



St Mary of Charity Primary

Weekly Newsletter

Friday 2nd October 2026

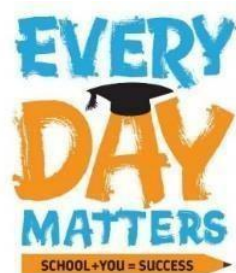


Telephone: 01795 532496

Email: office@smcs.aquilatrust.co.uk

Website: www.smcschool.co.uk

Attendance



EYFS Hamilton	Year 1 Donaldson	Year 2 Anning	Year 3 Malala	Year 4 Hockney	Year 5 Rosen	
97%	93%	97%	95%	96%	95%	95%
Year to date: 96.8%		This Term: 96.8%			Target 96%	

Dear Parents and Carers,

It has been another busy and enjoyable week at SMC, with lots of opportunities for learning, celebration and coming together as a school community.

Firstly, I would like to thank all of the Year 2, 3 and 4 parents who attended our Times Tables Rock Stars (TTRS) workshops this week. It was wonderful to see families engaging with their children's learning. The children were particularly excited to share their heatmaps with both parents and staff, proudly demonstrating the effort they are putting into developing their times table fluency. We are already seeing encouraging progress in their mathematical confidence and accuracy. Well done to everyone involved!

Our Year 4 pupils enjoyed a fantastic day at Otterden Woods this week. They spent the day hunting for insects, exploring the woodland environment and developing their teamwork skills through den building activities. The children represented the school brilliantly and thoroughly enjoyed their outdoor learning experiences.

On Friday, we proudly celebrated Hello Yellow Day, focusing on wellbeing, kindness and having fun together. Across the school, children took part in a variety of activities designed to promote positive mental health and strengthen our sense of community. The day was filled with board games, dancing, OPAL play, favourite music and discussions about ways we can look after our own wellbeing and support others.

Our Wellbeing Champions were exceptional ambassadors throughout the day. They supported children on the playground by leading colouring activities, word searches and craft opportunities, helping everyone to feel included and enjoy the celebrations. In addition, they have been working hard to improve our school grounds by planting daffodil bulbs and helping in the garden, making the area brighter, more welcoming and enjoyable for all.

Most importantly, Hello Yellow Day gave us the opportunity to appreciate one another and reflect on the many things we are thankful for. It was wonderful to see so many smiles, hear so much laughter and celebrate the importance of looking after ourselves and each other. A fantastic day was had by everyone at SMC.

Staffing Update

Many of you will be aware that Miss Marks has been absent for much of this term due to a health-related issue. We know that both children and families have missed seeing her in school and I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the whole school community, to wish her a speedy recovery. We are pleased that her recovery is progressing well and are hopeful that she will be able to rejoin us towards the end of next week. We know the children will be delighted to welcome her back.

I would also like to share some positive staffing news. Following the departure of two valued members of staff at the end of the last academic year, we have now successfully recruited two new Teaching Assistants to join our team. We are currently completing the necessary pre-employment checks and are hopeful that both colleagues will be able to start with us after the half-term break. We look forward to welcoming them to the SMC family and know they will be a wonderful addition to our school community.

Important Change to the End of the Academic Year

I would also like to make families aware of an important amendment to the school calendar.

Unfortunately, an administrative error occurred when calculating the dates for this academic year. The May Bank Holiday was inadvertently included as a teaching day, which means that our published calendar falls below the statutory number of teaching days required.

To rectify this, an additional school day has been added to the end of the summer term. As a result, the final day of the academic year will now be Friday 23rd July, rather than the previously advertised Thursday.

We appreciate that changes to published dates can be inconvenient and apologise for any disruption this may cause. Thank you for your understanding and support.

Thank you, as always, for your continued partnership and support. We are incredibly proud of all that our children achieve and the positive school community we continue to build together.



Mrs Rowley-Jones

Headteacher



Suitable for
Primary aged
children



Arts Holiday Club Faversham

27th, 28th October

St Mary of Charity Primary School

10am – 4pm | £35 per day*



(or £40 with
wraparound care,
9am – 5pm)



WRITING COMPETITIONS FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG ADULTS

SUBMIT A STORY OR POEM
UP TO 500 WORDS

THREE ENTRY LEVELS:

- YEARS 3-6
- YEARS 7-10
- YEARS 11-13

1ST PRIZE: £30 BOOK TOKEN

2ND PRIZE: £20 BOOK TOKEN

Plus the winning entry from each group will
win £100 worth of books for your school
library or a nominated book charity



FAVERSHAM
LITERARY
FESTIVAL

Deadline for entries: 15 January 2027

Entry to the competition is free.
To enter you must be living within or
attending a school within the
Faversham postcode area.

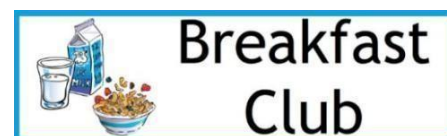
Entries can be submitted
through participating schools
or sent direct to Faversham Literary
Festival:

info@favershamliteraryfestival.com

All entries must include the entrant's
name, age, and your school or your
home postcode

www.favershamliteraryfestival.org

**PLEASE
NOTE..**



We run our own **Breakfast Club** and **After School Club**; spaces for these need to be pre-booked at least 24 hrs in advance using the MCAS App. Please contact the school office if you need support booking a place for your child.

Breakfast Club: 7:30am-8:35am

After School Club: 3:15pm- 6pm (with a 4pm, 5pm & 6pm collection option)

Please note: If you wish to collect after 5pm, we require 7 days' notice. Contact the office via email or phone to book a 6pm slot.



Caution

Please take care on school site, no parking or driving in pedestrian areas and ensure that groups of parents do not block entrances/pathways into the school.

We have had to make the decision to ban the use of school bikes after school and these were not being cared for or supervised adequately. Children are not allowed to ride bikes on the playground after school. Please ensure that your child does not do this.

**Don't
Forget!**

Children need to bring a water bottle into school daily. This should be filled with plain water only unless your child has a medical condition that necessitates a different type of fluid. The children have opportunities to refill their bottles throughout the day and are reminded to do so.

Due to the changing nature of the weather children are required to have a waterproof coat with them each day. We always try to get outside regardless of the weather. We also recommend your child having wellington boots in school for access to the grass and mud kitchen areas when it is wet.

This week in Worship

This week in worship we have been exploring resilience and how we can achieve things we put our mind to. We have considered people who have been treated unfairly, linking this to Black History month and how we should never give up in the fight for justice.



COLLECTIVE CELEBRATION

**ALL YEAR 4, NATHANAEL,
ADRIANA, DULCIE,
MATILDA, AJAY, LENNY,
BEN, HARLOW, ISLA,
ELEANOR, ARCHIE, DEMI**



IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

INTERNET SAFETY

This week's poster is about **AI COMPANIONS** Please continue to monitor your child's online behaviour and access. If you need help with a specific app we have not highlighted yet, please talk to Mrs Ling.

ATTENDANCE



If your child is poorly and unable to come to school, please ensure that you inform the office via telephone or leave a message on our answer phone.

You **MUST** phone in before 9.10am.

DROP OFF

Can we please remind parents that school gates shut at **8:45am**. If you arrive late, please drop off your child/ children at the school office.

For safeguarding reasons we do not allow parents/carers to drop off their children to their classes.

MAIN ENTRY

ALL VISITORS
MUST REPORT
TO THE
SCHOOL OFFICE



We would politely ask all parents/carers to supervise your child carefully during drop off and pick up. Ball games are not permitted before school as this poses a risk to other children, please do not allow your child to play with a ball anywhere on the school site before the start of the school day.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about AI COMPANIONS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Powered by generative AI models like ChatGPT and Google Gemini, AI companion apps and virtual chatbots such as Character.ai, Snapchat My AI, Replika and Talkie, allow users to create, customise, and chat to synthetic avatars around the clock. While many young people use them for harmless entertainment, creative writing or homework help, these tools are designed to simulate genuine human empathy, emotional bonding and deep friendship.

EMOTIONAL DEPENDENCY

AI companions are programmed to be endlessly agreeable, attentive, and available 24/7. Unlike human friendships, an AI companion never disagrees, sets personal boundaries, or gets tired. Young people (especially those experiencing loneliness, social anxiety, or low self-esteem) can quickly develop an unhealthy emotional attachment, viewing synthetic software as their 'best friend' or a surrogate romantic partner.

DANGEROUS MENTAL HEALTH ADVICE

AI chatbots possess no genuine empathy, professional clinical knowledge, or moral reasoning. While developers state these tools are not therapists, vulnerable teenagers often turn to them in crisis. Chatbots have previously hallucinated unsafe medical guidance, validated depressive spirals, and failed to safely escalate disclosures of self-harm or suicidal ideation to real-world protective services.

DATA HARVESTING & OVERSHARING

Because conversational bots simulate warmth and understanding, children often lower their guard and treat the chatbot as a trusted friend. They may disclose sensitive personal information, including full names, school details, private family problems, or secrets, unaware that their conversations are being logged, may be analysed by third parties (including advertisers), or used to train future AI models.

DISTORTED SOCIAL SKILLS

Navigating real-world friendships can be messy, involving dealing with conflict, compromise, boredom, and awkwardness. If a teenager spends hours interacting with an AI that is tailored specifically to validate and flatter them, they may become impatient with real-world relationships. Over time, this can lead to social withdrawal, heightened anxiety in peer groups, and isolation: a vicious circle of growing online dependency coupled with a heightened sense that relationships in the 'real world' are too challenging to maintain.

INAPPROPRIATE OR EXPLICIT CONTENT

While most mainstream platforms feature safety filters and guardrails, young people frequently discover 'jailbreak' prompts to bypass them. Some companion platforms subtly nudge users towards mature themes, romantic roleplay, or sexually suggestive conversations. In worse cases, third-party apps with weak safety checks have been found to generate sexually explicit text or intimate images.

"FREEMIUM" UPSELLS & SUBSCRIPTIONS

Many companion platforms operate on a freemium model. While basic chat is free, features like voice calls, uncensored responses, custom avatars, or 'deeper bonding' tiers are locked behind expensive monthly recurring subscriptions or in-app token purchases. This can lead to significant hidden costs and pressure on young people to spend money to maintain the 'friendship'.

Advice for Parents & Educators

TALK OPENLY ABOUT FAKE RELATIONSHIPS

Demystify how these tools work. Explain to young people that an AI companion has no feelings, memories, or consciousness; it is simply calculating the next most mathematically probable word based on its training data. It is helpful to explain to them the mechanics of large language models so that they understand how they are trained and how they are designed to always flatter and be helpful.

ENCOURAGE REAL-WORLD CONNECTION

Ensure technology habits do not replace face-to-face peer socialisation, sports, hobbies, and family time. Create healthy boundaries at home (such as keeping phones and tablets out of bedrooms overnight) to prevent late-night, unmonitored attachment loops with conversational chatbots when young people are at their most vulnerable.

AUDIT PRIVACY SETTINGS & AGE LIMITS

Check which companion apps are installed on your child's phone or tablet. Many dedicated companion apps carry an App Store rating of 17+, while platforms like Character.ai set a minimum age of 13+ (or 16+ in the UK/EU). Review the privacy settings together: turn off data-sharing toggles, disable model training where possible, and ensure location permissions are blocked.

REINFORCE WHERE TO GET REAL HELP

Make sure young people know that a machine can never replace professional pastoral or mental health care. Remind them of the trusted adults they can turn to at school – such as their Form Tutor, Head of Year, or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – as well as dedicated youth support services like Childline (0800 1111) or Shout (text 85258).

Meet Our Expert

Darren Coxon is the Founder and Executive Director of Kompass Education, a consultancy specialising in supporting educators, students and parents in making wise choices with AI. His book *Ethical AI and Education*, co-authored with Clara Hawking, will be released later in 2026 by Taylor and Francis.



The National College®

See full reference list on our website

@wake_up_weds

/www.thenationalcollege

@wake.up.wednesday

@wake.up.weds

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 09.10.2026

REMINDER

The School Gate

Please be mindful of other children and parents at the school gates. The front of the gates can become a very crowded place and we want children to have ease entering the school in the morning. Please encourage your child to walk through the gates on their own and do not stand in groups talking where you potentially block the entrance. It is intimidating for children to walk through adults into school.

HEALTHY LUNCHES



We promote healthy eating at St Mary of Charity Primary School and would appreciate parents adhering to the healthy eating guidelines as below:

Sweets: Please do not pack sweets or chocolate bars.

Drinks: children under 5 receive free milk with their snacks and water is available for everyone whenever they want to drink. Please do not send in fizzy drinks with your child's packed lunch.

Nut Free: Please be aware that we are becoming a nut-free school. We now have children in school who have potential life-threatening nut- allergies which can be triggered by direct or indirect contact with nuts in the environment. To keep our children safe, we request that parents please find a nut-free alternative. This also includes NUTELLA or any CHOCOLATE spread.

Thank you for your co-operation.



SCHOOL DINNERS –

Dinner Money cost £3.10

Please be reminded school meals are to be paid for in advance.

WRAPAROUND CARE: Both Breakfast and Afterschool club bookings are placed under this tab and payments need to be made when you book your session for your child. *This is done to avoid any payments not made.*

Please be reminded to clear out any outstanding balances under individual accounts of your children.

**NO NUTS OR NUT
PRODUCTS ALLOWED
IN SCHOOL**





Faversham
Foodbank
Together with Trussell

HARVEST SCHOOL COLLECTION

— HELPING LOCAL PEOPLE IN FAVERSHAM & VILLAGES —

Please donate the following items to support
individuals and families in our community.



Tinned fruit



Cartons of
fruit juice



Jars of Jam



Tinned Carrots



Brown/BBQ
sauce



Unisex
Deodorant



Household
cleaning products

Dates for your Diary



Date	Event
14 th October	PTFA GLOW Disco
15 th October	Year 3 TTRS Competition
16 th October	Year 4 TTRS Competition
19 th October	Creepy Claws Assembly 2.45pm
20 th October	Year 6 Golden Ticket reward pm
22 nd October	2.30pm Year 3 Class Assembly – Yr 3 parents welcome
23 rd October	9.30am Harvest Festival at St Mary of Charity Church – all families welcome

