

News from Abbey Park School

Term 3 - February 2026

'Potential into Performance'



**The Park
Academies
Trust**



Message from the Principal

'Potential into Performance'

Welcome to our Term 3 newsletter, celebrating another busy, exciting and successful term at Abbey Park School.

Earlier this term, it was wonderful to see so many parents joining us for our Year 7 and Year 9 Parents' Evenings. We also held an online information evening for parents of our Year 9 pupils, providing helpful guidance on the Key Stage 4 options process. Year 9 pupils have now submitted their option preferences and, with the deadline passed, Mr Stubbs will be working hard behind the scenes to accommodate as many of their choices as possible.

In January, we were delighted to welcome a group of educators from South Korea, who visited Abbey Park to learn more about the UK education system and to see first-hand how we are incorporating technology and AI within our school. During their visit, our guests were able to meet pupils and observe a range of lessons in action. They kindly gifted us a hand-made Sokoture doorbell—said to bring good luck—and in return, on behalf of Abbey Park, I presented them with a Paddington Bear, which they were thrilled to receive.

This term, our Year 7 pupils have been developing essential basic first aid skills in PSHE with Mr Bates. They practised how to respond safely and calmly in emergency situations—an incredibly valuable life skill that they approached with maturity and enthusiasm.

Term 3 has been full of enriching opportunities beyond the classroom. Our Year 10 and 11 Art and Photography pupils enjoyed a stimulating trip to London's Southbank and the Tate Galleries, where they explored a wide range of artistic styles to support their coursework. KS4 science pupils attended *Science Live!* at the Bath Forum and heard from leading scientists across physics, biology and chemistry—an exciting opportunity to connect classroom learning with real-world scientific research. Pupils involved in the mock trial competition visited Swindon Magistrates' Court, where they observed live proceedings and gained valuable insight into both the legal system and their roles in the competition. Meanwhile, our KS4 geographers travelled to Bristol Harbourside to carry out essential fieldwork exploring the regeneration of the area. Our KS4 pupils also attended Appren-T-Fest at STEAM Museum, where they met local apprenticeship providers and industry-leading employers to explore future training and career options. We were also honoured to welcome David Smith, the most successful British Paralympian in boccia, who spoke with pupils about his achievements and remarkable journey.

One of the standout highlights of the term was, of course, our spectacular school production of *Mary Poppins Jr.* After months of dedication, rehearsals and impressive teamwork, the cast and crew delivered two magical daytime performances for our primary schools. The feedback from Bridlewood Primary School perfectly captured the spirit of the show: *"The performance was professional and entertaining throughout. Our children came home with the catchy songs in their heads and thoroughly enjoyed their afternoon."*

On opening night, I was blown away by the seamless set changes, vibrant choreography and, above all, the wonderfully talented cast and crew. I am certain some of them will one day grace the West End stage. These productions simply would not be possible without immense staff commitment, so I would like to extend a special thank you to Mrs Hutchings, Miss Fullerton, Miss Browning and Mrs Grearson for their exceptional leadership and support. At the time of writing, the team has just one more evening performance to complete before everyone can enjoy a very well-deserved rest.

I hope all pupils have a restful half-term break and return refreshed and ready for another enjoyable and productive term.

**Regards,
Mr Ward
Principal**

N.B. A reminder that Term 4 begins on **Tuesday 24th February 2026**, as Monday is a staff training day.

PE

The term has been another busy one for the PE dept, starting off with the Wiltshire schools Cross Country Championships. APS were well represented with 4 pupils representing Swindon schools. Douglas K finished 10th in his age category and will now go forward to represent Wiltshire schools at the National Championships.

All of our girl's football teams made it through to the Swindon schools finals night. Our Year 7 team came 3rd, U14s came 4th and our U16s were runners up narrowly losing to Commonweal.

This terms fixtures have focused on alternative sports and giving some of our pupils the opportunity to represent the school in dodgeball, table tennis, badminton and benchball events. Our Year 8 boys won their dodgeball tournament and have qualified for the county final at the Wiltshire Schools Games in June.

A group of Year 8 girls attended a benchball evening at Nova and had a great time playing a tournament against Bradon, Nova, Warneford, RWBA and GWA. APS did not lose a game with 4 wins and a draw and ended up runners up to Warneford.



Team: Phoebe H, Olivia R, Millie K, Favour P, Ella F, Maisie M, Ruby S, Angel D, Drusilla B-A, Lily A, Utjiua G, Precious M.

Paralympian visit:

British Boccia gold medal Paralympian David Smith came to visit APS for the day. He led an inspirational talk to 120 of our pupils and then delivered a session on how to play boccia throughout the day. The pupils came away feeling inspired by David's road to international success and learnt how to play a new sport which they thoroughly enjoyed.



PE

Individual successes outside of school;

Emily W (Y9) recently competed in a national judo competition. She had 3 fights, 2 against the same opponent which she sadly lost to. Despite this, Emily finished 7th in the nationals which is an incredible achievement!



Next term our pupils will be competing in basketball (girls), the boys football season commences and we have an open gymnastics competition. We look forward to sharing further successes.

Mrs Wall
PE teacher

Science

Pupils in Year 9 and 10 have formed a formidable team called the Rocky Roaders whose job it is to build and code a LEGO robot to compete once again in the First LEGO League Challenge this year.

In March, The Rocky Roaders and their Robot, Rocky, will carry out archaeology-themed tasks such as clearing topsoil, uncovering buried artifacts and emptying a silo.

They will present their robot design to judges, as well as discussing their solution to a problem that archaeologists face during digs.

They have done so well so far and shown great resilience in overcoming difficulties on the mission map.

Miss Keogh
Science teacher



Modern Foreign Languages

MFL Christmas Research in Spain

Last term, our Spanish pupils became cultural researchers, investigating how Christmas is celebrated across Spain. From El Gordo Lottery to Los Reyes Magos. Pupils presented their findings through posters, presentations and written projects. Their research showcased a growing appreciation for global traditions.

We would like to congratulate to all those who took part. It was brilliant to see that everyone put in 100% effort.

¡FELIZ NAVIDAD!

Nochebuena (Christmas Eve)

- Main dinner
- Midnight Mass (Misa del Gallo)



Día de Navidad (Christmas Day)

- Family gathering, often with seafood or roast meats



Santos Inocentes (Dec 28th)

- Like April Fools
- Flour fights (Eis Enfarinats)
- Pranks in some towns



Midnight Mass:
In Spain, some families go to church at midnight after a large dinner on December 24th (Christmas Eve) to celebrate the birth of Jesus!

New Year's Eve (Dec 31st)

- Eating 12 grapes with the 12 chimes for good luck with the upcoming year

Fun fact:
The main gift-giving day in Spain is on January 6th (Día de Reyes).



CHRISTMAS IN SPAIN

The events	
December 24 th	Evening of processions, midnight mass
December 25 th	12 days of fasting
December 26 th	Processions (Cinco Días)
December 27 th	Processions (Cinco Días)
December 28 th	Flour fights (Eis Enfarinats)
December 29 th	Pranks in some towns
December 30 th	Pranks in some towns
December 31 st	Eating 12 grapes at midnight
January 6 th	Gift-giving day
January 7 th	Gift-giving day

elaborate Nativity scenes (Beléns), huge Christmas lotteries, midnight mass (Misa del Gallo), special feasts with seafood, ham, and turrón, and the main gift-giving on Three Kings' Day (Jan 6th) after grand parades.

Spanish christmas

Spanish people make different traditions that are colourful and beautiful.

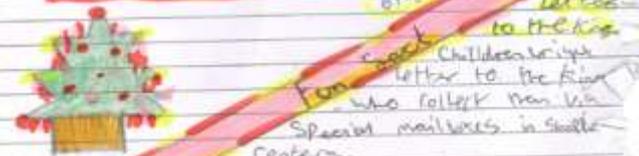


Eve - attending Misa del Gallo (midnight mass) including Nativity scenes - Christmas cards and on New Year's Eve they eat 12 grapes at midnight one for each chime for good luck in the coming years

meals: Afternoon seafood like fish and vegetables, roasted lamb and turkey is common

When do they celebrate Christmas in Spain? A long Spanish holiday period on six festive meals.

When do they celebrate Christmas Eve? The 24th and 25th of December. The Kings arrive on the 6th of January. Children write a letter to the King who collect them via special mailboxes in school centers.



SPANISH CHRISTMAS

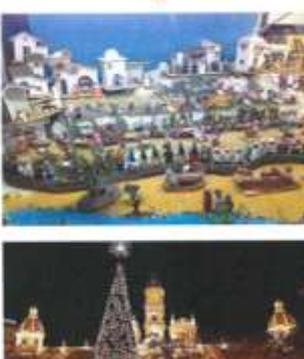
In Spain Christmas is mainly celebrated on the 24th of December (Christmas eve)



How they celebrate
Usually members of the family gather round a feast of Christmas meat, wine and all kinds of desert.

What they do
Spanish people create elaborate nativity scene and display them for all to see. Also there is a Spanish lottery called El Gordo Lottery and it is a massive national event with huge prizes.

Feliz Navidad



¡Navidad!

Comida Festiva

- Starters: Prawn, ham, CHEESES, soups
- Main: Roast lamb, turkey, regional seafood
- Sweets: Turrón (nougat), polvorones, mazapan

Bebidas

- cava
- Roja
- Sherry
- Carajillo

Cabalgata
Celebrations on the streets in Spain - Kings on floats, gift-giving, tweets, music and dance around.

Tradiciones

- Midnight mass
- Nativity scenes

Día de los Reyes 3 6th Jan
It is Spain's main gift-giving day where presents have been left overnight to the Kings.



Careers Education Update for Year 10 and Year 11

This term, our Year 10 and Year 11 pupils have been engaging in a wide range of activities designed to broaden their understanding of future pathways and help them make confident, informed decisions about life after Year 11.

Year 11: Exploring Post-16 Options

Year 11 have been focusing on careers through their PSHE lessons, using the Unifrog platform to explore different career pathways and learn more about labour market information. They have also benefited from presentations by UTC and Lydiard Park Academy, gaining insight into the courses and pupil experience available at each provider.

Apprenticeship Opportunities

Both Year 10 and Year 11 pupils were invited to attend the Appren-T-Fest event on 10th February. This was a valuable opportunity for pupils to learn more about apprenticeships, the employability skills employers are seeking, and the wide range of businesses offering apprenticeship routes. Pupils enjoyed speaking directly with employers and discovering how to apply for these opportunities.

Upcoming Events for Next Term

Next term, Year 10 will take part in their dedicated Careers Day, which will include sessions led by visitors from St. James's Place focusing on finance. Pupils will also complete virtual work experience and hear from GWA, New College, and Cirencester College about the courses and pathways they offer.

On 10th March, we are pleased to welcome a speaker from Making Careers Happen, who will deliver sessions to each year group on growth mindset, employability skills, CV writing, and effective interview techniques. They will also provide further guidance on post-16 options, including apprenticeships.

Mr Maddern
Assistant Principal

Trip to Kingsmead Nursing Home

An invited group of Y8, Y9 & Y10 pupils, along with Mrs O'Brien and Miss Bowie went to spread Christmas cheer, paint salt dough decorations and decorate biscuits with the lovely residents at Kingsmead Nursing Home in Old Town on Thursday 18th December. Christmas songs were sung heartily and we finished off with an enthusiastic Inflatable Reindeer antler game!

We are keen to foster intergenerational connections and provide our pupils with a meaningful opportunity to interact with residents of the nursing home.

Following such a successful visit, APS will be visiting again in March to undertake Easter crafts!

Mrs O'Brien (Intervention teacher) and Miss Bowie (Librarian)



Upcoming Art Events



Alison Adams is a local mixed media and collage artist who is inspired by the rich and diverse beauty of the natural world around her in the Cotswolds. Her creative process is often intuitive and spontaneous, beginning with processes that allow the subject to emerge as she works. This method, known as aleatory art – from the Latin alea, meaning “dice” – embraces chance and discovery.



Cirencester

New Cirencester art exhibition: 'Flora, Fauna and Fantasy'

Venue

Corinium Museum
Park Street
Cirencester, GL72BX United Kingdom + [Google Map](#)
Phone: 01285 655 611

BRISTOL LIGHT FESTIVAL

19 – 28 February 2026
Central Bristol, Various Locations. See website

[Homepage – Bristol Light Festival](#)

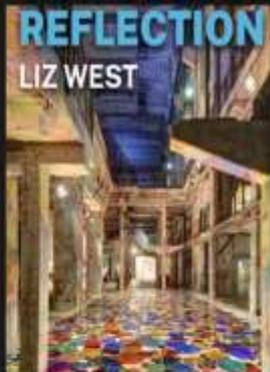


OUR COLOUR LIZ WEST



OUR COLOUR

OUR COLOUR REFLECTION LIZ WEST



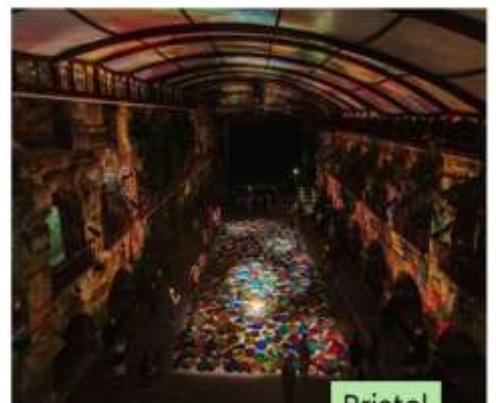
OUR COLOUR REFLECTION

THE LITE SERIES

CAMERON
BALLOONS &
BRISTOL LIGHT
FESTIVAL



THE LITE SERIES



Bristol

Upcoming Art Events



Exhibition Details
 📍 *Preview Night:* 6th February, from 7pm
 📅 *Exhibition runs:* 6th February – 8th March
 Oink Gallery Ltd, 95 Victoria Road, Swindon SN1 3BD, United Kingdom

Oink

Opening Hours
 Monday & Tuesday Appointment only
 Wednesday 11am - 5pm
 Thursday 11am - 5pm
 Friday 11am - 5pm
 Saturday 11am - 5pm
 Sunday Closed

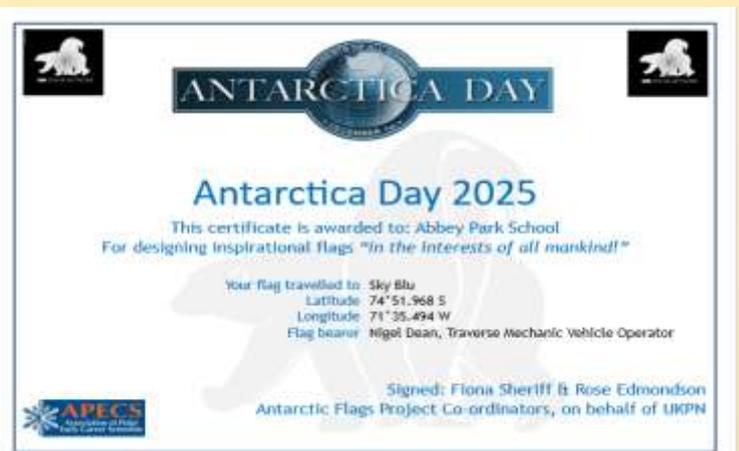
VICTORIA TOPPING WORSHIP THE WILD
 06.02.26



Swindon

Competitions

Back in the Autumn term, we set up an opportunity for pupils to enter a competition for us to create a flag for Antarctica after the huge success over the past couple of years. We chose 8 overall winners which made up 2x Abbey Park School flags which would represent Antarctica. It is with great delight to inform you that our flag has successfully made it to Antarctica and has been photographed with Nigel, a traverse mechanic vehicle operative. The traverse vehicles team move fuel and cargo from the ice runway at Sky Blu to the various depots and field stations. A vital role that the scientists and crew rely on. He took this picture (in -9.8 degree temperatures) whilst he was busy de-wintering all of the machines as they spend the Antarctic Winter (our summer) out in the open. The vehicle in the photograph is a Pisten Bully 300 polar snow tractor. There are so many jobs in Antarctica that aren't science based, but are all very necessary.



Mrs Graham
Curriculum Leader for Humanities

Easter Egg Collection



EASTER EGG COLLECTION

in aid of Swindon Women's Aid and
Swindon Domestic Abuse Service

**DONATE BY 27TH MARCH.
DROP OFF DONATIONS
AT THE LIBRARY AND
RECEIVE AN R1!**



Y11 – Session 6 GCSE support

TERM 4: Year 11 – Session 6 – GCSE support

- Sessions will run from 3.15pm for a maximum of one hour
- Although Curriculum Leaders may advise attendance, sessions are open to all pupils
- **Attendance is on a voluntary, 'drop in', basis. Pupils do not need to sign up to a whole term**
- Registers will be taken
- The LRC is open for private study after school
- Pupils in detention in the Assembly Hall are not permitted to attend Session 6 in place of a detention. They are able to undertake private revision. Resources are available.

	Subject	Room	Staff
TUESDAY	Photography (Also open to Year 10)	BG71	CP
	Further Maths Qualification	RF20	LB
	Science	YG97	JSh
	DT	TBC	SO
	Drama practical	DS	DB
	Business Studies	RG30	MR
	WEDNESDAY	MATHS PAST PAPER CLUB	ALL
THURSDAY	History	GF48	CPI
	Geography	GF43	SB/CT
	French	GF34	VL
	Spanish	TBC	Staff on rotation
	Art (Also open to Year 10)	BF61	AS/JWh
	DT	BG80	BQ/AN
	Computer Science	RG30	CH
	FRIDAY	Media Studies	BG71
Drama theory	DS	DB	
Music	MU	MH/AF	

After-School Enrichment & Lunch Time Clubs

The timetable is updated regularly with amendments and/or cancellations, so please do keep checking our website and social media for any updates. Lunch time sessions are also advertised around the building and on the TV screens in the breakout areas.

Changes to signing-up to after-school enrichment clubs:

- **Free clubs** - sign-up for free after-school clubs has now been added to **ePraise**. Parents and pupils are both able to **sign-up via the ePraise app**.
- **Paid for clubs** will continue to be added or remain on Arbor.

Club	Day	Room	Year Group
KS3 Homework Club	Daily	RG21	Y7, 8 & 9
KS4 Homework Club	Daily	RG21	Y10 & 11
KS3 Badminton Interhouse	Monday	Sports Hall	Y7, 8 & 9
PAID CLUB: Dance Academy	Monday	Dance Studio	Information emailed separately
Y7 & 8 Code Breaking	Tuesday	LRC	Y7 & 8 (max 10)
Y9, 10 & 11 Sparx support	Tuesday	BG71	Y9, 10 & 11 (max 30)
Chess club	Tuesday		All (max 30)
Y8 & 9 Swindon Town Football Club training	Tuesday	Football Pitch	Y8 & 9 (max 30)
ALL Indoor Cricket	Tuesday	Gym	All
ALL Badminton	Tuesday	Sports Hall	All
Y9 & 10 Lego club	Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday	YG87	Sign-up through Miss Keogh. This is the LEGO Robotics Club - pupils will prepare for and enter the First LEGO League Challenge as a team. This involves building a LEGO robot, coding, researching, presenting and a trip in February.
ALL Girls Basketball	Wednesday	Sports Hall	All
Mock Trials	Wednesday	LRC	Pupils have already signed up through Mrs Verlander-Simmonds
ALL Y9, 10 & 11 Indoor Softball	Thursday	Sports Hall	Y9, 10 & 11
Boys Y7 & 8 Football	Thursday	Astro	Y7 & 8
ALL Benchball	Thursday	Gym	All
Duke of Edinburgh	Thursday		Pupils have signed-up through Mr Bates
Y9 Fame Lab Academy	Thursday	YG87	Pupils to sign-up through Miss Keogh
Bronze/Silver Arts Award	Thursday	Drama Studio	Information emailed separately
Anime & Manga club	Thursday	LRC	All
Y11 Dungeons & Dragons	Friday	GG45	Y11 - sign-up through Miss Peele
Choir	Friday	Music Rooms	All

Below is a selection of the lunchtime clubs on offer:

Day	Club
Monday	KS3 Girls Dodgeball – Gym
	KS3 ALL table tennis – Dance Studio
	Open Mic
Tuesday	ALL Girls Basketball – Sports Hall
	Table Tennis – Outside
Wednesday	ALL Girls Benchball – Gym
	Table Tennis – Outside
Thursday	KS4 Boys Basketball – Gym
	ALL Volleyball – Sports Hall
	Table Tennis – Outside
	Ukulele Group
Friday	KS3 Boys Basketball – Sports Hall

Useful Information

Buying books

In the library we try to keep a wide variety of books and authors, however it is impossible to stock everything. If your child enjoys reading it can be difficult to keep up with buying them books, especially in the current economic climate.

So here are a few tips to keep costs down:

- Join your local library, it is free to join and you can borrow up to 16 books at a time.
- While at the library, many have a withdrawn section where you can take as many books as you can carry for £1.
- Charity shops often have a book section, the bonus is you can return them when you have finished and support a good cause.
- Discount book shops such as The Works offer a wide range of books at discount prices.
- Online WoB (World of Books) is a secondhand book shop which offers books at a reasonable price and offers free delivery in the UK.

Local libraries

North Swindon Library

Orbital Retail Park, Thamesdown Drive, Swindon, SN25 4AN

01793 707120

northswindon.library@swindon.gov.uk

Current opening hours

- Monday - 2.00pm - 6.00pm
- Tuesday - closed
- Wednesday - 10.00am - 2.00pm
- Thursday - closed
- Friday - 1.00pm - 5.00pm
- Saturday - 10.00am - 2.00pm
- Sunday - 11.00am - 3.00pm

Central Library

Regent Circus, Swindon, SN1 1QG

01793 463238

central.library@swindon.gov.uk

Current opening hours

- Monday - 10.00am - 5.30pm
- Tuesday - 10.00am - 5.30pm
- Wednesday - 10.00am - 5.30pm
- Thursday - 10.00am - 5.30pm
- Friday - 10.00am - 5.30pm
- Saturday - 10.00am - 4.00pm
- Sunday – closed

Local Bookshops

Bert's Books

54 Godwin Court, Swindon, SN1 4BB

07949 190977

bert@bertsbooks.co.uk

Opening hours

- Monday - 8.30am – 5.30pm
- Tuesday - 8.30am – 5.30pm
- Wednesday - 8.30am – 5.30pm
- Thursday - 8.30am – 5.30pm
- Friday - 8.30am – 5.30pm
- Saturday - 8.30am – 5.30pm
- Sunday - 10.30am – 4.00pm

Waterstones

3 Canal Walk, Swindon SN1 1LD

01793 436465

www.waterstones.com

Opening Hours

- Monday 9.00am – 5.30pm
- Tuesday 9.00am – 5.30pm
- Wednesday 9.00am – 5.30pm
- Thursday 9.00am – 5.30pm
- Friday 9.00am – 5.30pm
- Saturday 9.00am – 5.30pm
- Sunday 10.00am – 4.00pm

School uniform Donations

We'd be grateful for any outgrown items pupils no longer need.

If they have any of the following in good condition, please consider donating them rather than letting them sit unused.

- Revision guides or set texts
- Maths equipment (e.g. protractors, geometry sets)
- School uniform (blazers, ties, PE kits)
- Bags



Please drop donations off at reception. These resources will directly support our younger pupils.

Thank you for your generosity and for helping our school community thrive.

Warm regards,

Mr Stubbs

Assistant Principal

Pupil Laptops

When pupils are given a school laptop to use at home, please ensure the software and antivirus are updated by turning the laptop on weekly.

Please return the laptop to the school reception or IT office if it is no longer in use at home so that it can be distributed to pupils who now need a device.

If you're experiencing any problems with the laptop at home, please let us know.



IT Support



Safeguarding information

At Abbey Park we are committed to ensuring a culture of safeguarding in our school and it is paramount in all we do. We hope that our termly safeguarding update will give you an overview of our approach, offer some useful guidance and information and inform you of what your child is learning in school about how to keep themselves safe. For more information about safeguarding, please look at our website:

What does Safeguarding look like at Abbey Park?

At Abbey Park School we follow the Government policy document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. This is statutory guidance for all schools in England to follow and comply with. It has recently been updated and therefore our safeguarding policy has been updated to reflect this. You can find this on our safeguarding section on the school website. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's responsibility**. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in making sure that children grow up having the best life chances. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all adults should make sure their approach puts the child at the centre of the decision making and that the best interests of the child are always considered. We believe that it is in the best interest of our children to have opportunities to learn how to stay safe both in and outside of school. Our safeguarding themes are woven into lessons across the curriculum, into assemblies and throughout daily life in school. Here are just a few examples of how we teach safeguarding at Abbey Park:

- Dedicated safeguarding team in school every day
- Pastoral support for each year group.
- Pastoral Support Assistants who have specialist training in supporting a child in their social and emotional needs
- Members of staff who have completed basic mental health training
- Mental health pupil ambassadors
- Mental health staff ambassadors
- A dedicated mental health lead – Mrs Stevens
- Wellbeing Wednesday each Wednesday Tutor time looking at how to look after mental health
- Assemblies and lessons taught throughout the year, including but not extensively, anti-bullying, equality, diversity, fire, sun, children's safety, exploitation, sexual harassment and violence and online safety.
- PHSE curriculum covering how to be healthy, having healthy relationships and developing emotional literacy
- Online safety curriculum
- RSE (Relationships and sex education) curriculum
- Weekly tutor time reminders about staying safe in school and our expectations

If you need any support with your child, please contact a member of the safeguarding Team.

Designated
Safeguarding Lead:
Mrs Kara Stevens



Deputy Designated
Safeguarding Lead:
Mrs Lorraine Hatcliffe



Deputy Designated
Safeguarding Lead:
Ms Vanessa Redondo



Deputy Designated
Safeguarding Lead:
Miss Stacey Prince



Food bank and Boxes of Hope

We understand that times are incredibly challenging for many families right now, and making choices between essentials like food and electricity is a reality no one should have to face. Please know you're not alone, and there is support available. If you're finding things difficult, our Pastoral team is here to help—whether it's referring you to the local food bank or accessing a Box of Hope to ease the pressure. You only need to ask, and we'll do everything we can to support you with care and confidentiality.

Contact details and circumstances – please keep us up to date!

It is vitally important that we have the correct contact details for every parent/carer. If you change your phone number, e - mail or move house, please let the admin team know or update it on Arbor. We also need at least two emergency contacts for your child. Unless there is a court order saying differently both parents should be listed on the contacts. We also ask that you keep us up to date with any changes in your personal circumstances that may impact your child. Please see below the contact details of the safeguarding team.

Mrs Stevens: stevensk@abbeyparkschool.org.uk

Mrs Hatcliffe: hatcliffel@abbeyparkschool.org.uk

Miss Redondo: redondov@abbeyparkschool.org.uk

Miss Prince: princes@abbeyparkschool.org.uk

Contact details:

Please can we ask that you ensure the school has at least two contact details in case of an emergency. Unless there is a court order saying differently both parents should be listed on the contacts. This can be done on Arbor.



Useful contacts:

'Contact Swindon' has changed its name and is now known as Children and Families Contact Swindon. If you have concerns about a child and want to speak to a social worker, family services worker without going through school please call - 01793 464646

If you have concerns that a child is at immediate risk of harm, please call the Police on 999

School Nursing team – for support to help children with their physical, mental and emotional well-being and referring to other specialist agencies.

Tel – 01793 465050 or email snn@swindon.gov.uk



Online safety guidance for parents - <https://>

Assembly and PSHE this term

At Abbey Park School all pupils attend Assemblies and PSHE sessions each week.

During term 3 pupils have had the following assemblies: Potential into Performance - APS PROUD to learn & consent safeguarding, Online safety, Careers, Holocaust memorial day and LGBTQ+

During PSHE this term pupils have been learning about the following topics:

Year 7	Society & Culture *Citizenship strand
Year 8	Living in the wider world – developing your own identity
Year 9	Government & Politics: Citizenship (British Values)
Year 10	Rights & Responsibilities: Citizenship
Year 11	CEIAG: Living in the wider world

Social care or external agency involvement

A polite request to keep the Pastoral team updated if your child is receiving support from social services or any external agencies. This will enable us to ensure the right support is given at the right time.

Special guardianship orders or unofficial care givers

Just a reminder to keep the school updated if a child is under a Special guardianship order or unofficial care placement to ensure they receive any support needed.

Attendance matters:

Research shows that there is a direct link between good attendance to school and better outcomes for young adults.

If you are struggling with your child's attendance please contact your Child's Head of Key stage, PSA or Miss Anstee for support.

First aid

Just a reminder that we can only offer first aid in school. We are not able to treat pre-existing conditions as we are only first aiders.

Paracetamol – we will not issue any paracetamol to pupils during P5 to ensure pupils do not take another dose at home.



Abbey Park School Attendance Ladder



Safeguarding information

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.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

SNAPCHAT

AGE RESTRICTION
13+

SNAP STREAK
97

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Snapchat's use of artificial intelligence (AI) includes features like the 'My AI' chatbot and AI-powered filters, offering interactive experiences that can be fun but also pose risks. These tools may share unfiltered or inaccurate responses, promote unrealistic beauty standards, and collect personal data. Advanced filters and deepfake-style lenses can distort reality, potentially leading to manipulation, impersonation, or inappropriate content.

SNAPCHAT+

Snapchat+ is the platform's premium subscription service, offering early access to new and exclusive features. In June 2023, Snapchat introduced a new tier called Lens+, giving subscribers access to hundreds of lenses and AR experiences for playing, creating, and sharing Snaps. These paid features may encourage young users to spend money to access exclusive content, increasing the risk of overspending or feeling pressured to make in-app purchases.

SCREEN ADDICTION

Snapchat boosts user engagement and daily use with features like streaks (daily Snapchat exchanges between you and a friend). When a streak's been going for a few days, users will see a 🔥 emoji. The number alongside it shows the number of days, but if users miss a day and break the streak, the only way to restore it is to pay. This encourages daily use habits, and frequent notifications can keep users returning to the app even more often.

ACCESSIBILITY

Snapchat is now accessible from a web browser, meaning children can use it on a laptop or tablet without downloading the app. This can make activity harder to monitor, reduce the effectiveness of parental controls, and increase the risk of unsupervised communication or exposure to inappropriate content.

SEXTORTION

Because Snapchat's disappearing messages feature may foster a sense of safety, users may become targets of sextortion. For example, a predator may pressure someone into sending nude images, then somehow capture those images to threaten and intimidate the victim. This might involve claiming they will share the images with friends or family unless money is paid.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some content on Snapchat isn't suitable for children. The hashtags used to group content are determined by the poster, so even an innocent search term could still yield age-inappropriate results. The app's disappearing messages feature also makes it easy for young people to share explicit images on impulse – so sexting continues to be a risk associated with Snapchat.

Advice for Parents & Educators

ACCESS THE SNAPCHAT FAMILY SAFETY HUB

Created with guidance from Common Sense Media, Snapchat has developed a Family Safety Hub that explains how the app works and how to use its in-app protections for teens. It's recommended that you review this guidance before allowing a child to download Snapchat. Remember, the app is only intended for children aged 13 and over.

ENCOURAGE OPEN DISCUSSIONS

Snapchat's risks can be easier to handle if you nurture an open dialogue. Talk about scams and blackmail before letting children sign up. If they're lured into a scam, encourage them to tell you immediately. Talk openly and non-judgementally about sexting, emphasising its inherent risks. Furthermore, explain how popular 'challenges' on the platform can have harmful consequences.

BLOCK AND REPORT

If a stranger connects with a child on Snapchat and makes them feel uncomfortable by pressuring them to send or receive unwanted or inappropriate images, the child can tap the three dots on that person's profile to report or block them. There are options to state why they're reporting that user, with a tailored reporting section under the 'Nudity and Sexual Content' category. In this category, there's the option to report somebody for threatening to leak sexually explicit images, or 'nudes'.

USE PRIVACY SETTINGS TOGETHER

Sit down with the children in your care and explore Snapchat's privacy settings as a shared activity. You can help them adjust who can contact them, view their stories, or see their location on Snap Map. It's a good opportunity to explain why some settings are safer than others, reinforcing their understanding of online boundaries. Encourage them to regularly review these settings, especially after app updates or changes in their friendship groups.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian Government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/snapchat>

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Safeguarding information

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents and carers with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with their children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. For further guides, hints and tips please visit nationalcollege.com.

10 Top Tips on Supporting Children with SELF-REGULATION

Children need to learn to understand and recognise their emotions, while finding healthy ways to process them. Emotional self-regulation, however, depends heavily on age and development. While very young ones or children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) may find it particularly challenging to self-regulate, nurturing these important skills can be hugely beneficial. Here are ten top tips for supporting children with their self-regulation.

1. DESIGNATE A TRUSTED ADULT

It's vital that children feel safe and know that there's someone they can always go to for help if they need it. Schedule consistent times for the child to develop a relationship with this person – ideally through play and games – allowing trust to grow and ensuring that the child is more likely to come forward if anything is wrong, rather than hiding their emotions.

2. MEET CHILDREN HALFWAY

Unless you know where a child is developmentally and tailor your approach to their needs, you're less likely to have an impact. In particular, younger ones and children with SEND can struggle to self-regulate and instead rely on others to help them. We call this 'co-regulation'. Rather than offering strategies for self-regulation, it could be better to start co-regulating with a trusted adult first.

3. FACTOR IN THEIR BASIC NEEDS

Remember that for a child to develop emotional regulation skills, their basic needs must be met first. Children who are hungry, tired, cold and so on – as well as those who have experienced adverse childhood experiences – may struggle to self-regulate. Before you develop strategies with any child, make sure they feel safe, secure and comfortable in themselves.

4. REMAIN PATIENT

If a child is struggling with their emotions, it can often become difficult to stay calm. Remember that dysregulation is beyond their control, so a display of frustration or anger could negatively impact the situation. Instead, children need to be met with comfort and understanding to help them manage these problematic feelings.

5. BE A DYSREGULATION DETECTIVE

While some children can tell you why they become dysregulated, many others can't. You could investigate potential triggers by observing the child and talking to their family. When the child becomes dysregulated, note down details like the time, what they're doing and who they're with – the trigger may be someone they sit near, an unmet sensory need or something else entirely. Once we identify some triggers, we can help to avoid or overcome them.

6. USE SUITABLE LITERATURE

There are some wonderful books that can help you teach self-regulation to children. Reading these with a child can be especially powerful. Take time to discuss the content: ask questions about what feelings the characters had, why they felt that way and what strategies helped them. It can also be useful to refer back to snippets of these books at appropriate moments.

7. TRY SENSORY RESOURCES

An overlap between sensory needs and emotional regulation is possible. Children may struggle to self-regulate if they're experiencing sensory overload (a noisy classroom, for example). Positive sensory input can help calm them down. Use resources such as weighted blankets and fibre-optic lights. Of course, what works for one child might not work for another – so it's important to offer a choice of resources to discover which they prefer.

8. NURTURE INDEPENDENCE

If you feel it's appropriate, let children try out these strategies alone. Always offer them a choice: they could listen to music when they're feeling stressed, for example, or they could write down their worries or draw something to represent how they feel. This may take time for the child to get used to, so be patient. Encourage them to share any helpful strategies with a trusted adult.

9. MODEL GENUINE FEELINGS

Children learn a lot just from watching grown-ups. Don't be afraid to show your own emotions and self-regulation strategies. While you obviously want to avoid sharing anything too personal with children, they should still see us experiencing and handling our own feelings. Tell them how you are feeling, then show them how to respond in a healthy manner.

10. FORMULATE A PLAN

As much as we try to prevent children from experiencing dysregulation, it's always wise to have an appropriate plan for when it does happen. Discuss this strategy with the child (if appropriate) and their family. The best approach for an individual child is often a bespoke one; it's hugely important to know in advance what might help and what could worsen the situation.

Meet Our Expert

Georgina Durant is an author, former teacher, Special Educational Needs Coordinator and the founder of the award-winning SEN Resources Blog, where she shares activities, advice and recommendations for parents and teachers of children with SEND.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

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Application form



More information

**Swindon Music Co-operative, Astoria House, 165/166 Victoria Road, Swindon, SN1 3BU
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Term 4 Curriculum Map - KS3

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
English	Non-Fiction: Persuasive Writing	Fiction: Mystery Short Stories	Non-fiction: Speeches
Maths	Angles, Properties of 2D Shapes and Area & Perimeter	Univariate data and Bivariate data	Trigonometry and Quadratic expressions & equations
Science	Energy & Speed and Chemical Reactions	Organisation & Waves	C9 Chemistry of the Atmosphere & P3 Particle Model of Matter
MFL	Spanish: Mi Familia y Mis Amigos French: Ma vie de famille	Spanish: Qué Hacemos French: Le monde est petit	Spanish: Jóvenes en Acción French: Le meilleur des mondes
Humanities	Geography: The Almighty Dollar	Geography: RE Unit Philosophical Thinking: Swindon in today's world	Geography: Russia History: The Civil rights movement Philosophical Thinking: Medical Ethics
Computing	Algorithms & Flowcharts	Cyber Security	Python Programming
Design Technology (DT)	Food & cooking	Diet & health	Dietary needs
Visual Arts	Landscapes	Distraction	Transform
Performing Arts	Drama: The Terrible Fate of Humpty Dumpty - scripted module exploring the issue of Bullying Music: Programme music	Drama: Titanic - module exploring the historical context of disaster and its consequences Music: Theme and Variation	Drama: Shakespeare's Theatre Music: Live Lounge
PE	Tagg Rugby, OAA, Gymnastics, Netball. Badminton, Basketball	Dance, Basketball, Tagg Rugby, Handball, Hockey, Basketball	Basketball, Hockey, Handball. Table Tennis, Fitness
Personal, Social, Health & Citizenship Education (PSHCE)	Living in the wider world: CEIAG	Drugs & Alcohol education	Rights & Responsibilities

Term 4 Curriculum Map - KS4

'Potential into Performance'

	Year 10	Year 11
English	Fiction Writing: Language Paper 02	Revision
Maths	Higher: Similarity & Further trigonometry Foundation: Probability	Higher: Sequences & Transformations Foundation: Algebra & Percentages
Science	C3 Quantitative Chemistry & C5 Energy Changes	B6 Inheritance, Variation & Evolution
MFL	Spanish: Mi estilo de vida French: En pleine forme	Spanish: Mi estilo de vida French: En pleine forme
Humanities	Geography: Urban Issues and Challenges History: Society and exploration 1558-88, The Weimar Republic, Hitler's rise to power Philosophical Thinking: Buddhist practices Sociology: Paper 1: The Sociology of Family	Geography: Decision Making Preparations (Released April) and Revision History: Revision and use of past papers. Philosophical Thinking: Revision Sociology: Paper 2: Social Stratification
Business & Computer Science	Business: 1.4 Making the business effective Computer Science: 3.1 Fundamentals of Algorithms and 3.2 Programming	Business: 2.5 Making Human Resources Decisions Computer Science: 3.8 Ethical, legal and environmental impacts of digital technology on wider society, including issues of privacy
Design Technology / Food	D&T: Theory: Ecological & Social Footprint. Scales of Production. Materials and their properties FPN: 3.3 Food Science, Food Skills	D&T: NEA FPN: Exam preparation, Food Skills
Visual Arts	Art: Natural Forms Photography?: Transforming Portraits	Art & Photography: ESA
Performing Arts	Drama: Component Three Looking at long answer questions director & designer Section B: Visit Theatre to see a professional production Music: Practice through listening activities	Drama: Component Three Exam practise Visit Theatre to see a professional production Music: Listening activities and practice questions
PE	Netball, Football, Dodgeball, Fitness, Handball, Badminton, Basketball, Futsal CNAT: R185 Topic 2 & 3- Leadership GCSE: Paper 1- Short- & Long-Term effects of exercise/ Components of fitness	Netball, Dodgeball, Fitness, Football, Badminton, Handball, Tables Tennis, Futsal BTEC: Unit 3- Applying the principles of personal training
Personal, Social, Health & Citizenship Education (PSHCE)	CEIAG: Living in the wider world – employability skills	Health & Wellbeing: mental health

Contact details and consents

Having up-to-date contact information enables us to communicate with you promptly in the unlikely event of an emergency school closure during the day. This ensures that we can communicate effectively and keep you informed of any urgent developments. Please also take a moment to review the contact details and consents we have recorded for you on the Arbor Parent Portal are correct.

If your circumstances have changed and your child can no longer go home by themselves in event of an emergency school closure, you can update the consent accordingly on Arbor.

IMPORTANT NOTICE - Y11 exams

All Y11 pupils need to be available for exams on Inset Days

Y11 mocks will take place between

Monday 23rd February and Friday 6th March

Monday 23rd February	<i>Inset day</i>
Tuesday 24th February	All years return to school EVENT: Y9 MenAVWY Immunisations all day
Thursday 26th February	EVENT: Period 1 - Animal Aid guest speaker EVENING EVENT: Y8 Subject Consultation Evening (4-7:30pm)
Monday 2nd March	EVENING TRIP: Big Dance Off - 6-8pm
Monday 9th March	EVENT: Period 1 & 2 - Art Workshop
Wednesday 11th March	TRIP: GCSE Media to Harry Potter Studios, Watford EVENT: Period 2 & 3 - Art workshop
Thursday 12th March	EVENT: Young Carer Day- 2.10-3.10pm EVENT: Y8 & 9 Team Math Challenge at The Deanery EVENT: Y10 Careers Day
Friday 13th March	Y10 & KS3 Drama - Operation Mince meat- Theatre Royal, Bath
Monday 16th - Friday 20th March	Wellbeing week
Wednesday 18th March	TRIP: STEM trip to Gloucester
Thursday 19th March	PSHCE Y8 Police Visit 1.05-2.05pm
Tuesday 24th March	EVENT: Character Champion Pizza Party
Wednesday 25th March	Consultation Day
Thursday 26th March	EVENT: Young Carer Easter Event 1.05-3.10pm EVENT: PSHCE Y8 Police Visit 2.10-3.10pm EVENT: Immunisations Catch-up all day

Y11 Mock Exam timetable

Start time	9.00am	1.15pm
23-Feb	INSET DAY	
24-Feb	Science (Biology) 1 hour 45 mins Combined Science (Biology) 1 hour 15 mins	Maths non calculator 1 hour 30 mins
25-Feb	English Literature (Exploring modern and literary heritage texts) 2 hours	Science (Physics) 1 hour 45 mins Combined Science (Physics) 1 hour 15 mins
26-Feb	Spanish Listening 1 hour 30 mins	French Listening 1 hour 30 mins
27-Feb	Maths calculator 1 hour 30 mins	Further Maths paper 1 1 hour 45 mins
02-Mar	English Language (Exploring effects and impact) 2 hours	Geography (Geographical applications) 1 hour 30 mins History (Medicine) 1 hour 20 mins
03-Mar	CNAT Sports Studies 1 hour	Hospitality & Catering 1 hour 45 mins Further Maths paper 2 1 hour 45 mins
04-Mar	PE Practical exam - individual assessments scheduled throughout the day	

IMPORTANT NOTICE - Y11 exams

All Y11 pupils need to be available for exams on Inset Days



Abbey Park School
Terms and Holidays 2025 - 2026



August 2025						
Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

September 2025						
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29	30					

October 2025						
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November 2025						
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December 2025						
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29	30	31				

January 2026						
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February 2026						
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March 2026						
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April 2026						
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May 2026						
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June 2026						
Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
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29	30					

July 2026						
Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

INSET Days

1st and 2nd September, 20th and 21st November, 23rd February, 1st June, 20th July

Lunchtime Finish

19th December and 17th July

Bank Holidays 2025/26 UK

25 August '25	August Bank Holiday	1 January '26	New Year's Day	4 May '26	Early May Bank Holiday
25 December '25	Christmas Day	3 April '26	Good Friday	25 May '26	Spring Bank Holiday
26 December '25	Boxing Day	6 April '26	Easter Monday		

Our full calendar and more information can be found at www.abbeyparkschool.org.uk