



# News on the Ninth

## January 2025

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Telephone: (01707) 880420

Dear Parents and Carers,

Happy New Year and a warm welcome back to school this term. We hope you and your families had an enjoyable Christmas break.

A huge thank you for all the heartfelt Christmas wishes, cards and presents we received at the end of last term. Although the Spring Term is shorter than the others, it is just as packed with exciting events and learning.

It was wonderful to welcome parents and carers into school for our Christmas performances. The children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 did a superb job with their acting, singing and dancing, and we hope you have made some fantastic memories. Thank you also to the PTA for organising the mince pie and mingle sessions before each performance.

Please look out for the curriculum pamphlets which will be emailed out giving details about what your child(ren) will be learning this term. As there hasn't been as much classroom time as usual since the previous newsletter, this month, we thought we'd share some information about the different teams within the school.

### Governors

We are an independent body overseeing how the school is run. We are there to offer support, advice and challenge to the leadership team in school. We are involved in a range of strategic decisions including oversight of finances, premises, curriculum, staffing, policies and a range of other issues. We try to get in to school to see teaching in action and to speak with children and staff as much as we can.

Most recently we have been involved in strategic decisions like recruiting a dedicated speech and language therapist, purchasing a minibus to ensure that all children can participate in sports without relying on asking parents to help transport them and recruiting our new Deputy Headteacher.

### Phase Leadership Team

Our job is to monitor and support the teachers within our phase to help ensure that high-quality lessons are being taught, children are suitably supported and challenged with their learning and that inappropriate behaviour is dealt with appropriately.

When parents have questions or concerns, they should initially raise them with the class teacher, however if they feel an issue has not been resolved, they can contact one of us. We will also contact parents if we have concerns about children within our phase regarding things such as inappropriate behaviour or reading at home.



## School Council

We are elected each year by members of our class. As a group, we meet with Mr Burt once every two weeks to share the views of our class. Our role is to give a child's voice to how we can help make things even better around the school. We collect and share opinions about a variety of things including: which charities to support, what clubs would be preferred, improvements to playtimes, promoting safe, healthy travel to school and advising on new books for classrooms.



Year 2



Year 3



Year 4



Year 5



Year 6

## Wellbeing Committee

Our aim is to think of new ways we can look after our school and community's mental health and wellbeing. We support Miss Dean and Miss Bertorelli in thinking of ideas to promote and support emotional wellbeing. This could include reading stories to younger children, creating posters with important messages, supporting play and speaking to younger children.



*"I think the mental wellbeing of the students here is as important as their education because a sad pupil won't learn as well as a happy pupil".*

*"I wanted to be part of the Wellbeing Committee because I want to help other people. I'm kind and caring towards others and I can ask a trusted adult for advice when needed".*

*"I believe every student should feel safe and happy at Commonswood."*



## Play Leaders

All children from year 6 have the opportunity to become play leaders. They give up a portion of their lunch breaks to lead games and activities on the year 2, year 1 and reception playgrounds. They try to encourage as many children as possible to take part in exciting activities – promoting positive interactions.

## Safeguarding Team

Our Safeguarding Team is responsible for protecting the welfare of all students. We work proactively to identify and address any concerns related to pupils' safety, wellbeing, and emotional health. This includes safeguarding against physical, emotional, and online harm.

If there are concerns about a pupil, we will work with teachers, parents, and external agencies to ensure that appropriate support is provided.

Our team is here to ensure that every child has the opportunity to thrive in a safe and supportive environment, and we encourage you to reach out to them if you have any concerns regarding your child's safety or wellbeing.



## Clubs

Clubs will start on the week commencing 27th January and the last week of clubs will be week commencing 24th March. There are no clubs on the week commencing 10th February due to Learning Review Meetings with parents.

A letter with booking information will be sent out next week on 16<sup>th</sup> January.

KS1 Clubs				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
		<p><b>Year 1 Lego Club</b> (free) Parents please collect from the office door at 4.15pm</p> <p><b>Y1,2 Gymnastics</b> (free) collect from the Nursery door at 4.15pm</p>		<p><b>Y1, 2 Football</b> Premier Sports Parents please collect from the Nursery door at 4.15pm</p>





KS2 Clubs				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Y3,4,5,6 Sign Language</b> (free) Parents collect from the office door at 4.15pm	<b>Y 4,5,6 Indoor athletics</b> (free) Parents collect from the office door at 4.15pm  <b>Y4 Badminton</b> (free) Parents collect from the office door at 4.15pm	<b>Y3,4,5,6 Kapla Club</b> (free) Parents collect from the Nursery door at 4.15pm		<b>Y3,4,5,6 Football</b> Premier Sports Parents collect from the KS2 playground at 4.15pm

### Nursery Applications for September 2025

If your child was born between 01/09/2021 – 31/08/2022 they are eligible to start our Nursery in September 2025. Applications for Nursery will go live in January 2024.

We do have some Stay & Play sessions available for you and your child to come along and spend some time in the Nursery prior to applying. Please contact the school office in order for you to book a place.

Places are limited so please book early to avoid disappointment. Please email the school office to request a Nursery application form [admin@commonswood.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@commonswood.herts.sch.uk)

### Reception Applications for September 2025

Applications for Reception classes must be completed by **15<sup>th</sup> January** using the online application through the local authority website.

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/school-admissions/primary-junior-and-middle-schools/primary-junior-and-middle-school-places.aspx>



If you need any help or guidance to do so, please speak with our office staff who will be pleased to assist you if you do not have access to online facilities. May we remind parents of Nursery children that a new application must be made for admission to Reception classes and no priority is given to children already attending Commonswood Nursery.

### Online Safety Theme – Self Image and Identity

At home, please could you have a discussion with your child regarding this area.

- In EYFS and KS1, it could be discussing what to do if something happens that makes them feel sad, worried, uncomfortable or frightened.
- In Lower KS2, we have been discussing how people can represent themselves in different ways online and not to fully trust everything as how it appears.
- In upper KS2, discuss how to make responsible choices about having an online identity.

## Device / App Parental Controls

Almost all apps and devices now offer controls for parents. Parental controls on devices can offer different types of protection -from filtering out adult content in search results, to preventing your child from buying things when playing games.

You can find instructions on how to set controls on the manufacturer's website, or to find specific guidance for your device, network or platform, visit the 'Internet Matters' website. Control settings will apply whether the device is being used in your home or outside. It's also easy for controls to be switched off, so make sure your child understands why the settings are in place.

## Emotion of the term

Emotion focus for this half term:

**Happiness**



This half term, we will be learning about 'happiness': how it feels, what causes it and how it might look in someone else.

Please discuss this emotion with your child at home.

Our Wellbeing Committee are supporting us in teaching children how to spread kindness through the school by reading a story about Anti-Bullying to KS1.

## Anti-Abuse Curriculum

In order to embed the Anti-Abuse Curriculum into our teaching, each half term we are focusing on one theme which we will discuss in our classrooms during Snack and Discussion time. This half term, we focused on **Resilience and Wellbeing**. Some objectives linked closely with our PSHE topic (Dreams and Goals) as well as our discussion on the Emotion of the Month. Here are just some of the things we have been discussing across the school:

- When I make mistakes or have a bad experience, I have strategies to move forward positively.
- I know that I need to pay attention to my emotions and take care of my mental wellbeing.
- I have aspirations for the future, and I know how to plan to achieve those aspirations.
- I know how to help myself and others to calm down when angry or distressed.
- I know that everyone experiences ups and downs in their life: everyone struggles sometimes but talking about problems helps.

At home, why not speak with your child about their dreams and aspirations for the future. Reinforce the message that it is ok to make mistakes and normal to experience ups and downs – having ways to cope with these struggles and moving forward positively is what is most important.



## Cost of Living Support

This winter, Hertfordshire County Council wants to make sure that advice and support is available to help every resident deal with the cost of living.

Please follow the link to contact details highlighting advice and services residents can access.



<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/comms-team/campaign-toolkits/cost-of-living/cost-of-living-flash-poster.pdf>

## Time To Talk

**Negotiation, deliberation, empathy, persuasion and the ability to take turns in conversation are just a few of those skills that are beneficial for all aspects of our lives.**

**Research shows that children who are supported to develop strong language skills in their earliest years are more likely to succeed in school and work and lead happier lives.**

*[Literacy Trust: Creating Confident Communicators](#)*

Oracy is a hot topic right now—and for good reason. Strong oracy skills are essential for the development of young thinkers, innovators, and communicators. As more educators and parents recognise its impact, oracy is slowly becoming recognised as a cornerstone of learning, helping children express themselves clearly, listen actively, and engage thoughtfully with others.



For early years and primary aged children, oracy education is especially crucial. It forms the foundation of their social and cognitive development, shaping the way they understand the world and interact with others. Through activities that encourage speaking and listening, children develop the confidence to structure their thoughts, share ideas, ask questions, and solve problems

collaboratively. It also plays a powerful role in the development of writing. These skills aren't just academic—they play a significant role in building empathy, resilience, and self-awareness, which are key to personal and professional success.



Christmas is a great time of year to spend time talking and playing.

## Unwanted coats

If you have any children's coats which are no longer required and are of good quality, please bring them into the school office. We will give them to families in need.

## Term Time Absence

We are unable to authorise term time holidays.

Term time absence have a negative impact on friendships and learning. Please avoid taking your child out of school.

7 Education Act 1996 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child of compulsory age attends school.

School term dates for 2024/ 2025 and 2025 / 2026 can be found on the school's website.



## School Diary

January	
9 <sup>th</sup>	Speed stacking at Templewood Y4
17 <sup>th</sup>	Indoor athletics at Stanborough Y5
16 <sup>th</sup>	Nursery stay and play sessions begin
21 <sup>st</sup>	Choir to O2
27 <sup>th</sup>	Clubs start this week
February	
4 <sup>th</sup>	Year 5 Pine class assembly
5 <sup>th</sup>	Year 5 Palm class assembly
5 <sup>th</sup>	Music Workshop Y5
10 <sup>th</sup>	No clubs this week
11 <sup>th</sup>	Learning Review Meetings 3:30 – 6:10
13 <sup>th</sup>	Learning Review Meetings 3:30 – 6:10
14 <sup>th</sup>	Local Walk Y1
28 <sup>th</sup>	PTA Quiz night

March	
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Book Week Poetry workshops
5 <sup>th</sup>	Royal Albert Hall Gala
6 <sup>th</sup>	World Book day
10 <sup>th</sup>	Great Big Dance off Y4
24 <sup>th</sup>	Last week of clubs
26 <sup>th</sup>	Year 4 assembly
April	
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Year 3 assembly

## School Term Dates

2024 / 2025			
Spring	Monday	6 <sup>th</sup> January	Staff Inset Day
	Tuesday	7 <sup>th</sup> January	Term Commences
		17 <sup>th</sup> – 21 <sup>st</sup> February	Half Term
	Friday	4 <sup>th</sup> April	Term Ends
Summer	Tuesday	22 <sup>nd</sup> April	Staff Inset Day
	Wednesday	23 <sup>rd</sup> April	Term commences
	Monday	5 <sup>th</sup> May	Bank Holiday
	Friday	23 <sup>rd</sup> May	Staff Inset Day
		26 <sup>th</sup> May – 30 <sup>th</sup> May	Half Term
	Wednesday	23 <sup>rd</sup> July	Term ends

2025 / 2026			
Autumn	Wednesday	3 <sup>rd</sup> September	Staff Inset Day
	Thursday	4 <sup>th</sup> September	Term Commences
		27 <sup>th</sup> October – 31 <sup>st</sup> October	Half Term
	Friday	28 <sup>th</sup> November	Occasional Day
	Friday	19 <sup>th</sup> December	Term Ends

2025 / 2026			
Spring	Monday	5 <sup>th</sup> January	Staff Inset Day
	Tuesday	6 <sup>th</sup> January	Term Commences
		16 <sup>th</sup> – 20 <sup>th</sup> February	Half Term
	Friday	27 <sup>th</sup> March	Term Ends
Summer	Monday	13 <sup>th</sup> April	Staff Inset Day
	Tuesday	14 <sup>th</sup> April	Term commences
	Monday	4 <sup>th</sup> May	Bank Holiday
	Friday	22 <sup>nd</sup> May	Staff Inset Day
		25 <sup>th</sup> May – 29 <sup>th</sup> May	Half Term
	Monday	29 <sup>th</sup> June	Staff Inset Day
	Thursday	23 <sup>rd</sup> July	Term Ends

## PANTS

**TALK PANTS AND YOU'VE GOT IT COVERED!**

**P** RIVATES ARE PRIVATE  
 Parts of your body covered by underwear are private. No one should ask to see or touch them. Sometimes doctors, nurses or family members might have to. But they should always explain why, and ask if it's OK first. No one should ask you to touch or look at parts of their body that are covered by underwear.

**A** LWAYS REMEMBER YOUR BODY BELONGS TO YOU  
 It's your body, no one else's. No one should make you do things that make you feel embarrassed or uncomfortable. If anyone tries, tell an adult you trust.

**N** O MEANS NO  
 You have the right to say 'no' – even to a family member or someone you love. Remember, you're in control of your body and your feelings are important.

**T** ALK ABOUT SECRETS THAT UPSET YOU  
 Secrets shouldn't make you feel upset or worried. If they do, tell an adult you trust. You will never get into trouble for sharing a secret that upsets you.

**S** PEAK UP, SOMEONE CAN HELP  
 Talk about stuff that makes you worried or upset. An adult you trust will listen, and be able to help. It doesn't have to be a family member. It can be a teacher or a friend's parent – or even ChildLine.





Simple conversations, like crossing the road safely, bullying and dealing with strangers, are subjects that you and your child might talk about. But what about staying safe from sexual abuse? It's a conversation no parent wants to have, but thankfully it doesn't have to be scary. In fact, you don't even have to mention 'sexual abuse'. Simple conversations really can help keep your child safe.

The Underwear Rule is a simple way to help keep children safe from abuse. It teaches children that their body belongs to them, they have a right to say no, and that they should tell an adult if they're upset or worried.

For more information, please visit this link:

<https://www.parentsprotect.co.uk/files/Pants-adults.pdf>

## Free Parenting Courses

Disagreements are a normal part of life. How you approach them can make all the difference to you, your co-parent, and your children. Learn skills to navigate changes in your relationships, develop positive communication skills and learn practical steps that you can bring into your child's life to help them cope during and/or after a separation or divorce.

**Parenting When Separated:** A 6-week group-based course for separated parents that focuses on the emotional impact of separation and supporting communication between co-parents.

Upcoming course dates:

- Online course every Wednesday between 29 Jan - 12 Mar 2025 excluding half term, 10am - 12:30pm
- Face to Face course at The Otley Family Centre, Otley Way, WD19 7TB Every Friday between 17 Jan - 28 Feb 2025 excluding half term, 10am – 1pm

Parenting When Separated Referral Form ([hertfordshire.gov.uk](http://hertfordshire.gov.uk))

<https://surveys.hertfordshire.gov.uk/s/5SHI7N/>

**Parenting SEN Children Through Separation:** A 6-week group-based online course for separated or separating parents and carers of neurodiverse children seeking guidance, support, and strategies for co-parenting more consistently.

Upcoming course dates:

- Monday between 24 Feb - 31 Mar 2025, 7pm - 9pm
- Every Tuesday between 25 Feb - 1 Apr 2025, 9.30am - 11.30am

[https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=1v8xmMHAKWkdXzUTU-XK07CPv9ipqBDIY6wX\\_2Taa1UOEYwWTISNzg2TUpaQVNROFg4M1owR1BQMSQIQCN0PWcu](https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=1v8xmMHAKWkdXzUTU-XK07CPv9ipqBDIY6wX_2Taa1UOEYwWTISNzg2TUpaQVNROFg4M1owR1BQMSQIQCN0PWcu)





In partnership with Hertfordshire Council, British Cycling is excited to offer FREE Cycling City Hub and Academy sessions for children across Hertfordshire!

Held at both the Welwyn Gosling Track and St Albans Pump Track, these sessions are the perfect opportunity for students aged 7-14 to build BMX and velodrome cycling skills in a fun, safe environment.

What: Skill-building cycling sessions, BMX and Velodrome skills Who: Confident riders, ages 7-14 When & Where: St Albans Cycle Hub: Tuesdays, 4:30 PM – 5:30 PM , Welwyn Gosling Park: Wednesdays, 4:30 PM – 5:30 PM Cost: Free! (Bike rentals available at St Albans; Welwyn riders, please bring your own) New sessions will also be launching soon at The Sele School, Hertford and Edwinstree Middle School, Buntingford.

Don't miss this chance for students to enjoy professional coaching and foster a love for cycling! Sign Up via <https://group.spond.com/SMDKB> (or use code SMDKB if you're already on Spond). For more info, contact Iffat Tejani at [cityacademyherts@britishcycling.org.uk](mailto:cityacademyherts@britishcycling.org.uk)



**AVA**  
Against Violence and Abuse

**AVA**  
Against  
Violence  
and  
Abuse

**A FREE 10 WEEK COURSE SUPPORTING CHILDREN WHO HAVE LIVED WITH DOMESTIC ABUSE**

**COURSE COVERS:**

- VALIDATION OF CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES
- SAFETY PLANNING
- UNDERSTANDING ABUSE AND REDUCING SELF-BLAME
- APPROPRIATE VERSUS INAPPROPRIATE EXPRESSIONS OF EMOTION

**PROGRAMME CONSISTS OF 10 X WEEKLY SESSIONS**

**DATES:**  
**Tuesday afternoons from 12th November 2024 to 28th January 2025**

**TIME: 15:30-17:15**

**To book a place, please contact your child's school for booking information**



**Are you a family with children and young people aged 0-25 with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities looking for local activities?**

The SEND community activities directory promotes a wide range of local activities and support groups, some activities will also include discounts for families registered on our Hertfordshire Additional Needs Database (HAND).



[www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/SENDdirectory](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/SENDdirectory)



**WHEN:**

Monday 17<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> February

Time- 9am to 3pm



**WHERE:**

Commonswood Primary School



**WHO CAN JOIN:**

Boys and Girls in Year 1 to 6



**COST: £25**



**What's Included?**

- Fun Drills and Challenges
- Mini-Tournaments
- Skills Development in Passing, Shooting, and More
- A Safe and Encouraging Environment
- **ONLY 32 SPACES AVAILABLE!!**



**BOOKINGS:**

Bookings will start on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January via [www.justcoachingacademy.com](http://www.justcoachingacademy.com)  
Commonswood children priority booking until 26<sup>th</sup> January.



**Commonswood Primary & Nursery School is a Safeguarding School**

**We are an Encompass School working with external agencies to support children who are victims of domestic abuse.**

*'All schools have a clear responsibility placed on them by the Children Act 1989 and by guidance from the Department of Education to safeguard the welfare of all their pupils. In doing so schools are expected to consult with Social Services if they believe there is a possibility that a child may be suffering from abuse or neglect.'*

*If you have any concerns about children, please contact 0300 123 4043.*

**Mrs G Seymour (Designated Safeguarding Lead), Mr S Burt (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead), Mrs D Lindsay-Hill (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead), Miss K Dean (Designated Safeguarding Lead) Chair of Governors Mrs Julie Noakes**