



27th March 2026

Message from the Headteacher

We are pleased to extend a warm welcome to new pupils and families that recently joined our school community. We are delighted to have you as part of our school family and look forward to getting to know you in the weeks ahead.

We've had a wonderfully busy and enriching Spring term, filled with exciting learning opportunities and special events across the school.

Our Reading Ambassadors helped make World Book Day extra special with teacher reading swaps, book swaps, outdoor reading activities and a fantastic costume parade. Pupils also received book tokens and enjoyed a lively Pinocchio dance workshop.

We're excited to share that we have also joined the National Year of Reading to help further grow our reading culture.

Our School Council and Eco Warriors continued to meet regularly, giving pupils a strong voice in school life and environmental projects.

KS2 pupils enjoyed a French Enrichment workshop filled with songs, games and interactive learning, while Nursery had great fun in their weekly Hartbeeps sessions focusing on movement, sound, and imaginative play.

Music continues to be a real strength at our school. Our KS2 choir meets every Monday morning and is busy preparing for their performance at the Hexagon Concert in June 2026.

This term we also offered a wide range of after-school clubs — including Football, Street Dance, Gymnastics, Gardening, French and Netball — as well as new lunchtime activities and football coaching.

We were pleased to hold our first SEND Parent/Carer Coffee Afternoon too.

Our Young Carers enjoyed a special trip to the cinema for Young Carers Day, and our Wellbeing Ambassadors organised a Wellbeing Afternoon for each Key Stage, supporting positive mental health across the school.

A big thank you to the Friends of the School (FOH) for organising the Mother's Day Shop, Easter egg hunt and providing the prizes for the mad March hair as well as the end of term Krispy Kreme donuts treat.

We were delighted with the fantastic turnout at this term's Parents' Evening. The atmosphere throughout the evening was warm, positive, and full of enthusiasm.

We hope all our families that celebrated Eid last week had a joyful time.

Thanks to Ruth from All Saints Church, Dedworth for coming in and delivering an Easter assembly. Wishing all our families celebrating Easter a wonderful time.

Have a lovely Easter break!

Mrs Sharma



Updates & Curriculum News

myHappyMind

We are excited to share some of the highlights from the Meet your Brain and Celebrate modules. All our teachers are having at least one conversation (formal or informal) about children's mental wellbeing each week. They are also all saying that Happy breathing has benefitted their class.

Staff Quotes:

'We have enjoyed using Happy Breathing to regulate'

'Pupils enjoyed Strength Spotting in their friends.'

'Children are enjoying being able to recognise positives rather than negatives.'

Next term's theme is: Relate

Class teachers have updated their class pages, please use the link below. Here you will find information about what is being taught in school this term.

[Class Pages | Homer First School & Nursery](#)

Attendance

The Government has issued statutory guidance on attendance for all schools. We will continue to monitor attendance and punctuality.

Our overall school attendance this year.

94.3%

This is below our target of 96% whole school attendance. We will continue to address persistence absences and lateness.

[Should I keep my child off school checklist poster \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Jewellery, Hair & accessories

Just a reminder that the wearing of jewellery, except stud earrings and watches (no smartwatches), is not permitted in school.

Long hair should be tied back at all times. Please avoid overly large or flamboyant hair accessories.



Diary Dates & Reminders

Friday 27th March	Last day of term, 1.30pm finish.
Monday 13th April	Children return to school, 8.35am
Wednesday 22nd April	Earth Day & Eco-warriors wear green for the environment - £1 donation
Friday 24th April	Eco-warriors book sale
28th & 29th April & 1st May	Scholastic Book Fair - 3.10pm to 3.40pm
18th – 22nd May	Walk to School Week
Thursday 21st May	Singing picnic/Alexander Devine fundraiser. All parents are invited to attend - details to follow.
Friday 5th June	Sports Day followed by family picnic - details to follow.
8th & 9th June	Year 4 Ufton Court residential
Wednesday 17th June	Junior Music Festival at The Hexagon for children in Homer choir.
Thursday 25th June	Reserve Sports Day
Friday 10th July	Year 4 Leavers Evening - details to follow.
Wednesday 15th July	RockSteady concert – parents of children who attend band lessons are invited to join us.
Wednesday 22nd July	Last day of term- 1.30pm finish.



Homer First School & Nursery
Presents...

Singing Picnic!

Songs & Singing Games on the School Field!



Raising Money for  Alexander Devine Charity

Hot & Cold Drinks, Cakes & Ice Cream Available!

Thursday 21st May - 1.45pm



A GUIDE TO THE MTC



WHAT IS THE MTC?

- MTC stands for 'Multiplication Tables Check'.
- Online quiz for year 4 children in England, set by the government.
- Pupils demonstrate their times tables skills, which they've been practising for years.
- Helps us to know your children are ready for year 5 maths

MTC KEY FACTS

- Must be taken in school between 1st and 12th June 2026
- Start with 3 practice questions
- Then 25 multiplication questions (no division)
 - For each question, you must enter an answer within 6s
- 3s pause between questions

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PREPARING PUPILS : SCHOOL

We might...

- spend a little more time learning times tables in class
- set times tables homework
- organise class tournaments

PREPARING PUPILS : OUT OF SCHOOL

- Regular, *short* verbal times tables practice
- Kitchen, bathroom, bedroom, walking
- Play TTRS on mobile/tablet/computer
- Those who scored 25 last year typically played 6 minutes three times a week.

BEST GAME MODES FOR YEAR 4





At National Online Safety we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information they need to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one topic of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.



It can be challenging for parents and carers to know whether children are spending too much time on their devices. Furthermore, it's even more of a challenge to know whether a child is addicted to the internet and social media. As technology is becoming more pervasive, children and young people are experiencing tech-related dependencies. Do we as parents and carers have the knowledge to identify and support children and young people who may be developing an addiction to their devices?

47% of parents said they thought their children spent too much time in front of screens

What parents need to know about SCREEN ADDICTION



HEALTH & WELLBEING

Children as young as 13 are attending 'smartphone rehab' following growing concerns over screen time. There are now help centers in the UK which deal with screen addiction for children and adults showing the seriousness of device addiction. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has officially recognised gaming addiction as a modern disease. The condition was confirmed as part of their International Classification of Diseases (ICD) which serves as an international standard for diagnosing and treating health conditions.

LACK OF SLEEP

7 out of 10 children said they had missed out on sleep because of their online habits and 60% said they had neglected school work as a result. It is important that children get the sleep they need in order to focus the next day.

LOSS OF INTEREST IN OTHER THINGS

Your child may become less interested in anything that does not include their device. You may notice that your child is missing school time and generally being less engaged with other activities in the home. It is important to discuss this with your child as soon as you notice a behaviour change.



CONFIDENCE, SUPPORT & ADVICE

The Children's Commissioner report 'Life in Likes', explored how children aged 8-11 are using social media today. It showed that children are using their devices to speak to their online friends about their problems and seek acceptance and support, removing face to face interactions.

APPS CAN BE ADDICTIVE

Apps have been designed with 'psychological tricks' to constantly keep grabbing your attention. One example of this is on the app Snapchat, where you can gain 'streaks' when interacting with your friends. If you don't respond, you lose the streak. This addictive nature of apps aims to engage children and keep them coming back for more.



Top Tips for Parents



LIMIT SCREEN TIME

In today's digital age, technology is an important part of a child's development so completely banning them from their device will mean they are missing out on a lot, including conversations and communication with their friends. Rather than banning them from using their devices, we suggest setting a screen time limit. Work out what you think is a suitable and healthy amount of time for your child to be on their device per week. Remember that your child may need to use devices for their school homework so only set screen limits on recreational time on their device. Once you have established this, have the conversation with them to discuss why you are implementing a screen limit. There will be others in your child's friendship group who will not have screen limits set and will be sending messages when they do not have access to their phones.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Children model their behavior on their peers, so if their parents are constantly on their device, they will see this as acceptable. Try limiting your own screen time and follow the same rules you have set for them. If you have asked your child to not use their device at the table, make sure you don't. Try setting house rules that the whole family abide by.

REMOVE DEVICES FROM THEIR BEDROOM

Setting a rule about removing devices from bedrooms will help your child to get the sleep they need and be more focussed the next day at school. 20% of teenagers said that they wake up to check their social network accounts on their devices. Even by having a device switched off in their bedroom, they may be tempted to check for notifications.

LESS TIME MEANS LESS EXPOSURE

There are many risks associated with devices, such as cyberbullying, grooming, sexting, viewing inappropriate content etc. Less time spent on a screen means that a child will be less exposed to these risks.

MOBILE-FREE MEAL TIMES

Have you tried to settle your child by giving them a tablet at the dinner table or restaurant? This may seem like a quick fix to calm them down but in reality, it is encouraging them to use their device as a distraction from conversation and dealing with their emotions. We suggest removing all technology from the dinner table and having conversations with your family about how their day has been.

ENCOURAGE ALTERNATE ACTIVITIES

It may seem like an obvious solution, but encouraging children to play with their friends, read a book, or playing outdoors will help them realise they can have fun without their device. Playing football, trampolining, camping, going for a walk or swimming are all healthy replacements for screen time. Try to join them in their Outdoor activities to show your support.

STATISTICS

52% of children aged 3-4 go online for nearly 9hrs a week

82% of children aged 5-7 go online for nearly 9.5hrs a week

93% of children aged 8-11 go online for nearly 13.5hrs a week

99% of children aged 12-15 go online for nearly 20.5hrs a week

Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes Report 2018

SOURCES:
<https://www.independent.co.uk>, Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes Report 2018; <https://www.ofcom.gov.uk>, <http://uk.businessinsider.com/how-app-developers-keep-us-addicted-to-our-smartphones>, Journal of Youth Studies; <https://www.mirror.co.uk/tech/tv-film/kids-sleep-963396>, University of Leeds; <https://medhealth.berkeley.edu/news/article?id=2016-06-01-lack-of-sleep-damaging-for-children>

www.nationalonlinesafety.com Twitter - @natonlinesafety Facebook - /NationalOnlineSafety

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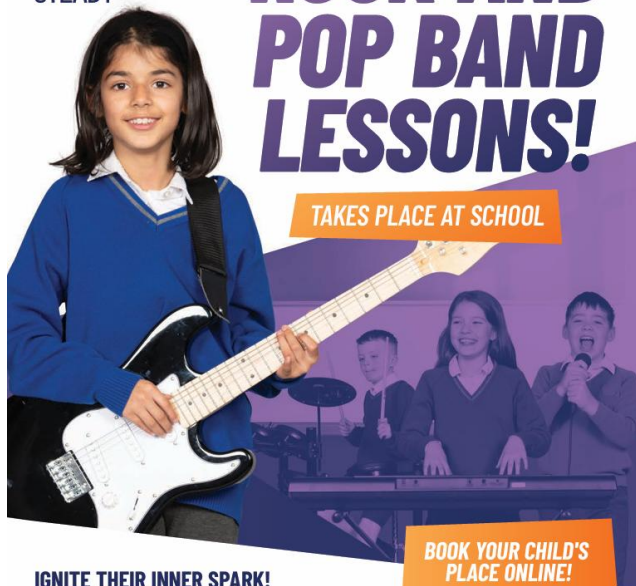
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