NEWSLETTER

ASPIRE - ACHIEVE - THRIVE - ENJOY

12th September 2025

Dear Parents/Carers

Thank you to those parents who donated items for our playground imagination zone at the donation station this week. If there are any other items you wish to donate, please drop them into reception for the attention of Mr Jenkins.

This week we had our first Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 Aspire celebration assemblies. Some teachers found it hard to pick just one winner as they have been so impressed with how the children are doing so far this year. We are making a slight change to our Aspire Tea this year which winners attend. This will now be run by myself during the singing assembly each week so children aren't missing any of their lessons. Don't worry – there will still be cake for them to enjoy! Our singing assembly runs fortnightly with Key Stage 1 one week and Key Stage 2 the next week so children may need to wait an extra week to attend. We do feel however this is better than them coming out during a lesson and missing some learning time.

This week in assembly, the children celebrated **Roald Dahl Day**. They discovered fun facts about the famous author and had a go at solving riddles based on his best-loved stories. Can you guess this one?

I mix shampoo, toothpaste, and shoe polish too,
Into a potion of bubbling goo.
Grandma drinks it and changes her size,
Which Dahl story brings this surprise?

Why not join in the fun on **Saturday 13th (Roald Dahl Day)** by reading one of your favourite Roald Dahl books or watching a film inspired by his stories?

Have a wonderful weekend.

Mrs Dixon
Head of School

Your weekly reminder that we are a nut free school

Thank you for your continued support with this matter ensuring our children who have this life-threatening allergy stay safe.

Attendance was much better this week and our attendance so far this year is **95.3%.**
Well done to Mrs Pritchard's class (1TP) who had 100% attendance this week!

School attendance policy – Authorised absence

In the next few weeks, I will share with you parts of our pupil attendance policy. The full policy can be found here on our website. This week we will look at authorised absence.

If your child does not attend, we have to record the appropriate code in the register which explains the nature of why they are absent. Government guidelines on attendance codes means that as a school there are only certain absences that we are able to authorise. These are explained below:

Authorised absence codes
Medical appointments Absences for medical appointments will be recorded with a M code if they result in the child missing either of the registration periods. If your child has their appointment during the day, but are still present for both registration periods, then the register remains unchanged and they will still be marked as present. We will sign them out on the signing in system to record when they leave.
Religious observance We will authorise the day of observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong.
Illness We know that sometimes our pupils cannot come to school because they are really unwell - and that's the right thing to do for them and other students. Medical advice is clear however that children with mild illness will often be well enough to attend - for example if they have a cough, or cold, without a temperature. The NHS have produced a very useful guide to help you decide if your child should be in school or not**:** visit **https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/** Any authorisation of absence through illness is done so at the discretion of the Head of School or member of staff delegated to carry out this task, such as the Attendance Officer. We will mark absence due to illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. Some examples of when reasonable doubts and concerns over the authenticity of illness occur include: • **Frequent absences**: A child regularly having days off ill • **Patterns in timing**: Absences reported as illness that occur regularly on particular days (e.g. Mondays, test days, PE days) • **Days before or after a school holiday**: School suspect the child is in fact on holiday • **Inconsistencies in explanation**: Reports from parents/guardians that don't match what the child says, or symptoms that change frequently without medical follow-up • **Safeguarding concerns**: The school suspects the illness may be masking family difficulties or neglect • **Impact on learning**: The child's absences are causing significant gaps in progress, and the reasons given don't appear proportionate to the amount of time missed.

In these circumstances, we may request medical evidence in order to authorise the illness. Where attendance is of a serious concern, we may require medical evidence to authorise any further periods of absence through illness. This will be determined on an individual basis. Parents will be notified of this by letter.

In the case of an illness which lasts for five days or more (or four days in the event of an INSET day or Bank Holiday), parents will always be asked to provide medical evidence.

Acceptable forms of medical evidence include:

- An appointment text message or letter
- A GP stamp
- Evidence of consultation with NHS 111
- Medication prescribed by a GP
- Copy of prescription

Where evidence has been requested and has not been provided, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified. The NHS gives clear guidance on which illnesses requires a child to be kept off from school and illnesses where children are still able to attend school in 'Is My Child Too Ill for School?' https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/ If parents disregard this guidance, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Absence due to unavoidable cause

The Head of School can authorise absence in emergencies where the parent can prove that the reason their child was prevented from coming to school was unavoidable, such as a bereavement or a sudden emergency.

Family emergencies need careful consideration before decisions about attendance are made. It is not always appropriate or in the best interests of the pupil to miss education for emergencies which are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school with support from staff and peers can provide children with stability. The school routine offers a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

If the Head of School is satisfied with the reason given and the reason is in relation to the child, not just the parent, then the absence will be recorded as authorised.

Exceptional circumstances

The Head of School can authorise requests for leave in exceptional circumstances. We define exceptional circumstances as **rare, significant events which are unavoidable,** for example attendance at a funeral (only the day of the funeral and not travelling days), accredited extra-curricular exams (such as ballet) participation in approved sporting events (regional or national level) or visiting a terminally ill relative.

Next week we will look at unauthorized absences and what happens with these.

Diary dates

Dates were given out for the year in the first newsletter. Going forwards, I will include dates here for the current term as a reminder. Any new dates which were not shared previously will appear in red.

Date	Time	Event
w/c 15th September	3:15 – 4:15pm	**Miss Guy's after school sports clubs start this week** **Monday – Gymnastics** **Tuesday – Dance**
25th September	After school TBC	**Year 5/6 Boys Football league off-site (7 weeks)** *Miss Guy will select individuals who will be invited to participate.*
26th September	After school TBC	**Year 3/4 Brazilian Soccer Festival off-site** *Miss Guy will select individuals who will be invited to participate.*
w/c 29th September		**Harvest festival donations week 1**
1st October	3:30 – 4:00pm	**Year 1 Parent phonics workshop** *Please come to the office to sign in*
1st October	After school TBC	**Year 5/6 Girls netball league starts off-site (4 weeks)** *Miss Guy will select individuals who will be invited to participate.*
2nd October	3:30 – 4:00pm	**EYFS (Caterpillars) Parent phonics workshop** *Please come to the office to sign in*
3rd October	TBC	**Year 5/6 Sports Leader event off site** *For children who have already been selected as our Sports Leaders*
w/c 6th October		**Harvest festival donations week 2 (final week)**
7th October		**School photos – Individual and siblings**
7th October	3:30 – 4:00pm	**Year 6 SATs parent workshop** *Please come to the office to sign in*
10th October	TBC	**Year 1/2 Multi skills festival off site**
13th October		**Home learning due in**
14th October	3:30 – 4:00pm	**Year 3 Caldecotte residential parent information session** *Please come to the office to sign in*
19th – 22nd October		**Year 6 Residential to Condover Hall** *(for children who have already signed up and paid)*
23rd October	3:30 – 4:30pm	**EYFS (Caterpillars) and Years 1 and 2 Spooky Disco**
23rd October	5:00 – 6:00pm	**Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 Spooky Disco**
24th October		**Last day of term**
Half term		

This week's Aspire winners

1TP	**Ivy**	1RC	**Evie**
2PK	**Eliana**	2LD	**Eden**
3MY	**Abigail**	3JC	**Ella** **Eva**
4AJ	**Holly**	4MH	**Zahars**
5SS	**Tommy M** **Rebecca**	5GF	**Vinnie**
6LG	**George**	6AS	**Eliza**

Flute Spaces - Still available for 25-26

On Friday, Mrs Watts and Miss Creed came in to do a flute demonstration in the hall. If your child is interested in starting the flute, please sign up using this link: https://mkcoop.eepos.fi/#/forms

Instrumental Lessons in school with the MK Co-op

The Music Co-op are now in charge of instrumental lessons and payments.

If your child wishes to start a new instrument at any point in the academic year, or you have any questions about payments, please contact Katie on: mkmusiccoop@gmail.com or via the website, https://www.mkmusiccoop.com/ .

ROCK STEADY

ROCK AND POP BAND LESSONS!

IGNITE THEIR SELF-BELIEF

- Children learn to play an instrument in their very own band.
- Fun and inclusive in-school band lessons. No music theory involved.
- Follow their musical journey in your Backstage account.
- Exam-free, Ofqual-regulated Trinity music qualification.
- Instruments provided and no experience necessary.

BOOK YOUR CHILD'S PLACE ONLINE

0330 113 0330 (Mon-Thurs 8am-8pm, Fri 8am-6pm, local rate)

rocksteadymusicschool.com

Reading at Great Linford Primary School - What will my child bring home?

Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6

Renaissance myON

Reception

Children in Reception start learning individual sounds. When they have learnt enough sounds and have begun to blend those sounds into words, they then take home a "Sound blending book" – we hope that this happens after Christmas. Until that time, we encourage parents to read to their children at home and use the "Great Linford Phonics" Google Classroom page. This is full of interactive videos that help the children practise their sounds.

Year 1 and 2

Once children can blend sounds into words, they will explore "Storybooks" in their phonics session. These books link directly to the sounds that the children know. The children practise with this book all week and should find it easy to read at home (we want that!). As well as this book, the children will also bring home a "book bag book" – this book is also linked directly to the sounds the children have been learning. The colour of each book indicates the stage that they are at in their phonics ability. Like in Reception, we also encourage parents to use the "Great Linford Phonics" page which has interactive videos directly linked to the colour group they are in.

In Key Stage 2, children may start to bring home "Accelerated Reader" books linked to their ZPD. ZPD, or *Zone of Proximal Development*, is the range of book levels where your child makes the most progress as a reader.

- **Too easy:** Books may feel fun, but they don't help your child grow.
- **Too hard:** Books can cause frustration and discourage reading.
- **Just right (ZPD):** Books are challenging enough to stretch your child's skills, but still doable with some support. This is where the best learning happens.

Teachers use low-stakes tests each term to figure out your child's ZPD. Then they recommend books that match it, so your child feels both challenged *and* successful while reading.

Will every child bring home an Accelerated Reader book in KS2?

Not every child will. Some children may need extra help with phonics or building their reading fluency. These children might bring home a **"Fresh Start" book** instead."Fresh Start" books are specially designed for older children in KS2. They look age-appropriate but still give the extra phonics practice and support your child needs. These children may also get some extra phonics help during the school day, while still having a book at home that helps them grow in confidence and skill.

Miss Guy's Afterschool Sports Clubs
This Half Term

Monday

Gymnastics

EYFS to Year 6 with Miss Guy

Tuesday

Dance

Year 2 to Year 6 with Miss Guy

Sign up for afterschool sports clubs is now open on SchoolGateway.

After School Clubs – Autumn Term 1 (Wednesday 10th September- 23rd October 2025

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
YR1 to YR6 **Smart Raspberry cooking** £57 for 6 weeks 3.15pm – 4.15pm 15th September – 20th October 2025 Max 12 Book via https://portal.smartraspberry.franscape.io/class-overview/911	**YR2 TO YR6** **Dance with Miss Guy** £24 for 6 weeks 3:15pm-4:15pm 16th September – 21st October 2025 Max 30 **Book via School Gateway**	**EYFS to YR3** **Football with Let's Kick it** £7 per session or £42 booked as block (7 sessions) 10th September until 22nd October 2025 Book via https://eequ.org/letskickitgreatlinford	**YR3 to YR6** **Football with Let's Kick it** £7 per session or £42 booked as block (7 sessions) 11th September until 23rd October 2025 Book via https://eequ.org/letskickitgreatlinford	Enjoy Afterschool club is available **Book via School Gateway**
EYFS TO YR6 **Gymnastics with Miss Guy** £24 for 6 weeks 3:15pm-4:15pm 15th September – 20th October 2025 Max 30 **Book via School Gateway**	-	**YR3 to YR6** **Get Coaching MK-Tennis Club** £36 for 6 sessions 10th September until 15th October September 2025 Book via https://pay.gocardless.com/BRT0003ZHYDW3Y2	**YR1 to YR3** **Get Coaching MK-Tennis Club** £36 for 6 sessions 11th September until 16th October 2025 Booking via https://pay.gocardless.com/BRT0003ZHYXP36M	

- Marketplace
- **PTA Calendar**
- Compliments Form
- **Feedback**
- Volunteer WhatsApp Invite

The Community Marketplace is for everyone — parents, carers, and staff — to give, sell, or snap up pre-loved items, including uniform. Already live with lots of listings of pre-loved uniform, it's easy to browse, list or share.

🔗 Visit the Marketplace directly: glps-pta-community.github.io/marketplace
🔗 Or explore all our PTA tools via: linktr.ee/glpspta

Any questions? Please email:
pta@greatlinfordprimaryschool.co.uk

Jewellery Reminder

Thank you to those parents who continue to follow our uniform expectations around jewellery. We still have a number of children coming to school on PE days wearing, in particular, earrings. Although flat backed earrings reduce the risk of injury to the wearer's neck, they do not remove the other risks of injury to the wearer or those around them. Taping earrings is no longer recommended as it does not remove the risks either.

Unless your child has had their ears pierced within the last 6 weeks, or has had a conversation with the school regarding doctor advice you have received, we would expect earrings to be removed for PE. If your child cannot remove their earrings themselves, please ensure they are removed at home in the morning and can be put back in after school.

Why is this important?

Safety

Jewellery can pose a significant risk during physical activity. Items may get caught on equipment or clothing, leading to injuries.

Injury Prevention

Even small items like stud earrings can cause harm to the wearer or others during contact or movement-based activities.

Focus on Participation

Removing jewellery ensures that all children can fully and safely participate in PE without distractions or limitations.

We appreciate your support in helping us maintain a safe and inclusive environment for all children. Please ensure your child is dressed appropriately for PE and is not wearing jewellery on those days.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the school office or your class teacher.

Thank you for your co-operation.

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

RECOGNISING & MANAGING STRESS

According to recent studies, over 60% of young people report feeling regularly overwhelmed – with stress impacting their learning, emotional wellbeing and social connections. If left unaddressed, stress can lead to more serious concerns such as anxiety, depression or disengagement. This guide offers ten practical, evidence-based strategies to help children and young people recognise, manage and recover from stress in healthy ways.

1 SPOT THE SUBTLE SIGNS

Look out for changes in mood, behaviour, or energy levels, such as irritability, withdrawal, clinginess, or frequent headaches. These may indicate that a child is feeling overwhelmed. By tuning into these cues early and offering a calm, non-judgemental space to talk, adults can help children feel heard and supported before issues escalate.

2 KEEP CONVERSATIONS FLOWING

Make time for open, informal check-ins – whether it's during car journeys, over dinner, or in quiet classroom moments. Let children know it's okay to talk about what's bothering them. Regular, low-pressure conversations create a safe space where emotions are validated, not dismissed.

3 MAKE MOVEMENT PART OF THE DAY

Physical activity can dramatically reduce stress hormones while improving mood and focus. Encourage movement through activities children genuinely enjoy – from team sports to dancing around the kitchen. Even light activity like stretching or walking the dog can help us all unwind.

4 SUPPORT HEALTHY SLEEP PATTERNS

Poor sleep makes stress harder to manage. Establish a calming evening routine that avoids screens before bedtime and promotes winding down, such as reading, listening to music, or chatting quietly. Good sleep hygiene helps reset mood, enhances concentration, and boosts emotional resilience.

5 PRACTISE MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness doesn't have to mean long periods of meditation. A few slow breaths before lessons or short family meditation sessions before bed can make a real difference. These simple habits help children ground themselves, reduce emotional reactivity, and build inner calm over time.

6 SET DIGITAL BOUNDARIES

Excessive screen time, especially before bed or on social media, is linked with higher stress levels. Set clear expectations for when and where devices can be used and suggest screen-free alternatives like crafts, nature walks, or board games to promote digital balance and reduce overstimulation.

7 NURTURE SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Strong relationships act as a buffer against stress. Whether it's a trusted adult, a sibling, or a good friend, ensure children have people around them they can talk to and spend quality time with. Help them build those bonds through shared activities and meaningful interaction.

8 PROGRESS OVER PERFECTION

Set realistic goals and praise effort, not just outcomes. When children feel pressured to be perfect, stress naturally follows. Celebrate small wins and help them reframe setbacks as learning opportunities. This helps build confidence and reduces the fear of failure.

9 TEACH EVERYDAY PROBLEM-SOLVING

Use real-life scenarios to build resilience. Encourage children to identify problems, consider possible solutions, and choose a plan of action. Practising these steps builds a sense of control and reduces the helplessness that often accompanies stress.

10 BE THE MODEL THEY NEED

Children notice how adults respond to challenges. Model healthy coping strategies such as taking breaks, asking for help, or calmly expressing frustration. By showing how you manage stress constructively, you help normalise these behaviours and encourage children to do the same.

Meet Our Expert

Anna Bateman is Director of Halcyon Education Ltd, Director for Wellbeing and Family Services at Leigh Trust, and lead expert for mental health at The National College. Anna specialises in strategic mental health solutions for schools, supporting educators and families to improve resilience, emotional literacy, and overall wellbeing for children across the UK.

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Nintendo Switch

The Nintendo Switch was launched back in 2017 but continues to be popular. The console was the first 'Hybrid', meaning it was both portable and for home use. The console actually has a built-in screen, making it extremely popular with gamers of all ages.

Parental Controls

Nintendo has designed an App called 'Nintendo Switch Parental Controls', specifically for parents to ensure a safer experience on the Switch. In this App, after making an account, you can take advantage of the following parental control settings:

Here you can find the following features:

- Parents can control how long children and young people are allowed the play the Nintendo Switch. Parents can set time limits and an in-game alarm will let the young gamer know their time is up.
- Monitor what type of games a child or young person is playing via reports.
- Parents can choose to restrict certain games, based on PEGI Ratings.
- There is a feature to stop children and young people from posting screenshots taken on the Nintendo Switch to social media platforms.
- Restrict the ability to communicate with other players. This can be done on a game by game basis too.

Users can choose to block another use through the following actions:

1. Select user Icon via the Home menu and then press **Add Friend**.
2. From here, users select **search for users you've played with** which will deliver a list of all players.
3. From this list, identify the user you wish to block and select **block** and then **block** again to confirm.

In order to report a player, you must download the Nintendo Switch Online app on a smart device.

1. From your main menu, select your **vault**.
2. Select the **Records** square.
3. Select the player you wish to report and press A on your Nintendo Switch.
4. Add in your reasoning for making the report and the select **report** to submit.

oursafetycentre.co.uk
How to stay safer on popular platforms

Community messages

🔍Need help with housing or finances? Get free, confidential advice!

🤝Great Linford & Bradwell Parishes are working together to bring Citizens Advice Drop-In Sessions to you.

🗓️Tuesdays, 10 AM - 1 PM

📍Conniburrow Community Centre, MK14 7DX

👉Just drop in- no appointments needed!

MK SEND team messages

Parents and Carers Alliance MK (PACA MK)

The Parents and Carers Alliance MK, known locally as PACA MK are our local Parent Carer Forum for special educational needs and disabilities. They are a strategic partner of the City Council, facilitating coproduction by capturing the voice of families and feeding this back to the local area SEND partnership.

PACA MK can also provide some information and signposting to families who are navigating SEND services. You can see a short video about what PACA MK do here: **PACA - YouTube**

PACA have created a booklet for parents whose children are neurodivergent, which can be found here: **Supporting Your Neurodiverse Child | PDF to Flipbook**.

You may find this booklet useful to share with families that you are working with.