

Headlines

Issue 9 - 31.01.25



MESSAGE FROM MRS FORD, HEADTEACHER

Dear Parents/Carers

We have a very exciting Science Week planned during the week beginning 10th February, for all children in Years R to 6. On Thursday 13th February children may dress up to celebrate the end of the week. As Science forms part of STEM (Science Technology, Engineering and Maths) they may dress up in any costume associated with these subjects. (Please see letter dated 27th January for further information).

Our wonderful FOSS team (Friends of Stepgates School) are also busy organising a variety of events for the children to enjoy during Spring term, including their very popular Spring Disco and Mother's Day Gift Stall. Further details of these events will follow in due course.

STAFFING

I am delighted to extend a warm welcome to a new member of staff, Miss Maria Nowakowska who has joined us this term as a Learning Support Assistant. I am sure she will soon feel part of the Stepgates team.

STEPGATES SHINING STARS

This term we have selected our 'Stepgates Shining Stars' for Science. The children will be working with Mrs Brough demonstrating experiments to the rest of the school and assisting during the upcoming Science Week. Congratulations to the following children who received their badges during assembly and are wearing their stars with pride:

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| Alfie G and Crystal B | Grasshoppers Class |
| Elijah C and Lucia G-S | Falcons Class |
| Aaron C and Piper C | Hawks Class |
| Adam P and Amber S | Owls Class |
| James E and Daphne C-P | Kites Class |

REMINDER - INSET DAY FRIDAY 14TH FEBRUARY 2025

Please note that school will be closed on Friday, 14th February for an INSET Day.

ATTENDANCE / PUNCTUALITY EXPECTATIONS

At this time of year, as we move from the grey days of January into Spring, I know many of you will be thinking ahead to brighter days and maybe booking a holiday. With this in mind, I thought it would be helpful to remind all parents/carers of my expectations regarding attendance, including 'Requests for Leave of Absence' and 'Lateness'.

Stepgates Community School firmly believe that all children benefit from regular school attendance, it is crucial for a child's future life chances and establishes a positive work ethic early in life. Stepgates expects that pupils attend 100% of the time, unless the absence is classed as EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES and is authorised by the Headteacher. **(Please note - A family holiday, leaving school early for haircuts, dentists, seeing Father Christmas, taking the dog to the vet, weekend away or arriving late due to car problems, oversleeping, no one being able to bring your child to school - do not meet the criteria for 'exceptional circumstances')** In accordance with guidance from Surrey County Council no holidays will be authorised at the beginning of the academic year, or during May due to end of year assessments.

Under the Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

- To his/her age, ability and aptitude and
- To any special needs he/she may have

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

MESSAGE FROM MRS FORD, HEADTEACHER Cont'd...

Five consecutive days of term time leave

Penalty Notice fines will be issued for term time leave of five or more consecutive days. **INSET training days are school days** and can be included in the five or more consecutive days where there was intent to be absent for term time leave.

10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period

Penalty Notice fines will be considered when there have been 10 sessions (this could be a morning or an afternoon) of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period. The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. two sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further eight within the Autumn Term). Please make sure that you make first day of absence contact with us to explain any absences for your child.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave or irregular attendance the amount will be:

- £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.
- Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave or irregular attendance the amount will be:

- £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.
- There will be no offer of a reduction.

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within three years)

The third time an offence is committed for term time leave or irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court.

Magistrates' fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child.

Cases found guilty in the Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate, due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.

New two penalty notice limit in a three-year period

The three-year rolling period starts for parents when the first penalty notice is issued to them after the 19th August 2024.

I have attached a poster to Page 3, for ease of reference.

We understand that, financially, times are very tough for many families and children do become ill but please do not abuse our staff who are here to support you and abide by rules enforced by Surrey County Council

PUNCTUALITY

I would also like to remind parents that lateness to school is just as serious as non-attendance and could also lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice. It is expected that children will arrive at school on time. The start of the school day is an important time for children to develop their social skills with their peers, as well as preparing them for their learning. We start teaching at 8.45am and 'late' children miss out on vital skills such as phonics and/or basic number work. In cases of persistent late arrival to school, school will liaise with the parents/carers to identify reasons for the persistent lateness and provide appropriate support and guidance. The matter may be referred to the Inclusion Officer (IO) for investigation on her regular visits to school. The role of the Inclusion Service is to monitor school attendance/lateness and to support children in order to improve their attendance/lateness. This often involves a home visit.

Thank you for your support in ensuring all our children are in school on time, every day.

**Mrs T Ford
Headteacher**

PENALTY NOTICES WILL BE ISSUED FOR

Term time leave: Penalty Notice Fines will be issued for term time leave of 5 or more consecutive days

10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period: A Penalty Notice may be considered/issued when a pupil has had 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period. The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years.

PER PARENT/PER CHILD

Penalty Notice fines will continue to be issued per parent per child.

For example: 3 Siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

FIRST OFFENCE

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for a term time holiday or irregular school attendance the Penalty Notice will be charged at:
£160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days of issue, reducing to £80 if paid within 21 days**.

SECOND OFFENCE (within 3 years of the First Offence)

Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second Penalty Notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first notice, the second Penalty Notice will be charged at:

£160 if paid within 28 days (no reduced fee for paying early).

(**Unpaid Penalty Notice's after 28 days may result in a parental prosecution)

THIRD OFFENCE (within 3 years of the First Offence)

On the third time that an offence is committed for either a term time holiday and / or irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, the case may proceed straight to Parental Prosecution under the Single Justice Procedure. If found guilty of the offence of 'Failure to send a child to school' the Magistrates can impose a fine up to £1000.

PROUD CORNER

Well done to:

- ◆ Eva-Marie, Year 1 - Ninja Knights Certificate
- ◆ Dakota W, Year 2 - Medal, Trophies & Rosette, Encore Dance
- ◆ Isabella HEK - Acro Rosette & Trophy
- ◆ Dexter S, Year 3 - Football Trophy & Medal
- ◆ Leo W, Year 1 - Football Medal
- ◆ Edward H, Year 6 - Swimming Certificate & Badge

Thank you for sharing your success with the children at our Whole School Assembly.

HEADTEACHER AWARDS

Well done to the following children who have been presented with Headteacher Awards:

- * Harvey B, Year 2
- * Finlee F, Year 5
- * Ella C, Year 4
- * Santino W, Year 5
- * Blake G, Year 1

SURREY FIRE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

This week some classes have had visits from Surrey Fire Education Department, which have been fantastic and the children have thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

The talks included videos, games and role play which brought the lessons to life; each class was left with a sticker, activity sheet and book to keep in order to remember the fundamental guidance around fire safety for children.

We are so grateful for this fantastic resource and support of the children within our Community.



Our Reception children were lucky enough to climb aboard the fire truck and squirt the hoses.

PANATHLON CHALLENGE

On Tuesday 21st January some of the Robins children went on a sporting trip to NESBOT College to take part in a Panathlon Challenge. We left school just after nine to get on the mini-bus to drive to NESBOT College, Epsom. When we arrived, we were given our area and put into teams. Once all the schools had arrived we listened to the coach who told us about how the morning would go. We then went to our first activity. The activities included Skittles, Basketball, Bean Bag Throw, Curling, and Target Throwing. We all had different favourite activities.

After all the activities were finished we got together in a big group to see how each team did. Our team came 3rd out of the six teams and we each got a medal!

Although we felt nervous, we worked together as a team and we all had a fun time.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

ARTIST OF THE MONTH FOR FEBRUARY



Katshushika Hokusai

(c. 31 October 1760 – 10 May 1849),

Known simply as Hokusai.

Hokusai was a Japanese artist, ukiyo-e painter and printmaker of the Edo period. Born in Edo (now Tokyo), Hokusai is best known as author of the woodblock print series *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji* which includes the internationally iconic print, *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*.

COMPOSER OF THE MONTH FOR FEBRUARY



Johann Pachelbel

(Baptised 1 September 1653 – Buried 9 March 1706)

Johann Pachelbel was a German composer, organist, and teacher who brought the south German organ schools to their peak. He composed a large body of sacred and secular music, and his contributions to the development of the chorale prelude and fugue have earned him a place among the most important composers of the middle Baroque era.

HAWKS CLASS ASSEMBLY

On Friday 24th January 2025 Hawks Class had their class assembly. We did a Spanish assembly. We had been learning the days of the week and fruits in our Spanish lessons. We also already knew how to count to 10 in Spanish. Using this knowledge, we told the story of The Very Hungry Caterpillar, or as the Spanish would say, La Oruga Muy Hambrienta. We ended with a song called Veo Veo which we also sang in Spanish.

By Lilly, Florence, Bella, Ella, Piper, Layla in Year 4

FALCONS CLASS TRIP TO CHERTSEY MUSEUM

Falcons Class had a fantastic day out at Chertsey Museum on Monday 27th January. We spent the day investigating pre-history which included how people lived, the tools that they made and used as well as the different animals that were alive back then.

We examined lots of artefacts from pre-history, including bones and discovered what they were used for. We also explored the museum and dressed up as Stone Age people, we had a great day!

Please don't forget to visit and support our local museum.



DATES - 2024/2025

UPCOMING EVENTS - SPRING TERM 2025

| | |
|--|--|
| Friday 7th February | Ladybirds Class Assembly (9:05am) |
| Mon 10th-Thurs 13th February | STEM (Science Technology, Engineering & Maths) Week |
| Thursday 13th February | Children may dress up in a costume associated with STEM Week Children finish at normal time for half term |
| Friday 14th February | INSET Day - School closed |
| Mon 17th to Fri 21st Feb | Half Term |
| Monday 24th February | Children return to school |
| Friday 28th February | Falcons Class Assembly (9:05am) |
| Monday 3rd March and Tuesday 4th March | Parent-Teacher Consultation Evenings for Years R-6 (Further details to follow) |
| Thursday 6th March | World Book Day |
| Friday 7th March | Grasshoppers Class Assembly (9:05am) |
| Friday 14th March | Butterflies Class Assembly (9:05am) |
| Friday 21st March | Owls Class Assembly (9:05am) |
| Monday 24th March | Book Fair this week |
| Wed 2nd to Fri 4th April | Year 4 Residential Trip |
| Friday 4th April | Last day of Spring Term - Children finish at 1pm |
| Mon 7th to Mon 21st April | Easter Holidays |

SUMMER TERM 2025

**DURING MAY ASSESSMENTS FOR ALL CLASSES WILL TAKE PLACE
NO AUTHORISED ABSENCES WILL BE GRANTED DURING THIS TIME**

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|---|--|
| Tuesday 22nd April | Children return to school |
| Monday 5th May | Bank Holiday - School Closed |
| Mon 12th - Thurs 15th May | SATs (Standard Assessment Tests) Week |
| Wednesday 21st May | Class Photographs |
| Thursday 22nd May | Sports Day (Weather Permitting) |
| Thursday 22nd May | Children finish at normal time for half term |
| Friday 23rd May | INSET Day - School closed |
| Mon 26th to Fri 30th May | Half Term |
| Monday 2nd June | Children return to school |
| Mon 2nd to Fri 6th June | Year 6 Residential Trip |
| Monday 9th June | INSET Day - School closed |
| Thursday 26th June | Year 6 trip to Harry Potter Studios |
| Tuesday 1st July and Wednesday 2nd July | Secondary School Induction Days - (Please check with individual school for further details) |
| Tuesday 22nd July | Last day of Summer term - Children finish at 1pm |