



Stoke Mandeville Combined School

Caring, Inspiring and Achieving Together

Weekly Update Friday 17th July

Dear Parents and Carers

Back in January when I shared my intention to retire at the end of this term it seemed a very long way away, but here we are.

This week has been an incredible week which has left me stunned and humbled by the kind words and messages along with the incredibly generous gifts I have received.

It has been my privilege to be part of the story of Stoke Mandeville and I have enjoyed being the Head of such a wonderful school community. Your support for all our children really means they grow to be wonderful, amazing young people.

While my chapter may be ending I leave behind good memories and an amazing team, to whom I wish every success.

Thank you again for your amazing support and kindness.

*Mrs Eileen Stewart
Head teacher*



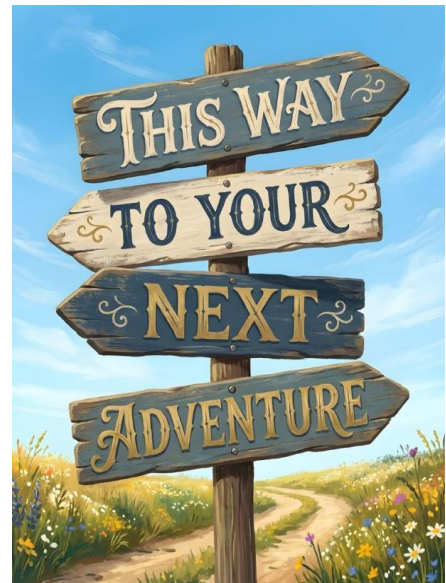
Stoke's Got Talent

This afternoon our annual talent show 'Stoke's Got Talent' arrived at Stoke Mandeville with acts across all year groups wowing the audience with their polished performances, positively entertaining the whole school for the afternoon. We'd like to thank all of the acts who auditioned in their classes and all the acts who performed in the finals today. We're proud to announce in 3rd place we had Reception Class with their rendition of 'Golden', and in 2nd place (a well known favourite for all the mums out there!), the Backstreet Boys with 'I Want It That Way'. 1st place went to the wondrous magician, Alfie Hinton!

Thank you from SLT

Many thanks for all your kind contributions towards Mrs Stewart's retirement gifts. We held an assembly on Monday where we presented her with a bottle of champagne, jewellery (earrings and a necklace), an engraved vase and an orchid. We were also able to purchase nearly £600 of John Lewis vouchers so that she can choose further gifts to remember her time at SMCS.

The children presented her with cards they had made in each class, a plaque for the new cabin (to be named after her) and a giant gold headteacher's award. She was also presented with a joke book containing all the best jokes from Hot Chocolate Friday over the years! Thank you to those of you who signed the eCard which has been printed off and given to Mrs Stewart.



Thank you also to The Friends who provided cakes and assisted with serving refreshments during Mrs Stewart's Tea Party on Thursday afternoon. It was lovely to see so many parents there on the day who turned out to wish Mrs Stewart well.

Kind regards

Mrs Tong and Mrs Barnett

Mrs Stewart – Wendover News July 2026

Some of you may be aware that Mrs Stewart was interviewed by one of our Governors, Jenny Shaw, for an article in this month's Wendover News.

Please find attached a copy of the interview in full which may be of interest to pupils and parents for an insight into her 12 years as Headteacher of Stoke Mandeville Combined School.

From turnaround to thriving:

In an interview with Jenny Shaw, Stoke Mandeville Headteacher, Eileen Stewart, reflects on the last 12 years

After 36 years in education and 12 transformative years at the helm of Stoke Mandeville Combined School, headteacher Eileen Stewart is preparing to hand over the reins and embark on a well-earned retirement.

When Eileen joined the school in 2014, she arrived at a challenging time. Stoke Mandeville Combined had experienced significant leadership changes, with Eileen becoming the tenth headteacher in ten years. The school had recently been rated 'Requires Improvement' by Ofsted, and rebuilding confidence within the school community was a priority.

Over the following decade, Eileen led a remarkable turnaround. Today, the school is thriving, consistently oversubscribed and recognised for its strong sense of community.

Reflecting on her achievements, Eileen is quick to praise the staff who have supported the school's success. "I may be the head, but I'm only as good as the people around me," she says. Among the innovations introduced during her tenure, Eileen is particularly proud of the school's commitment to British Sign Language (BSL).

Originally taught to support deaf pupils, BSL has since become the school's modern foreign language, with children now working towards achieving BSL Level 1 by the time they leave Year 6. Her guiding philosophy has remained simple throughout: "Happy children, happy parents, happy staff – and happy children learn."

Eileen also treasures the school's rich history: Stoke Mandeville Combined holds handwritten logbooks dating back to its opening on 3 October 1893, providing a continuous record of school life for almost a century.

Every Armistice Day, Eileen reads entries from the historic records to pupils, helping connect across the generations through shared memories.

Then there is the much-loved tradition of



Hot Chocolate Friday, where Eileen spends time each week chatting with around 35 children.

As retirement begins, Eileen and her husband plan to travel the country in their campervan with their dog. Yet she knows she will remain connected to the school she helped shape. "I am a chapter in this school's history," she says. "Now there will be a new chapter, with a new headteacher, exactly as it should be."

Please mention Wendover News when responding to adverts

Kids Eat Free Offers

Every school holiday, dozens of UK restaurants, pubs and cafes let kids eat for free or just £1 when an adult orders a main meal. Please find attached a list of these offers for your information.

Summer Reading Challenge

This week, the children in Reception to Year 5 should have brought home a Summer Reading Challenge booklet. This can be completed over the summer holidays with lots of housepoints on offer. Details about what to do are included within the booklet and there is more information in them about how you can get involved in the library summer reading challenges as well.

Keeping up with reading over the summer and sharing and enjoying books with others around you will all count towards the activities in the booklets.

Happy reading everyone! We look forward to awarding housepoints in the autumn term and seeing what everyone has been reading.

HAF Clubs over Summer Break

If your child is eligible for Free School Meals then you should have received HAF Vouchers directly from the Council. If you would like more information about these and what clubs are available to book in the local area during the Easter break then please head to our website:

<https://www.stokemandeville.bucks.sch.uk/pupilpremium/haf>

Free School Meals and Pupil Premium

Further to our email sent earlier this week, please don't forget to complete the online form if you think your child may be entitled to free school meals from September onwards. Further information about who may be eligible for additional funding can be found in the attached letter.

Free School Meal Eligibility Checker <https://forms.gle/EWTYV31uFe3Y9giPA>

Communications Home

Whole school: Medication in School

Whole school: Thank You from Mrs Tong and Mrs Barnett

Whole school: Plastic Bags

Whole school: Thursday Morning – Delayed Start

Whole school: Information from The Family Hub Team

Whole school: TONIGHT – School Disco

KS1 Individuals: REMINDER KS1 Prize Giving Ceremony

KS2 Individuals: REMINDER KS2 Prize Giving Ceremony

Year 5 & 6: Year 5 & 6 Production 'Rock Bottom' – Updated Start Time

Year 6: Wonder – Film Showing

MAC/ASC Users: Wraparound Care Autumn Term 1 2026/27

Pupil Premium Families: Summer Disco – PP Families

Payments/Consent Forms Available on School Gateway

MAC Users: MAC 2025/26

ASC Users: ASC 2025/26

MAC Users: MAC 2026/27

ASC Users: ASC 2026/27

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

Date	Time	Event
Fri 17 Jul	6-9pm	Friends of SMCS Summer Disco <i>Doors open 5.50pm</i> Reception and KS1 - 6-7pm KS2 - 7:15-8:30pm (Year 6 until 9pm)
Mon 20 Jul	9am 10.30am	KS1 Prize Giving Ceremony (<i>invited children only</i>) KS2 Prize Giving Ceremony (<i>invited children only</i>)

Tue 21 Jul	9am	Year 6 Leavers Assembly (<i>Year 6 parents all welcome to attend</i>)
Tue 21 Jul	1.30pm	End of term (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.