



Stoke Mandeville Combined School

Caring, Inspiring and Achieving Together

Weekly Update Friday 14th November

Remembrance Day

On Sunday our Senior pupils represented Stoke Mandeville Combined School at the Remembrance Day service at St Mary's Church. They led the laying of the wreaths during the service and represented the school wonderfully, along with those from our local Brownie group and the wider Stoke Mandeville community.



On Tuesday a special Remembrance Assembly was held for the whole school.

During this assembly two of our children from Year 6 read the poems they had been working on as part of their work on World War 2 and the whole school held a two minute silence after the names of the fallen from Stoke Mandeville were read by Mrs Stewart.

Allotment

We are still in need of some willing volunteers to help our at our allotment! If you would be interested in volunteering your time then please contact Mrs Reed via the School Office.

Forgotten Items

Despite our reminder last week we have actually had a higher number than usual of forgotten items brought to the office every morning this week! Please can we again ask parents (and children!) to remember their belongings at the start of the day e.g. packed lunches, water bottles,

coats and PE kits. If a water bottle is forgotten then there is no need to bring this to school as children are provided with cups in the classroom if needed.

Children in Need Day

Today we held a Children in Need Mufti Day where children came to school in their own clothes in exchange for a coin or online donation. They also enjoyed a Pudsey Fair in the hall this afternoon where children from Year 6, supported by School Council reps, ran fun games for the rest of the school to take part in.



There is still time to donate to this worthy cause if you haven't yet had a chance to do so by heading to our Just Giving page.



https://www.justgiving.com/page/stoke-mandeville-combined-school-7?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL

Cutlery Workshop

On Thursday, 'Stir Food' delivered a workshop as part of their offer to schools and provided all of the classes with an opportunity of understanding the use of cutlery and supporting children in how to cut. For this exercise children were given a piece of cucumber, apple and carrot to cut. This highlighted to us that a number of our children need to develop their hand strength and we will use this information moving forward to support them in developing this skill.

Stir Food also have a number of other opportunities that they have to offer and we will be taking them up on this throughout the academic year.

Year 5 Rock Climbing

Today ten children from Year 5 went to Sir Henry Floyd Grammar School to participate in some indoor Rock Climbing. They participated in several games against other schools. Each game showed them working as a team and being resilient with climbing the wall, working out different strategies to stay on the wall, getting across and not falling off. All children really enjoyed themselves and did a fantastic job of representing SMCS. For more photos of the day please head to our [School Photo Gallery](#) on our school website.



Headlice – Year 1

We have had a case of headlice reported in Year 1 this week. Please can we encourage all parents to check their child's hair this weekend and to treat as necessary if lice or nits are found. Please head to the [NHS website](#) for further information about the treatment of head lice and nits.

Stir Food

Please can we ask parents to try to order their meals by 8.30am at the latest in order for the kitchen to have enough time to download the orders and prepare the lunch menu? We are in consultation with Swift Kitchen to bring the order cut-off time forward to earlier in the morning, but in the meantime please can we ask parents to place their orders either the night before or by 8.30am at the latest? Orders can be placed for up to a term in advance so to avoid any last minutes panics then you can do these all in one go.



Class Hampers

We've had the first of our Christmas hampers delivered this afternoon by Year 3! Please return all tickets to the School Office or your child's class as soon as possible. If you would like any additional raffle ticket booklets then please contact the School Office.

We look forward to seeing more fabulous hampers being delivered in the coming weeks. As a reminder the deadline for this is **Thursday 27th November**.

After School Paperchain Trail!

ASC were inspired by last week's 'Longest Sweet Trail' competition and this week made a giant paperchain that reached the whole way around the school! Sadly it wasn't quite long enough to enter the Guinness Book of Records but they had great enjoyment making it!



Friends Reminder

Don't forget that the Friends are welcoming donations of teddies and cuddly toys for the 'Teddy Tombola' from Monday onwards. Please bring these to the School Office where they will be gratefully received!

Djembe Drumming Assembly

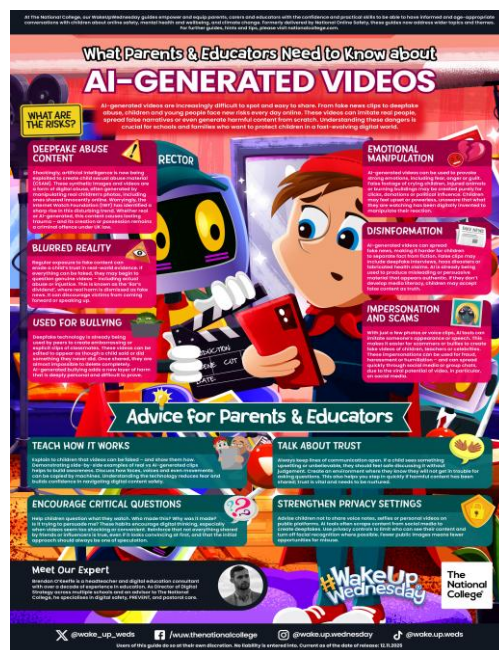
On Thursday, the Djembe Drumming Club performed their first concert during the whole school assembly. The group of children from Years 3 and 4 have only been learning the drums for 8 weeks and they did incredibly well to perform a number of rhythms using 'call and response'. Mrs Tong and Miss Cooke were very proud of them and the rest of the school were also keen to join in!



Online Safety Update: AI Generated Videos

AI can now generate realistic looking videos that are almost impossible to distinguish from genuine content. From hoax news to abusive deepfakes, these synthetic clips can mislead, manipulate and even harm.

As AI tools become more advanced, and more accessible, young people are increasingly at risk of encountering fake but convincing footage online. This guide unpacks the dangers of AI-generated videos, from the emotional impact of fake distressing content to the potential for impersonation and bullying. With practical tips to help young users spot deepfakes and navigate online spaces with confidence, this guide is an essential read for parents and educators navigating this rapidly evolving digital landscape.



As a reminder all of the Online Safety Guides we have shared with parents can be found on our website in the following location:
<https://www.stokemandeville.bucks.sch.uk/handouts/onlinesafety.>

Reading Update

Recent research by the National Literacy Trust has shown the percentage of children and young people who told us they enjoyed reading was at its lowest in 20 years. Astonishingly just 1 in 3 (32.7%) of children and young people aged 8 to 18 said that they enjoyed reading in their free time in 2025. This marks a 36% decrease since 2005. The drop in reading enjoyment over the last year has been especially steep among primary- aged children and boys. With this in mind one of our school priorities this year is to encourage the love of reading.

In school we use 'Twinkl Phonics' as our government approved reading scheme to support children as they learn to read. We are currently sorting both the existing scheme books and others which may be used as children start reading alongside others which can supplement the reading scheme and would be considered reading for pleasure books. Over the next few weeks you may see some changes to the labelling on the books, particularly in Key stage 2 as children move beyond the phonics scheme. As we are sure you can appreciate, this is a huge task and will be ongoing.

Learning to read is a crucial life skill and your support in listening to your child read on a regular basis helps them develop their love of reading, along with hearing you read to them (whatever their age). As outlined in the reading record we recommend reading at least 4 times per week.

We are looking to offer a phonics training session on **Wednesday 26th November** at 3.30pm. We expect this to last for around half an hour. Children and siblings are welcome to attend.

Swimming Lessons

Both **Stoke Mandeville Stadium** and **Aqua Vale Swimming and Fitness Centre** are running a **special promotion** to help more children learn this vital life skill and grow their confidence in the water.



Join for just £1 and pay nothing until 1st January!

This offer gives families an affordable way to get their children started on their swimming journey with expert, friendly instructors in safe, welcoming facilities.

We'd love your support in helping us spread the word by **including this offer in your school newsletter** or parent communication channels. Learning to swim is a skill that lasts a lifetime, and this is a great chance for families to get started.

Find out more and register here:

- Stoke Mandeville Stadium: <https://www.stokemandevillestadium.co.uk>
- Aqua Vale Swimming and Fitness Centre: www.buckinghamshireleisure.com/aqua-vale-swimming-fitness-centre

Housepoint Totals This Week

Well done to Chequers for earning the most housepoints this week!

Chequers	Claydon	Hughenden	Waddesdon
10390	10298	10300	10369

The Values Award was given to Peyton in Year 6 and the Tidy Award went to Year 4.

Communications Home

ARP: ARP – Local Support Group (NCDS)

SEN Pupils: Area SEND Inspection – Survey Information for Parents and Carers

Signing Choir: Signing Choir – Community Event – Thursday 4th December

Netball Club: Netball Cancelled

Year 1: Headlice – Year 1

Year 2: Year 2 – Smoothie Tasting

Years 3 to 6: KS2 Cross Country at Turnfurlong Junior – Sat 22 Nov

Year 4: REMINDER Year 4 – Water Safety Lesson

Year 6 Individuals: River Dart 2026 – Subsidised Payment Schedule

Year 6 Residential: River Dart 2026 – Payment Schedule

Whole school: Free online courses for Parents and Carers

Whole school: REMINDER Children in Need Mufti

Payments/Consent Forms Available on School Gateway

MAC Users: MAC 2025/26

ASC Users: ASC 2025/26

Signing Choir: Signing Choir – The Woolpack Christmas Market – Thu 4 Dec 25

Year 6 Residential: River Dart 2026 – Payment 1 (deadline 30/11/2025)

Year 6 Residential: River Dart 2026 – Payment 2 (deadline 31/01/2026)

Year 6 Residential: River Dart 2026 – Payment 3 (deadline 27/02/2026)

Year 6 Residential: River Dart 2026 – Payment 4 (deadline 27/03/2026)

Years 3 to 6: KS2 Cross Country at Turnfurlong Junior – Sat 22 Nov (deadline 20/11/2025)

Dates for the Diary (New dates or times are written in RED)

Date	Time	Event
Mon 24 Nov		Deadline for donations of teddies for Teddy Tombola
Mon 24 Nov – Wed 26 Nov		Advent Calendar Raffle tickets on sale at drop off and pick up
Wed 26 Nov	3.30pm	Phonics Information Session in school. <i>Pupils and siblings welcome.</i>
Fri 28 Nov		The Friends of SMCS: Advent Calendar Raffle
Thu 4 Dec		Year 5 Viking Day
Fri 5 Dec		Bottle and Treat Mufti – <i>Bring a box of treats (sweets or chocolates) or a bottle (alcoholic or soft) on exchange for wearing full mufti</i>
Fri 5 Dec	3.30- 5.30pm	The Friends of SMCS: Christmas Fayre
Tue 9 Dec	Morning	School Christingle Service
Fri 12 Dec	9-11am	iRock Concert – <i>Further information to follow</i>
Fri 12 Dec	9-10.30am	Parent Forum – <i>For parents with children in an iRock band please can they</i>
Fri 12 Dec	6-8.30pm	The Friends of SMCS: Christmas Disco <i>6-7pm Reception, Years 1 and 2 7.15-8.30pm Years 3 to 6</i>
Tue 16 Dec	PM (Time TBC)	KS1 Nativity (Reception to Year 2)
Wed 17 Dec	AM (Time TBC)	KS1 Nativity (Reception to Year 2)
Wed 17 Dec		School Christmas Lunch
Thu 18 Dec		Whole school trip to the Pantomime at Aylesbury Waterside
Fri 19 Dec	1.30pm	End of term (please note there is no ASC on this day)

Class Updates

We know how much you enjoy finding out what the children have been learning in our Weekly Updates. You can find this information by selecting the link below to your child's class.

[Reception](#)

[Year 1](#)

[Year 2](#)

[Year 3](#)

[Year 4](#)

[Year 5](#)

[Year 6](#)

School Office

Opening hours: 8am to 3.40pm Monday to Friday

Email: office@smcs.org.uk

Telephone: 01296 612371



Please ensure all emails are sent to the School Office and not via School Gateway or classroom apps such as Seesaw or Google Classroom as these are not monitored and will not be responded to. Please note that we have a 48 hour response policy to all emails and this may be extended to 5 days during particularly busy times. For all urgent queries please telephone the School Office.