

Friday 18th September 2026

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St John's Church of England Primary School

Weekly News

Headteacher's Message:

Dear Parents/Carers

As we complete another busy week, I would like to thank all of our children for contributing to the calm and purposeful environment that continues to be a strength of our school. It has been wonderful to see pupils settling quickly into routines and approaching their learning with such positive attitudes.

A special mention must go to Windsor Class, who have completed their first full week. They have worked incredibly hard, shown great enthusiasm and have made an excellent start to the year.

I would also like to thank Mr Collins for his work with Year 6 this term. The children have responded brilliantly and have already made a very positive impression as role models around the school. We are delighted to welcome Mr Foster back on Monday following his paternity leave.

Attendance remains a key priority for us. Being in school every day has a significant impact on children's learning, confidence and progress. We have noticed that attendance on Fridays is often lower than at other points in the week. We would encourage families to consider whether children are genuinely unwell or perhaps simply feeling tired at the end of a busy week. While we all feel tired from time to time, it is important that children attend school whenever they are well enough to do so, as every day of learning counts. Thank you for your continued support in helping us ensure that children arrive at school regularly and ready to learn.

Kind Regards

Olly Priestley - Headteacher

Certificate Winners:

Attenborough - Charley

Mandela - Hudson

McCartney - Seli

Pankhurst - Sam

Simmonds - Mia

Rashford - Madison

Medal- James

Attendance

Punctuality

Arriving 5 minutes late every day adds up to over 3 days lost each year

Arriving 15 minutes late every day adds up to 2 weeks absence a year

Arriving 30 minutes late every adds up to 19 days absence a year

Please can all families ensure the children arrive at school promptly.

Safeguarding/Well being:

Excessive screen time can have a significant impact on children's health, wellbeing and development. Spending long periods on phones, tablets, computers or gaming devices can affect sleep quality, reduce physical activity and limit opportunities for face-to-face social interaction. It may also make it harder for children to concentrate, manage emotions and engage fully in learning. While technology can be a valuable educational tool when used appropriately, balance is essential. We encourage families to set clear screen-time limits, promote regular breaks and prioritise activities such as reading, outdoor play, exercise and family conversations to support healthy childhood development.

Sharing joy and hope in the community

Weekly House Point Winner: ST DAVID

Forms sent home

There have been a number of forms sent home this term. Thank you to everyone who has already completed and returned them. It is crucial that all the information we hold about your child is up-to-date-**please return any forms you may have by Wednesday 23rd September.**

Smoking and vaping on school premises

Smoking and vaping on school premises, including the car park, is completely prohibited, with no exception. Please help us promote a safe environment for all our children, staff and visitors.

Absence in Term Time

The Government has said schools may **NOT** grant **ANY** leave of absence during term time unless there are **EXCEPTIONAL** circumstances. If the school refuses your request and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an **unauthorised absence** and noted on your child's attendance record. Persistent unauthorised absence may result in a penalty fine. **Please complete and return absence requests prior to making any bookings and at least four weeks before the anticipated leave date.** If there are exceptional circumstances, such as a funeral, please complete and return the form as soon as possible please.

Unavoidable absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

Illness
Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
Days of religious observance
Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces
External examinations
When Traveller children go on the road with their parents

Other examples of absence from school that cannot be authorised:

Shopping
Minding the house
Birthdays
Resting after a late night
Relatives visiting or visiting relatives
Holidays being cheaper during term time

The law allows schools to consider individual requests to authorise a future avoidable absence. However before the school can authorise any such requests, they must satisfy themselves that there are exceptional circumstances which justify such a decision. It is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient information/evidence in order to establish this fact. The request for leave must come from a parent with whom the child normally resides

In the case of unexpected extended absence, it is advisable that the parent fully informs the school as to the reasons. Please contact the headteacher if you wish to discuss this issue.

The law requires parents to ensure their children receive an efficient full-time education, and every minute of every day is important. Please help them not to miss any of this valuable time.

We hope that when you have read this information you will consider that your child's education is too important to allow them to miss school for avoidable reasons.

Upcoming events:

Thursday 22nd October	Photos
Thursday 22nd October 1.30	Harvest Festival in Church
26th-30th October	Half Term
9th-11th November	Parent consultations-information to follow
Monday 30th November	School closed for staff training
Thursday 17th December 1.30	Christmas service in Church
Friday 18th December	Last day of Autumn Term
Monday 4th January	School closed for staff training
Tuesday 5th January	First day of Spring Term
15th-19th February	Half Term
Thursday 4th March	World Book Day
8th-10th March	Parent consultations-information to follow
18th March 1.30	Easter Service in Church
25th March	Last day of Spring Term
12th April	First day of Summer Term
26th/27 th April	Year 3 and 4 Residential Visit
3 rd May	Bank Holiday
31st May-4th June	Half term
Week beginning 10 th May	Y6 National Tests
8 th June	Sports Day
30th June/1st July	Y6 Transition day to Courtfields
Thursday 1 st July	Move up day
Friday 2 nd July	School closed for staff training
5 th -7 th July	Y5 and 6 Residential Visit
Friday 23 rd July	Last day of Summer Term

Term dates and INSET days for the 2026-27 academic year are now on the school website under the News and Events tab.

Secondary School Admissions-Advice from Somerset Council

The online portal for applications for children to start secondary school in September 2027, is now OPEN. The closing date is 31 October 2026.

The Secondary School Admissions Guide is now live on the website Secondary admissions guide ([somerset.gov.uk](https://www.somerset.gov.uk)) We strongly encourage you to read this before making your application.

We recommend you always include your catchment school as one of your preferences. If you don't and it becomes oversubscribed, we can't guarantee your child a place there and if you don't get offered one of the schools you have chosen, your child might be offered a school further away with no travel assistance.

A few tips before you start;

1. If you previously applied for a child starting or transferring school in 2017 or earlier you will need to re-register on the portal as a new system was introduced at this time.
 2. If you do not receive your registration or forgotten password email please check your junk mail. If you still do not received an email please contact schooladmissions@somerset.gov.uk As with any IT system there is always the potential for unforeseen issues so if you experience any problems, please let us know and we'll look into it as quickly as we can.
- [Starting at a secondary or upper school in September](#)

ADMISSION INFORMATION FOR JOINING RECEPTION IN SEPTEMBER 2027 WILL BE AVAILABLE ON 28TH SEPTEMBER.

Our St John's Reading Challenge!

We are excited to introduce our **School Reading Challenge** to new families who have joined us this academic year. At St John's, we encourage all children to read at home to an adult **at least 4 times a week**. Every read counts towards their challenge!

When children reach **25 reads in a half term**, they will be awarded a **Reading Challenge Badge**. Throughout the year, children enthusiastically collect their badges and those who complete the challenge **every half term** will become an **Ultimate Reading Champion!** 🏆 There will be a special reward to celebrate their fantastic commitment and efforts to reading across the year.

Today, our Ultimate Reading Champions from the last academic year have been informed of their special treat. Please do sign the slip to give permission for your child to participate in the treat.

Other reading news!

A huge **well done** to all our pupils who completed the **Library Summer Reading Challenge**. It was wonderful to celebrate their achievements in our **Praising Assembly last week**. Keep reading, keep enjoying books and keep being brilliant readers! 📖 🌟



Previous attachment



Helping Your Child Become a Stronger Reader

Simple, research-based ways to support literacy at home

You don't need to be a reading teacher to help your child **grow** as a reader.
Small, consistent moments at home can make a big difference!

Readers
do brighter things!



WORD READING

Help your child connect sounds with letters.

- Practice the letter-sound and spelling patterns your child is learning at school.
- Encourage your child to look carefully at all the letters in a word.
- Practice blending sounds together to read unfamiliar words.
- Practice breaking spoken words into individual sounds to support spelling.

When your child gets stuck, try:

- "Look carefully at the word."
- "What sounds do these letters represent?"
- "Blend the sounds together."
- "How would the sentence."

Try not to encourage guessing from the picture or the first letter. Pictures are wonderful for discussing a story, but developing readers need practice reading the words on the page.

FLUENCY

Accurate reading comes first. Smooth reading grows with practice.

- Have your child reread familiar books or short passages.
- Read a sentence aloud and have your child read it after you.
- Encourage appropriate phrasing and expression.
- Focus on accuracy and understanding—not speed alone.

VOCABULARY & KNOWLEDGE

The more children know about the world, the more they can understand when they read.

- Read aloud books that are more challenging than your child can read independently.
- Explain interesting new words during everyday conversations.
- Talk about science, nature, history, places, people, and experiences.
- Visit libraries, museums, parks, and other places that spark conversation and curiosity.

COMPREHENSION

Reading is about understanding—not just saying the words.

- Before reading, talk about what your child already knows about the topic.
- While reading, pause occasionally to wonder, predict, or clarify.
- After reading, try questions such as:
 - "What happened?"
 - "Why do you think that happened?"
 - "What did you learn?"
 - "What was your favorite part? Why?"

KEEP READING ALoud!

Even when children begin reading on their own, keep reading to them.

Reading aloud gives children access to richer vocabulary, more complex language, new knowledge, and wonderful stories that may be beyond what they can currently read independently.

HOW 10 MINUTES?

1 **3 minutes**
Practice sounds, words, or spelling patterns being taught at school.

→

2 **4 minutes**
Have your child read something at an appropriate level.

→

3 **3 minutes**
Read aloud to your child and talk about what you read.

Stronger Readers Brighter Tomorrows



Most importantly...
Make reading a positive experience.

Notice effort. Celebrate progress. Talk about books. Be curious together.

Read
Learn
Grow
Belong



Research base: National Reading Panel. Committee on the State of the Science of Reading. 2000. National Academy Press.

 **Embracing Literacy** 

Research informed by the Department of Education, the National Literacy Trust, and the National Literacy Trust.

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OPEN EVENTS

EVENING: 23RD SEPTEMBER 2026

MORNINGS: 24-29TH SEPTEMBER

The next exciting chapter of your child's life starts here. Join us at Court Fields School to find out more...



T: 01823 664201

E: schooloffice@courtfields.bep.ac

W: courtfields.bep.ac

OPEN EVENING

Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, parents and carers are warmly invited to our Open Evening on Wednesday 23rd September 2026, from 5.30pm to 8pm

Visit the school from 5.30pm onwards and attend allocated school presentation time

Presentations in the School Hall from Court Fields' staff and students

- ➔ 5.30pm for Beech Grove, Sampford Arundel, West Buckland and IKB
- ➔ 6.15pm for Wellesley Park, Langford Budville and Oake, Bradford & Nynehead
- ➔ 7pm for Rockwell Green and St John's
- ➔ Parents of children at schools other than those above are welcome at any of the meetings

Meet our wonderful students. Find out more about Court Fields 2026
Plan the next part of your child's journey with us.

Join us to see the school at work on Thursday 24th, Friday 25th, Monday 28th Tuesday 29th September 2026. Tours start at 9.30am, please book your place by contacting the school.

FREE WEBINARS FOR PARENTS & CARERS

Hosted by Somerset's
Mental Health
Support Team



SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING



WHEN?

18:00-19:30 8th October 2026
13:00-14:30 13th October 2026

REGISTER AT:

[canva.link/
mhstautumn
2026](https://canva.link/mhstautumn2026)

In this 90 minute workshop hosted by Somerset's Mental Health Support Team, we will...

- ✓ Learn how positive mental health supports your child's happiness, confidence and success at school and beyond.
- ✓ Recognise the early signs that your child may be struggling and understand how to respond.
- ✓ Discover practical, everyday strategies to support your child's emotional wellbeing at home.
- ✓ Find out where to access help and support for your family when it is needed.



SCAN ME

FREE WEBINARS FOR PARENTS & CARERS

Hosted by Somerset's
Mental Health
Support Team



SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S BIG FEELINGS



WHEN?

AN EMOTION COACHING
APPROACH

13:00-14:30 20th October 2026
18:00-19:30 22nd October 2026

REGISTER AT:

[canva.link/
mhstautumn
2026](https://canva.link/mhstautumn2026)

In this 90 minute workshop hosted by Somerset's Mental Health Support Team, we will explore...

- ✓ How to support your child's and teen's emotional resilience in the moment and for the future.
- ✓ Strategies that will help develop emotionally intelligent mindsets for all your family.
- ✓ A range of tools (including Emotion Coaching) to boost your child's, and your own, emotional resilience.



SCAN ME

FREE WEBINARS FOR PARENTS & CARERS

Hosted by Somerset's
Mental Health
Support Team



BOOSTING SELF-ESTEEM & RESILIENCE

HELPING YOUR CHILD
TO THRIVE



WHEN?

13:00-14:30
21st October 2026

REGISTER AT:

[canva.link/
mhstautumn
2026](https://canva.link/mhstautumn2026)

In this 90 minute workshop hosted by Somerset's Mental Health Support Team, we will explore...

- ✓ The everyday moments that build confidence and emotional strength.
- ✓ Simple ways to encourage your child's strengths, talents and interests.
- ✓ Helping children overcome negative self-talk and build a positive mindset.
- ✓ Friendships and feelings: supporting your child to navigate relationships with confidence and resilience.



SCAN ME

FREE WEBINARS FOR PARENTS & CARERS

Hosted by Somerset's
Mental Health
Support Team



HELPING YOUR CHILD & TEEN SLEEP:

TOOLS, TIPS &
TECHNIQUES



WHEN?

9:30-11:00 6th November 2026
18:00-19:30 12th November 2026

REGISTER AT:

[canva.link/
mhstautumn
2026](https://canva.link/mhstautumn2026)

In this 90 minute workshop hosted by Somerset's Mental Health Support Team, we will...

- ✓ Learn why sleep is so important for wellbeing, mood and learning.
- ✓ Understand common sleep challenges and what gets in the way.
- ✓ Discover simple, evidence-based tips to improve sleep habits.
- ✓ Help your child feel happier, healthier and ready to reach their potential.



SCAN ME