

Dear Parents and Carers,

Message from Mrs Dowdeswell



Welcome back! I hope you all had a wonderful summer and I offer a warm welcome to the new families and children who have joined us in Ash and Oak Classes. When I welcome the new children into Reception, I cannot help but think back to when my own two children started school: the butterflies in all of our tummies when they walked into their class on the very first day; the uniform that made them suddenly look so grown up; and the school bag that looked so very big upon their backs. It is truly a special time for children and their families and I am so pleased that you chose our school family to support and nurture your son/daughter through the first part of their school journey.

Indeed, it has been wonderful to see all of the children settle so well across all year groups and it is always an exciting time as we embark on a new year of learning. Please do regularly visit the school [website](#) as it includes lots of useful information on what your child has been doing in school and important information about your child's learning so that you can support them at home.

The last academic year was an extremely successful one for our school and this was recognised by the many awards that the school received. These included:

- RHS School Gardening Award – Level 1 and Level 2;
- Modeshift Stars Accreditation;
- Leader in Faith RE Award
- 360° Online Safety Mark – Level 1, 2 and 3 (full accreditation)
- Swindon Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Award for Schools
- School Games Gold Award (awarded for second consecutive year!).
- Healthy Schools Mark – bronze award.

We have also submitted work towards achieving the Primary Science Quality Mark, the Healthy Schools Mark Silver Award, and the Asthma Friendly School Award and are hopeful of receiving an update on these soon. I know you will join me in congratulating all of the staff and pupils in working so hard to achieve these awards.

In addition to this, we have set up our Evergreen Room to support children who need an additional level of support or individualised support; our netball court was built and a netball club will be running from this year; and our outdoor gym equipment has proved very popular with our children. We also introduced our careers curriculum whereby many visitors came to speak to our pupils about careers across many different professions and our forest school visits allowed all our pupils to engage with the outdoors to support their learning.

So, what an exciting time for our school as we move forward into a new school year and myself and the staff look forward to working with you during the coming school year to offer the very best education to the children of our school. Thank you as always for your ongoing support; we will always be stronger working together, and here's to a very successful school year for all of our pupils.



Learn, Grow, Love, Live

Finally, I know I speak on behalf of all staff when I say a huge thank you for all of the kind gifts and cards received by the staff at the end of the school year; these are never expected, but are a lovely gesture full of kindness and generosity. Thank you so much.

Mrs Dowdeswell.

We are a nut-free school

We have had a few examples of parents putting nuts into lunchboxes and also Nutella in sandwiches. This could be dangerous for our pupils who have allergies. Please ensure your child does not bring any nuts into school with them. Thank you for your support.



Lateness



Sadly, we are already seeing some children regularly arriving late for school. This is extremely unsettling for the child as they often find it difficult to enter the class when all the other children are settled, and it is disrupting to the teacher and the rest of the children who have to pause the work they are doing for the late child to settle and catch up.

It is really important your child is in school ready for the first lesson of the day to start at **8:45am** so that they do not miss valuable learning and do not disadvantage their classmates. The most common reasons given for lateness is 'traffic' – if you drive your child to school, please ensure you leave in plenty of time to ensure your son/daughter is here on time or take advantage of the excellent breakfast club that runs at the school from 7:30am. Your support in this is greatly appreciated.

Harvest

Our Harvest Mass will be led by the children in Year 5 at Holy Rood Church on Sunday 12th October at 5:30pm (children to arrive by 5:15pm). This is an important celebration for the whole school that supports our learning in RE and British Values and all children are expected to attend. We have chosen the Swindon Food Collective as our Harvest charity again as they work tirelessly to help the families of Swindon. Here is a [link](#) should you wish to find out more about the very worthwhile work they do. A separate letter will follow giving all the details needed including times and donation requests. All children are to wear full uniform please and the Friday before will be a non-uniform day so that families are able to have the uniform washed and ready for the Sunday.



Parents' Evenings

Parents' Evenings will take place on **Tuesday 30th September** and **Thursday 2nd October**. Parents' Evenings are an important opportunity for you to see how your child has settled into their new class, talk to their new teacher, and find out how you can support your child at home. Time slots are now open via ParentPay and we look forward to seeing you 😊

Christmas (I know, I know – sorry!)

We are beginning to think about our Christmas Fair and I would like to ask you to save any good quality items which you feel might be useful for us to sell on the day. I know many families start to sort out existing toys and books ready for the new ones that Santa will bring and I would be so grateful if you could put these to one side for us. I also know that for many families this year is going to be a difficult one; if you feel you are unlikely to be able to buy your child(ren) a present this Christmas, please come and speak to me and I will do all I can to help. Please don't feel embarrassed or awkward – we all need a helping hand sometimes and I am more than happy to do what I can. You can either call in person or email admin@holycross.swindon.sch.uk and mark FAO Mrs Dowdeswell.



Swimming – Y4

Swimming is such a valuable life skill and can bring so much fun and enjoyment; therefore, we are delighted to be able to offer swimming lessons for children in Y4 and Y5 this year. Swimming starts for children in Y4 from Tuesday 30th September and children will need to bring:

- a one-piece swimming costume or trunks;
- a towel;
- a swimming hat if your child has long hair.

Also, it is easier for girls to wear socks rather than tights on the days they swim as it is quicker when changing. Although it is a very short coach journey to the pool, if you feel it likely that your son/daughter might be travel sick, please ensure you give them a travel tablet before they leave home. Payment for swimming is made via ParentPay and children should participate in every lesson. A note from parents will be needed if a child is unable to swim on a particular week. Lessons for Y5 children will begin later in the year.



Clubs



I am so grateful to my staff for running clubs for the benefit of our pupils. We have so many clubs on offer this year, including: art, modelling, Lego, skipping, dance, quilting, gardening...and so much more. Clubs will be starting shortly and a separate letter will come out telling you what clubs are available for your child to join. Clubs are often over-subscribed, so please only put your child's name down for a club if they are committed to attending each week. Once again, staff run these clubs on a voluntary basis and I thank them for all they do for the children of the school; also, what a very talented bunch they are!

Jewellery

We have seen a lot of children return after the summer break wearing necklaces and hoop earrings. Please remember that children are only allowed to wear one pair of stud earrings and a watch. This is for health and safety reasons. Thank you.

Volunteers

If you are interested in volunteering at the school, please do speak to the office or email admin@holycross.swindon.sch.uk. We are so grateful to our existing volunteers who come into school to listen to children read, help with DT, accompany the children swimming, walk with children to church and so much more. This can be extremely rewarding for the volunteer and also helps the children of our school in so many ways. We would be very happy to hear from you if you would be able to give a few hours to help our school community.



Lunches

We strongly recommend that children have a school dinner, especially during the colder months. Many children with packed lunches ask for a school meal when they see what others are eating. If you wish to book your child a hot meal, please do this through ParentPay. If you provide your child with a packed lunch, please ensure the lunch is healthy and that there is enough food for your child to feel full until the end of the school day. Ideas of what to include in a healthy lunchbox can be found [here](#).

Coats

Now that the cooler and wetter days are with us, please ensure your child brings a coat to school. We are very aware of how important it is for children to get out in the fresh air during the school day and in light rain, children will still go outside.

Travelling to school

Well done to all parents who support their child in cycling or riding a scooter to school – both are a great form of exercise and it is fantastic to see so many children arriving to school this way when I greet families at the school gate. Please do ensure your child is wearing a helmet for their own safety.

Exaltation of the Cross



Thank you to those children who attended school on Saturday 13th September to welcome the procession from Holy Rood Church. Many of the parishioners from Holy Rood Church attended this event and it was a privilege to have been asked to open the school to allow people to softly pause for prayer and for some of our pupils to lead the prayers.

Lord Jesus,

We ask for Your help as we begin this new school year.

Allow us to experience Your presence in the many blessings You put before us. Open our eyes to the new challenges and exciting opportunities that this new school year brings.

Open our hearts and minds to new friends and new teachers.

Amen.

Cultural Capital

Definition of cultural capital:

- The values, knowledge or ideas that parents can pass on to their children, which can then influence their success at school and later in life.

In school, we work so hard to give the children as many first-hand experiences as we can; however, we would love for the children to experience more. In every newsletter we shall provide some examples of where you could take your children. Here are the first few ideas:



Coate Water Country Park

Coate Water is a wonderful place to visit and I wonder if as a family you could spot the following: a heron, a cormorant, a young swan, a squirrel and a robin. You could make up an 'eye spy' list to see how many they can cross off. The conkers are out now and children always have great fun finding these and running through the leaves as they look for them. Could they use the internet or a book to find out what a conker is and why the leaves fall from the trees?

https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20077/parks_and_open_spaces/487/coate_water_park

Oh, I do like to be beside the seaside...

Who doesn't enjoy a visit to the seaside?! The closest beaches to Swindon are Weston-Super-Mare and Bournemouth – autumn is a lovely time to visit a beach, so why don't you see if you could do a day trip during the October half term? You could talk to your child about the wildlife, rockpools, etc and perhaps they could prepare a picture or a fact file on beaches. For older children, maybe they could write a comparison between Swindon and a coastal town. 💡



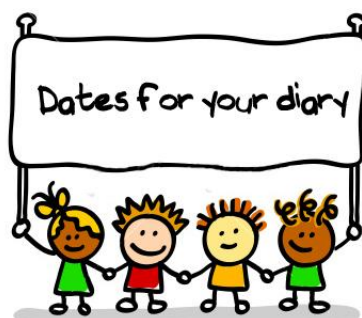
Town Gardens

We are very lucky to have such wonderful parks in Swindon and Town Gardens in Old Town is simply beautiful. There is a play park suitable for all ages, tennis courts, a café, and a bandstand where there are often bands playing on a Sunday afternoon. There is a large pond and also a fantastic bird aviary. It is definitely worth a visit. Your child could look up some of the different species of bird, go squirrel hunting, or collect leaves, pine cones, and acorns to make an autumn collage. 🍁 🌿 🍂

<https://towngardens-swindon.co.uk/>



Mrs Dowdeswell would love to see your autumn pictures! 😊



Friday 19 th September	Feast of Holy Cross Mass in school
Wednesday 24 th September	Y2 walk around the local area
Tuesday 30 th September	Swimming lessons begin for Y4
Tuesday 30 th September	Parents' Evening
Thursday 2 nd October	Parents' Evening
October	Black History Month
Friday 3 rd October	Whole school photographs
Friday 10 th October	Non-school uniform day
Sunday 12th October	Harvest Mass at Holy Rood Church 5:15pm
Thursday 16 th October	Immunisations by school nurse Reception – Year 6
Wednesday 22 nd October	Visiting music roadshow for all children
Thursday 23 rd October	First day of half-term holidays
Monday 3 rd November	Return to school after half-term
Mon 10 th & Tues 11 th November	Kurling taster sessions
Friday 14 th November	Odd Socks Day (anti-bullying week)
Tuesday 11 th November	Remembrance service in school
Wednesday 12 th November	School disco
Thursday 20 th November	Chaplains visit to Clifton Cathedral
24 th November	Parliament Week
Friday 28 th November	Teacher Training Day – school closed to all pupils
Tuesday 2 nd December	Nativity rehearsal at Holy Rood Church
Thursday 4 th December	Nativity performance at Holy Rood Church (afternoon)
Wednesday 10 December	Pantomimes: Reception – Y2 in school, Y3 – Y6 Wyvern Theatre
Friday 12 th December	Christmas Fair
Friday 12 th December	Advent Service in school
Friday 19 th December	Christmas Mass in school
Friday 19 th December	School finishes at 1:15pm for all pupils as half-term begins
Monday 5 th January 2026	Teacher Training Day – school closed to all pupils
Tuesday 6 th January	Return to school after half-term

Every Thursday, children from Y3 – Y6 take it in turns to attend morning Mass at Holy Rood Church. Please ensure your children always have a coat with them on this day. We are always most grateful for volunteers to accompany the children to Mass.

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS 2025 / 2026

Aug-2025						
M		4	11	18	25	
Tu		5	12	19	26	
W		6	13	20	27	
Th		7	14	21	28	
F	1	8	15	22	29	
Sa	2	9	16	23	30	
S	3	10	17	24	31	

Sep-2025						
M		1	8	15	22	29
Tu		2	9	16	23	30
W		3	10	17	24	
Th		4	11	18	25	
F		5	12	19	26	
Sa		6	13	20	27	
S		7	14	21	28	

Oct-2025						
M		6	13	20	27	
Tu		7	14	21	28	
W	1	8	15	22	29	
Th	2	9	16	23	30	
F	3	10	17	24	31	
Sa	4	11	18	25		
S	5	12	19	26		

Nov-2025						
M		3	10	17	24	
Tu		4	11	18	25	
W		5	12	19	26	
Th		6	13	20	27	
F		7	14	21	28	
Sa	1	8	15	22	29	
S	2	9	16	23	30	

Dec-2025						
M		1	8	15	22	29
Tu		2	9	16	23	30
W		3	10	17	24	31
Th		4	11	18	25	
F		5	12	19	26	
Sa		6	13	20	27	
S		7	14	21	28	

Jan-2026						
M		5	12	19	26	
Tu		6	13	20	27	
W		7	14	21	28	
Th	1	8	15	22	29	
F	2	9	16	23	30	
Sa	3	10	17	24	31	
S	4	11	18	25		

Feb-2026						
M		2	9	16	23	
Tu		3	10	17	24	
W		4	11	18	25	
Th		5	12	19	26	
F		6	13	20	27	
Sa		7	14	21	28	
S	1	8	15	22		

Mar-2026						
M		2	9	16	23	30
Tu		3	10	17	24	31
W		4	11	18	25	
Th		5	12	19	26	
F		6	13	20	27	
Sa		7	14	21	28	
S	1	8	15	22	29	

Apr-2026						
M		6	13	20	27	
Tu		7	14	21	28	
W	1	8	15	22	29	
Th	2	9	16	23	30	
F	3	10	17	24		
Sa	4	11	18	25		
S	5	12	19	26		

May-2026						
M		4	11	18	25	
Tu		5	12	19	26	
W		6	13	20	27	
Th		7	14	21	28	
F	1	8	15	22	29	
Sa	2	9	16	23	30	
S	3	10	17	24	31	

Jun-2026						
M		1	8	15	22	29
Tu		2	9	16	23	30
W		3	10	17	24	
Th		4	11	18	25	
F		5	12	19	26	
Sa		6	13	20	27	
S		7	14	21	28	

Jul-2026						
M		6	13	20	27	
Tu		7	14	21	28	
W	1	8	15	22	29	
Th	2	9	16	23	30	
F	3	10	17	24	31	
Sa	4	11	18	25		
S	5	12	19	26		

Bank Holidays



School Holiday



TD Days



(subject to change)

Christmas Day Holiday
Boxing Day Holiday
New Years Holiday
Good Friday
Easter Monday
May Day Holiday
Spring Bank Holiday
Summer Bank Holiday

25th December 2025
26th December 2025
1st January 2026
3rd April 2026
6th April 2026
4th May 2026
25th May 2026
31st August 2026

Holy Cross School

TD Days

1st & 2nd September
26th November
5th January
27th March
15th June