'll get back on  
track and closer to our  
target by Easter.

A young carer is a person under 18 who provides ongoing, unpaid care and support to a family member or friend with a physical/mental illness, disability, or addiction. They take on adult responsibilities—such as cooking, cleaning, or personal care. I support young carers at AJS with their attendance and wellbeing in school. There is a Young Carers Action Day on 14<sup>th</sup> March. If you are aware of AJS pupils who are currently supporting family or friends as young carers that we aren't aware of please let me know and I will be able to lend my support in school and invite them to the Action Day.

### Reporting pupil absence

If your child has vomited or has diarrhoea they must refrain from attending school for 48 hours from the last episode. Please direct any student absence by emailing

[pupilabsence@ajs.education](mailto:pupilabsence@ajs.education)

or by leaving a voicemail on **01733 202403** option 2 before 8.30am

Please state your child's name, class and the reason for their absence.

You can also notify us of your child's absence using the **Arbor app**.



Arbor

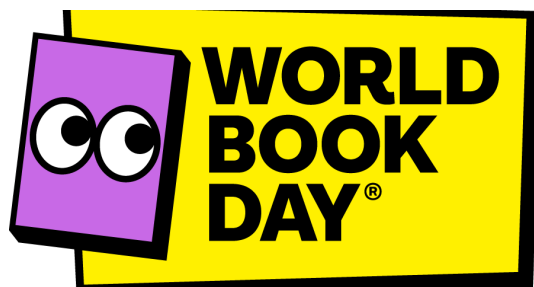
Failing to advise why your child is absent will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

These are the only 3 ways to report absence to the school.

Thank you for your co-operation.

I'M ENJOYING SPENDING  
TIME IN DIFFERENT  
CLASSES WITH WEEKLY  
ATTENDANCE ABOVE 95%!





**THURSDAY 5<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2026**

## DRESS UP AS YOUR FAVOURITE BOOK CHARACTER

All children and staff are invited to dress up as a character and wear this on the day. Please leave any character toy weapons (guns, swords etc) at home!

## AJS BOOK SWAP



**WORLD BOOK DAY COSTUME SWAP**

Need a costume for World Book Day? Friends of AJS would love it if you could all join in with our World Book Day costume exchange.

**Donation:** To donate please bring your costume to our box located inside the school reception between **Monday 9<sup>th</sup> and Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February**.

**SWAP shop:** The costumes will then be on display for you to pick in the school reception between **Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> and Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February**.

On Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February, we invite children to donate any books in good condition that they have grown out of or grown tired of. Books can be given to your child's teacher.

On Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> March at 3:10pm, all the donated books will be laid out on tables in the playground for children to choose one to take home - no cash involved!

Staff will also be donating books from home so there should be enough for every child to take a book home on the day.

Thanks for your support with this idea - only donate if possible.



All children should bring their favourite book with them on the day (this can be a library book or one from home). At various points in the day, a D.E.A.R. (Drop Everything And Read) bell will ring and children will have to stop what they are doing to read a few pages of their book (even if they are doing PE!).



# Reading at AJS

Proud to support  
The National Year  
of Reading 2026.

GO  
ALL  
IN.

## Reading at Home: Little Moments, Big Magic!

Want to boost your child's reading without turning your living room into a classroom? Great news – the best reading support is often the simplest (and the most fun!). Here are three brilliant ways you can help at home, even if you only have 10 minutes.

### 1) Read to your child (yes, even when they can read!)

When children hear a confident reader, it helps them learn what reading is supposed to sound like.

Try:

- Using different voices for characters (silly ones are encouraged!)
- Showing how your voice changes at a question mark
- Pausing at commas and full stops (like little "breathing breaks")
- Letting them hear tricky words read smoothly

Why it helps: Your child learns fluency, expression, and new vocabulary – all while enjoying a story with you.

### 2) Read with your child (teamwork makes the dream work!)

This is a great option if your child is building confidence or gets tired quickly.

Try:

- Taking turns: you read a page, they read a page
- Sharing paragraphs: you read one, they read the next
- Reading the "hard bits" for them, and letting them read the easier parts

Why it helps: Your child gets support and practice – without the pressure of doing it all alone.

### 3) Echo Reading (copycat reading – and kids LOVE it!)

Echo reading is simple, powerful, and perfect for improving fluency.

How it works:

1. You read one sentence (or part of a sentence)
2. Your child reads it back, copying your expression and pace

Keep it short – no more than one sentence at a time is best.

Why it helps: It builds confidence, improves phrasing, and helps children learn how to read smoothly and with meaning.

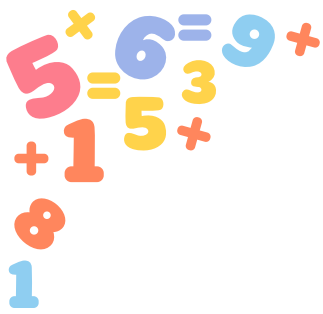
Top Tip: Keep it light!

*Reading at home should feel cosy, not stressful. If your child gets stuck:*

- Help them with the word
- Praise the effort
- Keep the story moving

*A calm, happy reader grows faster than a worried one!*

**Together we can make sure that every child at AJS loves to read!**



# Maths at AJS

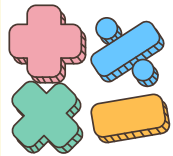
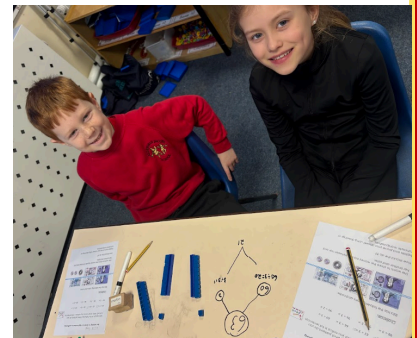


Welcome to an exciting new chapter in our school's journey! This September, we officially launched Ark MyMastery for our mathematics curriculum.

## What is 'mastery'?

The "Mastery" approach is built on **the belief that every child can succeed in maths**. Instead of rushing through topics, we take the time to dive deep. We ensure that children don't just memorise a method to get the right answer, but truly understand the why behind the math. We focus on mathematicians being about to 'understand' the maths rather than just 'do' it.

Our curriculum focuses on learning through **manipulatives** (physical resources such as counters) throughout the school to **help children to see and understand the maths**. We engage in a **talk task** each day where we develop our reasoning skills. We use our understanding to solve problems in familiar and unfamiliar contexts. We focus on praising effort.



## How can you help at home?



### Fluency of key facts

Being able to instantly recall addition and subtraction facts is important throughout school. For example, knowing number bonds to 10 in EY will help the children with column addition and subtraction later in school. In lower school, focus on recall of number bonds and addition and subtraction facts up to 20. For year 2 and above building on these and developing multiplication facts up to  $12 \times 12$  is important. Here are lots of ways to practise times tables at

home: <https://www.aldermanjacobs.cambs.sch.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=341&type=pdf>

### Small moments- big impact

Exploring day to day maths together such as calculating how much items will cost in a shop, scaling a recipe, measuring out ingredients. All these day to day encounters with maths, help to develop your child's problem solving skills.

For more ideas of how to support at home, please see the ideas for each individual year group here:

[HTTPS://WWW.ALDERMANJACOBS.CAMBS.SCH.UK/LEARNING/MATHS](https://www.aldermanjacobs.cambs.sch.uk/learning/maths)



# Healthy Schools Award



In November, AJS achieved the Healthy Schools Award. This was awarded to us for embedding into the curriculum, and throughout everyday school life, practises to support and improve healthy lifestyles, mental health, wellbeing and inclusion.

Here are just a few things the healthy schools panel were impressed by:

- the initiatives AJS provide children to take on leadership roles: Enterprise children who run the Tuck Shop, Sports Ambassadors, Play Leaders, Bistro Buddies to name but a few!
- having a fantastic PE curriculum which allows children to try different sports both within the school day, after school clubs and taking part in inter schools competitions.
- embedding cross curricular links within the curriculum in developing healthy bodies and minds and supporting national days/weeks such as wellbeing week and healthy lifestyles days.
- developing a curriculum to celebrate different cultures and identities and teaching children to understand and give respect to all.
- having a school caterer who provides balanced meals in line with food standards using a fun and varied menu (including our hand made burgers and pizzas!)

## How can parents help at home?

Encourage your child to bring in a healthy snack for break.

Encourage your child to have a school lunch. They are very healthy!

Ensure after school snacks are healthy ones.

## What should I put in a lunchbox?

Carbohydrates	Protein	Fruit and Vegetables	Dairy
Sliced bread, Ciabatta, pitta bread, bagels, baguette, wraps, chapattis, crackers  Wholemeal pasta or rice, couscous.	Eggs, meat, fish and pulses.	Try to include at least two pieces of fruit and veg.  (Carrot sticks, cucumber slices, tomatoes, grapes, apples, pears, oranges, peppers, carrots).	Cheese (babybels, cheesestrings), yoghurts, fromage frais, custard or rice pudding.

## Useful websites:

<https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/>

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/school-lunch-recipes>

<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/healthy-lifestyles/eat-better/lunch-boxes/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/the-eatwell-guide/>

<https://cambspborochildrenshealth.nhs.uk/feeding-and-eating/healthy-eating/>



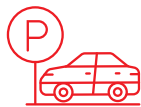
# AJS Energy Squad



The Energy Squad is a new group formed in school to think of ideas about how we can reduce our carbon emissions and develop sustainable actions in school to help care for our environment. The group is led by Mrs Smith and is made up of children from different year groups, staff and Governors. So far the Energy Squad have:

- Helped keep retain heat inside by being 'door monitors' - keeping doors closed at lunchtimes.
- Created bird feeders from recycled materials and to attract more wildlife to our garden area.
- Drawn up plans to develop a pond area on the school site working with the Froglife charity.
- Met with Sustrans (sustainable travel experts) to think about ways to increase the number of children who walk, cycle and scoot to school.

The Energy Squad certainly have 'energy for the environment' and we look forward to sharing more of their great work with all in our school community.



## Parking plea



We have received a number of complaints from local residents about inconsiderate and dangerous parking or driving on Drybread Road and neighbouring roads. The photo below was taken by a local resident.



There is real concern about the safety of people who are walking to school at drop off and pick up times as there is often not enough room to walk safely on the paths, particularly if parents also have toddlers/ babies in pushchairs. Fenland Council have been informed and we expect traffic wardens and PCSOs to be visiting over the next few weeks. We all have to work together on this issue so that everyone can access the school safely. If you are using a car to transport your child, please be considerate of others. Thank you.

The Energy Squad have been thinking about how to help this situation. One idea we hope to trial next term is a 'Walking Bus' where parents can drop children off at the top of Drybread Road with staff and volunteers then walking the children to school. We also want to trial a 'drop and go' system in the layby outside Key Stage 2 playground. The idea being that Key Stage 2 children exit their car independently without the need for parents to park up and wait on the playground with their children. We asked the Police if we could use some of their blue and white cones to put out along the road (especially where the yellow zigzags are) but this isn't allowed. If you have any other ideas to help make drop off and pick up less stressful, please do let us know.

# BEHAVIOUR BULLETIN BY MR BROWN

As Mr Fry's saying goes; "In the blink of an eye it will be July," however it has been amazing to see that as we reach the halfway point in the year we have seen so many house points awarded across the school. The children have received points throughout the school day in relation to our school rules (Ready, Respectful, Safe) and our core values (teamwork, resilience, energy, kindness). Make sure that you keep checking our Arbor app to see how many points your child has received and to see their virtual 'badges'.



Teamwork



Kindness

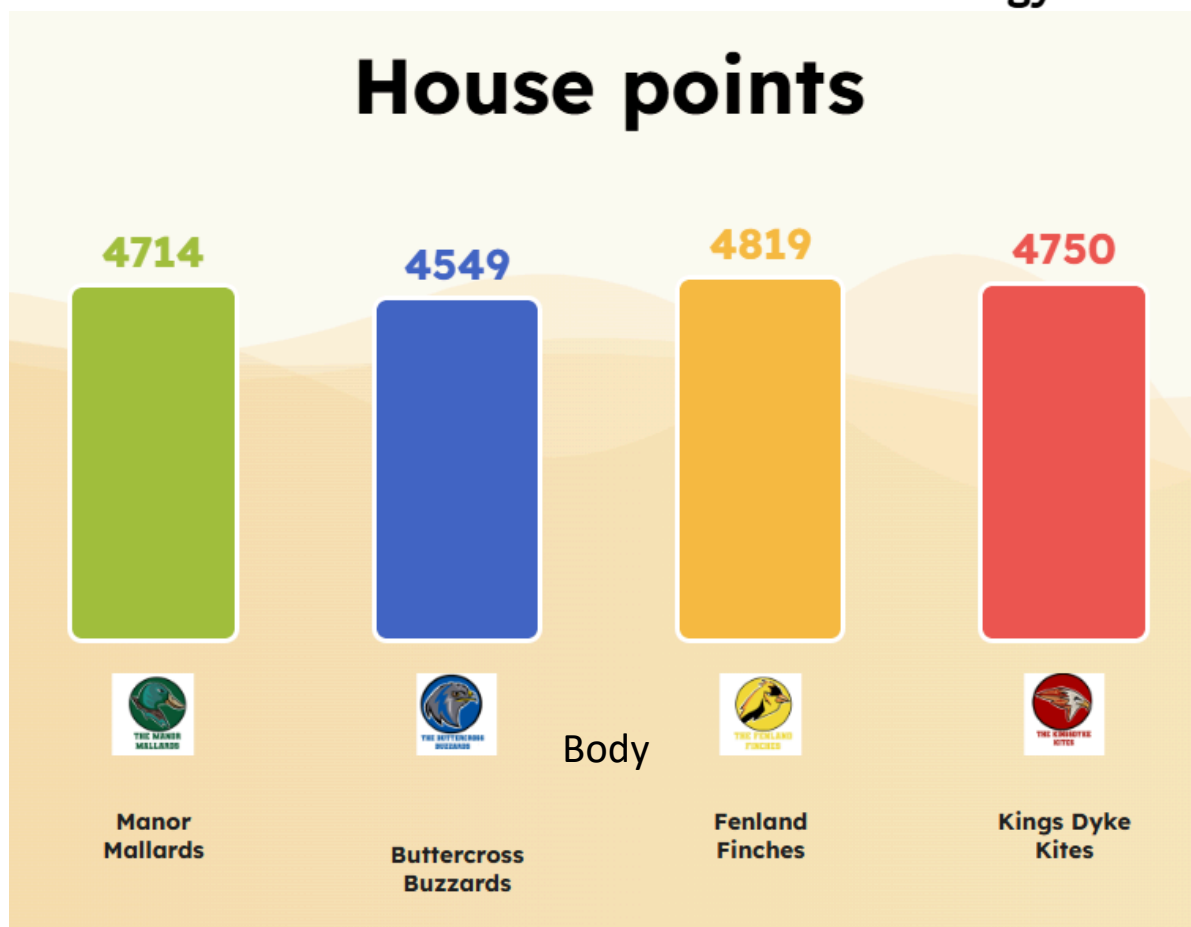


Resilience



Energy

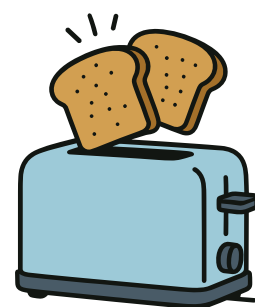
## House points



Body

## EARLY BEARS

Our Early Bears Breakfast Club moved location to the school dining hall at the start of term. The extra space in the room means that there is greater capacity for more children to attend. The club is supervised by our experienced Early Bears staff (who also work as Teaching Assistants in the school), all children are provided with breakfast and drink and there are a range of activities to keep children busy. The sessions are £4.50 per day. To use this facility please complete the registration forms which can be found [here](#) on our website.



## Lunchtime and After School Clubs - can you help?

At AJS we offer a range of superb after school sports clubs, but parents who completed their survey last year mentioned that they would like to see a wider variety of clubs on offer.

Mrs Combes runs our brilliant choir, Mr Winfield has started a STEM and Computing Club, we also have Reading Club, 'Quiet Club' (drawing and colouring) and a Gardening Club taking place during lunchtimes.

We would love to offer more clubs and we are looking for parent/grandparent volunteers who might like to share their expertise or hobby. For example, in Mr Fry's previous school a group of grandparents set up a successful knitting club! Other ideas include crafting, cooking, Lego, bird watching - the list is endless!

If you know of family and friends who might be interested in sharing their interests with a small group of children we'd love to hear from you. Please email [office@ajs.education](mailto:office@ajs.education). (Please note, all volunteers are subject to a DBS check and will receive an induction and safeguarding training.)



## LUNCH BOOKINGS

Please can we ask all parents to log onto the School Gateway and book their child's daily meal.

Did you know meals can also be cancelled on the School Gateway? If your child now wants packed lunch or is absent, you can log on and remove the meal, confirm booking and the meal will be removed. Please note, all meals must be booked or cancelled before 6am each morning.

If you have any issues with bookings, please come to the office and we will be more than happy to assist.

## LOST PROPERTY

We have a large storage unit full of lost property in our meeting room. If your child has misplaced an item of clothing, a water bottle or lunch box, please ask the office and they will open the room for you to have a rummage through the items. 99% of the items do not have a name label - if it has a name, we can usually reunite the item with its owner! Lost property will be laid out before the Valentine's disco and again on parent's evenings in March. Items not claimed will be donated to charity at the end of term.

We wish Mr Pickering well as he leaves us for a new adventure. He has worked alongside AJS staff for many years and will be missed.





# Thank You!

**From FOAJS**

**£818.97 made from  
Secret Santa**

**£208 made from  
Christmas hamper raffle**



Thursday 12th February 2026

## Friends of AJS Valentines Disco

**Disco 1:** Pre-School & Early Years 4:30pm - 5:15pm  
(1 parent / carer to stay for Pre-School children)

**Disco 2:** Y1, Y2 & Y3 5:30pm - 6:45pm

**Disco 3:** Y4, Y5 & Y6 7:00pm - 8:15pm

★ **£3 to include drink & crisps** ★

Pay on door with pre-filled slip

# Rotary **YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHER** COMPETITION



## CALLING ALL YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHERS

Express yourself by putting your photography skills to the test at the annual Rotary Young Photographer competition. (Up to the age of 17)

Visit the following link for more information  
<https://rotary-ribi.org/clubs/homepage.php?ClubID=489>

Contact [peterbeckwith.rotary@btinternet.com](mailto:peterbeckwith.rotary@btinternet.com) before 13<sup>th</sup> March

ROTARYGBL.ORG



# Rotary **YOUNG ARTIST** COMPETITION



## CALLING ALL YOUNG ARTISTS

Express yourself and share your creative talents by taking part in the annual Rotary Young Artist competition. (Up to the age of 17)

Visit the following link for more information  
<https://rotary-ribi.org/clubs/homepage.php?ClubID=489>

Contact [peterbeckwith.rotary@btinternet.com](mailto:peterbeckwith.rotary@btinternet.com) before 13<sup>th</sup> March



## WorkWell Fenland getting you well for work

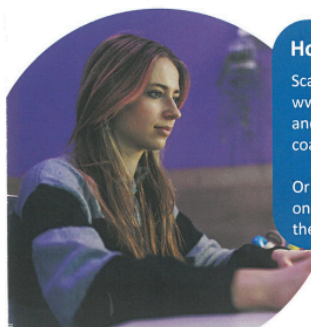
WorkWell Fenland is a free service for when you're struggling to find or retain a job due to physical or mental health.

You do not need to be on benefits to access the service. Taking part in the programme is completely voluntary and has no impact on benefits.

You will be assigned a coach who will help you identify what support you need and help you to access it.

### You are eligible for WorkWell if:

- You are aged 16 or older
- You have the right to work in the UK
- You live in, or are registered with a GP or Jobcentre Plus in Fenland
- You have a health-related issue that is making it difficult to get work or stay in a job (whether you are struggling with physical or mental wellbeing).



### How to access WorkWell Fenland

Scan the QR code to visit [www.fenland.gov.uk/WorkWell](http://www.fenland.gov.uk/WorkWell) and arrange for a WorkWell Fenland coach to get in touch.

Or call Fenland District Council on 01354 654321 and ask for the WorkWell Fenland team.



Get started today and access free, personalised support.

# Diary Dates

## February

Thursday 12th - Y1 Reading Cafe 2-3pm  
Thursday 12th - FOAJS Valentines Disco  
Friday 13th - Last Day of Spring Term 1  
Monday 23rd - Start of Spring Term 2  
Wednesday 25th - EY's/Year 6 Height and Weight Check

## March

Thursday 5th - World Book Day  
Tuesday 10th - Pre School Reading Cafe 2-2.45pm  
Wednesday 11th- Y6 and Whole School Class Photos  
Friday 13th - Pre School Reading Cafe 2-2.45pm  
Tuesday 17th - EY's Vision Screening Checks  
Tuesday 17th - Parents Evening  
Wednesday 18th - Parents Evening  
Thursday 19th - Y2 Woburn Safari Trip  
Monday 23rd - Wednesday 25th - Grafham Residential  
Friday 27th - FOAJS Easter Disco  
Friday 27th - Last Day of Spring Term 2

## April

Monday 13th - Start of Summer Term 1  
Tuesday 14th - Year 1 Sacrewell Trip  
Tuesday 14th - Year 4 Maths Cafe

### School Term Dates 2025/2026

**Spring Term 1:** Tues 6th Jan - Fri 13th Feb  
**Half Term:** Mon 16th Feb - Fri 20th Feb  
**Spring Term 2:** Mon 23rd Feb - Fri 27th March  
**Half Term:** Mon 30th March- Fri 10th April  
**Summer Term 1:** Mon 13th April- Fri 22nd May  
**Half Term:** Mon 25th May - Fri 29th May  
**Summer Term 2:** Mon 1st June - Fri 17th July

### Professional Days

**The school will be closed to pupils on the following day:**

Monday 20th July