



Dear Parents and Carers

This will be the last Newsletter of 2024. On behalf of the children, staff and Governors at Ferndown First School, I'd like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Thank you for your continued support of Ferndown First School.

The final week of term has been packed full of events to mark the festive season. The children have thoroughly enjoyed many events that they have taken part in. For me, the church service was a highlight. The choir sang beautifully, and I am impressed with the children in Year 2 who read during the service.

Today, we are releasing a special Christmas video that the staff have been working on. It has been great fun to make, and the children were so excited to watch it in assembly this morning. It turns out Mrs Laverick is quite the diva! She took her starring role as Mary very seriously!



I am sure you will enjoy watching it to. It really does take a very special staff team to pull something together like this. Well done everyone involved - especially Mrs Lord and her son, Harrison, for editing it together.

I would also like to thank all the staff for their continued support and tireless commitment to make Ferndown First School such a lovely place to work and to ensure the children have a great school experience.

Finally, have a lovely break and enjoy this special time with your family and friends.

We look forward to seeing the children back at school on **Monday 6th January 2025**.

Yours sincerely

Mr Sean Watts
Headteacher



Reception - First Visit to Church

The children in Reception thoroughly enjoyed their first visit to church for the Christmas service. They listened beautifully to the wonderful singing of the choir and joined in with the songs that they knew. All of the Reception teachers are really proud that our first visit was a success.

Thank you very much to all the grownups that helped us walk across to the church. We can't do events like this without you. Thank you also to all the grownups

that came along to watch the service. It was lovely to have so many of you there. Please see our website for a few photos to show how captivated the children were.

Reception - Countdown to Christmas!

Thank you to all those parents, carers, friends and families that came to watch the Reception children's production of 'Countdown to Christmas'. The children really enjoyed taking part and, I am sure you will agree, they were fantastic!



More pictures are available on our website.

Surprise Reindeer Visit

We have rounded off this term with a very special treat for the children today. We welcomed back N&J Heavy Horses to our school who brought their reindeer, Jingles who is a 4 year old white male reindeer (and who, we have been told, was the naughty reindeer!) and Prancer, a 12 year old female reindeer who is 'Santa's reindeer'.

The children thoroughly enjoyed learning about the history of reindeer, how they live in our warmer climate, all about how their antlers grow, how they shed them and what they like to eat. And, of course, about this busy time of the year when they pull Santa around on his sleigh!

They were so excited to see real reindeer!



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Choir On Tour

Our school choir of over 50 children have been very busy this week. They have performed in 7 local care homes as well as singing at The Beacon Café and as part of our Christmas Service at St Mary's. Yesterday, they also joined Parley First School choir for a joint event in Ferndown Town Centre. I was very impressed with the standard of singing. The choir have been taught to sing exceptionally well by Mrs Charters, our Music teacher.



Christmas Hamper Raffle

Congratulations to our new PFA who have been working tirelessly to organise the successful Christmas hamper raffle. We have raised over £1600! This is a great achievement. Thank you to parents for the donations for the hampers which were beautifully made up by the PFA.



Christmas Surprise!

Last week, we spent time setting the props, scenery and coordinating all the children and staff ready for a recording of a very special Christmas video which will be available to view on the school website. The children and staff have had great fun making this video and special thanks go to Mrs Lord for her hard work overseeing the filming, direction and production of this for everyone to enjoy!



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Smart Phone Free Childhood

Thank you to those parents who recently completed our Smartphone survey. We received a total of 140 responses over the 19 days the survey was running. Most results have been broken down into number/percentages of results received.

1 Does your child currently have a smartphone or any device that connects to the internet?			
No, just a mobile phone for texts and calls only		1	
Smartphone		13	
Tablet, eg iPad, Kindle, Galaxy tab		95	
Games console, eg Xbox, Playstation, Switch		15	
Smartwatch		0	
Other		16	
2 Do you limit your child's use of their smart device?			
Yes	124	92%	
No	11	8%	
3 On average, how many hours a week does your child use a smart device?			
Less than 1 hour	27	20%	
1 - 5 hours	62	45%	
5 - 10 hours	35	25%	
More than 10 hours	14	10%	
4 Do you utilise filters to ensure your child can only access age-appropriate content?			
Yes	132	97%	
No	4	3%	
5 Do you monitor your child's online activity/search history?			
Yes	117	87%	
No	17	13%	
6 Did you or do you feel pressure to get your child a phone?			
Yes	25	19%	
No	110	81%	
7 If other parents agreed to delay giving their child a smartphone, would you?			
Yes	109	81%	
No	25	19%	
8 Are you worried about the harm that social media sites are doing to our young children?			
Yes	128	93%	
No	10	7%	

You may well be aware of the recent Channel 4 documentary 'Swiped: The School That Banned Smartphones', created by Emma and Matt Willis.

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The two-part documentary shines a light on the impact smartphones have on children's behaviour with a landmark social experiment, where 30 Year 8 pupils from The Stanway School in Colchester are challenged to give up their phones and iPads for 21 days, and are monitored by researchers from the University of York. It is worth a watch.

We will be working with a representative from Papaya - Parents Against Phone Addiction in Young Adolescents, to lead workshops for parents and children. To find out more about Papaya, please follow the link below.

<https://www.papayaparents.com/>

Please see the posters attached at the end of the newsletter for further useful information about screentime and a shortlist of Smartphone Free Childhood community approved phones for young people that offer connection minus toxic algorithms.

Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service - Message for Parents / Carers



We have been asked to pass on the following winter fire, water and road safety messages to our families, which include two online prize draws, which include the chance to win a VIP trip to a fire station, along with other prizes.

'Dear Parents /Carers

We appreciate this this time of year is very busy, but we ask for five minutes of your time to ensure you and your children are safe.

Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service firefighters will be available all the time over the festive period to come and help in an emergency.

Please help your children understand how they can stay safe by reading and filling in one of the prize draw quizzes.

[It was the lights before Christmas](#) is designed for Reception and Key Stage 1 children

[Winter Safety Firefighter Quiz](#) is designed for Key Stage 2 children

However, each child may enter both quizzes if appropriate.

Enter to win a VIP trip to a participating fire station, a Blaze Bear Teddy and a Lego or PlayMobil Emergency Services set.

Electrical safety is of particular concern at this time of year, especially with the increased number of electrical items such as festive lights and new electrical goods. Please make sure all electrical items are in good condition; the correct charger is always used and you unplug items when not in use #unplugtounwind

Thank you and we wish you a happy festive period.

Dorset & Wiltshire **Fire and Rescue Service'**

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Dates for your Diary

We have provided some dates for your diary over the rest of the next academic year in the table below. Please note that further information on all these events will be sent home to parents in due course.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Spring Term 2025	
Wednesday 15 th January	Yr 4 Trip to Winchester Science Museum
Friday 24 th January	M&M Productions - Sleeping Beauty
Tuesday 4 th - Friday 7 th February	Life Education Workshops
Wednesday 12 th February	School Disco
Thursday 13 th February	Yr 4 Avon Tyrrell Final Parents' Meeting
Monday 3 rd - Wednesday 5 th March	Yr 4 Avon Tyrrell Residential Visit
Mon 10 th , Thurs 13 th and Fri 14 th March	Dogs Trust Visit to School
Wednesday 2 nd April	Parents' Evening
	St Mary's Easter Service - TBC
Summer Term 2025	
Tuesday 13 th May	Yr 2 Trip to Liberty's Owl & Reptile Centre
Wednesday 14 th May	MTC Parent Meeting for Yr 4 Parents at 6pm
Tuesday 20 th May (tbc)	Yr 3 Brownsea Island Trip
Thursday 22 nd May	Open Evening
Tuesday 17 th & Wednesday 18 th June	EYFS Trip to Blashford Lakes
Thursday 19 th June	Yr 1 Trip to Hilliers Gardens
Friday 27 th June	Transfer Day
Monday 30 th June	Staff Training Day
Thursday 10 th July	Sports Morning
Wednesday 16 th July	Summer Service at St Mary's Church - TBC
Friday 18 th July	Yr 4 Leavers' Assembly - 10am



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LUNCHTIME AND AFTER-SCHOOL CLUBS TIMETABLE

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
LUNCHTIMES				
Book Club Yrs 3 & 4 12.45pm Library Mrs Errington	Computing Club Yrs 3 & 4 12.45pm Lark Class Miss Fearn	Lego Club Yrs 3 & 4 12.45pm Wren Class Mrs Lord	Lego Club Yrs 3 & 4 12.45pm Wren Class Mrs Lord	Chess Club Yrs 2-4 12.30pm Hall Mr Watts
	Lego Club Yrs 3 & 4 12.45pm Wren Class Mrs Lord		Choir Yrs 3 & 4 12.45pm - Music Room Mrs Charters	
AFTER SCHOOL				
Ferndown First Sch After School Club All Years 3.05pm - 6pm	Ferndown First Sch After School Club All Years 3.05pm - 6pm	Ferndown First Sch After School Club All Years 3.05pm - 6pm	Ferndown First Sch After School Club All Years 3.05pm - 6pm	Ferndown First Sch After School Club All Years 3.05pm - 6pm
Live4Tennis Yrs 1 - 4 3.05pm - 4.05pm (External)	Karate Yrs 2, 3 & 4 3.05pm - 4.15pm (External)	PESSPA - Football Yrs 2, 3 & 4 3.05pm - 4.05pm (External)	PESSPA - Dodgeball Yrs 2, 3 & 4 3.05pm - 4.05pm (External)	
Gardening Club Yrs 2, 3 & 4 3.05pm - 4.10pm Miss Spicer/ Mrs Bramley			Art Bee Yrs 1 - 4 3.05pm - 4.05pm (External)	
Dance Club Yrs 3 & 4 3.15 - 4.15pm Mrs Marshall			Cooking Club Yrs 3 & 4 3.05pm - 4.15pm Miss Fearn	
			Singing Club Rec, Yrs 1 & 2 3.05pm - 4pm Mrs Jackson	
			Drawing Club Rec, Yrs 1 & 2 3.15pm - 4.15pm Miss Cully	
			Sewing Club Yrs 2, 3 & 4 3.15pm - 4.15pm Mrs Boswell	

Information on all the clubs above is usually provided through ParentMail. Please check your ParentMail / Newsletter regularly for any updates regarding new clubs that are starting up.

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FERNDOWN FIRST SCHOOL
TERM DATES & HOLIDAYS
SEPTEMBER 2024 - JULY 2025

SPRING TERM 2025

Term Starts	Monday 6 January 2025
Half Term Holiday	Monday 17 February – Friday 21 February 2025
Term Ends	Friday 4 April 2025
Easter Holiday	Monday 7 April – Monday 21 April 2025

SUMMER TERM 2025

Term Starts	Tuesday 22 April 2025
May Day Holiday	Monday 5 May 2025
Half Term Holiday	Monday 26 May – Friday 30 May 2025
Inset Day	Monday 30 June 2025
Term Ends	Friday 18 July 2025
Inset Day	Monday 21 July 2025
Inset Day	Tuesday 22 July 2025

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Algorithms not included

Here's our shortlist of SFC community-approved phones for young people that offer connection 📶 minus the toxic algorithms 🤖👎.

We've even landed a few discounts on the latest models (no kickbacks for us to be clear!)



Pinwheel
(£239 plus £13.99 monthly)
A smart-ish phone with an uncrackable kid-safe operating system, GPS tracking and vetted apps you can add as your skill grows, inc Google Maps, Spotify and payments.
SFC members get 10% off with code: **FREECHILDHOOD**



Balance Phone
(£299)
Released 17th Dec, delivery in time for Xmas. A smartish phone designed to give teens connectivity with less addictive algorithms and risks. It blocks porn, streaming, games, betting and social media sites/apps, but does allow banking, music, maps and WhatsApp.
SFC members get 10% off with code: **smartphonefreechildhood**



Nokia 2660 Flip
(£64.99)
A flip phone with full colour screen, camera, MP3 player, torch and Snake/Tetris plus multiple colourways - but no internet or apps.



The Phone
(£100)
Quite simply a phone - one designed with childhood in mind. It has the look and ease of use of a smartphone, with a large touch screen, but it only calls and texts.



Nokia 5710
(£24.99)
An old school phone without internet or social media, but with some great contemporary features including an inbuilt MP3 player, loudspeaker and wireless earbuds.



Use this QR code to find out more about the alternative phones that are available

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YOUR TIPS FOR A HEALTHIER SCREEN TIME

'How much is too much screen time for children?'

	Birth to 5 years	6 to 10 years	11 to 17 years																												
Waking up	 No screen time between birth - 24 months	 Waking up without screens. It is recommended that social media/screens are not used for the first hour of the day																													
 Phones, tablets and computers should not be in any child's bedroom overnight.	 2 - 5 year olds no more than 30 mins/day No screen time between birth - 24 months	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th><th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td colspan="6">Not more than 1-2 hrs/day</td> <td>Up to 2 hrs/day</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	Not more than 1-2 hrs/day						Up to 2 hrs/day	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th><th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td colspan="5">Up to 2 hrs/day</td> <td colspan="2">Up to 2-3 hrs/day</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	Up to 2 hrs/day					Up to 2-3 hrs/day	
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 Watching lots of short videos is being linked to concentration difficulties in children.	 Avoid using a device to settle your child down. Instead try a book, a game outdoors, or just a cuddle	 Keep active 'Encourage physical activity, ideally outside, for 1-2 hours'	 'Try and ensure screen-free time together' Stay active. More green time, less screen time																												
 Reports suggest adults touch their phones over 2000 times a day.	 'Bedtime stories are the best and healthiest way to settle your child' Under 5s should not use a screen at least 2 hours before bedtime	 'Buy an alarm clock so that screens are not in the bedroom' No screens at least 1 hour before bedtime																													

Accepted by NHS England Mental Health Leads

'Studies have shown a clear link between excessive screen time and issues such as delayed speech and language development, short-sightedness, communication difficulties, reduced concentration spans, poor sleep and mental health problems.'

HEALTH PROFESSIONALS FOR SAFER SCREENS



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