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Newsletter 3 November 2026

Term dates for the Autumn Term

Please note these are correct at the time of sending this newsletter, they are subject to change only if necessary Please keep these dates safe! New dates since the newsletter at the beginning of this term are highlighted in yellow.

Date	Infant School	Junior School
Monday 9th November 9-11 am Monday 16th November 9-11 am Monday 23rd November 9-11 am Monday 30th November 9-11 am	**Raising resilient children** course for all parents/carers. Help your child to become more resilient and learn to manage disappointment and when things do not go their way! **This is a five week course.** Junior new hall. If your child struggles to be resilient and overcome things that go wrong or are new to them, this is the course for you. Sign up via the QR code on the leaflet or come to the school office. Free museum vouchers for all attending. Junior new hall.	
Tuesday 3rd November 4pm	Email sent out with booking details for parent consultations. **Booking opens at 4pm**	
Thursday 5th November 9-11am Thursday 12th November 9-11 am Thursday 19th November 9-11 am Thursday 26th November 9-11 am Thursday 3rd December 9-11 am Thursday 10th December 9-11 am	**English for EAL parents.** If English is your second language, come along and improve your English skills with the adult family learning team. **This is a 6 week course.** Junior new hall. Sign up with the QR code on the leaflet or phone the office to book. Free museum vouchers for all who attend.	
Monday 9th November	**Flu vaccinations.** Details to follow nearer the time	
Monday 9th November	Autumn term report cards released via compass app at 4 pm	
Tuesday 10th November 9.30		New Reception 2027 tours for parents
Thursday 12th November	Michael Rosen Poetry Party for children	
Thursday 12th November 4-7pm	**Parent consultations** on line all year groups	
Friday 13th November	Rocksteady Assembly for Infant Children. Rocksteady will show the children what they do and what they can learn. Information will follow if parents wish to book sessions for their children. A fee is payable.	Year 5 Viking History Day. Year 5 will share further details.
Monday 16th November 4 – 7pm	**Parent consultations** on line all year groups	

Date	Infant School	Junior School
Tuesday 17th November	Multi sports festival at Easton Tennis Centre for selected Year 1-4 children	
Friday 20th November	**Flu Vaccination Mop-Up sessions** (Juniors am / Infants pm)	
Monday 30th November	Email sent to parents to order a **Christmas Lunch** for the 16th December. **All bookings must be received by 12 noon on 2nd December**	
Tuesday 24th November 9.15 - 11.15	**Pre school activity morning** for children starting school in September 2027	
Friday 27th November		Panathlon ten pin bowling at NAMCO for selected Year 3-6 children
Wednesday 2nd December	**Booking closes at 12 noon** for Children's Christmas lunches	
Thursday 3rd December		Dodgeball competition at UEA sportspark for selected Year 6 children
Friday 4th December	Infant Rocksteady concert for parents and carers 9.15 am . Rocksteady will share details nearer the time	**Year 4** dress rehearsal at 9.15 am for parents/carers who cannot attend on the 7th December
Monday 7th December		**Year 4** Christmas Concert for parents and carers at 9.15am **Year 5** dress rehearsal at 2pm for parents/carers who cannot attend on the 8th December
Tuesday 8th December		**Year 5** Christmas concert for parents and carers at 9.15am **Year 6** dress rehearsal at 2pm for parents and carers who cannot attend on the 9th December
Wednesday 9th December	**Year 2** dress rehearsal at 10.45 am at JUNIORS for parents and carers who cannot attend on the 14th December	**Year 6** Christmas concert for parents and carers at 9.15am **Year 3** dress rehearsal at 2pm for parents and carers who cannot attend on the 10th December
Thursday 10th December	**Year 1** dress rehearsal at 2pm at JUNIORS for parents/carers who cannot attend on the 11th December **Reception** Dress rehearsal at 2pm at Infants for those who cannot attend on the 15th December	
Friday 11th December	**Year 1** Christmas concert for parents and carers at JUNIORS at 9.15 am **Year 1** Christmas party pm	**Year 3** Christmas concert for parents and carers at 9.15 am
Date	**Infant School**	
Monday 14th December	**Year 2** Christmas concert for	**Junior School**

	parents and carers at JUNIORS at 9.15 am **Year 2** Christmas party for children pm	
Tuesday 15th December	**Reception** Christmas concert for parents and carers at INFANTS **Reception** Christmas party pm	Christmas party for **Year 6** children New Hall Christmas party for **Year 5** children Main Hall
Wednesday 16th December	**Federation Christmas Lunch for Children.** Must be pre booked.	Christmas party for **Year 3** children Main hall Christmas party for **Year 4** children New Hall
Wednesday 16th December		
Thursday 17th December	**Christmas entertainment for all children across the day in the Juni New Hall** **Includes balloon and magic shows provided by 'Go Awesome' entertainment.** Each show is lively, age-appropriate, and packed with fun. The children can expect a warm, high-energy atmosphere with plenty o Laughter, Wonder, and audience participation — the kind of experienc that feels like a real Christmas Celebration in school. 9.15 – 10 Years 2 and 3 10.15 – Years Reception and 1 11.15 – 12 Years 4 and 5 1.30 – 2.15 Year 6	**Junior Rocksteady** concert 9.15 am
Friday 18th December	**School closes at 3.15pm infants and 3.25pm Juniors** for the End of Term Break	
Tuesday 5th January	Schools **reopen at 8.40 am** for the Spring term for all children	

Staff Changes

As often happens at the end of a school year, there are some staffing changes.

Mrs Bell, our Deputy Head, leaves at the end of term to pursue some business interests outside of education. She has been a part of many major events and developments for our schools, including the setting up of the Federation in 2017. She says she has loved every moment of being with us, and seeing the children grow and develop over the years and then rejoining us for work experience. She looks forward to seeing the children around Dereham in the future and catching up with their news too. It has been a pleasure to have her here working with us and she has played a huge part of ensuring we can support all children to grow in confidence and move forwards with their learning in their time with us. We will miss her but wish her all the best for her next adventure!

Mrs Thompson will be moving over to join the SLT Wednesday to Friday from January until at least the end of the Summer term. She has been working with us in this capacity since she came back from her maternity leave and has been working with us on Wednesdays too this term. As Miss Ray does not return from her maternity leave until after February half term, please be mindful that we will have a reduced capacity within the SLT and therefore may not be able to respond to questions immediately in this interim period. **Miss Gold** will have the children in GT1

from Monday to Thursday and Mrs Bower, which has been coming to our school for many years as a supply teacher, will teach them on a Friday.

Mrs Bizley, who works in our Infant Office, is also leaving at the end of term. It has been a pleasure to have Mrs Bizley work with us and her calm and reassuring manner has been supportive for many parents, staff and children over her time with us. We wish her well on her next adventure too!

We are recruiting for a new office staff member with experience of working in a school office preferably, so if you know anyone who may be suitable, the advert can be found here.

https://www.educationjobfinder.org.uk/job/814ef282-81e8-4676-b02a-fbc8ad77437f

Miss Hattie Gibbons has joined us this week as a TA in the Junior School on Wednesday and Friday in Mrs Jessop's absence. She is studying for a degree in Early Childhood Studies at the UEA alongside her role here so this will be excellent experience for her. We hope she enjoys working with us.

Mrs Candice Adams and Mrs Nayna Bass are joining us from the 23rd November as TAs for our KS1 SRB. We do hope to welcome our first children around Christmas time, so they will be busy getting things ready for them and doing their training. The KS1 SRB will be temporarily in our old Nursery class which has been adapted to ensure it is suitable for the children joining us. This is whilst we wait for the new one to be built.

Poppy Appeal

Thankyou to everyone who has contributed to our poppy appeal collections this year. We are always appreciative of the donations made. We will sell any remaining items next week on Monday and Tuesday. Poppy items can be worn up to and including the 11th November in school. Thank you to all the children who have done such an excellent job of managing the poppy selling this year!

Headteacher Absence

Just to inform parents and carers that I will be absent from the 12th November until at least the 23rd of November as I have to have surgery. I am hoping to be back and look forward to seeing the children once I have the all clear!

This does mean that SLT will be lower than their usual capacity so please be patient with any queries or requests for contact. Mrs Thompson will be with them Wednesday to Friday during that time, with Mrs Kim, one of our Year 2 teachers, teaching in GT 1 on the Thursday and Friday that week.

Thankyou for your understanding.

Courses for Families

Unfortunately, to date, only one parent has attended the free courses being offered by Norfolk Family Learning. We selected these courses carefully in response to feedback from parents and carers about some of the challenges families can face, including helping children to build resilience, develop confidence, and manage everyday difficulties and setbacks. We also have one for parents and carers where English is an additional language to support communication. Please see the diary dates for more information.

There is still plenty of time to join, and we would love to see more parents and carers take advantage of this opportunity. The sessions are warm, friendly and supportive, and are open to all families. As an added bonus, those who attend will receive free museum vouchers.

If you would like to come along, please simply let the school office know. We know that parenting can sometimes present challenges, and these sessions are designed to offer practical ideas, helpful strategies and a supportive space to share experiences and learn from others. We hope many of you will consider joining us.

Attendance Matters: Every Day Counts

On Monday, your child's attendance percentage will be included on their report card. We would encourage all families to take a moment to look at this and celebrate good attendance, whilst also considering whether there are any improvements that could be made where attendance has become a little lower than we would like.

We know that children become unwell, and there will always be occasions when they genuinely need to stay at home. However, whenever children are well enough to attend school, being in school every day really does make a difference.

The Government's aim is for all children to achieve **100% attendance**. While we recognise that illness can make this impossible, we generally encourage families to work towards a minimum of **95% attendance** wherever possible.

Firstly, we would like to say a huge **thank you** to the many families who ensure their children attend school regularly and arrive on time each day. Your commitment and support help your children make the most of every opportunity available to them.

Attendance is about much more than academic achievement. Children who attend school regularly are more likely to feel settled, confident and connected. They build stronger friendships, develop important social skills, and benefit from the routines and sense of belonging that school provides. When children miss school regularly, they can sometimes find it harder to maintain friendships, feel fully involved in school life, or keep up with learning that has taken place in their absence.

Research consistently shows a strong link between attendance and attainment. Children who attend school regularly are significantly more likely to achieve well at the end of Key Stage 2 and go on to achieve stronger GCSE results. Attendance below 90% is classed nationally as **persistent absence**.

To put this into perspective:

- **95% attendance** means around 9 days of learning lost each year.
- **90% attendance** means around 19 days of learning lost each year, almost four weeks of school.
- Over the course of primary school, a child with 90% attendance could miss approximately **133 school days**, which is more than half a school year of education.

Arriving on time is equally important. The first few minutes of the school day set children up for success. Children who arrive punctually begin the day feeling calm, settled and ready to learn, whilst also avoiding missing important instructions, morning activities and opportunities to connect with their friends.

As a school, we are required to monitor attendance closely and demonstrate the actions we take to improve attendance for all pupils. More importantly, we do this because we know how much attendance matters for children's wellbeing, achievement and future success.

Where attendance falls below **92%**, we will usually write to families to make them aware and to offer support. This is often the first opportunity to identify any difficulties and work together to address them. Following this, a six-week review period takes place. If attendance has not improved, we then invite families to a supportive attendance panel meeting to explore any barriers and agree a plan moving forward. These meetings are intended to be collaborative and supportive, helping us work together to achieve the best outcomes for the child.

We want to support families at the earliest possible stage. If you are experiencing difficulties getting your child to school, please do not wait until attendance becomes a concern. Our Family Support Officer, **Mrs Bates**, is available to help and offer practical advice and support. She can be contacted at **familysupport@toftwoodfederation.co.uk**.

We have the same high expectations for attendance for all children, including those in Reception. Developing good attendance habits early helps children establish routines that will support them throughout primary school, secondary school and beyond into further education and employment.

Families should also be aware that we have important safeguarding responsibilities. If a child is absent for more than three consecutive days, or where there have been previous concerns regarding attendance, we may carry out a welfare check. This is simply part of our duty to ensure that children are safe and well, and to offer support where it may be needed.

Ultimately, attendance works best when schools and families work together. We know that most parents and carers want the very best for their children, and we share that goal. By prioritising attendance and punctuality, we can ensure every child has the best chance to thrive academically, socially and emotionally and to make the most of every day at school.

Federation PTA

We are delighted to have a brand-new **PTFA (Parent, Teacher and Friends Association)** with lots of exciting ideas to raise funds and create even more memorable experiences for our children.

Many families have told us they would love to see **more discos, fun events and activities**. We'd love that too! We are looking at the possibility of having a Summer Fayre alongside the family picnic this year.. However, these events can only happen if we have enough volunteers to help make them a reality. At the recent meeting, only one parent attended alongside the new committee, and without more support, it will be difficult to run the events families are asking for.

The good news is that helping doesn't have to mean joining a committee or giving up lots of time. Whether it's baking a cake, helping for an hour at an event, face painting at a disco or lending a hand behind the scenes, every contribution makes a difference.

Funds raised will help us provide extras for our children, including new playground equipment and refreshed playground markings to keep playtimes active, engaging and fun. These are things that cannot be funded from increasingly stretched school budgets.
If you are able to help in any way, please complete our short survey. Together, we can create fantastic opportunities for all of our children! Thank you for your support. 💙
TPTFA Help Offer – Fill out form
Together, we can create fantastic opportunities for our children. If you think you could spare a little time to support the PTFA, please complete the survey and help us build a thriving community of volunteers.
Thank you for your support. Every helping hand helps make a difference for our children.

What's been happening!
Black History Month
In October, children across the federation have been learning about Black History Month. Key stages one and two began the month with a Black History Month assembly to celebrate the achievements of Black people in the past and present. They talked about how not everyone has always been kind and shown respect for others in the past. They have not treated people fairly or in the right way. This has sometimes been because of the way someone looks or where they come from. This has meant that in the past lots of people didn't know about all the amazing things that black people had done. They were often not mentioned in history books, television shows a bout the past or even in school history lessons.
Reception children shared the story 'Coming to England' by Floella Benjamin. This is an inspirational true story about the triumph of hope, love, and determination of Baroness Floella Benjamin's journey from Trinidad to London.
Year one children learnt about the life of the space scientist Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock. Maggie (who is dyslexic) explained why being different is no barrier to success if you are passionate about something.
Year two children shared stories and information books about a selection inspirational black people. They also found out about the life of Mary Seacole, a nurse from Jamaica. She came to England following a calling, wanting to serve as a nurse in the Crimean War. When asked what Black History month was, a child in year two commented 'Significant black people so we can celebrate them'. 'Everyone's different in a different way,' said H in year two.
https://www.toftwoodfederation.co.uk/news/curriculum-news/black-history-month-october-2026/

Year 1 and 2 60 Active Minutes Festival
On Thursday 24th September, 12 children from Year 1 and 2 went to Taverham High School for an 60 Active Minutes Festival. The children were able to try a range of activities that involved different skills that can be applied when playing different sports. Some of the activities included football skills, playing games with a parachute and throwing a ball into hoops.
The children worked independently, in pairs and in small groups. They worked together to solve problems such as moving cones to make a pattern and took turns with each other on the different activities. All of the children listened well to the Sports Leaders and enjoyed trying the activities with them. It was lovely to see the children working in mixed year groups and supporting each other.
https://www.toftwoodfederation.co.uk/category/special-events/

Children's University Graduation Event
Children's University pupils from both the Infant and Junior school took part in a wonderful graduation ceremony on the 9th of July to celebrate their achievements for the year and receive a special certificate for all of their hard work.
The ceremony took place at The Enterprise Centre at UEA where the children were given graduation robes to wear and joined together with other children from Norfolk schools. During the ceremony two of our pupils read a beautiful poem about their love of learning to the audience, which received a huge round of applause. Each pupil came to the stage to receive their scroll and at the end of the ceremony the children were delighted to get the chance to throw their mortar board hats into the air!

Over the year our CU pupils take part in various extra-curricular activities which earn them points and leads to a range of awards at the annual graduation ceremony. Some of the activities and events this year have included dance shows, gymnastics, dog training, cooking and lots of learning at our wonderful Norfolk museums.
It was such a special event to be part of and a great way to finish the year for our hard working CU pupils. Well done to you all!
https://www.toftwoodfederation.co.uk/special-events/childrens-university-graduation-event-2026/
Children's University is a program designed to provide educational experiences for children aged 7 to 14 years. Its aim is to foster a love of learning, build confidence, and encourage aspirations among children. The program offers various out-of-school learning opportunities and recognises children's achievements through formal certificates and graduations. If any pupils are interested in joining Children's University please contact the school office for more information.
Email fedadmin@toftwoodfederation.co.uk if your child would like to take part.

Other events you can read about and see photos of on the website are:
Reception Autumn 1 2026 https://www.toftwoodfederation.co.uk/year-groups/reception/reception-autumn-1-2026/
Year 1 farm visitors https://www.toftwoodfederation.co.uk/category/year-groups/year-1/
Year 2 history day https://www.toftwoodfederation.co.uk/year-groups/year-2-children/autumn-1-year-2-history-day/
Year 3 Ancient Egyptian Day https://www.toftwoodfederation.co.uk/category/year-groups/year-3/

Sugar Collection
This year, our school is once again supporting the **Sugar for Shelters Appeal**, a long-standing Christmas campaign organised by the Buckingham Emergency Food Appeal (BEFA).
We are inviting families to donate a **1kg bag of sugar** to help support people experiencing hardship during the winter months. All donations should be brought to the **school office by 10th December**.
Every packet donated will help provide essential supplies to homeless shelters, soup kitchens, women's refuges and community Christmas meals. Even better, **British Sugar matches donations kilo for kilo**, doubling the impact of every bag collected.
A small donation can make a big difference to someone this Christmas. If you are able to help, please send your donation to the office by **10th December**.
Thank you for supporting this worthwhile cause and helping to spread a little Christmas kindness.