

## Manorbrook School and Community Newsletter



Aiming for Excellence

No. 1 12<sup>th</sup> September 2025

# Welcome Back!



Dear parents, carers and friends,

Welcome back to everyone, whether you are a returning family or a new family joining us. It has been brilliant to welcome all of the children back to Manorbrook and I had the privilege of leading the first Commendation assembly of the year with KS2 today. This is always one of my favourite parts of the week where we can all celebrate the successes of the children in so many ways.

As this is the first newsletter of the year, you will see that it is a bumper edition as there are lots of notices, reminders and information that we need to share at the start of the year, including dates for meeting the teachers.

If you are new to the school, please be aware that our newsletter is produced fortnightly and emailed to parents. It will also be available on the school website once the new website has been launched if, for any reason, your copy does not arrive. **The newsletter is important and we urge parents to read it in full. It is one of the main ways in which you will find out key information and receive reminders.**

As you know from my previous communication, the work over the summer has been very successful and has made big improvements within our EYFS/Y1 building in particular. I know that a number of parents have seen the changes when they've been into school for Commendations etc and the feedback has been very positive! Yesterday I met with the development team to help me to understand the next phase of works that they are proposing. As part of the discussions, we also spoke about the importance of keeping the community informed of the process and what is being proposed. The team are equally as keen as I am to ensure that you are kept informed and further communication from South Glos will come out in due course when they move towards the next phase.

I wish you a lovely weekend. Hopefully we see a few less of the downpours we've had this week!

Kind regards

*Paul Medlicott*

## **School Website**

You may have noticed that our website is not currently fully up to date – this is due to us being mid transition to a new website, which will hopefully take place in the coming weeks. More information to follow!

## **YR Phonics & Early Reading Workshop**

An email has been sent to YR parents inviting you to a 'Phonics and Early Reading' workshop. As your children will be starting to learn their letters and sounds in the next few weeks, Mrs Haines would like to share with you how they are taught, our approach to early reading and ways in which you can support them at home.

The date for this meeting is Thursday 25th September 9am-10am in the main KS1 hall; we would appreciate it if someone from each child's family could attend this meeting as we want all families to have heard the same information regarding this approach.

## **"Meet the Teacher" Drop-in Sessions**

Our Meet the Teacher sessions are an opportunity for you to meet your child's new class teacher in their new classroom and learn about some of the new routines that your child will hopefully already be familiar with. Sessions will start at 3.00pm except for Y1. The dates for these sessions are as follows:

Mon 22<sup>nd</sup> – Starlings and Jackdaws

Tues 23<sup>rd</sup> – **Swifts 2.45pm start**, Blackbirds

Wed 24<sup>th</sup> – Goldfinches, Wagtails

Thurs 25<sup>th</sup> - **Robins 2.45pm start**, Sparrows

Reception class staff are currently meeting all our new families on their home visits.

## **Reading Buddies**

Can you spare a little time at the start or end of the school day?

We are keen to increase the support for our children as they learn to read, and are looking for volunteers who would be willing to stay for a little while after dropping their children off in the morning, or to come in slightly earlier in the afternoon before collecting their children.

Even as little as ten or twenty minutes can be valuable, as it enables one or two extra children to be heard reading. So even if you can only spare a little bit of one morning or afternoon a week, please let us know, so we can increase the support for our young readers.

Being a reading buddy is easy to do; it makes an enormous difference to children, and can be hugely satisfying. **The more volunteers we can attract, the more children can be helped.**

**If you want to offer your help, or would like to know more, please get in touch with us! You can email the office and your details will be sent on to Mrs Haines, and she will talk you through how to get started.**

## **Sharing of Videos/Photos Online**

Please can we remind you not to share photos or videos of children at school or school events in social media or other online platforms. Whilst you may be happy for your child's image to appear online, we have some children in our community that, for a variety of reasons, should not appear. As a community school, please help us to keep everyone happy and safe by keeping any images and videos of school events etc between yourself and your family. Thanks for your support with this.

## **Allotment News**

Over the summer the allotment has flourished despite some water challenges due to the building work meaning we didn't have water our supply.

We have had our first ever crop of tomatoes and will be picking them with Y2 as they ripen.

As you will have noticed we have decided to re-wild the area under the old play equipment. This was for two reasons; to save money in groundwork to make the area level and safe and to encourage wildflowers and in turn insects and pollinators. The area has been fenced to allow it to grow as the ground is uneven. It will now be cut, the seeds allowed to drop and then the children will help compost what is cut. A big thank you to FOM for funding the fencing and to Tom Guzman for undertaking the work to erect the fencing.

Over the summer our allotment group cropped 6.5 kilos of vegetables including tomatoes, cucumbers, courgettes, cabbages and beetroot. This was donated to the Thornbury Food Bank and was gratefully received.

We will be holding one of our 'big dig days' to clear the beds and prepare them for winter. They are in desperate need of organic matter like compost/manure. If anyone has any unused or knows of a source please let us know. And as always if you would be keen to join our project, everyone is welcome regardless of experience - it's very much a learn as we go project!

### **Y3 & Y5 Swimming**

A reminder that Year 5 will be swimming at Tockington from Friday September 19<sup>th</sup>. Letters have already been sent home with further information. Year 3 will be swimming later in the year. We are currently organising cover and parental support for this and would be very grateful to hear from any Year 5 parents who are happy to support us taking them on the coach and for the lessons. Even if you are only able to support for a few weeks, or are happy to be on standby, that would be great! We may need to obtain DBS checks for anyone without one, but if you already know you have one that would also be helpful to for us to know. If you think you might be able to help out, please could you contact the school via our email address: [enquiries@manorbrook.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@manorbrook.org.uk) or 01454 867225 or speak to Mrs Senior.

### **Commendations**

This week we have started our Commendation assembly on a Friday and began with KS2. These will all run as previously, alternating between KS2 one week and KS1 the next. Therefore, next week will be KS1 Commendation. If you are a Reception parent, our Reception children will not be joining these assemblies just yet, as we help the children to settle and build routines. We will let you know when they will be involved.

### **Arbor App/Parent Portal**

We use Arbor for our communication to parents via email and the Arbor in-app messages. Commendation messages are sent out on a Thursday afternoon and will be sent by in-app messaging as well as email. Any urgent messages will be sent by in-app messages as well as / or via text message. All other non-urgent communications will generally be sent via email. **It is therefore essential that all parents / carers have logged into the Arbor app. Please check your phone settings to ensure that notifications have been enabled/allowed for the app so that you are aware when a message has been received.**

### **Reading before school**

From Monday, we will begin to open our doors before school for you to spend time reading with your child if you would like to. Can we please remind you that the hall is open only for children reading quietly with an adult and not a time for children to be entering classrooms. Unfortunately, there were also a number of occasions during last year where children were running around in the hall or groups of adults were chatting rather than reading. Please can we ask that you only use this time for reading with your child and then exit onto the playground for the children to enter school as normal at 8.40am. Thank you.

## **Parent Pay – School Lunches**

As you will be aware, our cashless Parent Pay system allows you to order and pay for your child's meals up to three weeks in advance, paying for the meals upon ordering. This avoids the build-up of any debt on the account. Occasionally, if a child does not have a meal pre-ordered on the system, or has arrived with no packed lunch, the teacher can submit the order on the family's behalf during morning registration to address this. When this happens, the charge for that meal appears on your Parent Pay account and must be paid as soon as possible to maintain a clear balance.

This is a reminder that ordering should as a rule be done at home, whereas ordering in school should only be an occasional occurrence, not done on a regular basis.

Please will you kindly ensure that your Parent Pay account remains in credit or at zero balance at all times. Anyone with an outstanding balance will be contacted to address this asap. If there is an outstanding balance of £9.20 or above, the child's name will not appear on the whiteboard at registration to allow an ad hoc lunch to be booked until such time that the balance has been cleared. As always, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the office staff if you are having difficulties clearing your balance, and we will be happy to discuss possible ways in which we can help.

## **Packed lunches**

We ask parents to provide healthy food and **not to put sweets or chocolates in lunch boxes.** (One small biscuit bar with a little chocolate is permitted.) **Please do not include** condensed fruit snacks such as fruit bars, fruit winders, fruit pellets and yoghurt-coated fruit flakes, as they often contain even more sugar than the sweets we already don't allow.

Children should bring only water to drink in a clear bottle with a sports top please.

This year we want to continue our Eco-school work to reduce single-use plastic waste. The children are very proud to show where they have used reusable tubs or recyclable foil instead of plastic to help reduce landfill. Anything you can do to help with this would be appreciated.

## **Nuts**

We remain a 'nut free' school. Please ensure that nuts are never included in packed lunches, because some children at school (and some of their family members) and a member of staff are affected by severe nut allergies. (This includes nutty sandwich spread, e.g. Nutella, as well as biscuit bars and cakes containing nut products.)

## **Birthday Sweets**

A polite reminder that we do not allow the giving out of birthday sweets, etc, in school.

## **EYFS/Reception**

Please could we ask that as the children enter and leave through the doors in the Reception classrooms that younger siblings are not playing in the EYFS garden next to the doors or climbing on the equipment. Many thanks.

## **Notifications of alternative collection**

Please could parents try to ensure that any notifications of someone else collecting your child from school are advised before 2.30pm where possible. Notifications received very close to collection time may not be passed/picked up in time.

## **Woodland**

As has been the case previously, please could we remind you that children are not allowed to play in the woodland area before or after school.

## **Macmillan Coffee & Cake Morning**

We will be holding a Coffee Cake and Company Morning in aid of Macmillan in the coming weeks, further information will be sent once a date is confirmed.

## Uniform and watches

As we start this term, the children have returned looking great in their uniform- thanks for your help with this. Just in case you have forgotten any of our uniform requirements over the summer, we will send out our Uniform Guidance with this newsletter. Just a reminder about the information on watches from the guidance:

“Watches and simple fitness monitors are acceptable. We would recommend something really simple and cheap, as watches are easily lost or broken.

*Please note: wristwear which allows other functions that might be found on a phone, like games, messaging or recording, are not allowed. Children will be asked to take these off.”*

## Term Dates for Children to Attend in 2025 – 26

**Term 1 (Autumn Term First Half)** Thursday 4th September - Friday 24th October

**Term 2 (Autumn Term Second Half)** Monday 3rd November - Friday 19th December

**Term 3 (Spring Term First Half)** Monday 5th January - Friday 13th February

**Term 4 (Spring Term Second Half)** Monday 23rd February – Thursday 2nd April

**Term 5 (Summer Term First Half)** Monday 20th April - Friday 22nd May

**Term 6 (Summer Term Second Half)** Monday 1st June - Tuesday 21st July

## INSET DAYS

The school allocates five INSET days per academic year. Children do not attend on these days:

The five INSET days for 2024-25 are as follows:

INSET 1 2nd September

INSET 2 3rd September

INSET 3 3rd November

INSET 4 2nd April 2026

INSET 5 1st May 2026

## Walk to School Wednesdays and Fridays



We count Walk to School numbers on Wednesdays and Fridays. Please try and support this if you can; if you drive to school, you may be able to stop the car a distance from school and walk the rest of the way. We award the Golden Trainer to the class with the highest percentage of walkers. **This week's winners were Y5 Starlings - well done!**

## 'Friends of Manorbrook' News

**Welcome back!** We hope you had great summers and your children have settled in well to the new term. Welcome, in particular, to our new families: we look forward to meeting you around school or at FOM events soon.

We would welcome new faces to get involved with our friendly group of parent helpers. Please get in touch if you're interested in contributing in some way. Our **AGM on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**October at 8pm** at the school is a great opportunity to hear more and share your ideas – all welcome.

FOM will also be serving **tea, coffee and cakes for our new families**, on **Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> September**, from 10am (directly after the phonics meeting) in the KS1 hall. All welcome to stay behind for a drink and a chat.

**Reception Welcome Event:** FOM is launching a brand-new event exclusively for our Reception starters and their siblings! Join us at the school on **Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> October** for magic and fun with popular children's entertainer Johnny G. Doors open 4pm, show 4.30-5.30pm.

Book your places in advance only at the link below – no tickets will be on sale on the door. This is not a drop-off event: £5/child, adults and under-2s go free but still need to book a ticket. Refreshments included. <https://www.pta-events.co.uk/friendsofmanorbrook>

**Disco:** The school disco returns on **Friday 24<sup>th</sup> October**. Details and booking to follow soon. Please note: to manage capacity constraints and allow our youngest children the chance to settle in, this event will be open to Year 1 classes and upwards only.

**Cake sale:** We're kindly asking Year 2 bakers to donate cakes the first cake sale of the year, to be held on **Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> September** directly after school.

**Quiz + Chips:** Our ever-popular event – mixing a great pub quiz, Parky's chippy takeaway and a well-stocked bar – returns to the school on **Friday 7<sup>th</sup> November**. More details to follow.

**Zumba:** Huge thanks to Natasha Johnson for raising £245 for FOM via her Zumba classes. Natasha runs sessions at Manorbrook every Tuesday night (6pm: Zumba, 7pm: Zumba Toning, 8pm: Yoga-Lattes), and donates 50% of her fee to FOM for every parent who attends 10x classes between September 2025 and 2026. Booking and info at [www.natashajohnson.co.uk](http://www.natashajohnson.co.uk)

**100 Club:** FOM runs a monthly '100 Club' open to all parents and friends for just £2/month, with proceeds split between cash prizes each month and supporting the school. The more who sign up, the higher the cash prizes! Entry form attached: it only takes a minute to set up payment or a standing order.

Congratulations to our summer winners!

*July:*

1st place (£22.80)	32	(T Peddaboina)
2nd place (£11.40)	34	(Name withheld)
3rd place (£3.80)	37	(Name withheld)

*August:*

1st place (£22.80)	37	(Name withheld)
2nd place (£11.40)	3	(J Thacker)
3rd place (£3.80)	6	(R Blackwood)

Email: [friendsofmanorbrook@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofmanorbrook@gmail.com)

Facebook: [friendsofmanorbrook](https://www.facebook.com/friendsofmanorbrook)

Instagram: [@friendsofmanorbrook](https://www.instagram.com/friendsofmanorbrook)

<b>SEPTEMBER – Term 1</b>		
Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	15:00	Meet the Teacher: Starlings and Jackdaws
Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup>	15:00	Meet the Teacher: <b>Swifts 2.45pm start</b> , Blackbirds
Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup>	15:00	Meet the Teacher: Goldfinches, Wagtails
Thursday 25 <sup>th</sup>	15:00	Meet the Teacher: <b>Robins 2.45pm start</b> , Sparrows
Thursday 25 <sup>th</sup>	09:00	YR Phonics Workshop
	10:00	FOM new parents coffee morning
Thursday 25 <sup>th</sup>	15:20	Y2 Cake Sale

<b>OCTOBER – Term 1</b>		
Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup>	20:00	FOM AGM
Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup>	16:00	YR FOM Welcome Event
Friday 24 <sup>th</sup>	Tbc	FOM Disco / Last day of Term 1