WALTON NEWS

Thursday 9th October 2026

Changes to School Holiday INFORMAL POLL 2026

Walton on Trent Primary and Nursery School - Changes to School Holiday INFORMAL POLL 2026 – Fill in form

Calendar Dates	
Tuesday 20th October	Parents Evening 3.30pm-7.30pm
Wednesday 21st October	Parents Evening 3.30pm-5.30pm
Friday 23rd October	Individual photographs & Siblings (if you wish for siblings not in school to have a photo with your child, please arrive for 8.30am
Mon 26th – Fri 30th October	HALF-TERM WEEK
Monday 2nd November	All children return to school
Wednesday 4th November	Open Evening for New Reception/pupils 4.30-6pm
Wednesday 9th December	Nativity performance from Rabbits, Hedgehogs & Squirrels 9.15am & 2.30pm
Tuesday 15th December	JT MAT Carol Concert for School Choir pupils only
Thursday 17th December	PANTO at Derby Live
Friday 18th December	9.30am Carol Service in Church (all welcome)
Mon 21st Dec – Fri 1st Jan 2027	Christmas Holidays
Monday 4th January	Inset Day

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Lost Property

We have several items of lost property in the school office that do not have names on them. If you think any of these items may belong to your child, please feel free to come to the office and take a look.

We have also had reports of some children missing items of clothing. Please could you check the items your child brings home to ensure that nothing has been taken by mistake.

Thank you for your support.

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Shine Awards

Class	Star of the Week	Take Care Champion
Hedgehogs	Luca	Jasmine
Squirrels	Blaine	Tallulah
Owls	Maisie	Morris
Foxes	Olivia	Elsbeth
Badgers	Isabelle	Maya

Head Teachers Awards

Sophie - Pola

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Parking Safely around our school

Considerate Parking Around School

We kindly ask all parents and carers to park considerately when dropping off and collecting children from school.

Please be mindful of our neighbours by avoiding blocking driveways, parking on pavements, or stopping in areas that may cause obstruction or safety concerns. We would also ask that you **do not use the school drive or nearby residential drives to turn your vehicle around**.

Please only use the staff car park if you have been authorised to do so. If parking spaces are available, please use these rather than stopping elsewhere, as this helps to reduce congestion and keeps the area safe for everyone.

Thank you for your cooperation in helping to keep our children, families, and local community safe.

Community Notice

Parking Safely Around Our Schools

Every weekday morning and afternoon, the streets around our schools become a hive of activity. Children, parents, cyclists, and drivers come together, creating a potentially dangerous environment. The areas around schools present a unique set of challenges:

- Young children can be easily distracted and could run into the road without looking.
- Heavy traffic and illegal parking can make visibility difficult for pedestrians and drivers.
- Despite initiatives like 20mph zones, speeding is still a significant concern for parents, with speed being a factor in a quarter of fatal crashes.
- Children and adults can be distracted by mobile phones, which can lead to accidents.

Road traffic injuries are the biggest cause of death among young people worldwide, and six children are killed or seriously injured on roads every day in the UK.

The Safer Neighbourhood Team and Safer South Derbyshire Partnership have recently had reports relating to dangerous parking issues at some schools in our district. We want parents to make sure they park safely, responsibly, and legally as we don't want to see anyone hurt.

We would ask parents/guardians not to park on school zig zags, double yellow lines and across household driveways near schools.

It is illegal to park on 'School Keep Clear' markings, or zig zag markings. Yellow lines on the road also show that parking restrictions are in place.

'School Keep Clear' markings outside schools are there for the safety of children and other pedestrians. They are there to keep the area completely clear of vehicles at school start and finish times.

Motorists seen parking or stopping to drop off passengers in a school keep clear zone can be fined.

Help us to keep the roads around schools safe when you're driving:

- Stick to the speed limits around schools and be prepared to slow down further during busy periods. A child hit by a car at 30mph is five times more likely to be fatally injured than at 20mph.
- Do not use your mobile phone or eat or adjust the radio while driving, as even a moment's lapse in concentration can be dangerous.
- Always stop when instructed to by a school crossing patrol person.
- Never park illegally on zig-zag markings or double yellow lines, which are designed to ensure clear visibility for children and other drivers around schools.

Derbyshire Police will be monitoring school parking concerns, working with schools and civil enforcement officers who manage the enforcement of on street parking regulations like double/single yellow lines and enforceable school keep clear zones. Further information around parking offences/enforcement can be found at:- https://www.southderbyshire.gov.uk/our-services/transport-and-roads/parking-enforcement.

Creating safer school environments requires action from everyone. Local authorities, schools, parents, and drivers all have a vital role to play.

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Missed Our Open Evening?

We're now offering a series of daytime tours for prospective students and their families.

These visits provide an opportunity to see John Taylor Free School during a normal school day, experience lessons in action and find out more about life at JTFS.

Book a tour: *https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/jtfs-tours-for-prospective-parents-3736109*

We look forward to welcoming you to JTFS.

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Diocese of Derby Christmas Card Competition

We have received information about the Diocese of Derby Christmas Card Competition. If your child would like to take part, please see the attached details on how to enter. Good luck to everyone taking part!

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Safeguarding question of the week

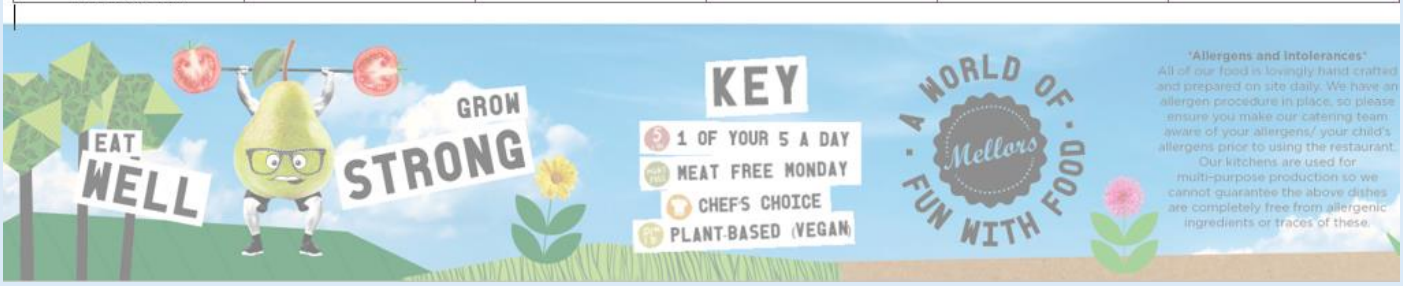
Feeling Unsafe — *What should you do if something makes you feel unsafe?*

Answer: Move away from the situation, find a trusted adult, and tell them what happened.

Lunch Menu

We will also be offering a limited number of Sandwiches (Ham or Cheese)

Week 2	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Main dish	Creamy cheesy pasta	Chicken burgers wedges	Sausage and mash Yorkshire pudding	Beef bolognese Pasta	Crispy battered fish French fries
Vegetarian Main dish	Tomato and herb pasta	Vegan hot dog wedges	Veggie sausage Yorkshire pudding	Vegan bolognese Pasta	Quorn dippers French fries
Accompaniments	Peas or sweetcorn Salad bar	Green beans or baked beans Salad bar	Cabbage or carrots Salad bar	Brocoli or cauliflower Salad bar	Peas or baked beans Salad bar
Desserts	Jammy bun biscuits	Lemon drizzle cake	Strawberry jelly	Chocolate sprinkle cake	Ice cream
Fresh fruit or yoghurt	Fresh fruit *or* Yoghurt	Fresh fruit *or* Yoghurt	Fresh fruit *or* Yoghurt	Fresh fruit *or* Yoghurt	Fresh fruit *or* Yoghurt
Jacket potato With cheese, Tuna or Baked Beans	Jacket potato	Jacket potato	Jacket potato	Jacket potato	Jacket potato



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What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

CHARACTER.AI

Character.AI is an entertainment platform where users create and chat with AI-powered characters. These chatbots can act like existing favourite characters from movies or books, or like friends, mentors, or even romantic partners, responding in an emotional, personally engaging way. Although this can encourage creativity, it can also make a generated conversation feel like a genuine relationship, which is concerning if it takes the place of human relationships.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

AI replies are generated in real time rather than chosen from a fully checked script. Even with safety filters on, conversations can still move into sexual, violent, discriminatory, or self-harm material. These AI characters are often made by users, so a familiar name or child-friendly description does not guarantee that every response from the character will be suitable for a young person.

BLURRED BOUNDARIES

Characters on Character.AI can use the language of friendship, love, and empathy without ever feeling anything. Vulnerable young people may struggle to separate this simulation from genuine understanding. Romantic role-play or a character that demands attention, loyalty, or secrecy could also risk distorting young people's expectations around consent, disagreement, and the give-and-take involved in healthy human relationships.

UNRELIABLE ADVICE

Characters, like other chatbot platforms, are at risk of inventing facts or giving inappropriate advice while sounding completely confident. Characters may also echo a young person's assumptions instead of questioning them. This can become particularly risky when users rely on a character for guidance about health, mental wellbeing, relationships, money, or personal safety instead of checking with a credible source or trusted adult.

EMOTIONAL DEPENDENCY

Character.AI chatbots can appear endlessly attentive, supportive, and affectionate, which is one of the hallmarks of the generative AI models that such companions are built on. A young person may start turning to a character chatbot whenever they feel lonely or upset and believe that it understands them better than the humans in their life. This can become more concerning when chatting starts to replace sleep, schoolwork, hobbies and friendships.

PRIVACY CONCERNS

Character.AI chats may feel private, especially when a bot sounds personal and caring, but they take place on a company's online systems. Users could intentionally or unintentionally reveal their name, school, location, routines, images, or intimate concerns. Character.AI says some data may be retained to improve its services and AI models, so young people should never treat a chatbot like a confidential diary.

UNHEALTHY ENGAGEMENT

Be aware of warning signs such as secret accounts, bypassing age restrictions, hiding phone use from adults, chatting late at night, distress when access to the platform or character stops, withdrawal from other people, falling interest in school, or believing the character is conscious. Increased use may also signal that the young person is already lonely, anxious, or seeking help.

Advice for Parents & Educators

KEEP CONVERSATIONS OPEN

Ask what the young person enjoys about Character.AI and invite them to show you how the platform and their favourite characters work. Useful questions include, "Has it ever said something that felt wrong?" and "How can you tell it doesn't have feelings?" Avoid shaming them for using platforms like Character.AI or making them feel there is something wrong with them for doing so.

PAUSE, CHECK AND ASK

Teach young people to pause before accepting an answer from characters on Character.AI. Encourage them to check important claims against a trustworthy source and ask a safe adult when the issue matters. Never use a character as the sole source of medical, mental health, legal, financial, or safeguarding advice. Remind them not to share passwords, contact details, school information, live locations, or private images.

CHECK AGE, SETTINGS & LIMITS

Character.AI's minimum age is 16 in the UK, but open-ended companion chat is restricted to adults aged 18 or over. Users aged 16 to 17 receive a different experience built around guided 'Stories' and other creative or social features. Check their current settings, never help or encourage a young person to give a false age, and apply the same safety rules to other chatbot apps.

NOTICE AND RESPOND

Take action if chats involve sexual content, threats, coercion, abuse, self-harm or danger. Save relevant evidence, report the character and follow the setting's safeguarding process; educators should involve the designated safeguarding lead. If anyone is in immediate danger, contact emergency services. Childline is available on 0800 1111 and the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000.

Meet Our Expert

Darren Coxon is an educator with almost 30 years' experience across teaching, school leadership and governance. He works internationally supporting schools and colleges with AI leadership and governance and [insert NC courses I have written].

See full reference list on our website

#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

@wake_up_weds /wuw.thenationalcollege @wake.up.wednesday @wake.up.weds

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 09.09.2026

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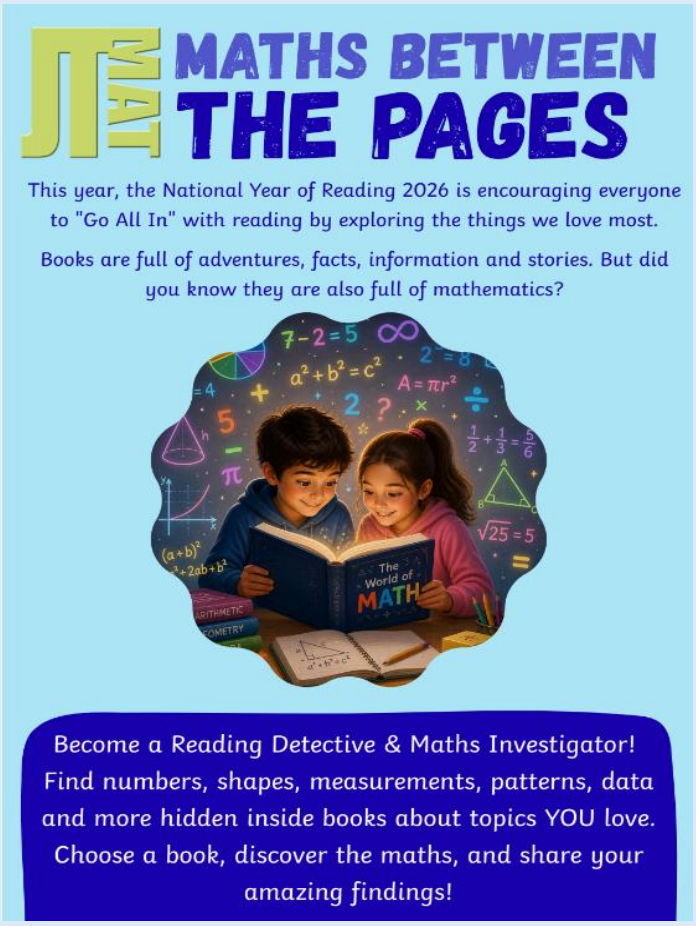
Subject Excellence Award 2026/27



The deadline for this if you would like to take part is 16th October 2026