

Information for parents and carers

Hello and welcome to this term's Parent Newsletter! 😊 We hope you enjoy this edition and discover lots of useful tips, ideas, and advice to support learning at home. If there's anything you'd like us to include in future newsletters, please share your suggestions with Mrs Weekes at the school gate—we love hearing from you!

We're delighted to announce the date of our next Coffee Morning, taking place on 21st January 2026. We hope you'll join us for a warm drink, a biscuit, and a relaxed chat with other parents and staff. It's a great chance to connect and find out more about what's happening in school. We look forward to seeing you there!

Working Together to Help Children Shine!

At Marsh Green, writing continues to be an important focus for improvement across the school. We want every child to feel confident putting their ideas onto paper, using exciting vocabulary, accurate punctuation, and clear sentences. Our teachers are working hard to support children in developing these skills through daily writing opportunities, rich storytelling, and lots of chances to edit and improve their work.

Over the Christmas holiday, there are many fun and simple ways families can help keep children writing at home. Here are some ideas to try:

🎄 Christmas Cards and Thank You Notes

Encourage children to write cards for family and friends, or thank you notes for gifts they receive.

📖 Festive Story Writing

Challenge your child to write their own Christmas adventure or a story about their favourite winter character. Younger children can draw a picture and write a few sentences.

🍷 Keep a Holiday Journal

Children can record special moments each day—visits, movies, fun with family, or favourite meals!

📝 Shopping Lists and Planning

Let them help write shopping lists, party plans, or even a New Year's Eve menu.

🎁 Treasure Hunts and Instructions

Create a festive treasure hunt and ask them to write the clues, or let them write instructions for making decorations or baking treats.

👴 Letters to Santa (or the Elves!)

Always a favourite—encourage children to explain what they would like for Christmas and why.



Attendance and Punctuality



Getting Your Child to School Really Matters

Did You Know... ?

In a School Year, If Your Child is Late Every Day By...	Your Child Would Have Lost Approximately...	or They Would Have Missed Approximately...
5 Minutes	3.5 Days from School	20 Lessons
10 Minutes	7 Days from School	41 Lessons
15 Minutes	10 Days from School	55 Lessons
20 Minutes	14.5 Days from School	82 Lessons
30 Minutes	22 Days from School	123 Lessons

Please Encourage Punctuality to Maintain Attendance

Every Minute Counts: Getting Your Child to School on Time 🕒

At Marsh Green, we know that every day at school is important for your child's learning and progress. Arriving on time means children don't miss out on key lessons, especially reading, which is vital for developing strong literacy skills.

When a child arrives late, they can miss the start of their reading lesson, which can affect their confidence and slow their progress. Being punctual also helps children settle in calmly, start the day positively, and be ready to learn with their friends.

Here are some tips to help your child arrive on time:

- Plan Ahead: Get school bags, uniforms, and lunchboxes ready the night before.
- Set a Routine: Establish consistent wake-up and morning routines.
- Leave Early: Allow extra time for unexpected delays so your child can arrive relaxed and ready to learn.
- Make It Positive: Praise your child for being ready on time—it helps motivate them to keep it up!

By ensuring your child is in school every day and on time, you are giving them the best chance to succeed, especially in essential lessons like reading. Every minute counts—let's make sure they don't miss a single one!

🔔 If You're Struggling

We know mornings can be challenging, and sometimes things happen that are out of your control. If you're finding it hard to get your child to school regularly or on time, please talk to us. We're here to help—not to judge—and we can work together to support your family.

Together, we can make sure every child has the best possible start to each school day. Let's aim for excellent attendance and punctuality so our children can thrive.

Please contact **Mrs Kelly** if your child is going to be absent from school on **0208 270 4984**.

Healthy Lunches

Healthy Portions for Growing Children

At Marsh Green, we know that good nutrition is key to helping children grow, learn, and stay healthy. One important part of this is portion control—making sure children eat the right amount of food for their age and activity level.

Children's appetites can vary from day to day, so it's normal for them to eat more sometimes and less at other times. Helping them understand portion sizes encourages healthy eating habits and prevents overeating.

Here are some tips for parents:

- Use Child-Sized Plates and Bowls: Smaller plates naturally encourage appropriate portions.
- Follow the "Hand Guide": A serving of protein can be about the size of your child's palm, fruit and vegetables can fill a fist, and a serving of carbohydrates can be the size of a cupped hand.
- Offer Balanced Meals: Include a mix of protein, carbohydrates, and plenty of fruit and vegetables.
- Encourage Listening to Hunger Cues: Teach children to stop eating when they feel full rather than finishing everything on their plate.
- Healthy Snacks: Keep snacks nutritious and appropriately sized—fruit, yogurt, or vegetable sticks are great options.

By helping children enjoy the right portion sizes, we can support their growth, energy, and focus at school. Small changes at mealtimes can make a big difference for lifelong healthy habits!



Exciting News Coming Soon!

Next school year, we'll be launching some **fun, hands-on parent and child workshops** to explore healthy eating, packed lunch ideas, and cooking on a budget. These sessions will be a great opportunity to learn together and try new things as a family.

Watch this space for more information soon!

! If your child has food allergies or intolerances, let us know—we're here to help keep them safe and supported. **!**

Thank you, as always, for your support in giving our children the best possible start every day.



It is important we prioritize the safety and well-being of the children under our care. Hence, it is imperative we have a **"no nuts in your lunchboxes"** policy. This policy extends to all food items containing nuts, e.g. chocolate spread. By being vigilant and ensuring that lunchboxes are free from nuts and nut-based products, we can help create a safer environment for all children and prevent potential allergic reactions. Thank you for your understanding and support!

All children are entitled to a **FREE** school meal.

		HAPPY MONDAY	TUESDAY PASTA KING 	GO GREEN WEDNESDAY 	THURSDAY ROAST 	FRIDAY FUN DAY 
 V: Vegetarian  VE: Vegan    AVAILABLE DAILY Jacket Potatoes Available (V/VE options), Freshly Baked Bread (VE), Seasonal Fresh Fruit, Low fat Yoghurts, Locally sourced salad bar (VE)	WEEK ONE WEEK TWO	MAINS Warming Chickpea and Lentil Curry Served with 50/50 Rice (VE)  BBQ Chicken Served with 50/50 Rice SIDE Peas and Sweetcorn (VE) DESSERT Smoothie Ice Cream (V)	MAINS Vegetable Lasagna (V)  Halal and Non-Halal Pomodoro Spaghetti Meatballs SIDE Carrots and Broccoli (VE) DESSERT Carrot Biscuit (V)	MAINS Crispy Margherita Pizza (V)  Vegetable Pie (VE)  SIDE Corn on the Cob (V) DESSERT Berries Jelly Trifle (V)	MAINS Ultimate Veggie Cheesy Fian (V)  Halal and Non-Halal Traditional Roast Chicken SIDE Roast Potatoes (VE), Cauliflower (VE), Yorkshire Pudding (VE), Gravy (VE) DESSERT Banana Cake (V)	MAINS Roast Mediterranean Vegetable & Falafel Wrap (VE)  Classic Battered Fish SIDE Oven Baked Chips (VE), Peas (VE), Curry Sauce (VE) DESSERT Fresh Fruit (VE) Selection of Yogurt (V)
		MAINS Wok Fried Spring Vegetable Stir Fry with Noodles (V)  Veggie Sizzle Sausage Served with Root Mash Potato (V)  SIDE Wiltd Greens & Sweetcorn (VE) DESSERT Smoothie Ice Cream (V)	MAINS Wholesome Mac & Cheese (V)  Halal and Non-Halal Sticky Beef with Carrot Rice SIDE Broccoli (VE) DESSERT Sticky Date Cookie (V)	MAINS Crispy Sweetcorn Pizza (V)  Bean and Sweet Potato Ragu (VE)  SIDE Vegetable Medley (VE) DESSERT Peach Jelly Trifle (V)	MAINS Golden Crunchy Roasted Squash Fillet (VE)  Halal and Non-Halal Traditional Roast Chicken SIDE Roast Potatoes (VE), Cauliflower (VE), Yorkshire Pudding (VE), Gravy (VE) DESSERT Chocolate & Pear Cake (V)	MAINS Hearty Cheese & Leek Pie (V)  Classic Salmon Fish Finger SIDE Oven Baked Chips (VE), Peas (VE), Curry Sauce (VE) DESSERT Fresh Fruit (VE) Selection of Yogurt (V)

Online Safety

Keeping Children Safe Online

Online safety continues to be a top priority at Marsh Green. As children spend more time online—whether for learning, games, or social activities—it's important they know how to stay safe and use the internet responsibly.

Here's what parents need to know:

1. Online safety starts early

- Even primary-age children can encounter harmful content, cyberbullying, or scams.
- Our lessons focus on teaching children how to protect their privacy, spot unsafe content, and understand appropriate online behaviour.

2. Learning doesn't stop at school

- Parents and carers play a crucial role in keeping children safe online. Regular conversations about what your child does online, which games and apps they use, and who they interact with are very important.

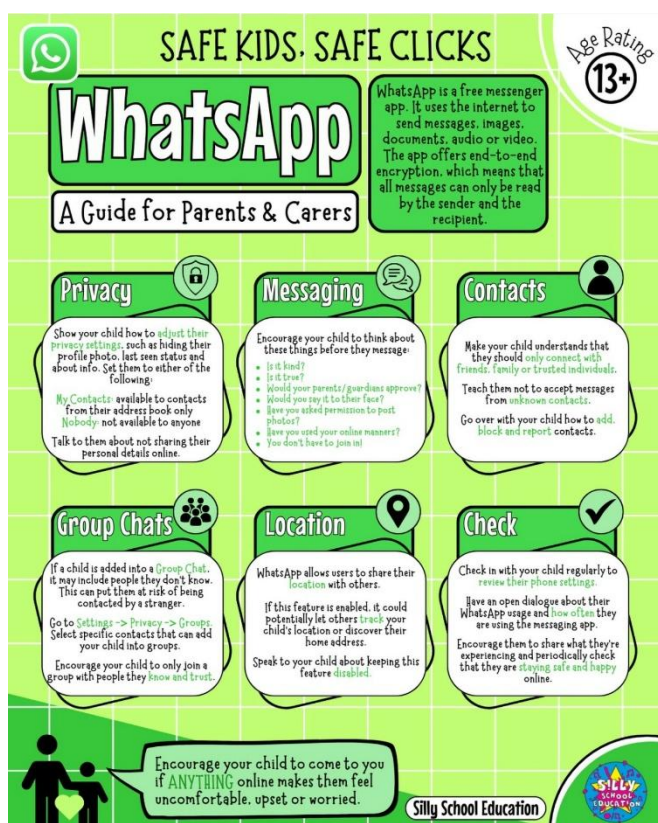
3. Helpful tools and resources

- Platforms like [saferinternet.org.uk](https://www.saferinternet.org.uk) provide safe, age-appropriate lessons about online safety.
- Use parental controls on devices and apps to help monitor content.
- Encourage your child to talk to you if anything online makes them uncomfortable.

4. Tips for supporting your child

- Set routines and screen-time limits.
- Model positive online behaviour.
- Discuss the difference between reliable and misleading content.
- Praise your child for safe and responsible online choices.

By working together, we can help children build **healthy, safe habits online**—just like we teach them how to stay safe in the real world. If you'd like more support or advice about online safety, please speak to a member of staff—we're here to help.



SAFE KIDS. SAFE CLICKS

WhatsApp
A Guide for Parents & Carers

WhatsApp is a free messenger app. It uses the internet to send messages, images, documents, audio or video. The app offers end-to-end encryption, which means that all messages can only be read by the sender and the recipient.

Age Rating 13+

Privacy
Show your child how to adjust their privacy settings, such as hiding their profile photo, last seen status and about info. Set them to either of the following:
• My Contacts: available to contacts from their address book only
• Nobody: not available to anyone
Talk to them about not sharing their personal details online.

Messaging
Encourage your child to think about these things before they message:
• Is it kind?
• Is it true?
• Would your parents/guardians approve?
• Would you say it to their face?
• Have you asked permission to post photos?
• Have you used your online manners?
• You don't have to join in!

Contacts
Make your child understand that they should only connect with friends, family or trusted individuals. Teach them not to accept messages from unknown contacts. Go over with your child how to add, block and report contacts.

Group Chats
If a child is added into a Group Chat, it may include people they don't know. This can put them at risk of being contacted by a stranger. Go to Settings -> Privacy -> Groups. Select specific contacts that can add your child into groups. Encourage your child to only join a group with people they know and trust.

Location
WhatsApp allows users to share their location with others. If this feature is enabled, it could potentially let others track your child's location or discover their home address. Speak to your child about keeping this feature disabled.

Check
Check in with your child regularly to review their phone settings. Have an open dialogue about their WhatsApp usage and how often they are using the messaging app. Encourage them to share what they're experiencing and periodically check that they are staying safe and happy online.

Encourage your child to come to you if ANYTHING online makes them feel uncomfortable, upset or worried.

Silly School Education

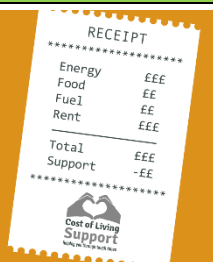


<https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety>

Cost of Living Support

Cost of Living Support



Many people up and down the country are really struggling, and the situation in Barking and Dagenham is no different. You're not alone.

Times are tough right now, so the Council and community partners are working together to support you. Visit www.lbbd.gov.uk/cost-living-support for a

wealth of support and contact details.

Pupil Premium

Pupil premium grant is funding to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in school. It is allocated to schools based on the number of pupils who are recorded as eligible for 'benefit related' free school meals or are looked after by the local authority. Our Pupil Premium Strategy Statement is on the school website if you would like more information.

You can apply online through the council website: <https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/benefits-and-support/free-school-meals-pupil-premium> If you are not sure if you are eligible, please try and apply – nothing ventured nothing gained!

Other benefits to pupils if eligible for Pupil Premium:

- A 50% reduction in the cost of school trips and school residentials
- Free places on the Borough's Holiday & Food Activity camps
- We may be able to offer other individual support, if you need help please speak to a Senior Leader in school.

Are you looking for a job?

Visit this web page for the information, advice and help with finding a job...

www.lbbd.gov.uk/cost-living-support/help-getting-work.

If you are interested in working in a school visit this web page and check the bulletin every Friday for school job vacancies in Barking and Dagenham... www.lbbd.gov.uk/jobs-and-careers/school-jobs

If you would like to gain experience in school and volunteer please express your interest to Mr Fitzpatrick. This could be just one or two days a week, it could be just at lunchtime, or for a whole day. This would be subject to a successful DBS and induction. It would be great for your CV and could help your job prospects in the future.

Village Community Hub

[Village Community Hub - Our Hubs BD](#)

215 Wellington Drive, Dagenham, RM10 9XW

Open Tuesday, 9am to 5pm. Thursday, 9am to 5pm

Email: villagecommunityhub@lbbd.gov.uk

020 8724 1983

Why visit us?

- Our Hubs are welcoming and safe spaces where you can meet new people
- We can offer information, advice and guidance on a range of things including health and wellbeing, employment, jobs, training, courses and lots more
- We provide a range of activities and events for all ages
- Our libraries allow you to find the perfect spot to read a book, enjoy some quiet time or use our public PC's to browse the internet
- Get involved and give back to the community through volunteering or putting on a community project



Winter Fun in Barking and Dagenham!

Holiday Activity and Food Programme (HAF)

- This winter, the borough's HAF programme will run again — offering a range of **free activities** for some children and young people aged **5–16**.
- Activities usually include crafts, games, sports, outdoor play, and more. Each session often includes a **free hot meal**, making it a great choice during the colder months.
- Booking is essential and places can fill up — so it's a good idea to check the council's website for full details and sign up early. [Barking and Dagenham+1](#)

Community Hubs & Local Libraries

- Local libraries and family community hubs often run **free drop-in events** for children and parents — like story times, crafts, or seasonal workshops. These events are usually open to all, with no booking required (unless stated otherwise), making them ideal for a spontaneous outing on a chilly day. [Barking and Dagenham](#)

Get Outside: Parks & Nature Activities

- Even in winter, you don't have to stay indoors — the borough's parks and green spaces offer a chance to get fresh air and enjoy nature. For example, the local ranger service offers activities such as guided walks, wildlife spotting, minibeast hunts and outdoor games under their "Wild and Free" programme. [Barking & Dagenham Country Parks -](#)
- These outdoor adventures are free and fun for families, and they're a lovely way to burn energy, explore nature and enjoy time together away from screens. [Barking & Dagenham Country Parks](#)
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Community & Social Spaces: Warm-Up Together

- For colder days when you just want to stay warm and cosy, there are warm spaces across the borough — community centres that welcome families with activities like board games, crafts, toddler zones, and sometimes snacks or hot drinks. [Barking and Dagenham](#)
- These warm spaces are inclusive and relaxed — a good place for families to meet other local people and enjoy some low-cost, child-friendly fun during winter.

✅ Why These Activities Matter

- They help children stay active and engaged during the winter holidays — helpful for both physical and mental wellbeing.
- They offer opportunities for families to enjoy free or low-cost fun together — which is especially valuable during a time when energy bills and living costs are high.
- They build community — meeting other families, making new friends, and giving children a sense of belonging locally.
- They offer a variety of experiences — not just crafts or games, but nature, socialising, exercise, and learning new skills.

We hope you and your children have a safe, happy, and memorable winter break. 🌈 Don't forget to take lots of pictures, try new things, and most importantly—have fun

Why singing is good for your health!

Singing — especially in groups — offers significant benefits for both physical and mental health. It strengthens social bonds and creates a sense of unity among participants. Physically, singing improves lung function, heart rate, and blood pressure, and can boost the immune system by activating the vagus nerve and releasing endorphins that reduce stress and pain.

Singing engages multiple parts of the brain associated with language, movement and emotion, making it beneficial for cognitive health. It is increasingly used as therapy for people with conditions such as Parkinson's disease, dementia, and chronic respiratory illnesses, including long Covid. Group singing can help improve breathing patterns, mood, and quality of life.

Singing remains deeply rooted in human culture and continues to show promise as a powerful tool for health, wellbeing, and social connection.



Thank you to everyone who attended the Carol Evening. It was a truly magical occasion, and the children performed beautifully, singing their hearts out throughout the evening.



Homework: Supporting Your Child at Home

Homework is an important way for children to practice what they've learned at school and develop independence, confidence, and good study habits.

Benefits of Homework:

- Reinforces learning from the classroom
- Builds responsibility and time-management skills
- Encourages problem-solving and critical thinking
- Helps parents see what their child is learning

How Parents Can Help:

- **Create a routine:** Set aside a regular, quiet time and space for homework.
- **Be supportive, not do it for them:** Encourage your child to try tasks independently first.
- **Break it into chunks:** Short, focused sessions are often more effective than long ones.
- **Praise effort:** Celebrate progress, not just results, to boost confidence.
- **Stay in touch:** If your child struggles, speak to their teacher for guidance.

With your support, homework can become a positive part of learning and help your child thrive at school!

Reading and Phonics

Little Wandle Phonics and Reading Scheme – A Successful Start! 📖 ✨

We are excited to share that the launch of the **Little Wandle Phonics and Reading scheme** this term has been a great success! Our children have quickly gotten used to the routines, and we are already seeing fantastic progress in their reading and phonics skills. The structured lessons, engaging books, and consistent practice are helping children develop confidence in decoding words, blending sounds, and understanding what they read.

How Parents Can Support at Home

You can help your child continue making progress by supporting their phonics and reading at home:

- **Read daily:** Spend 10–15 minutes each day reading together. Even a short, regular reading session makes a big difference.
- **Listen and discuss:** Ask your child questions about the story—who, what, when, where, why—and encourage them to talk about the pictures and words.
- **Practice phonics sounds:** Recap the letter sounds they are learning at school. You can play games or use flashcards to make it fun.
- **Praise and encourage:** Celebrate successes and encourage perseverance when words are tricky.

Looking After Reading Books

A gentle reminder: please help your child take good care of the reading books that come home. It is very disappointing to receive books with torn pages, writing, or missing pages. Listening to your child read each day and ensuring the books are handled carefully helps them last longer and supports the learning of all children.

By working together, we can help every child enjoy reading, make great progress, and develop a lifelong love of books!



Dates to Remember

- **Reception – Phonics Meeting: 12.01.26 at 2:30pm**
- **Year 1 – Phonics Screening Check Readiness: 19.01.26 at 2:30pm**





Caring for YOU This Winter

The holidays are a special time—but they can also be busy and tiring! Don't forget to look after yourself while caring for your family.

✨ Why it matters:

- When you feel good, you can enjoy family time more.
- Your calm helps your children feel safe and happy.
- Small moments of self-care boost your energy and mood.

💡 Quick ways to look after yourself:

- Take a few minutes for a hot drink ☕
- Go for a short walk outside 🚶
- Listen to music or a podcast you enjoy 🎵
- Have a quiet moment to read or relax 📖

Remember: caring for yourself isn't selfish—it helps the whole family thrive! 💛

🗣️ It's OK to Ask for Help

Remember: you don't have to do it all. If you're feeling overwhelmed, talk to someone you trust or speak with a member of staff at school—we're here to support families, not just pupils.

Wishing you a holiday full of fun, rest, and balance. And if things don't go to plan every day—that's perfectly okay too. You're doing your best, and that's more than enough.

There are lots of services available to you if you wish to access it...

Parents Helpline UK provides confidential advice and support for parents. You can call their helpline on 0808 800 2222. They also offer online chat support from 9.30am to 4pm.

www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/

www.familylives.org.uk/advice

www.family-action.org.uk

Rehab 4 Addiction offers a wealth of resources and information about addiction and mental health, which could be invaluable to those in need. They also provide a helpline that offers immediate assistance to those struggling with addiction in Dagenham, a service that could be life-saving

<https://www.rehab4addiction.co.uk/country-wide/drug-alcohol-rehab-dagenham>,

Rainham Foodbank

Unit 3-4, Mick Fury House, Lowen Road, Rainham, RM13 8HT

☎ 01708 397484

