



'At Moat Farm Infant School everyday we learn, achieve, have fun and play'



# Moat Farm Infant School

## Newsletter January 2026



We would like to wish all our families a very happy and prosperous New Year! A heartfelt thank you to all parents for your thoughtful Christmas gifts – the staff greatly appreciate your kindness and generosity. We hope you had a restful holiday and enjoyed precious time with your loved ones.

Thank you also for your continued support and understanding as we managed the challenges posed by the recent snow and icy conditions.

This half term promises to be both exciting and busy! We have a fantastic range of events and activities planned, including:

- Maths Parent Workshops for Year 1 and Year 2
- A Puppet Show for Year 1
- Year 2 Edgmond Hall Residential Trip
- Reception Phonics Parent Workshops
- A Visit from the Library Service Bus
- Road Safety Sessions for EYFS
- Year 1 Design & Technology Parent Workshops
- Spring Parent Consultations
- Parent Coffee Morning with External Visitors
- Year Group Valentine's Discos
- Weekly Parent Mood Master Sessions

Please remember to sign up for these events and workshops to make the most of the opportunities to engage with your child's learning and school community.

We look forward to a wonderful term ahead filled with learning, fun, and collaboration!



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### **My School Fund**

We are excited to announce that we have signed up to My School Fund!

#### **How does it work?**

My School Fund links your spend to your chosen school, meaning every time you make a purchase at participating retailers you both benefit through an innovative cashback scheme.

#### **What's in it for me and my child's school?**

Both you and your child's school will receive eGift Cards to spend in participating retailers based on a percentage of your overall spend.

#### **Getting Started?**

Step 1: Visit <https://www.myschoolfund.org/#/> to sign up for free and link to your child's school.

Step 2: Register your credit/debit card to your account

Step 3: Spend at participating retailers

Step 4: Start receiving your eGift Cards

Click this link to watch the introduction video: [My School Fund for parents - YouTube](#)

### **Operation Encompass**



As a school we take part in Operation Encompass. Operation Encompass is a police and Education early intervention safeguarding partnership that supports children and young people exposed to Domestic Abuse. It aims to ensure schools are notified in a timely manner of any reported Domestic Abuse incident where children are present or registered at the address. This early notification should mean that, in the majority of cases, schools are alerted in readiness for the children arriving at school the first working day following an incident.

Operation Encompass went live week commencing 1 October 2018 and the aim is that schools will know as close as possible to the start of the school day that the child has been or may have been exposed to a domestic abuse incident.

### **School Nursery Places**

Applications are now being taken for next year's nursery places – September 2026, January 2027 and April 2027 intakes. Registration forms are available at the school office or it can be emailed to you on request. Don't leave it too late to apply for your place.

If you would like to know more ask at the office for Mrs Davis or alternatively you can email her direct on: [jayne.davis@mfi.school](mailto:jayne.davis@mfi.school). This is the range of options for our families:

- **30 hour** funded places for **3 and 4-year** olds (8:40 – 3:00) you can apply for the eligibility code on this website. [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk)
- **15 hour** funded places for **3 and 4-year** olds - children may start with us the term after they turn 3 (8:30 – 11:30am or 12-3pm)
- **15 hour** funded places for eligible 2-year olds (12-3pm) some families may receive an ELT code or letter offering them free nursery places for their child.
- **15 hour** funded places for eligible working families with 2-year olds (12 – 3pm everyday) Eligible working families will be able to get 15 hours free places too. You can apply for the eligibility code on this website – free childcare for 2-year olds [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk)



# Attendance Matters



## What a great start to 2026!!!

Whole school attendance last week was 97.3%, this was such a strong start to the new term, thank you to our families for continuing to work with us to ensure that all children have the best possible attendance.

### Support from school

Where possible, school will offer support to you and your child around attendance difficulties. This is through our multi-tiered approach to support. Mrs Taylor may call you to request a meeting with you to talk about your child's attendance and any difficulties you or your child may be facing. This is a chance to talk through any difficulties there are and we encourage families to engage with us in this way so that your child can have the best attendance possible.

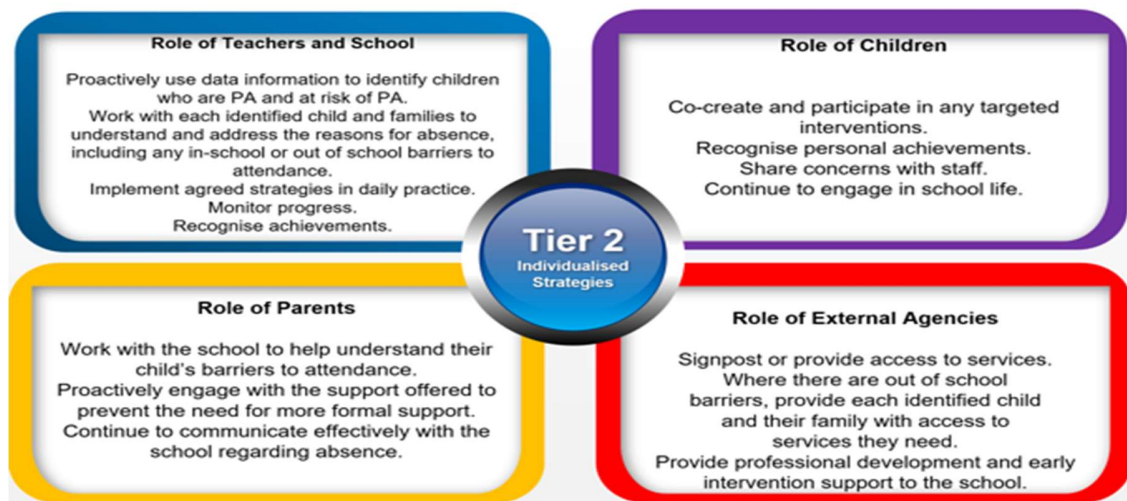


Table 1: Days Absent Table

Days Absent	Risk Of PA Level	Additional Factors
1	Low (Risk of PA)	Risk and Protective factors, traditional absence, identified as SEND or FSM demographic, external agency involvement.
2	Low (Risk of PA)	
3	Low (Risk of PA)	
4	Low (Risk of PA)	
5	Low (Risk of PA)	
6	Low (Risk of PA)	
7	Low (Risk of PA)	
8	Low (Risk of PA)	
9	Low (Risk of PA)	
10	Moderate (Risk of PA)	
11	Moderate (Risk of PA)	
12	Moderate (Risk of PA)	
13	Moderate (Risk of PA)	
14	Moderate (Risk of PA)	
15	High (Risk of PA)	
16	High (Risk of PA)	
17	High (Risk of PA)	
18	High (Risk of PA)	
19 or more	Locked into PA	

Table 2: Spells of Absence

Number of Spells of Absence	Risk of PA Level
1	Low (Risk of PA)
2	Low (Risk of PA)
3	Moderate (Risk of PA)
4	Moderate (Risk of PA)
5	High (Risk of PA)
6 or above	High (Risk of PA)

Your child will have brought their attendance register home which shows their attendance to date. The table above will help you to see how they are doing. Their attendance is reported as a percentage on the register. Attendance below 90% is classed as Persistently Absent (PA). Over the year this will equate to 19 days or more absent from school.

### **Eye Tests for Children**

Children may not always know that they have a vision problem. It is therefore recommended that children have regular eye tests. These should be carried out at least once every 2 years, even if there are no problems with their eyesight. These tests can be done at a high street optician and are free for all children under 16 years old (and those under 19 years old in full-time education). You can speak to your child's optician if you have any concerns about their vision.

### **School Gates**

#### **Vaping/Smoking**

Can I please ask that parents do not vape or smoke around the school gates as they arrive and leave?

#### **Inappropriate Language**

Please ensure that the language that you are using around the school gates near our children remains appropriate for their little ears!

### **Up to date contact information**

Please ensure the school office has up to date mobile phone numbers in case we need to contact you in an emergency. If you have moved house since you last completed the school form, please let the office staff know your new address.

Thank you

### **Car Safety**

We would like to remind families that children must use a child car seat until they're 12 years old or 135 centimeters tall, whichever comes first. Children over 12 or more than 135cm tall must wear a seat belt. You can choose a child car seat based on your child's height or weight.

Please view the below link for more information:

<https://www.gov.uk/child-car-seats-the-rules>

Please ensure that you follow the car seat regulations and your child is belted in at all times.

### **Rocksteady Music**

The Rocksteady music company have been working with a number of children in both Year 1 and Year 2. On Tuesdays, the children are learning how to play the drums, the guitar, the keyboard and singing. If you would like your child to take part, please come into the office and ask to speak to Mrs Ashmore our Music leader (There is a charge for this activity). You can find more information on the following website:

<https://www.rocksteadymusicschool.com/parents/>

### **Mood Master Sessions**

Barnardo's have started their Mood Master sessions with parents in school. We have 8 parents attending these sessions which will support them to step back from the ups and downs of life and reflect on their own well-being. Over the next few weeks parents will be supported to talk about their feelings, be given strategies on how to stop their worries, be given strategies to deal with stressful situations, be given strategies to resolve conflict and be given some mindfulness activities to take part in. Thank you to the parents who have accessed this support.



## Phonics



At Moat Farm Infant School, we believe that all our children can become fluent readers and writers.

This is why we teach reading through *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised*. We start teaching Little Wandle Foundations in our Nursery and then, from Reception, we follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised progression, which ensures children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move through school. As a result, all our children are able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. We also model the application of the alphabetic code through phonics in shared reading and writing, both inside and outside of the phonics lesson and across the curriculum. We have a strong focus on language development for our children because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

A reminder that useful phonics videos are on our website [Phonics | Moat Farm Infant School \(MFIS\)](https://www.moatfarminfantschool.com/phonics/) and on the Little Wandle Parents section <https://www.littlewandle.org.uk/resources/for-parents/>. You will also find an overview of what sounds the children learn in each year group.

### Reading Award



Congratulations for completing the Christmas Reading Challenge

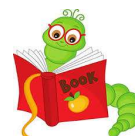


Well done to the children who took part in our Christmas Reading Challenge! All children were entered into a raffle and the winners were:

Riley in Robin Class

LA in Hedgehog Class

Averi-J in Kingfisher Class



Safer Internet Day 2026  
Tuesday 10 February

Coordinated by the UK Safer Internet Centre

[saferinternetday.org.uk](https://saferinternetday.org.uk)

On Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> February it is Safer Internet Day. The theme this year is 'Smart tech, safe choices- Exploring the safe and responsible use of AI'

In school children will be learning about what AI means and its uses in everyday life.

## 10 Top Tips for Parents to Support Children to Read Published by DfE

**1. Encourage your child to read** - Reading helps your child's wellbeing, develops imagination and has educational benefits too. Just a few minutes a day can have a big impact on children of all ages.

**2. Read aloud regularly** - Try to read to your child every day. It's a special time to snuggle up and enjoy a story. Stories matter and children love re-reading them and poring over the pictures. Try adding funny voices to bring characters to life.

**3. Encourage reading choice** - Give children lots of opportunities to read different things in their own time - it doesn't just have to be books. There's fiction, non-fiction, poetry, comics, magazines, recipes and much more. Try leaving interesting reading material in different places around the home and see who picks it up.

**4. Read together** - Choose a favourite time to read together as a family and enjoy it. This might be everyone reading the same book together, reading different things at the same time, or getting your children to read to each other. This time spent reading together can be relaxing for all.

**5. Create a comfortable environment** - Make a calm, comfortable place for your family to relax and read independently - or together.

**6. Make use of your local library** - Libraries in England are able to open from 4 July, so visit them when you're able to and explore all sorts of reading ideas. Local libraries also offer brilliant online materials, including audiobooks and e-books to borrow. See Libraries Connected for more digital library services and resources.

**7. Talk about books** - This is a great way to make connections, develop understanding and make reading even more enjoyable. Start by discussing the front cover and talking about what it reveals and suggests the book could be about. Then talk about what you've been reading and share ideas. You could discuss something that happened that surprised you, or something new that you found out. You could talk about how the book makes you feel and whether it reminds you of anything.

**8. Bring reading to life** - You could try cooking a recipe you've read together. Would you recommend it to a friend? Alternatively, play a game where you pretend to be the characters in a book, or discuss an interesting article you've read.

**9. Make reading active** - Play games that involve making connections between pictures, objects and words, such as reading about an object and finding similar things in your home. You could organise treasure hunts related to what you're reading. Try creating your child's very own book by using photos from your day and adding captions.

**10. Engage your child in reading in a way that suits them** - You know your child best and you'll know the best times for your child to read. If they have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) then short, creative activities may be the way to get them most interested. If English is an additional language, encourage reading in a child's first language, as well as in English. What matters most is that they enjoy it.



## Welcome to Sandwell Family Hubs Mobile Spoke

When the family hub mobile visits Moat Farm Infant School, it will be on Lavender Farm Car Park from 2:15pm to 4.30pm. There will be a range of services including:

- Mobile Library
- Family Hub staff to provide advice and information about the services available.

Do pop in and say hello!

Believe in  
children  
Barnardo's

Sandwell  
Metropolitan Borough Council

Sandwell  
**Family Hubs**  
Helping Families Thrive

## Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Our EYFS provides a nurturing and inspiring environment where children feel safe, valued, and excited to learn. We place a strong emphasis on outdoor learning and creative exploration, giving children daily opportunities to discover, imagine, and develop through play. With caring, experienced staff guiding each step, we support children in building confidence, independence, and essential skills, ensuring they are happy, well-prepared, and ready for a smooth transition into school.

Throughout the year, we enhance our curriculum for the children through inviting visitors into school, having special events and organising trips to extend the learning opportunities we provide for the children. This includes; having a visit from a storyteller, having a teddy bear picnic, going to visit the farm, having a mobile farm come to Nursery and having a birthday party for our school dog Lottie!

For more information about our EYFS, please visit our school website or contact our Early Years Lead, Miss Evans.

[elise.evans@mfi.school](mailto:elise.evans@mfi.school)

## Pupil Premium and Free School Meals

If your child is eligible for benefit related free school meals you need to register them for this. School will receive extra funding called 'pupil premium' and you may also receive food vouchers during the school holidays from Sandwell Council. Families who are eligible for free school meals will also be able to register children for free activities called in the school holidays - 'Holiday Activities and Food' HAF Sandwell scheme. They have a great Facebook page promoting all of the activities on offer in Sandwell and an internet page [Sandwell Holiday Activities](#)



### What is pupil premium funding?

Pupil premium funding from the government is given to schools to help pupils reach their full potential, regardless of their background or financial situation. School will get an extra £1,455 for every eligible pupil who is registered for free school meals. This extra money can make a real difference to the funding we receive from the government. It's provided for pupils who:

- Are registered for free school meals (*this is different from the universal free meals funding scheme for all Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils*)
- Are, or have been, in care
- Have parents in the armed forces

### **Many families in Sandwell could get free school meals but don't claim for them.**

Your child might be eligible if you access:

- Income Support
- Income-based jobseeker's allowance or employment and support allowance
- Support under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and you have an annual gross income of no more than £16, 190
- Universal credit, provided you have an annual net earned income not exceeding £7,400 (£616.67 per month)

You can apply for free school meals via the Sandwell Council Website [Free school meals | Sandwell Council](#) or alternatively you can complete a form in school and we can apply for you. These forms are available from the school office.

**Parent's with No Recourse to Public Funds 'NRTPF'** - For parent's with no recourse to public funds, you will need to apply directly at your child's school and must meet the relevant Government set eligibility groups. These can be found on the following link; [NRTPF - Eligibility Criteria](#)

**February half-term - It is important to note that there will be no food vouchers issued for the 1-week half-term holiday in February as this was included in the £60 Christmas holiday 2024 vouchers issued in December to all eligible parents in receipt of benefit related free school meals.**

## Packed Lunches

It is really lovely having the children who have packed lunches in Key stage 1 eat in the school hall. The link below will provide you with some new ideas of how to vary the contents and introduce new foods to your children. We would like our children to have a 'balanced' packed lunch which is healthy and has a range of items in it.

[Lunchbox ideas and recipes – Healthier Families - NHS](#)

### Lunchbox tips



#### Keep them fuller for longer

Base the main lunchbox item on foods like bread, rice, pasta and potatoes. Choose wholegrain where you can.



#### Freeze for variety

Keep a small selection of different types of bread in the freezer so you have a variety of options – like bagels, pittas and wraps, granary, wholemeal and multigrain.



#### DIY lunches

Wraps and pots of fillings can be more exciting for kids when they get to make them. Dipping foods are also fun and a nice change from a sandwich each day.



#### Cut back on fat

Pick lower-fat fillings – like lean meats (including chicken or turkey), fish (such as tuna or salmon), lower-fat spread, reduced-fat cream cheese and reduced-fat hard cheese. And try to avoid using mayonnaise in sandwiches.

[See more healthier swap ideas](#)



#### Mix your slices

If your child does not like wholegrain, try making a sandwich from 1 slice of white bread and 1 slice of brown bread.



#### Always add veg

Cherry tomatoes, or sticks of carrot, cucumber, celery and peppers all count towards their 5 A Day. Adding a small pot of reduced-fat hummus or other dips may help with getting kids to eat vegetables.



#### Ever green

Always add salad to sandwiches and wraps too – it all counts towards your child's 5 A Day!



#### Cheesy does it...

Cheese can be high in fat and salt, so choose stronger-tasting ones – and use less of it – or try reduced-fat varieties.



#### Cut down on crisps

If your child really likes their crisps try reducing the number of times you include them in their lunchbox, and swap for homemade plain popcorn or plain rice cakes instead.



#### Add bite-sized fruit

Try chopped apple, peeled satsuma segments, strawberries, blueberries, halved grapes or melon slices to make it easier for them to eat. Add a squeeze of lemon juice to stop it from going brown.



#### Tinned fruit counts too

A small pot of tinned fruit in juice – not syrup – is perfect for a lunchbox and easily stored in the cupboard.



#### Swap the fruit bars

Dried fruit like raisins, sultanas and dried apricots are not only cheaper than processed fruit bars and snacks but can be healthier too. Just remember to keep dried fruit to mealtimes as it can be bad for teeth.



#### Switch the sweets

Swap cakes, chocolate, cereal bars and biscuits for malt loaf, fruited teacakes, fruit breads or fruit (fresh, dried or tinned – in juice not syrup).



#### Yoghurts: go low-fat and lower-sugar

Pop in low-fat and lower-sugar yoghurts or fromage frais and add your own fruit.



#### Get them involved

Get your kids involved in preparing and choosing what goes in their lunchbox. They are more likely to eat it if they helped make it.



#### Variety is the spice of lunch!

Be adventurous and get creative to mix up what goes in their lunchbox. Keeping them guessing with healthier ideas will keep them interested and more open to trying things.

### Dates for your diary – Spring Term 2026

#### January

12<sup>th</sup> Badger and Heron Maths parent workshop 2:15-3:10  
 13<sup>th</sup> Hedgehog and Squirrel Maths parent workshop 2:25-3:10  
 14<sup>th</sup> Rabbit and Kingfisher Maths parent workshop 2:15-3:10  
 15<sup>th</sup> Otter and Frog Maths parent workshop 2:15-3:10  
 16<sup>th</sup> Year 1 Puppet show  
 19<sup>th</sup>- 21<sup>st</sup> Year 2 Residential to Edgmond Hall  
 20<sup>th</sup> Library service bus visiting from 2:15  
 22<sup>nd</sup> Reception road safety parent meeting  
 26<sup>th</sup> Squirrel and Badger DT parent workshop 2-3:10  
 27<sup>th</sup> Hedgehog and Heron DT parent workshop 2-3:10

#### February

Wk beg 2<sup>nd</sup> Story Telling Week  
 4<sup>th</sup> Parent consultations (**No clubs**)  
 5<sup>th</sup> Parent coffee morning with external agencies (school hall)  
 9<sup>th</sup> Reception Valentines Disco 3:15-4:15  
 10<sup>th</sup> Year 1 Valentines Disco 3:15-4:15  
 11<sup>th</sup> Year 2 Valentines Disco 3:15-4:15  
 12<sup>th</sup> Nursery and Rainbow Valentines Disco 3:15-3:50  
 13<sup>th</sup> Break up from school  
**February Half Term Holiday**  
**23<sup>rd</sup> Children return to school**  
 Wk beg. 23<sup>rd</sup> Easter raffle tickets on sale  
 27<sup>th</sup> Nursery 'love of reading' parent workshop

#### March

2<sup>nd</sup> World Book Week  
 2<sup>nd</sup>- 9<sup>th</sup> Book Fair  
 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Drama workshop in school – details to follow  
 4<sup>th</sup> Robin and Fox reading parent workshop  
 5<sup>th</sup> Owl and Mole reading parent workshop  
 5<sup>th</sup> World Book Day – details to follow  
 8<sup>th</sup> International Women's Day  
 9<sup>th</sup> Science Week  
 9<sup>th</sup> Fizz Pop Science assembly  
 11<sup>th</sup> Year 2 trip to the Black Country Museum  
 11<sup>th</sup> Mother's Day Stay and Read – Reception 8.30-8.45  
 12<sup>th</sup> Mother's Day Stay and Read – Year 2 8.30-8.45  
 13<sup>th</sup> Mother's Day Stay and Read – Year 1 8.30-8.45  
 16<sup>th</sup> Neurodiversity week  
 16<sup>th</sup> Year 1 Art gallery 3-3:20  
 17<sup>th</sup> Rocksteady parent concert  
 18<sup>th</sup> Year 2 trip to the Black Country Museum  
 20<sup>th</sup> Red Nose day  
 23<sup>rd</sup> Autism Awareness week  
 26<sup>th</sup> Year 1 Parent OPAL play morning 9-10:30  
 26<sup>th</sup> Mole and Owl Easter Bonnet parade in class 2:45-3:10  
 27<sup>th</sup> Nursery Easter Bonnet parade for parents in the hall 9am  
 27<sup>th</sup> Robin and Fox Easter Bonnet parade in class 2:45-3:10  
**27<sup>th</sup> Spring Term Ends**  
**Easter School Holiday**

SCHOOL HAS TO ALLOCATE 6 DAYS EACH YEAR FOR STAFF TRAINING. SCHOOL WILL BE **CLOSED** TO ALL PUPILS ON THE FOLLOWING DAYS.

We have had 4 already at the beginning of this term, 2 are remaining.

~~Monday 1<sup>st</sup> September~~

~~Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September~~

~~Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> November~~

~~Friday 5<sup>th</sup> December~~

**Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June**

**Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July**

## Sandwell School Term Dates 2025-2026

### Autumn term 2025

- Term starts: Monday 1 September 2025
- Half-term holiday: Monday 27 October 2025 to Friday 31 October 2025
- Term ends: Friday 19 December 2025
- Christmas holiday: Monday 22 December 2025 to Friday 2 January 2026

### Spring term 2026

- Term starts: Monday 5 January 2026
- Half-term holiday: Monday 16 February 2026 to Friday 20 February 2026
- Term ends: Friday 27 March 2026
- Easter holiday: Monday 30 March 2026 to Friday 10 April 2026

### Summer term 2026

- Term starts: Monday 13 April 2026 (Bank Holiday Monday 4 May)
- Half-term holiday: Monday 25 May 2026 to Friday 29 May 2026
- Term ends: Monday 20 July 2026 (Inset Day)
- Summer holiday starts: Tuesday 21 July 2026