



11 SEPTEMBER - NEWSLETTER

parents@balcombeschool.co.uk

We do have learners with allergies, so please remember – no nuts in school.

Dear Parents and Carers,

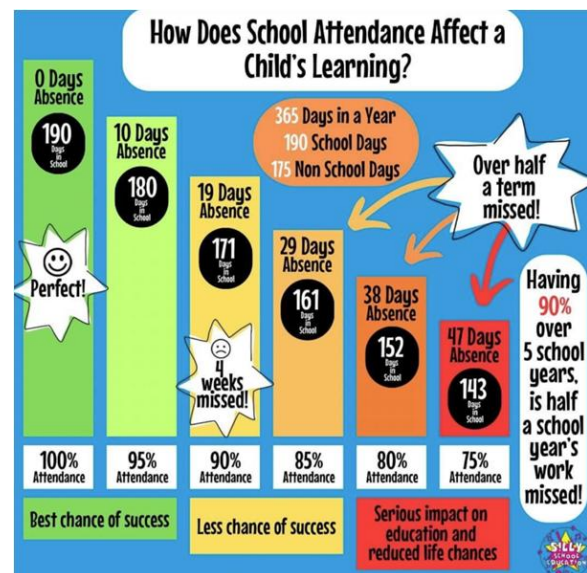
It has been a wonderful start to the new academic year, and I would like to congratulate all of our children on how brilliantly they have settled into their new classes and routines. Across the school, pupils have returned with enthusiasm, positivity and a real readiness to learn. They have quickly embraced new opportunities, built positive relationships and demonstrated positive learning behaviours. We are proud of the way they have started the year and look forward to seeing them continue to flourish over the coming months.

Thank you to all the parents and carers who attended our recent 'Meet the Teacher' sessions. We hope you found these meetings informative and helpful. Strong partnerships between home and school are essential to supporting children to thrive, and we value the opportunity to work closely together. If you were unable to attend, or if you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact your child's class teacher.

Our Christian value this term is **Thankfulness**. Throughout the coming weeks, children will be exploring what it means to be thankful in their daily lives, recognising the people, opportunities and experiences that enrich our community. We encourage families to discuss this value at home and to take a moment to reflect on the things they are grateful for. Please see the dedicated section later in this newsletter to find out more about how we will be exploring this important value in school.

As we begin the new school year, I would also like to highlight the importance of good attendance. Regular attendance is one of the most significant factors in a

child's success at school. Being in school every day helps children to feel secure, maintain friendships, develop positive routines and fully engage in their learning. Even small amounts of absence can make it more difficult for children to keep up academically and can have an impact on their confidence, wellbeing and sense of belonging within the school community. We greatly appreciate your support in ensuring that children attend school punctually and regularly wherever possible.



Thank you for your continued support. Together, we can ensure that every child has a happy, successful and rewarding year ahead.

Best wishes,
Ben Turney
Headteacher

Celebration Assembly

***Be Respectful, Be Ambitious, Be Resilient,
Be Caring, Be Creative, Be Curious,
Be The Best That You Can Be***

Since the start of term, the following children have been celebrated for demonstrating one of our Values in Action:

Well done to all our new Lake children for settling into school life so well. They will become part of our Celebration Assembly later in the term.

Etta T - Coombe Class – being very kind and caring towards her Coombe friends.

Carter - Forest Class – being caring by being a fantastic friend.

Bella – Spring Class – being resilient during maths even though it was tricky.

Flora – Mill Class – finding creative solutions to a maths challenge.

This week, the following children have been celebrated for demonstrating one of our Values in Action:

Bella – Coombe Class – creativity when exploring different types of line in art.

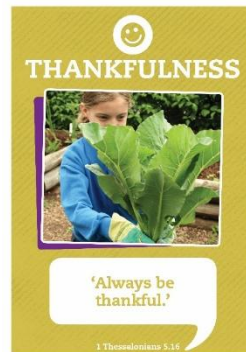
Oraia – Forest Class – being ambitious! Wanting to read and be a brilliant reader.

Guillaume – Spring Class – showing hard work and amazing resilience in maths!

Mill Class – this week Year 5 & 6 have been away on their residential trip to Bowles.

Christian Value

This half term our Christian Value is **Thankfulness**



As part of our Collective Worship this half term, we will be exploring what it means to be thankful and how gratitude can influence our thoughts, actions and relationships. Through Bible stories, reflection and discussion, children will learn to recognise and appreciate the blessings, opportunities and people who enrich their lives.

At Balcombe, thankfulness is closely connected to our school values. It helps us to be respectful of others and the world around us, caring towards those who support us, and resilient when facing challenges. By appreciating the gifts and talents God has given us, we are encouraged to be ambitious, creative and curious, making the most of every opportunity to learn and grow.



We believe thankfulness is more than saying “thank you”; it is about recognising God's goodness and using our gifts to make a positive difference to others.

We encourage you to talk with your child about what they are thankful for and how they can show gratitude at home, at school and within the wider community.

Changes in our school building

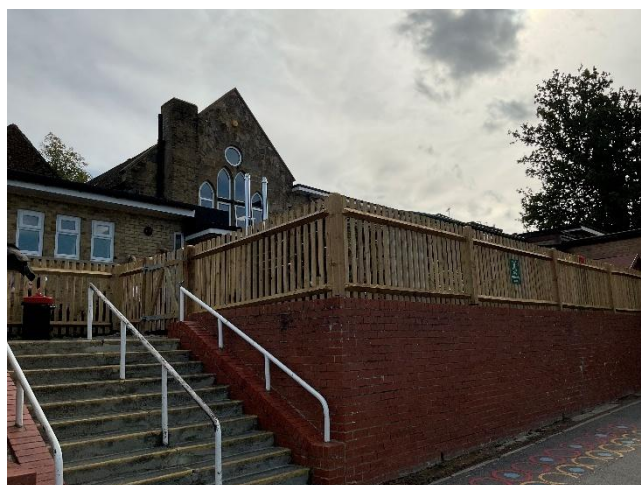
Whilst we were enjoying summer holidays and time with families, lots of work has been carried out in school. We have had lockers installed for Spring, Forest and Coombe to store their belongings in – they look very smart!



Coombe have also had a new playhouse installed in their outside area.



The green fencing around Lake's patio area has been replaced with a smart wooden fence.



Finally, the fencing around the back of our grounds has been replaced with new gates by the hall, on the field and at the access point for Nature Ninjas.



Thank you!

Thank You to Parents and FoBS!

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all parents and FoBS (Friends of Balcombe School) for the fantastic stationery donations we received at the beginning of term. With school budgets under increasing pressure, your generosity makes a real difference in ensuring our children and teachers have the extra resources they need to make learning engaging and enjoyable.

A Year of Amazing Fundraising

We'd also like to take this opportunity to celebrate the members of FoBS for their incredibly successful year of fundraising. The time, energy and dedication that goes into organising events, running the uniform shop, and everything in between truly doesn't go unnoticed – and we're so grateful for all you do.

Exciting Update: Our New Outdoor Building

One of our key fundraising targets for 2025/26 was to resource our new outdoor building. While there have been a few unavoidable delays, we're pleased to share that completion is expected very soon. We can't wait to reveal the wonderful learning opportunities your fundraising has helped us create for the children! Watch this space for photos and updates once the building is ready.



Thank you once again for your continued support of our school community.

Next Generation Active

Our new partnership with Next Generation Active (Breakfast Club and After School Club provision) has had a really positive start, thank you for your support.

If you would like to book your child/children a place please click on the link below:

[Link to booking](#)

We are also delighted to share that there are now some discounts available to families.

Sibling discount: use of code **SIBLING5** at checkout will provide a discount of bookings for two or more siblings.

NHS/Keyworker discount: Use of code **BLIGHT10** will provide a 10% discount on bookings. Users of this code will need to confirm keyworker status.

Bulk booking/Threshold discount: a threshold discount will be applied
The block booking discount can be combined with a discount code listed above.

Pupil Premium - update

The government has announced that the eligibility criteria for free school meals will change from 1 September 2026. Please see below for details.

Bike!

The bike in the photo below has been left since the end of last term. Please claim it if it is yours by Monday or it will be donated to charity.



Clothing bin



Thank you for your continued generous donations to our clothing bin. Please can we kindly ask that if the bin is full you do not leave bags around it. The company will not take the extra bags which end up in our bin going to landfill.

Dates for your Diary

Tues 6th Oct – Flu vaccinations

Thurs 8th Oct @ 1.45pm – Harvest Service. St Mary's Church all welcome

Mon 12th – Fri 16th Oct – Year 6 Bikeability

Mon 26th – Fri 30th Oct – HALF TERM

Mon 2nd Nov – INSET Day, school closed

Fri 18th Dec – Autumn Term finishes

REMINDER

Pupil Premium – updated criteria from 1 September 2026

The government has announced that the eligibility criteria for free school meals will change from 1 September 2026.

All children who live in a household that receives Universal Credit can get free school meals.

There will be 2 types of benefits-related free school meals (FSM).

Targeted free school meals

Children can get targeted free school meals if their household receives Universal Credit and earns £7,400 a year or less.

Children who receive targeted free school meals can also:

- take part in the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme
- help their school receive extra Pupil Premium funding

Expanded free school meals

Expanded free school meals are for children whose household receives Universal Credit but does not qualify for targeted free school meals.

Children in this group can receive free school meals, but they cannot access the extra support linked to targeted free school meals.

Targeted free school meals in all West Sussex maintained and free schools and academies are available to pupils in receipt of, or whose parents are in receipt of one or more of the following benefits:

- [Universal Credit](#)
- Income-based [Jobseeker's Allowance](#)
- Income-related [Employment and Support Allowance](#)
- Support under [Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999](#)
- The guaranteed element of state [Pension Credit](#)

If your child already gets free school meals, West Sussex County Council will check whether they qualify under the new rules before 1 September 2026. They will tell the school the outcome, and we will notify you.

Once West Sussex County council (WSCC) give your child a free school meal status, either Targeted FSM or Expanded FSM, they will keep that status until the end of that school year.

WSCC will check your child's eligibility every year before the start of the new school year. If they do not have the information they need, they may ask you to provide updated details.

If your child does not qualify for benefits-related free school meals but is in Reception, year 1 or year 2, they can still get Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM). You do not need to apply however you do still need to book their meals on the new FEED website.

If your child receives UIFSM and also qualifies for Targeted FSM, it is important to register for Targeted FSM.

Registering helps your child's school claim pupil premium funding. This extra funding gives schools more money to support children with their learning and wellbeing.

Fundraising for School

[Link to PayPal](#)

Remember to join easyfundraising - you can collect free donations for us every time you buy something online. It won't cost you a penny extra, so please help us to raise funds.

Community Speedwatch – appeal for volunteers



30 mph

Do you worry about your children's safety?

Our local speedwatch group desperately needs volunteers. If you can help, you will make a difference – an hour a month would be fantastic!

Offending drivers receive a letter explaining the potential risks and consequences, repeat offenders receive a visit from local police, with focused enforcement if necessary thereafter.

Training is provided, and you can help as little or as much as you are able.

To find out more please contact Councillor Nicky Gould
nicky.gould@balcombeparishcouncil.com
 for more information.

Or call 0772 596317 in the first instance.
www.communityspeedwatch.org