



January 2026
Issue 2.5

Dear Families and Friends of The Duke of Norfolk,

A very Happy New Year to all of our families. I hope you had a good festive break and spent time with those closest to you.

It has been a delight to welcome our children back to school – they make the dark mornings worthwhile! Thank you to all families for their patience this week as we have welcomed the snow and all the challenges this also brings, delightfully however the children have enjoyed their playtimes and it has been fabulous to see some snowmen being created in the school grounds too, please see the photographs later in the bulletin. Included in this newsletter are Spring dates to give you as much notice as possible for events upcoming. We also warmly welcome Miss Moody and Ms Williamson to the staff team this term.

As always, thank you for your continued support.

Warm wishes

Mrs. S Barker

Headteacher

Playtimes

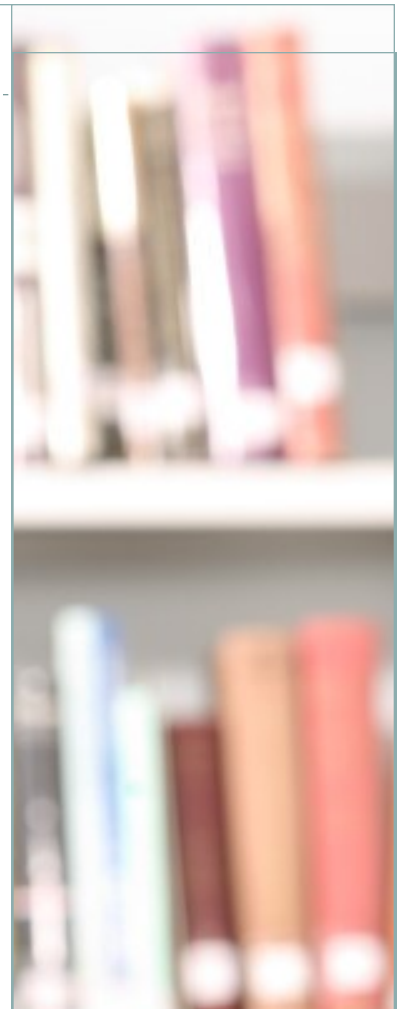
Throughout their seven years at primary school a child will spend approximately 20% of this time engaged in play, which is a significant amount of time. As a team we believe that play is essential for the physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development of each child. Most of our best childhood memories are from playing outdoors, climbing trees and exploring the wide world around us. Last year we successfully introduced the new climbing frame and with the support of the PTA and we are looking to extend this resource. We also introduced the sandpits and the tyre gardens designed by the children, that have been enjoyed by so many members of the Dukes community.

With this in mind we are committed to further developing quality play opportunities for all our children, but we also realise this is not going to be a quick journey, but one that will evolve over time and we need your support. Firstly we are looking to collect a number of good quality items, that we are hoping will support the children to develop their imaginative play and be able to enjoy a wider range of experiences at playtimes.

Can you help, or do you know someone who can help us by providing: crates, tubes, funnels, sturdy planks of wood, tarpaulin, nets, guttering, cable drums, ropes, pegs/clips. Please drop them at the bike shed. Thank you in advance for your support. The children really want to get building and creating. A more detailed list of items can be found later in the newsletter.

In addition, we would love some support and help to construct and create more long term and permanent items for the children to use such as a mud kitchen and palette dens. We would also love to hear from anyone would be willing to support us to garden some areas of the school grounds such as near the school office and to develop social spaces in the grounds.

As we get this project off the ground please, to ensure that children can play outside everyday they need to be warm, dry and comfortable, with the right clothing for the winter months. Please can you make sure all items are labelled.



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Donations List

We are looking for the items below to enable our children to enjoy a wider range of play experiences during playtime:

Suitcases of any size and type

Anything on wheels/castors

Plastic milk crates/supermarket delivery crates/
plastic bread trays

Road signs and cones

Kitchen pots, pans, baking trays, work tables,
wooden spoons, chopping boards

Tools like small spades/shovels, trowels and
brooms

Tubes of various sizes and various materials

Buckets

Pegs (to help to set up dens)

Metal frames large sheets of fabric

Foam-sheets/bodyboards/camping roll mats/yoga
mats

Wooden pallets

Cable drums

Guttering

Noodles (the type you use in the swimming pool!)

Reading Café

2026 is the National Year of Reading. This is a nationwide initiative to promote a love of reading for both children and adults. This campaign, covering the next three school terms has been launched by the Department of Education with the National Literacy Trust, aiming to address the decline in reading habits nationally. The focus is on making reading joyful. Here at Dukes we have been a little ahead of the curve as the staff all embrace the power of books and reading. We will be taking part in World Book Day a little later in the Spring term again, but would like to start off Year of Reading with our Reading café for years 1 and 2. Therefore we are hoping that the families of children in Years 1 and 2, the Blossom Classes, would like to join us on Tuesday 13th February. Please be aware that this is a date change due to the snow we have experienced recently.

PTA Events

We would like to thank the school community for their support of our events and fundraising activities in 2025, we have lots of plans for 2026. Keep an eye on our newsletters and social media for more information. School at our request have put the popular Toasty Friday payments onto ParentPay. Please sign up via ParentPay if you would like your child to have toast, the last day for payments is Wednesday 14th January.



Tudor Day

Year 5 and 6 have had the most marvellous start to the school term by stepping back in time to experience life as a Tudor for the day. They have learnt about Tudor punishments, crafted wool, done some weaving and been writing with a quill and ink. It was lovely to see so many of the children and the staff dressed for the part too, despite the snowy weather.



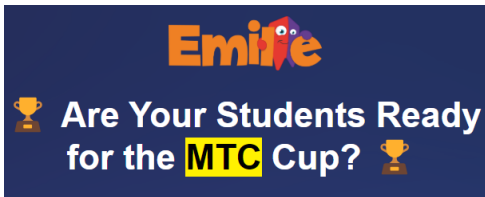
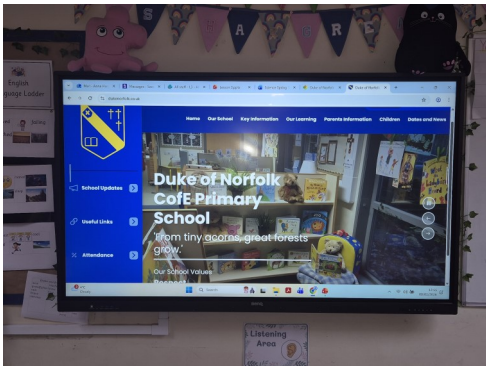
Snowmen At Dukes!





IT Classroom Resources update

This week might have been the first week back, but we have not let this stop us and I am pleased to say we have had brand new IT screens installed in each classroom across the school to support the children and their lessons. They look amazing and the children have been excited by their arrival.



Volunteers

If you would like to help out in school, Mr English is currently on the look out for some additional adult helpers during his forest school sessions. Unfortunately some sessions this term have no additional adult support which can limit the activities the children can access. This is a valued role for us as a school and I know from speaking with the parents and family helpers who join us how much they enjoy the sessions too. If you can please share a morning or an afternoon to support the children in the forest please get in touch via the school office.

In addition, the PTA would also like some more helpers for Toasty Friday, please contact the school office if you or someone you know can offer their time. Thank you.

MTC Cup

Like last year the children in Years 3 and 4 will take part in the Multiplication Cup to support them with their multiplication knowledge and facts on the 21st and 22nd of January This will take place in class using the Emile website and app.

Attendance

This school year our attendance so far is above the national average at 94.1% which is fantastic, and it's wonderful to see so many children arriving on time, ready to learn, and eager to take part in school life. In addition 82 children achieved 100% attendance last term, well done.

As you all know regular attendance not only helps children achieve their best academically but also builds friendships, confidence, and resilience. Let's keep working together as everyday in school is a step towards a brighter future. December attendance, below:

Sycamores	93.4%	Chestnuts	88.7%
Apple	94.9%	Orange	95.1%
Cherry	96.5%	Holly	97.4%
Fir	90.5%	Pine	94.8%
Beech	93.5%	Willow	96%
Oak	94.6%	Whole School	94.1%

KEY DATES

JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2026

- Tuesday 13th January—Reading Café for Year 1 and 2
- Wednesday 14th January—Last day for Toasty Friday payments on ParentPay
- Thursday 15th January—Class assembly for Beech Class
- Monday 19th January—World Religion Day in school
- Wednesday 21st and Thursday 22nd January—MTC World Cup for Year 3 and 4
- Thursday 22nd January— Boys Football Event
- Thursday 22nd January—Class assembly for Oak Class
- Friday 23rd January—RSPB Bird Watch
- Tuesday 27th January—Year 6 parents are invited to attend the SATS information evening at 6pm
- Wednesday 28th January Class Assembly for Willow Class
- Monday 2nd February—Sunflower Group
- Tuesday 3rd February—Year 3 and 4—The History Van The Egyptians
- Thursday 5th February—Young Voices
- Monday 9th February - marks the start of Children's Mental Health week
- Tuesday 10th February—Safer Internet Day
- Thursday 12th February—Class Assembly for Cherry Class
- Thursday 12th February—School closes for the Half Term Break
- Friday 13th February—INSET DAY
- Monday 23rd February School reopens to all pupils

INSET DATES

- Friday 13th February 2026
- Monday 3rd June 2026

