



Welcome Back!

Ian MacDonald (Headteacher)

I hope you all had a wonderful summer break and are feeling refreshed and ready for the year ahead. It has been a real pleasure to welcome the children back to school this week and to see them settling in so happily, full of energy and enthusiasm for all that lies ahead.

At the start of a new school year, I often find myself thinking about what we really want for our children. Academic success is, of course, important, but in a rapidly changing world, we also need to prepare children to be independent, resilient and flexible – able to think for themselves, adapt, solve problems and keep going when things do not quite go to plan. Here is an extract from Jonathan Haidt's

'The Anxious Generation':

"In 1987, 50 miles north of Tucson, Arizona, the Biosphere 2 was launched, an effort to study an enclosed artificial ecosystem. Every ecosystem needs trees, and trees grow rapidly in this protected environment. Everything seemed to be going great until one day some trees started falling over for no apparent reason. The designers had not realized that young trees need wind to grow properly.

When the wind blows, it bends the tree, which tugs at the roots on the windward side and compresses the wood on the other side. In response, the root system expands to provide a firmer anchor where it is needed, and the compressed wood cells change their structure to become stronger and firmer. This altered cell structure is called stress wood. Trees that are exposed to strong winds early in life become trees that can withstand even stronger winds when full grown. Conversely, trees that are raised in a protected greenhouse sometimes fall over from their own weight before they reach maturity."

As parents and educators, our instinct is understandably to protect children, but we must also know when to step back and allow them to manage things for themselves. Stepping in too quickly to solve a problem, resolve a disagreement, prevent disappointment or make things easier can unintentionally stifle the independence and resilience we want them to develop. Children need to experience manageable difficulties, make mistakes and learn that things will not always go their way. Our role is not to remove every "wind" they encounter, but to resist the urge to overprotect, trust them to cope and give them the space to become confident, capable and independent young people. Working together as parents, carers and school is an important part of this. Our **Meet the Teacher Meetings will be held during the week beginning 14th September** and are a valuable opportunity to meet your child's teacher, hear about the year ahead and discuss how we can work together to support your child.

We very much hope you will be able to attend. The meetings are for **parents and carers only**, and **Mrs Bryant will be running a crèche for school-age children** during the meetings.

Full details, including dates and times for each year group, can be found at the **end of this newsletter**.

Secure, Stretch, Succeed

This year, our school vision is **Secure, Stretch, Succeed**. It reflects our commitment to helping every child build strong foundations, enjoy being challenged and develop the confidence to achieve their very best:

- **Secure** – We are helping children to develop strong foundations in their learning, with a particular focus on writing and maths. Secure knowledge and skills give children the confidence and independence to build on what they already know.
- **Stretch** – We want children to think deeply, embrace challenge and become confident problem-solvers. Through engaging lessons, thoughtful questioning and opportunities to reason and explore, we will encourage every child to stretch their thinking.
- **Succeed** – Every child should have the opportunity to excel. We will celebrate achievement, build confidence and provide the right support and challenge so that all children can make progress, feel proud of their learning and succeed.

Together, **Secure, Stretch, Succeed** will help guide our learning and teaching throughout the year.

We would also love parents to join in by sharing your child's achievements outside school. Please email details to: admin@elmsteadprimary.net or pass them on to your child's teacher by Thursday ready for our Friday assembly.





Growth Mindset – a Reminder

This is reminder for all parents/ carers but will certainly be useful information for all new parents/ carers in the school: Having a 'Growth Mindset' is something that is fundamental to the work that we do as a school. Research has shown that everybody has one of two Mindsets: Fixed or Growth and this Mindset can change depending on what you are doing at the time. For example, you might be a keen writer and so have a Growth Mindset for this but then when learning to play a musical instrument you might have a Fixed Mindset. We are promoting a Growth Mindset with everything the children are doing in school.

This means we want the children to:

- embrace challenges
- show resilience and persevere when something is difficult
- understand that effort is vital to improving
- not be afraid to make mistakes and get thing wrong (this can be when most learning occurs)
- learn from feedback
- are inspired by other people's success

These things will help them not only in school but later on in life too.

P.E. Days for each class

Just to remind you that, each class will aim to do two P.E. lessons a week. On the days that your child's class has P.E., they will need to come in to school in their P.E. kit as the children will not change for P.E. They will remain in these clothes all day so do not need to bring in uniform to change into afterwards. These are the days that each class is doing P.E. starting from week beginning Monday 7th September:

Reception: Friday

Year 1: Monday and Friday

Year 2: Tuesday and Friday

Year 3: Tuesday and Friday

Year 4: Wednesday and Friday

Year 5: Wednesday and Friday

Year 6: Monday and Friday

P.E. Uniform consists of:

- School P.E. house colour t-shirt;
- Navy shorts;
- Navy tracksuit;
- Trainers for outside School

P.E. house colour t-shirt initially provided by EPSA for new children joining the school (any replacement t-shirts will then have to be paid for).

If your child had their ears pierced over the summer, please be aware that for health and safety reasons, children cannot take part in P.E. while wearing earrings. Earrings cannot be taped over, so they must be removed before the lesson. If your child is unable to remove them on their own, we kindly ask that you do so before school on P.E. days.

Assemblies

Every term we focus on the School's Core Values (Courage, Open-Mindedness, Nurture, Endeavour, Communication and Teamwork) in our assemblies. This term the focus is on: Courage and Open-Mindedness. Below are the aspects of the Core Value that will be introduced to the children through assemblies. You may wish to discuss them with your child at home.

Core Value	Aspect of Core Value Covered
COURAGE <i>From week beginning 31st August</i>	What is courage? How can courage be defined? Learning from our mistakes Admitting when we are wrong Taking sensible risks Making choices – in work and socially; standing up for what we believe Making choices – in work and socially; standing up for others Doing what you know is right, even if others are not Courage to stand up for what needs to change
OPEN-MINDEDNESS <i>From week beginning 2nd November</i>	Understanding what we mean by respect How we show respect in school Showing respect for people's differences Showing respect for other people's feelings Self-respect – making the right choices Respecting property Thinking before acting and consider alternative actions Being respectful, kind and honest

School Council

If your child is interested in representing their class on the school council this year, please see the attached poster from Miss Penwill that has more information about the speech they will need to do to their class before an anonymous class vote takes place.



Promoting Good Attendance at Elmstead Primary

At Elmstead Primary School, we know that regular attendance and punctuality are key to helping every child thrive. Being in school every day ensures pupils can fully benefit from learning, friendships, and all the opportunities that shape their wellbeing and future success.

We aim to build strong habits of attendance from the very beginning and hold high expectations for all our pupils. Good attendance is woven into our school's vision and values, supporting not only achievement but also safeguarding and personal development.

If you have any questions, please contact our Attendance Officer, Jackie Vaughan, who is here to support families with any attendance matters.

Forest School with Mrs Penny – Growing, Exploring and Learning Outdoors!

At Elmstead Primary, we are delighted that all of our children have the opportunity to take part in Forest School sessions in our very own wildlife area throughout the academic year. Led by our experienced Forest School leader, Mrs Penny, these sessions offer something special — a chance for children to learn, grow and flourish outdoors in nature.

So, what is Forest School?

Forest School is a child-centred learning approach that takes place in a natural environment, such as woodland, grassland or other outdoor areas like our wildlife area. This style of learning encourages children to explore, discover and create through hands-on activities and play.

It's not just about being outside — it's about developing confidence, independence, resilience and a lifelong love of learning. Unlike a traditional classroom lesson, Forest School is learner-led. Children are supported to follow their curiosity and problem-solve, to take supported risks and to build meaningful connections with the world around them. Over time, this builds confidence, self-esteem, communication skills, creativity and emotional well-being.



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) in their year group so you know which session your child will be taking part in and when to bring in their Forest School clothes.



WOW Walk to School Challenge

This year, we will be continuing to take part in the **WOW – Walk to School Challenge**, a brilliant initiative from **Living Streets**, the UK charity for everyday walking. This challenge continues to inspire our children and families to embrace active travel and enjoy all the benefits it brings. It's really simple. You walk or wheel to school, you log your journey each day on the screen in school and you earn a different badge every month. It's that easy.

This year's theme is **Walk the Senses**, so all of the badges show things that children said they could either see, hear, touch, taste, or smell on their journeys to school.

All of the badges have been designed by children who took part in the WOW challenge last year.

Our school record is giving out 154 badges in one month so let's see if we can beat it this year!



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

Monday 7th September

Meet the Teacher Meeting Dates:

Monday 14th September

Monday 14th September

Tuesday 15th September

Tuesday 15th September

Wednesday 16th September

Wednesday 16th September

Tuesday 20th October

Thursday 22nd October

Monday 26th October

Thursday 5th November

Friday 27th November

Monday 30th November

Tuesday 15th December

Friday 18th December

Clubs start this week

Year 2 Parents/ Carers – 3:30pm

Year 5 Parents/ Carers – 4:00pm

Year 6 Parents/ Carers – 3:30pm

Year 1 Parents/ Carers – 4:00pm

Year 3 Parents/ Carers – 3:30pm

Year 4 Parents/ Carers – 4:00pm

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

Whole School Trip to 'The Wizard of Oz Musical'

Last day of term