Unique and Valued by God

The St Mark's Fortnightly Newsletter

5th September 2025

'A school where children develop the passion to learn, the skills and knowledge to succeed and the confidence to take Christian values into our diverse society.'

Dear Parents of St. Mark's.

It has been an absolute pleasure being part of the School community for the last 13 years, but in November I will be retiring as Vicar of St. Mark's Church.

I have thoroughly enjoyed being the Vicar of St Mark's and the highlight of my time has been the relationship with the children, families and staff of St. Mark's School. I am so proud of the way St. Mark's Church of England Primary School has become such a wonderful place for enjoyable learning. We have a School which is well led, with clear vision and ethos, and it is a place where we know children can thrive academically, emotionally and spiritually.

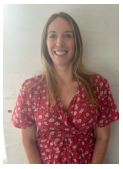
I have loved seeing children flourish at St. Mark's, and, as Chair of Governors, I am so proud of our staff, and the care and commitment which characterises all that goes on within the School every day.

I will be leaving with good memories of this School community, and with full confidence in the long term stability and flourishing of the School.

My wife and I will be moving to Reading to be close to family but I expect to be back in the neighbourhood frequently

Rev Stephen Coulson

We are here to help



Again this year, we look forward to doing all we can to support our children as they begin school and return to school. Across the school this will include: counselling, art therapy, speech and language groups, English as an additional language support, 1-1 tuition, small group tuition, interventions, ECH plan provision, social skills groups, pastoral support and mentoring . This is all in addition to high quality class-based teaching and learning. We will be working very closely with our external partners which include the Lambeth's Autism Advisory Service, Educational Psychologists and Speech and Language therapists.

Key People who are available to support you this term are:

Mr Ingram—Head teacher

Ms Nickola Roye— Acting Deputy Headteacher & SENCO

Ms Catherine Smith Assistant Head for Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Mrs Natasha Guy—Home liaison officer and working with parents and families

Mr Emmanuel Okuromade—Sports Coach and Pastoral Support

We will make direct contact with families this week to discuss plans and support.

Welcome back to school!

It has been a really positive beginning to the term and we welcome all of our new families to St Mark's. The children have been getting to know their new teachers and teaching assistants and learning more about the expectations and routines within their new year groups. Many of the Key Stage Two children are in the process of applying for Monitor positions that they are interested in leading and they will find out their new roles next week.

Already teachers are making arrangement for the term ahead. Next week, class bulletins for Autumn Term 1 will be sent out to you, which will outline information about what is to be learnt during the term. During the next two weeks there will be an opportunity for you to meet your child's class teacher in person. Please look at the diary dates within this newsletter to find out when this and other events and activities will be taking place.

School Uniform

- Black school shoes. Thank you for your efforts with this. Remember no trainers
- A blue shirt or polo shirt. We are happy if children purchase these from a store rather than purchase the one with the school logo, as it works out far cheaper. Make sure it is the correct colour
- A grey skirt or grey trousers
- A school sweatshirt or cardigan
- A book bag / A school bag
- PE kit is white t-shirt or polo shirt and plain blue shorts or jogging bottoms. Please avoid branded items and cycling shorts. PE kit should only be worn on PE days
- Please can children not wear jewellery to school, apart from stud ear-rings for health and safety purposes
- Hair bands must be simple and preferably in the school colours. Avoid hair accessories—large, colourful bows etc.
- NO SMART WATCHES ARE TO BE WORN TO SCHOOL PLEASE
- IF YOU WOULD LIKE HELP WITH UNIFORM, PLEASE SPEAK TO MRS NATASHA GUY, OUR HOME SCHOOL LIAISON OFFICER

Office Notices

School Dinners

Harrison is our new catering provider and will be providing our school dinners.

All primary school children who attend state schools from Reception to Year 6 in London receive free school meals for the full academic year.

Please notify the school if your child will have packed lunch instead of school dinners.

NURSERY CHILDREN WHO ARE NOT ENTITLED TO FSM will have to pay for their meal

School Meals will now cost £3.00 per day or £15.00 per week.

Please pay on ParentPay in advance to keep your dinner account in credit and prevent reminders

We actively encourage all families who think they are eligible to apply, as this will grant additional support within school through the Pupil Premium funding. To apply please click here and return the completed form to the office or obtain a form from the office. Families on a low income or in receipt of certain benefits may be entitled to Pupil premium.

If your circumstances have changes, please communicate to the office.

Breakfast Club

Breakfast Club is available from 8am every day for **£3.50 per child per day** (£17.50 per week).

Payments via ParentPay.
Please contact the office for an application form or click here.

After school clubs will start w/c Monday 15th September.

See pages 5& 6 and Check your emails for Full information

Up To Date Pupil Records

In order to adhere to our safeguarding duty, please update your child's details on our Pupil Records Form https://forms.gle/t65K9M4do88ooEnT8

We request for this form to be completed at the start of each year to ensure we have your latest details on file to contact you for regular and emergency situations. We also require your child's updated medical details and the details of the adults you permit to collect your child/ren so we can make sure they only leave with a person identified by you.

Greenhouse Schools
School news for parents
Green Schools Online

ParentPay
COUNT ON US

PARENT WORKSHOP

A ParentPay & School App workshop will be provided to parents.

FRIDAY 19H SEPTEMBER

9:00 TO 9.30 AM .

If you do not have your ParentPay activation codes yet, please contact the school office.

SCHOOL VALUES & POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR SYSTEMSIN Yr 1-6

ST MARK'S
Church of England Primary School

Chart

C – Compassion

H – Hard Work

A – Accountability

R – Respect

T – Trust

Being Joyful and Positive

Accountability and Leadership

Self-Control and Collaboration

Kindness and Compassion

Effort and Hardwork

What happens if you make the wrong choice? If you don't' follow the class or school rules?

White= a warning (although a verbal warning may have been give before this.)

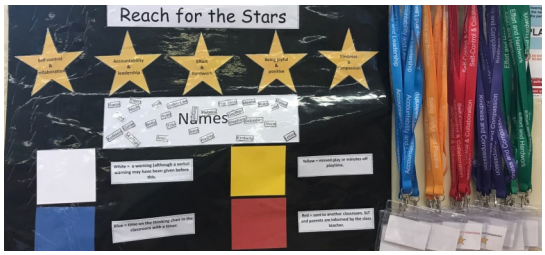
Blue = time on the thinking chair in the classroom with a timer.

Yellow = missed play or minutes of playtime.

Red = sent to another class-room. SLT and parents are in-formed by the class teacher.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR REWARDS

Lanyards



Pebble Jar

Badges

15 Lanyards = Bronze Badge

30 Lanyards = Silver Badge

50 Lanyards = Gold Badges

ST MARK'S
Church of England Primary School
Unique and Valued by God

AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS AUTUMN 2025

3.30pm-4.25pm

£3.50 per session, per club (£42.00 the term)
£2.00 for Pupil Premium (£24.00 the term)

Payment and bookings on ParentPay on a first come, first-serve basis

12 weeks
Monday 15th September
to
Friday 12th December

Children MUST wear PE kits for all sport activities.

MON
- FOOTBALL - Years 2-3
- COOKING - Years 1-6

TUE
- ARTS & CRAFTS - Yrs 1-6
- DODGEBALL - Yrs 3-6
- BIBLE STUDY - Yrs 1-6

WED
- MULTISPORTS - Yrs 1-3
- TAEKWONDO - Yrs 1-6 (Please book separately)

THU
- GYMNASTICS - Yrs 1-3
- CHESS - Yrs 3-6

FRI
- FOOTBALL - Yrs 4-6
- HOMEWORK - Yrs 2-6

Payments for clubs are NON – TRANSFERABLE or REFUNDABLE:
If your child changes his/her mind.
If clubs are CANCELLED due to staff absence.
NO REFUNDS WILL BE MADE AS ALL CLUBS ARE ALREADY SUBSIDISED

DUE TO DEMAND, WE CANNOT GUARANTEE AVAILABILITY OF CLUBS.
If there is not enough demand for certain clubs, we may not be able to run them this term.

St Mark's After School Clubs for AUTUMN Term 2025

We are delighted to be able to offer a wide range of extracurricular activities for the after school clubs on the Autumn term for pupils in Year 1 to 6.

After school clubs for the Autumn Term will **begin w/c 15th September 2025 and will run for 12 weeks, ending on Friday 12th December 2025.**

Club Pricing Update for After school Clubs

As announced in our last school newsletter, the cost of after club sessions will increase slightly from £3.00 to **£3.50 per session** to help cover rising costs and maintain the high standard of activities we offer.

In response to parent feedback, families eligible for **Pupil Premium will now pay a reduced rate of £2.00 per club,** per session paid upfront termly, with no need for refunds. We hope this change makes things easier for everyone.

The total cost per club for this Autumn term will be £42.00 per 12 weeks.

For Pupil Premium, the total cost per club for this Autumn term will be £24.00 per 12 weeks. No refunds will be issued.

All payments will be via ParentPay. Please log on to Parent Pay to book your child/children's places **by Wednesday 10th September 2025**. If you need any assistance booking online, please do not hesitate to contact the school office.

Please note these conditions apply to all clubs:

- Clubs have limited spaces and are booked **on a first-come first-serve basis.**
- **Places cannot be booked if you owe any money to the school (e.g. school dinners arrears/late fees) – please ensure this debt is cleared to allow your child to be assigned to clubs.**
- Please collect your child on time or give permission for them to go home alone (Y6 only – must be 10 years).
- **Children who are not collected promptly on more than three occasions will be unable to continue to participate in the chosen club and will be charged a late fee.**
- Your child's place in any club is not guaranteed until full payment has been received and confirmed.
- Those entitled to a discount will need to pay the full amount for the clubs selected and a refund will be made through via ParentPay.
- Children are expected to behave and comply with all the school rules. Those who are unable to do so will be removed from the club without refund.
- Only those children attending a club can stay. **Siblings must be collected at 3.25pm**.
- Please provide your child with a light healthy snack & drink and ensure they have the correct kit
- **Clubs finish at 4.25pm** (Including Taekwondo).

St Mark's C of E Primary School Term Dates for Autumn Term 2025/26

Date	Event	Details
Friday 5th September 2025	New children begin in Reception – Half Day until 11.30am	
Monday 8th September 2025	A staggered start in Nursery Class 3 children per day	Parents informed
Tuesday 9th September 2025	A staggered start in Nursery Class 3 children per day	Parents Informed
Tuesday 9th September 2025	Year 6 Willow Class begin to attend Kia Oval for Computing and Cricket Coaching	From 1.15pm PE kit needed
Wednesday 10th September 2025	A staggered start in Nursery Class 3 children per day	
Wednesday 10th September 2025	Year 5 and 6 Music Lessons resume	
Thursday 11th September 2025	Year 3 and 4 Music Lessons resume	
Thursday 11th September 2025	Chess resumes	Year 4
Friday 12th September 2025	Meet the teacher meeting for Reception parents 9.00 – 9.20am	In the school hall
Monday 15th September 2025	Meet the teacher meeting for Year 1 parents 2.50 – 3.15	In the school hall
Monday 15th September 2025	Sycamore Class visiting CYE Sailing Centre in Chichester	Arrive at school by 7.00am
Monday 15th September 2025	After School Clubs start	Pay in advance via ParentPay
Tuesday 16th September 2025	Sycamore Class return from CYE Sailing Centre in Chichester	Return by 4.30-5.00pm tbc
Tuesday 16th September 2025	Meet the teacher meetings Year 2 parents 9.00-9.20 Year 3 parents 3.00 – 3.20	In the school hall
Wednesday 17th September 2025	Meet the teacher meetings Year 4 parents 9.00-9.20 Nursery parents 2.50 – 3.15	In the school hall
Thursday 18th September 2025	Meet the teacher meetings Year 6 9.00-9.20 Year 5 3.00 – 3.20	In the school hall
Thursday 18th September 2025	Repeat Secondary Transfer Meeting for Parents of children in 6 at 9.20am following Meet the teacher meeting at 9am	
Friday 19th September 2025	ParentPay & School App Workshop	9.00 am
Monday 22nd September 2025	Swimming begins with Year 5 Class	See separate details
Tuesday 23rd September 2025	Coffee and Cake Welcome Morning and PSA Elections for 2025-26	9.00 am – School Hall Led by Natasha
w/c Monday 29th September 2025	Harvest Festival Week	Collection of food to donate to local food banks
Monday 29th September 2025	Reading Lab begins with Year 6	
Wednesday 1st October 2025	Story Lab begins – mornings tbc	
Friday 3rd October 2025	Story Lab begins – afternoons tbc	

St Mark's C of E Primary School Term Dates for Autumn Term 2025/26		
Date	**Event**	**Details**
Monday 6th October 2025	Autumn walk Reception Class	9.15 am
Friday 10th October 2025	Year 3 Olive Class Roman Banquet	Dress as Romans for the day
Friday 10th October 2025	Year 4 visit to the Science Museum	
Monday 13th October 2025	Focus Week IntoUniversity YR 6 including trips	9.30 – 2.30 all week
Thursday 23rd October 2025	Parent and Staff Football	9.00 am at the school gate
Friday 24th October 2025	Culture Day Culture Day Children to wear cultural clothing or the national flag colours.	After school event involving food and music from around the world
w/c 27th October – 31st October 2025	Half Term	
Monday 3rd November 2025	Term 2 Begins	
Wednesday 5th and Thursday 6th November	Parents' evening	Form to go out electronically

Dear Car Drivers, PLEASE DRIVE AND PARK RESPONSIBLY IN THE LOCAL AREA TO AVOID PROBLEMS. ALWAYS DRIVE SAFELY AND TREAT LOCAL RESIDENTS AND OTHER PARENTS WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT. Thank you Mr Ingram

School Days

Breakfast club

8.00 am to 8.50 am

After School clubs

3.30 pm to 4.25 pm

School Starts / End:

School gates open: 8:45 am

EYFS & KS1: 8:55am - 3:20pm (Monday to Friday) KS 1 Parents are to remain with children until the bell sounds

KS2 : 8:55 - 3:25 pm (Monday to Friday) Please be on time!

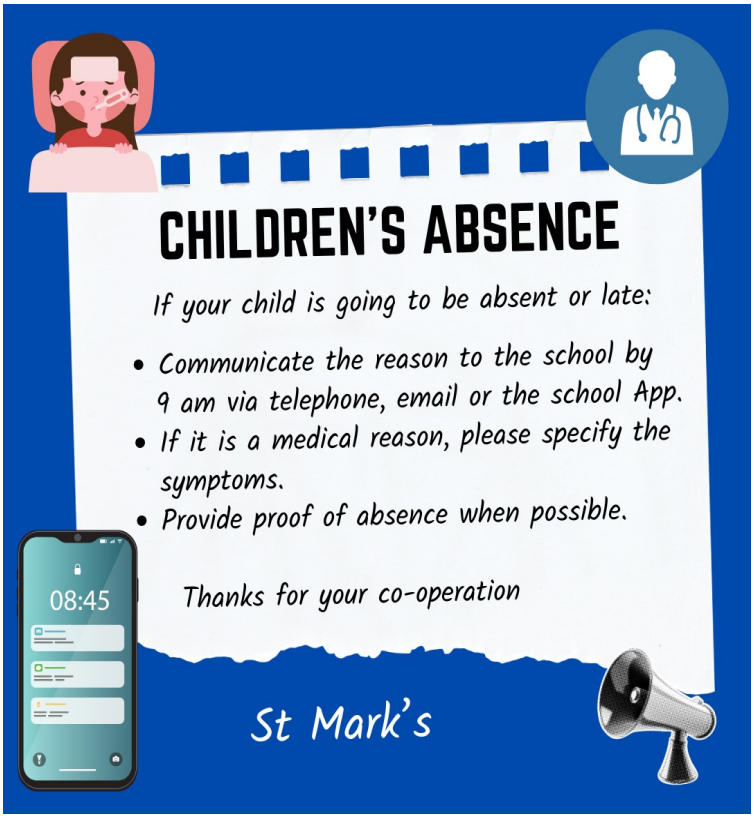
Health & Safety requirement:

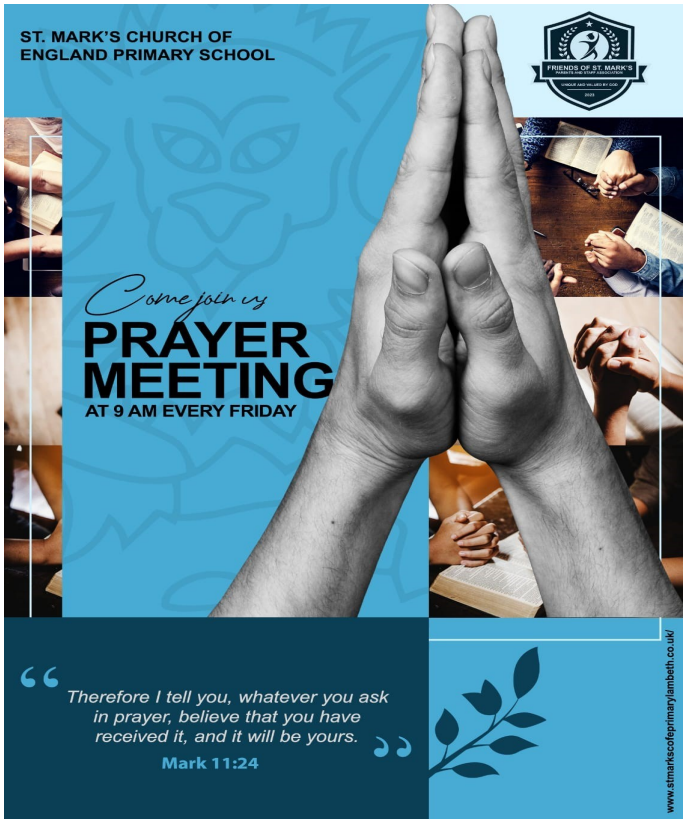
When dropping off and collecting your child, please do not stop at any time by the entrance gates, keep moving, as it is blocking the way to others and it is against H&S, which we all have to adhere to.

Absences & Sickness:

If your child is unwell, please notify the school via phone or email and state the reason for the child's absence.

NOTICES– Pupil absence and parents prayer meeting





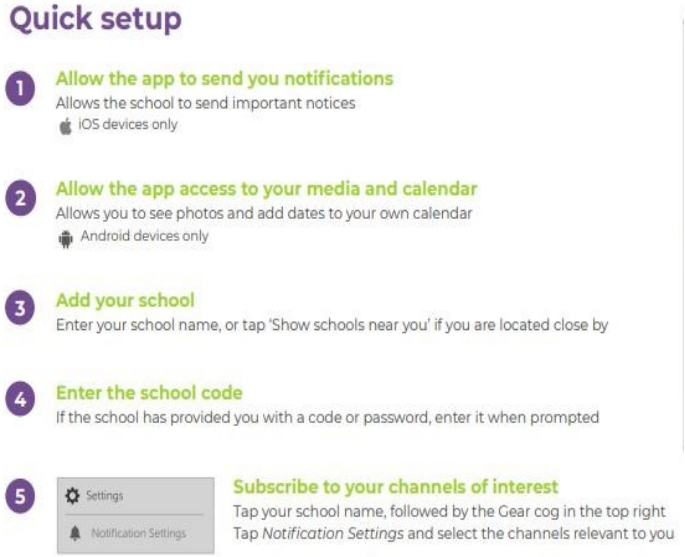
ST MARK'S MOBILE APP

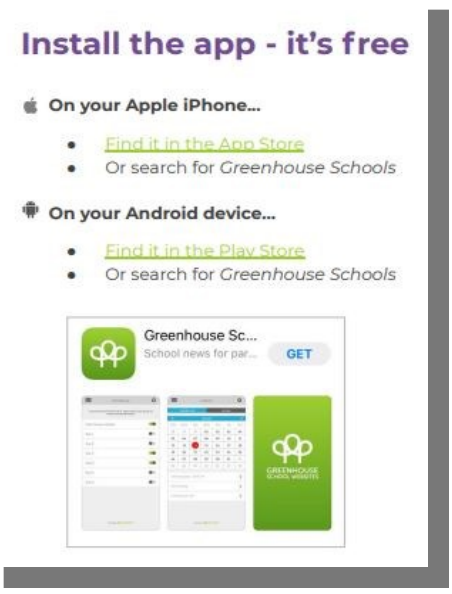
We hope this will enable facilitate communication with Parents.

Among the great futures of the Mobile App:

- **To easily report child's absence**
- **To have direct access to letters**
- **To receive push notifications**
- **Key information, e.g. term dates, galleries, newsletters, calendar and contact**

You can download it directly from our school website – Mobile App—Code 1467





NOTICES– Lunch menu

Please find below the school dinners menu until w/c 9th February 2026
Click here for pdf document

HARRISON
EST.1994

What's on the menu?

HARRISON
food with thought

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
WEEK ONE	Margherita Pizza Wheat, Milk or Mediterranean Roast Vegetable Pizza Wheat, Milk with a Garlic & Sweet Pepper Pasta Side Wheat Jacket Potato with Baked Beans & Veggie Balls Broccoli / Sweetcorn Chocolate Sponge Wheat, Egg, Milk with Chocolate Sauce Milk	Piri Piri Style Chicken served with Smoky Oven Roast Potato Wedges Red Pepper Pattie with a Piri Piri Style Dressing served with Smoky Oven Roast Potato Wedges Rainbow Ribbon Pasta Wheat with a Mixed Leaf Salad Green Beans / Carrots with Lemon & Thyme Wholemeal Shortbread Wheat or Lemon Gram Flour Shortbread Both served with Fresh Fruit Wedges	Mexican Style Beef Wrap Wheat served with a Vegetable Rice Butternut Squash Frittata Egg, Milk with a Smoky BBQ Style Relish Sulphites served with Parsley Potatoes Jacket Potato with Bean Chilli Sweetcorn with Chives / Savoy Cabbage Cinnamon & Cocoa Traybake Wheat, Egg, Milk	Chicken, Spinach & Cheese Pasta Bake Wheat, Milk Chinese Style Vegetarian Stir Fry served with Noodles Wheat, Egg or Rice Ratatouille Style Vegetables with Fusilli Pasta Wheat Broccoli / Carrots Orange Sponge Wheat, Egg, Milk with Custard Milk	Battered Fish Fillet Wheat, Fish served with Tomato Sauce & Chips or New Potatoes Cajun Style Sweet Potato Fritter served with a Pineapple Relish & Chips or New Potatoes Jacket Potato with Cheddar Cheese & Chives Milk Peas / Baked Beans Strawberry Ice Cream Milk with Apple & Berry Compote
WEEK TWO	Macaroni Cheese Wheat, Milk with a Winter Style Salad Sweet Potato Stir served with Rice Courgette & Lemon Pasta Wheat Vegetable Medley Wholemeal Carrot Cake Wheat, Egg with Custard Milk	Roast Chicken Thigh served with Roast Potatoes Cheddar Cheese & Leek Pinwheel Wheat, Milk served with Roast Potatoes Jacket Potato with BBQ Bean Ragout Sulphites Peas / Carrots Vanilla Ice Cream Milk with Pineapple Compote	Jacket Potato with Baked Beans & Cheddar Cheese Milk Salmon Fishcake Wheat, Fish served with a Tomato & Bean Salsa & Herbed Potatoes Pasta Primavera Wheat with a Tomato & Basil Breadstick Wheat, Soybeans Broccoli / Roast Butternut Squash Marbled Sponge Wheat, Egg, Milk with Chocolate Sauce Milk	Beef Bolognaise or Vegetarian Bolognaise served with Penne Pasta Wheat or Rice Jacket Potato with Butternut & Chickpea Korma Oven Roasted Courgettes / Sweetcorn Lemon Traybake Wheat, Egg, Milk	Chicken Sausage Roll Wheat, Sulphites served with Tomato Sauce & Chips or New Potatoes Falafel Bites served with a Sweet Chilli Dip & Chips or New Potatoes Pasta Arrabbiata Wheat Peas / Baked Beans Chocolate Shortbread Wheat or Orange Spiced Gram Flour Shortbread Both served with Fresh Fruit Wedges
WEEK THREE	Red Pesto Style Pasta Wheat with a Ribbon Salad Vegetable Biriyani Jacket Potato with Cheddar Cheese Milk & Coleslaw Egg, Milk, Mustard Roasted Butternut Squash / Peas Steamed Jam Sponge Wheat, Egg, Milk with Custard Milk	Chana Chicken served with Pilau Rice Vegetarian Cottage Pie Cheese & Chive Pasta Wheat, Milk Roasted Courgettes / Sweetcorn Orange Traybake with Chocolate Drizzle Wheat, Egg, Milk	Chinese Style Vegetable Curry served with Rice Margherita Pizza Wheat, Milk with Seasoned Oven Roast Potato Wedges Jacket Potato with Tuna Mayonnaise Egg, Milk, Fish, Mustard Vegetable Medley Ice Cream Milk served with Spiced Apple Compote	Minced Beef & Vegetables served with a Puff Pastry Top Wheat & Parsley Potatoes Tikka Style Chickpea & Potato Cakes served with Apple & Mint Chutney & Rice Tomato & Basil Pasta Wheat Carrots / Savoy Cabbage Berry Swirl Sponge Wheat, Egg, Milk with Custard Milk	Chicken Sausages served with Tomato Sauce & Chips or New Potatoes Cornish Style Vegetable Pasty Wheat served with Chips or New Potatoes Jacket Potato with Baked Beans Peas / Baked Beans Wholemeal Lemon Shortbread Wheat or Cinnamon & Chocolate Gram Flour Shortbread Both served with Fresh Fruit Wedges

Available daily
Please ask the catering manager for food allergen information

Menu Items Available Daily: Salad Selection • Homemade Bread • Fresh Fruit • Yoghurt

WEEK ONE
w/c 1st Sept, 22nd Sept, 13th Oct, 10th Nov, 1st Dec, 5th Jan, 26th Jan

WEEK TWO
w/c 8th Sept, 29th Sept, 20th Oct, 17th Nov, 8th Dec, 12th Jan, 2nd Feb

WEEK THREE
w/c 15th Sept, 6th Oct, 3rd Nov, 24th Nov, 15th Dec, 19th Jan, 9th Feb

Please see page 2 regarding allergen information provided on the menu.

HEALTHY Packed lunch

Should you choose to provide your child with a home packed lunch, we encourage you to provide a balanced packed lunch to support your child's growth and learning, Please include a variety of fruits, vegetables, proteins, and whole grains. Together, we can foster healthy eating habits and ensure the well-being of our students. Click here for the school packed lunch policy.

FRUIT & VEGETABLES

MEAT & ALTERNATIVES

OILY FISH

STARCHY FOOD
Bread, pasta, rice, couscous, potatoes

MILK & DIARY FOOD
Cheese, yogurt fromage frais

HEALTHY DRINK – WATER

Low Cost/No Cost Family Fun in London

Please look at the organisations' websites to double check times and arrangements

Natural Vibezzz – FREE

Family Forest School sessions restarting September 2025

Regular sessions start on the following dates (check schedule page for more details)

Mondays 10am – 12noon – Glengall Wharf Garden, 64 Glengall Road, Peckham SE15 6NH

Wednesdays 10am – 12noon – Southwark Park Wildlife Garden, Gorma Road, SE16 2TX

Fridays 10am – 12noon – Myatt's Fields Park, SE5 9LP

Saturdays 2pm – 4pm – Nature Vibezzz Hub, Portobello Community Garden, SE27 0Q

Email info@naturevibezzz.org for more information

website https://www.naturevibezzz.org/

blog https://naturevibezzznewsletter.wordpress.com/project-sessions/

Little Potters Family Trail – FREE

Saturday 6th September 2025 – 12noon – 4:00pm

Love Wimbledon Business Improvement District

Let your little ones get hands-on with 'Little Potters' family friendly activity

Wimbledon Quarter, 4 Queen's Road, SW19 8ND

https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/free-little-potters-family-trail-tickets-1634510538019?aff=ebdssbdestsearch

Walcott Foundation – FREE

Mondays 10am – 12:00 noon starting on Monday 8th September 2025

Free English Classes (childcare is available)

For parents and caters with Entry Level 2+

Come and learn English (ESOL) and make friends.

Take part in community events, trips, workshops and activities.

To register please contact Kaisa: 07774 668721 or kaisa@efalondon.org

Brixton Windmill– FREE

Wednesday 10th September 2025

Annual Talk:- The 12 Windmills of Lambeth

Join the Chair, Nick Weedon, for a talk exploring the **12 Windmills of Lambeth**.

Brixton is the sole survivor but there were others, not just for milling flour,

but sawing to supply timber yards and for the manufacture of medicines.

The talk will explore where they stood, what they did, and what stands in their place today.

Doors open at 6.45pm for a 7.15pm start. Refreshments available.

The talk is free but please reserve a place.

100 Blenheim Gardens, Windmill Gardens, SW2 5DA

https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/whats-on/100-blenheim-gardens-windmill-gardens/brixton-windmill-centre

Patricia Henry Christ Church Streatham (p.henry@ccsprimary.org.uk)

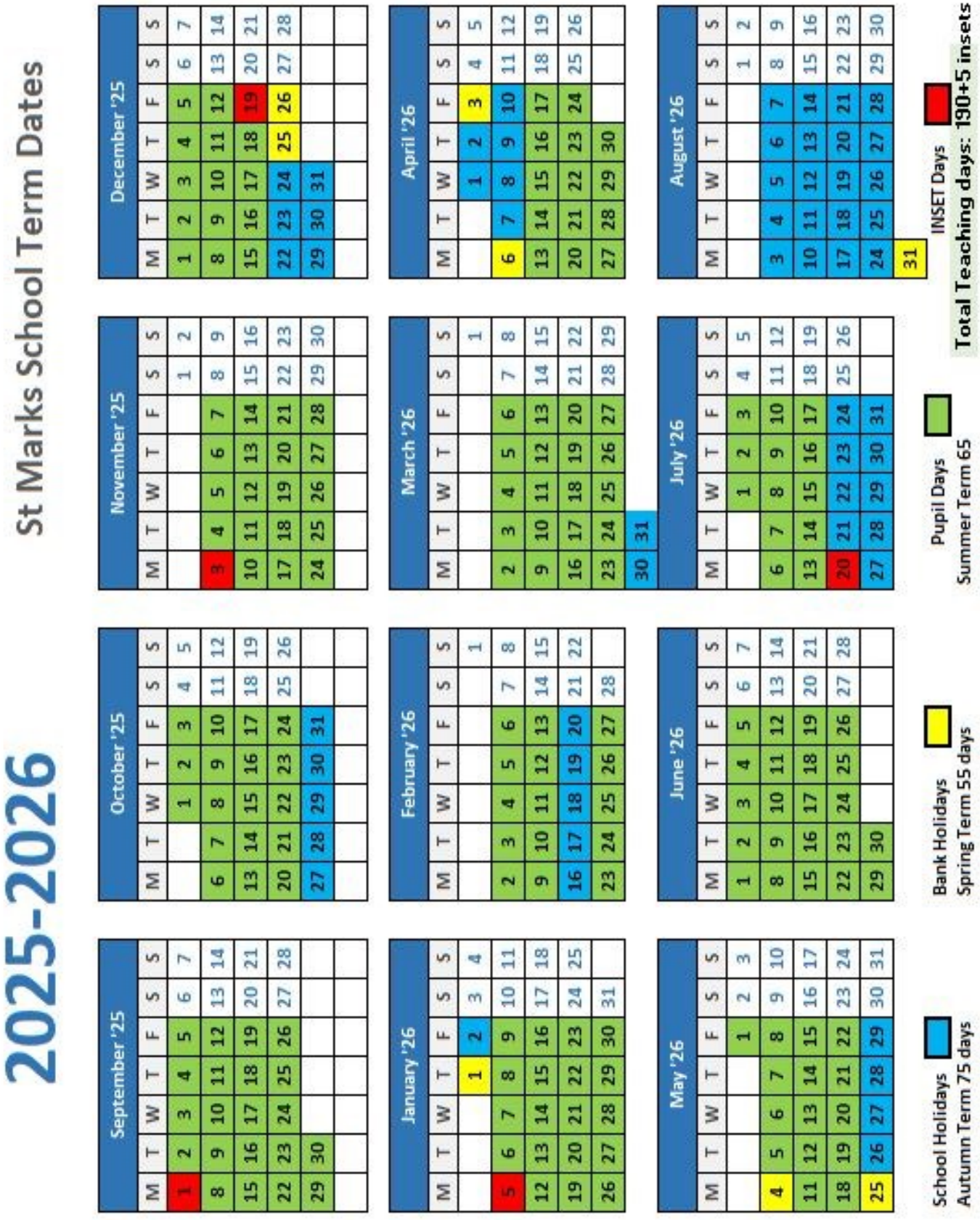
Rachel Thomas, Windmill Cluster (rthomas@sudbourne.com)

Windmill Cluster of Schools

OVAL LEARNING

Term Dates for 2025-26

Please find the term dates for the academic year. Please avoid taking holidays during term time as it can impact on children's progress.



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

SUPPORTING CHILDREN GOING BACK TO SCHOOL

Change can be hard for children to manage. Going back to school after a long summer break might cause them to feel uncertain about their friendships, school routines and relationships with new teachers. However, trusted adults play an important role in providing both practical and emotional support.

1 LEARN WHAT EQUIPMENT YOU NEED

Figure out a list of all equipment needed for the start of the school year, so you can comfortably get your hands on the necessary items in time. If children have any financial issues and receive free school meals, the school may be able to provide some monetary aid or offer other support.

2 COMMUNICATE WITH THE SCHOOL

If you notice that a child is feeling anxious about a change of teacher or school, arranging a one-to-one meeting with their new teacher can be a good way to alleviate some of the anxiety. Just knowing that they understand the child's worries and will be able to help them if the need arises can build the foundations of a good working relationship. Knowing that you can contact them with any queries can also be reassuring.

3 CHECK THE SCHOOL WEBSITE

There will be plenty of information about the start of term on the school's website to keep you updated. Furthermore, you should be able to find other useful information such as contact details for staff, important school equipment, clubs, and news about any special events on the school calendar for the year. It could be helpful to look through this with children for anything which might reassure them.

4 HELP TO MANAGE FRIENDSHIPS

If a child is feeling anxious about making new friends – especially if they're moving up to secondary school – it can be a good idea to remind them of what they could do or say when meeting new classmates. Investigating the extracurricular activities available could be a good way to open a conversation about their hobbies and pastimes, and joining such clubs could allow new friendships to be built on this mutual interest.

5 PLAN SELF-CARE

Talking to children about how they can manage their self-care can be an effective way of helping them understand its importance. This might involve playing a computer game they love with friends, a weekly visit to the library, getting to bed at the same time each night, or a range of other activities that support their wellbeing and provide the familiarity and safety of a routine that works for them.

6 MANAGE TRICKY FEELINGS

Explain that it's okay to have difficult feelings around returning to school. This can help reduce any shame or embarrassment a child might be feeling over these emotions. Emphasise that other children – even some of the teachers – will be feeling the same way. Consider practical ways to manage these feelings and help children feel more in control of their emotions. Some examples include fidget toys, breathing exercises or a notepad for doodling.

7 SECURE A SCHOOL UNIFORM

Parents and carers should try to buy a child's uniform for the new academic year well in advance of the new term (although allowing for potential holiday growth spurts) and give them time to adapt to any changes. Make sure they can comfortably change into and out of it for PE lessons. Double check the requirements for PE on the school's website, as some schools will also have requirements for PE kits.

8 PREPARE FOR TRANSITION DAYS

Ensuring that children attend transition days is a vital step in preparing for the new year. Some schools also have transition evenings for parents and carers to attend, offering extra opportunities to reach out for any additional support.

9 READ THE MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

If a young person struggles with their mental health, it's important to understand their school's mental health policy and provision to know what support is available. This should be on the school's website. A range of aid is typically on offer – from individual timetable amendments to group sessions on emotional wellbeing. You can then discuss these options with the child to reassure them that help is there if they need it.

10 LEARN ABOUT SEN SUPPORT

If a child has SEN and receives help in school, try to confirm exactly what support is available, to ensure they'll be having their needs met. If they're moving up to secondary school, it's a good idea to meet with the SENCO to ensure that all teachers receive the most relevant, up-to-date information about the child's needs and have a contact to liaise with if these change over time.

Meet Our Expert

Amy Sayer is a freelance mental health trainer for schools, an author and a content writer. She is an Associate for Diverse Educators, a fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching and ITT wellbeing coach. Amy has previously been a SMHL coach, helping many different settings audit their mental health provision and support them to create and implement a strategic plan based on the specific needs of each setting.

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Source: See full reference list on guide page at: https://nationalcollege.com/guides/supporting-children-going-back-to-school

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