Elmstead Primary School

NEWSLETTER
Friday 13th November 2026

www.elmsteadprimary.com

Anti-Bullying Week – 16th November – 20th November 2026

Ian MacDonald (Headteacher)

Next week is Anti-Bullying Week and in England this is coordinated by the Anti-Bullying Alliance. The theme this year is 'Break the Silence'. Even though we will be taking part in Anti-Bullying Week, with a special assembly and lessons going on in each class throughout the week to raise the awareness of bullying, we are committed to preventing and responding to bullying throughout the year. To find out more information about Anti-Bullying Week go to:
Anti-Bullying Week 2026: Break the Silence

Odd Socks Day

On Monday 16th November, as part of Anti-Bullying Week, we will be taking part in Odd Socks Day. Odd Socks Day is designed to be fun! It's an opportunity to encourage people to express themselves and celebrate their individuality and what makes us all unique!
All you have to do to take part is wear odd socks to your school!



Parent Proud Pop In

On **Tuesday 1st December**, we will be holding our first 'Parent Proud Pop In' of the academic year. This will give parents/ carers the opportunity to come and see your children's work and for your child to show off how proud they are of their learning. Your child's books will be on their desk and this is a time for your child to show off their learning to you. This is not an opportunity for a parent/teacher meeting and if you feel you require one of those please book in with the office for an alternative time. If you have children in a range of year groups, you will be able to visit them all. There will be two sessions which will run from 3:15pm – 3:45pm and then 5:00pm to 5:30pm.

Attendance this week:

This week's attendance figures:
Year 1: 98.28%
Year 2: 96.21%
Year 3: 98.62%
Year 4: 98.28%
Year 5: 90.67%
Year 6: 94.06%
Congratulations to Year 3 for this week's highest attendance!

Extending After School Club

From Monday 23rd November, we are going to be trialling an extension to our after school club hours.
From the above date, on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, after school club will be finishing at 6:00pm.
We are currently changing our Arbor booking system so that you can book either a shorter session – from 3:15pm to 5:00pm which costs £6 a session – or a longer session from 3:15pm to 6:00pm which costs £10 a session.
If your child is staying to the longer session, then we will be providing an additional snack such as a: sandwich, toasted sandwich, filled pitta bread.
On Fridays, after school club will continue to finish at 4:30pm as when we surveyed parents/ carers there was not enough interest for us to extend the hours on this day.
If you have any questions about any of the above, please contact the school office.



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Year 3's Stone Age Adventure!

What a brilliant day Year 3 had at Layer Marney Tower! We stepped back in time for a day packed with exciting activities, all linked to our Stone Age topic.
From digging for artefacts as budding archaeologists to exploring Stone Age food, clothing and daily life there was so much to discover! The children put their survival skills to the test with tracking and throwing activities and loved having a go at archery. We also got creative making clay pots and cave paintings, bringing our classroom learning to life.
It was lovely to see everyone getting stuck in, trying new things and encouraging one another. The children listened brilliantly, showed fantastic enthusiasm and represented Elmstead so well. We were very proud of them all — well done Year 3!
Miss Martin









Utilita Kids Cup

Last Friday morning, Elmstead Primary School's football team took part in the North Essex stage of the tournament, hosted by **Colchester United** at **Shrub End Community Centre**. The event brought together **16 primary school teams from across North Essex**, all competing for a place in the next round. We were drawn in a group with **Hamilton Primary**, **Montgomery Primary** and **Bishop William Ward**. Our opening match was a hard-fought **0–0 draw with Bishop William Ward**. We then played **Montgomery** and after falling behind 4-0, we rallied and it looked like a comeback was on the cards but there wasn't enough time left and we ended up **losing 5-2.** We knew that we couldn't qualify for the semi-finals but in our last group game we **won 3-1 against Hamilton.**
A huge congratulations to **Chance, Alfie, Tyler, Yahya, Hudson, Lucas W, Lucas D, Jacob B and Harry** for representing Elmstead Primary School with such skill, resilience and sportsmanship.



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Year 6 Trips

Year 6 went to Colchester Zoo last week. We took part in a workshop to learn about the work of Charles Darwin. We were able to handle real-life specimens and looked at the shape of bird beaks to determine what type of food they ate. We enjoyed learning about endangered animals; we listened to a zookeeper talk about the Komodo Dragon and watched seals glide gracefully over our heads as we walked through the tunnel.

This week, we went to Crucial Crew at The Princes Theatre in Clacton, to watch a performance about knife crime and joined in with some workshops to explore how to keep ourselves safe in the real world and online.

Mrs Sinclair







WOW – Walk to School Challenge Update

Just a reminder that **Elmstead Primary School** is taking part in the **WOW – Walk to School Challenge**, a fantastic initiative from *Living Streets*, the UK charity for everyday walking.

The challenge encourages children and families to choose **active travel** — walking, cycling, scooting, or even 'park and stride' — at least **twice a week**. Each month, pupils have the chance to earn a **brand-new badge**, made entirely from **recycled yoghurt pots**, as a reward for their efforts. The theme for this year's badges is **'Walk the Senses'** which encourages pupils to think about what brings them joy on their walks to school.

In **September**, an amazing **125 children** earned their first WOW badge — a brilliant start to the year! In **October**, **118 pupils** earned the second badge – the **'Crunching Leaves'** badge.

For **November**, our **Reception children** have now joined the scheme and all our children are working towards earning the **'Cooing Pigeons' badge**.

Let's see if we can make this our best month yet, with even more Elmstead pupils choosing active travel and helping to make a difference — for themselves and for the planet!







School Dinner Menus

Next week, we will be on Week 1 of our new Menus. The menus can be seen on the School Website at: https://www.elmsteadprimary.com/Dinner-Menus/. **School dinners can be paid for electronically on Arbor.**

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What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

WHATSAPP

AGE RESTRICTION 13+ In the UK

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

WhatsApp is a free messaging app owned by Meta, that allows users to send messages, share multimedia, make calls, and participate in group chats. In September 2026, WhatsApp announced new optional parental controls for teenagers, including privacy settings, group notifications, and restrictions on AI content, which parents and educators should be aware of.

GROUP CHAT PRESSURES

Group chats help young people stay connected, but they can also leave them feeling excluded or overwhelmed. Negative comments can escalate quickly, and frequent notifications can create a sense of needing to be constantly available. WhatsApp's new parental controls notify parents when teenagers join or leave groups, or when a group grows significantly in size.

HARMFUL CONTENT ON CHANNELS

WhatsApp Channels allow users to receive updates from public figures, organisations, and content creators; however, some Channels may expose young people to misinformation, harmful ideologies, or age-inappropriate material. New optional parental controls allow adults to restrict which Channels teenagers access, including limiting them to approved Channels.

SCAMS TARGETING YOUNG USERS

Scammers may use WhatsApp to trick young people into sharing personal information, sending money, or sharing security codes. They may impersonate friends or family members, using convincing stories about emergencies or urgent requests for help. New parental controls can help manage who contacts teenagers; however, they cannot prevent all scams or fraudulent messages.

UNWANTED CONTACT AND LOCATION SHARING

WhatsApp allows users to share their live location, profile information, and Status updates. Without appropriate privacy settings, this information could expose young people to unwanted attention or reveal their whereabouts. New parental controls enable adults to manage certain privacy settings, including who can view account details and add teenagers to groups.

DISAPPEARING AND HIDDEN MESSAGES

WhatsApp features such as disappearing messages and Chat Lock can make conversations harder for adults to identify. Although these tools are designed to protect privacy, they may also make it harder for adults to recognise inappropriate exchanges or harmful behaviour. WhatsApp's new parental controls do not give adults access to teenagers' private messages or calls.

COMMERCIAL AND AI CONTENT

WhatsApp includes advertising in parts of its Updates section and offers Meta AI, an integrated AI assistant. Young people may encounter sponsored content, misleading AI responses, or information which is unsuitable for their age. New parental controls offer a stricter 'Limited Content' setting for Meta AI; however, this cannot guarantee that every response will be accurate or appropriate.

ONLINE

Advice for Parents & Educators

EXPLORE NEW PARENTAL CONTROLS

WhatsApp's new optional parental controls are being rolled out gradually, giving families more ways to manage teenagers' privacy and interactions. Teenagers will need parental approval using a parent-set PIN to relax any protected settings. Keep the conversation open and set up the controls together, remembering that parents can adjust or switch them off at any time.

MANAGE CHANNELS AND AI

Explore the new settings for Channels, Status updates, and Meta AI. Parents can restrict Channels to approved selections or prevent teenagers from viewing them. They can also choose Meta AI's stricter 'Limited Content' option, which restricts certain topics. Remind young people that AI can produce inaccurate information and encourage them to question responses rather than accepting them at face value.

MONITOR GROUP ACTIVITY SAFELY

New parental controls notify adults when teenagers join or leave groups, or when a group grows significantly in size. These alerts can help identify potentially concerning interactions without revealing private messages. Encourage young people to discuss unfamiliar groups, uncomfortable conversations, or pressure from other members and that they can leave, mute, or report if they feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

PRIORITISE TRUST AND COMMUNICATION

Parental controls should support conversations about online safety, not replace them. Explain that WhatsApp's new features do not give adults access to private messages or calls, helping teenagers understand that their privacy remains protected. Reassure young people that they can speak openly about upsetting content, unwanted contact, or pressure from other group members.

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Diary Dates
Academic Year 2026/ 2027

Autumn Term 2026

Monday 16th – Friday 20th November	Anti-Bullying Week 2026
Monday 16th November	Odd Socks Day 2026
Wednesday 18th November	Tour for prospective new parents/ carers – September 2027 – 2:00pm
Thursday 19th November	Tour for prospective new parents/ carers – September 2027 – 11:00am
Friday 27th November	Non-Pupil Day
Monday 30th November	Non-Pupil Day
Tuesday 1st December	Parent Proud Pop In – 3:15pm to 3:45pm & 5:00pm to 5:30pm
Friday 4th December	EYFS Nativity – 9:30am
Friday 4th December	EPSA's Journey to Santa – 4:00pm to 8:00pm
Tuesday 8th December	KS1 Nativity – 1:30pm
Wednesday 9th December	KS1 Nativity – 9:30am
Thursday 10th December	Year 4 Viking Day
Monday 14th December	pm – KS2 Carol Service
Tuesday 15th December	Whole School Trip to 'The Wizard of Oz Musical'
Thursday 17th December	iRock Concert for Parents/ Carers
Friday 18th December	Christmas Dinner and Christmas Jumper Day
Friday 18th December	Last day of term

Forest School Dates for this term:

Forest School – Autumn Term 1

Week 1 8th September	Week 2 15th September	Week 3 22nd September	Week 4 29th September	Week 5 6th October	Week 6 13th October	Week 7 20th October
Year 6	Year 6	Year 5	Year 5	Year 4	Year 4	Year 3

Forest School – Autumn Term 2

Week 8 3rd November	Week 9 10th November	Week 10 17th November	Week 11 24th November	Week 12 1st December	Week 13 8th December	Week 14
Year 3	Year 2	Year 2	Year 1	Year 1	EYFS	Pantomime

Your child's teacher will tell you which of the two groups your child is in (Group 1 or Group 2) so you know which session your child will be taking part in and when to bring in their Forest School clothes.

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