



Headteacher Update

Ian MacDonald (Headteacher)

We began this week with an assembly all about *courage* — exploring how it's okay to make mistakes as long as we learn from them and try not to repeat them.

On Tuesday, our Stave House Music lessons with Mrs Minshull began. There will be lots of musical opportunities for children to get involved in this year. Many families have already signed up for individual instrumental lessons or iRock sessions.

Today, Miss Penwill announced this year's school councillors. Well done to all the children who took part and bravely stood up at the front and told their class why they would make a good school councillor. Our sporting activities are also in full swing. This is the second week of gymnastics lessons and clubs with Ty, our Little Springers coach, and our P.E. sessions with Ben from Colchester United.

All of these activities are part of our wider offer at Elmstead, designed to enrich the children's education and give them a broad range of experiences.

Healthy Snacks

As a school, we ask that you encourage your child to bring a healthy snack, and packed lunch, to school.

Studies have shown that healthy foods, as opposed to sugary or salty foods, encourage children's bodies and brains to work more effectively during the school day. The body of a child who eats sugary foods at break and/or lunchtimes may suffer a sugar 'high' which, in turn, may be followed by a sugar 'low'. Therefore, their attention span may waiver, which can affect the rate at which they learn. Please give a little extra thought when packing up your child's lunch for school and replace any sugary or salty foods with something a little healthier.

Here are a few suggestions:

Fresh fruit (including tomatoes, cucumber), chopped vegetables (such as carrot, pepper), bread sticks, pitta bread, cheese (and un-sugared/un-salted crackers) or yoghurts. Please be aware that there are some pupils with allergies and food containing nuts should be avoided.

For parents/ carers of children in Reception, Year 1 and 2, the Government has a free fruit and vegetable scheme which means that children in Reception, Year 1 and 2 are given a free piece of fruit or vegetable for their snack at breaktime.

Attendance this week:

This week's attendance figures:

Year 1: 97.93%

Year 2: 99.33%

Year 3: 98.97%

Year 4: 95.86%

Year 5: 94.69%

Year 6: 94.12%



Congratulations to Year 2 for this week's highest attendance!

Year 6 Parents/ Carers – Secondary School Applications

You can now apply online for your child's secondary school (year 7) place for children starting secondary school in September 2027. Read about the [secondary \(year 7\)](#) school place application process. All applications received after 31st October 2026 will be treated as late and will only be processed after all on-time applications.

Parents/ Carers picking children up after school

Please can you make sure that you let the Office or your child's teacher know if your child is going to be picked up by someone other than yourselves so that we can ensure that all the children have left the school site safely. I thank you in advance for your cooperation with this.

Meet the Teacher Meetings

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our **Meet the Teacher Meetings** this week. We hope you found the opportunity useful and enjoyed meeting your child's teacher, finding out more about their new class and hearing about some of the exciting things they will be learning this year.

It was lovely to welcome so many of you into school, and we look forward to working together throughout the year to support your children in their learning and development.



Year 1 have been getting creative this week as we began our new History topic, The Gunpowder Plot!

We started by exploring fireworks and thinking about the colours, shapes and patterns we might see in the night sky. We then created our very own fireworks using printed toilet rolls and finished them off with a sprinkle of glitter to make them sparkle!

The children were so creative with their designs, and we were amazed by the wonderful fireworks they produced. We can't wait to continue our learning about the Gunpowder Plot!

Miss Penwill



Introducing Our New School Councillors!

We are delighted to announce this year's **School Council**, with pupils from Years 2 – 6 being voted for by their classmates to represent their class.

A huge **well done** to all of the children who put themselves forward and congratulations to our newly elected councillors:

Year 6: Tyler & Rocco

Year 5: Indiana-Rose & Owen

Year 4: Alicia & Indiana

Year 3: Beatrix & Harrison

Year 2: Ada & Freddie

Our School Councillors will work together throughout the year to **share ideas**, **listen to the views of their classmates** and **help make our school an even better place**.

We are excited to see the fantastic ideas and positive changes they will bring to our school this year.

We wish them all the best in their new roles!

Miss Penwill



This Week's Play Champions!

A huge well done to our **Play Champions of the Week!**

🏆 **KS2 – Rorylee (Year 5)**

Rorylee was chosen for recognising that two children had a goal of building a really tall tower. He took the time to go over and **help them achieve their goal**, showing fantastic teamwork, kindness and encouragement.

What a brilliant example of being a great friend!

🏆 **KS1 – Felicity (Year 1)**

Felicity was chosen for **always being there for her friends**. She makes sure they are happy and never left without someone to play with in the playground. Felicity shows such wonderful kindness and care towards others.

Well done, Rorylee and Felicity! You are both fantastic **Play Champions** and wonderful role models for our school.

Miss Penwill





Wellbeing at Elmstead

This week and next week, we have our wellbeing sessions starting in school and a few parents/ carers have been asking us what our sessions are for. The information below gives more details about our comprehensive wellbeing programme:

At Elmstead, we believe supporting children's emotional wellbeing is an important part of school life and we want every child to feel safe, happy and ready to learn. Through a range of wellbeing opportunities, we help children build confidence, resilience, positive relationships and the skills to manage their emotions.

Thrive



Our Thrive approach supports children's social and emotional development. Thrive helps children to develop the emotional skills they need for everyday life. This includes learning to recognise and understand emotions, manage big feelings, build positive relationships, develop confidence and resilience and find appropriate ways to communicate how they are feeling.

Children may experience Thrive through whole-class activities, helping everyone to develop their emotional wellbeing (myHappymind), as well as through small-group or individual sessions for children who may benefit from some additional support at a particular time. The aim is to give children a growing toolkit of strategies that they can draw upon independently – whether they are dealing with a worry, managing frustration, resolving a friendship difficulty or preparing themselves to learn.

MyHappymind



myHappymind is our whole-school programme designed to support children's mental health and wellbeing. Through regular, age-appropriate sessions, children learn about how their brains work and develop practical strategies that can help them to understand themselves, manage their emotions and build positive relationships. The programme is based around five key areas: Meet Your Brain, Celebrate, Appreciate, Relate and Engage. As children progress through the programme, they learn about gratitude, positive relationships, resilience and setting meaningful goals. Simple strategies and activities give children tools that they can use in everyday situations, both at school and at home.

Wellbeing in the Wild



Our Wellbeing in the Wild sessions bring together emotional wellbeing and outdoor learning. Using elements of Forest School, children have opportunities to spend time outside, connect with nature and take part in practical and creative activities. Activities may include exploring nature, den building, natural crafts, teamwork challenges and opportunities for reflection. Wellbeing in the Wild sessions are child-led and they are encouraged to develop their confidence, curiosity and problem-solving skills.

Wellbeing Hubs



Our Wellbeing Hubs are small-group sessions that take place after school. The smaller group environment provides children with a relaxed and supportive space to develop their emotional and social skills. The aim of the hubs is for children to develop resilience skills, recognise and express emotions, develop their self-esteem and equip them with skills to tackle challenges with a growth mindset. Through games, discussion and practical activities, the children learn strategies that they can use both in and out of school.



School Dinner Menus

Next week, we will be on Week 2 of our 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.

Diary Dates

Academic Year 2026/ 2027

Autumn Term 2026

Tuesday 20th October

Thursday 22nd October

Monday 26th October

Thursday 5th November

Friday 27th November

Monday 30th November

Monday 14th December

Tuesday 15th December

Friday 18th December

Parents' Evening – 3:30pm to 6:30pm

Parents' Evening – 3:30pm to 6:30pm

Half term holiday week

Year 3 Layer Marney Trip

Non-Pupil Day

Non-Pupil Day

pm – KS2 Carol Service

Whole School Trip to 'The Wizard of Oz Musical'

Last day of term



Forest School Dates for this term:

Forest School – Autumn Term 1

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

Forest School – Autumn Term 2

<u>Week 8</u> 3 rd November	<u>Week 9</u> 10 th November	<u>Week 10</u> 17 th November	<u>Week 11</u> 24 th November	<u>Week 12</u> 1 st December	<u>Week 13</u> 8 th December	<u>Week 14</u>
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.