



Weekly Newsletter 2025-6

Dear Families & Parents,

This weekly newsletter is your essential guide to supporting your child. It is packed with important dates, event details and information. Please take a few minutes each week to read it so you don't miss a thing.

We look forward to sharing all the great news with you this academic year. If you have any good news stories or student achievements you would like to share, please feel free to reach out to us!

This week has been an incredibly busy with lots going on from the Youth Speaks competition, to several trips, the Young Chef of the Year and of course, the PTA silent disco. As usual our students were an absolute credit to the school and their families. Thank you to every member of staff and volunteer who made each of these events possible.

Finally, a massive thank you to our brilliant PTA for the organisation of fundraising events and for their efforts this week. I often remark to visitors about how lucky we are to have a group of parents who are so eager to get involved and support the school. A PTA in a secondary school is a rare thing and we are certainly very thankful for all the work they do!

Wishing everyone a restful and hopefully dry weekend.

Best wishes

P Balkwill

Headteacher



Key Information

Key Dates

9 December- Computer Science Workshop (small group)

10 December- Y10 Hospitality & Catering Trip to Zaza Bazaar

11 December- National Space Academy workshop

Class of 2025 (Y11) Celebration Evening

12 December - Christmas Carols in Glastonbury high street

16 December- Christmas Jumper day- more information to follow

17 December- Christmas Dinners

18 December- Christmas celebration events for students who have reached key attendance and on track point thresholds

19 December- Celebration assemblies & final day of term

Important Information

Christmas Lunches

Following on from the success of last year's staggered lunches, we will be organising a similar plan in the final week so that students can enjoy a christmas lunch with their friends in the canteen. Please look out for information over the next week for details regarding times and payment.



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Weekly Attendance Update

What does my attendance look like so far? 5 December

Band	Percentage	Number of days attended this year to date	Potential Days of Absence across the year if this continues	Potential hours of lost learning	Classification
1	100%	62	0	0	Perfect
2	98% to 100%	61	4	20	Excellent
3	96% to 98%	60	8	40	Good
4	93% to 96%	58	14	70	Requires Improvement
5	90% to 93%	56	38	190	Concerning
6	Below 90%	55	40	200	Persistent absence

It's been a very unusual couple of weeks for attendance. Several students and staff have been struck down by this winter flu bug – and we sincerely hope everyone feels much better very soon.

In spite of these challenges we have also seen some outstanding attendance across the school. Lots of pupils have continued to come in every day, showing real commitment and determination as we head towards the Christmas celebrations. Well done to you all!

We are also noticing an increase in parents responding to text messages from their child asking to be collected. It can be incredibly difficult for a parent to receive such a message, particularly if the child sounds upset or reports feeling unwell. We want to reassure you that as a school, it is absolutely never our intention to keep a student here if they are genuinely too unwell to continue with the day.

When a student reports feeling unwell, we follow a clear process: our staff will make an assessment and contact the family to work collaboratively towards the best outcome for your child. To ensure the safety and well-being of all children and to make sure we are always making the right decisions concerning their health and education, we ask for your vital support in adhering to this established process. This process can sometimes be tricky and we ask for everyone's cooperation in following this procedure and working with us in the future.

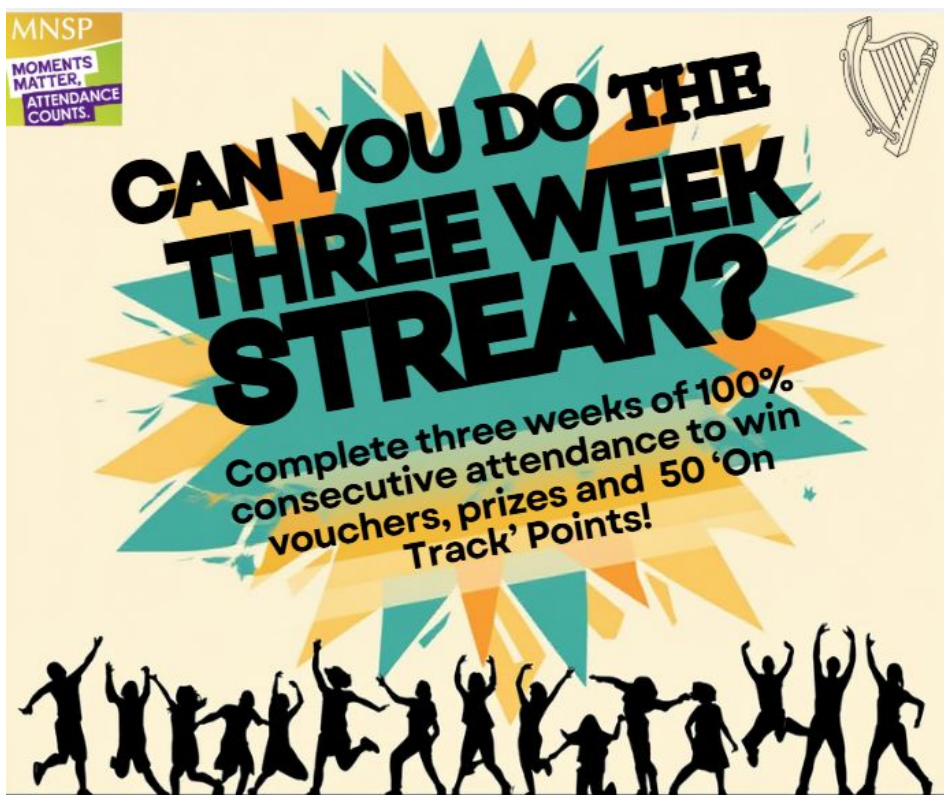
On Monday, we were delighted to find that 242 students achieved 100% attendance throughout November. A huge well done to every one of them. As part of our monthly attendance rewards, 15 students have been randomly selected to receive Amazon vouchers — these will be on their way shortly.

Weekly Attendance Update

Alongside the November 100% Club, we also introduced a three-week attendance streak as a pre-Christmas treat — and then the flu bug hit. Despite its best efforts, an impressive 238 students have maintained 100% attendance over the past three weeks, and the challenge still has one more week to go. At the moment, 278 students are still in the running to complete the next three-week streak and be in with a chance of winning.

Tutor groups are also taking part in a series of quizzes and enjoying a 'riddle a day' for the rest of the term. Several students will be receiving prizes, with even more to come in the final fortnight. A number of tutor groups are currently in the running for the non-uniform day challenge for Friday 12th December – but with this flu bug circulating, it's still very much all to play for!



So, with just two weeks to go until Christmas, we want to thank all our parents and families for their continued support. Your encouragement, communication and partnership make a huge difference — especially during a busy term and a challenging spell of winter illness. We are incredibly proud of our students' resilience and commitment, and we look forward to finishing the term positively together.



MNSP
MOMENTS
MATTER,
ATTENDANCE
COUNTS.

**CAN YOU DO THE
THREE WEEK
STREAK?**

Complete three weeks of 100%
consecutive attendance to win
vouchers, prizes and 50 'On
Track' Points!





On Track Update

<u>O</u>rganised	Equipped, on time, and completing homework
<u>N</u>eat	Smart, well presented books demonstrating your best work.
<u>T</u>ry hard	Trying your hardest and rising to the challenge.
<u>R</u>esponsible	A role model to others in your appearance, actions and words
<u>A</u>ctive	Listening, responding, and participating in lessons
<u>C</u>ommunity	Supporting staff and other students to create a positive learning environment for all.
<u>K</u>nowledgeable	Knowing key information, concepts and terminology for each subject/unit

Our 'On Track' Total so far.....

170,837

Well done to all of our students!



Youth Speaks Winners!



It was our pleasure to host and win the Youth Speaks intermediate competition at the end of last week. We were joined by teams from Whitstone School and Wadham School and enjoyed listening to their excellent discussions.

Speaking on the Pros and Cons of AI, our Year 9 team took the top spot, **winning the overall competition** and taking charge of the silver trophy for another year.

Our Year 7 team, also debated professionally about the rights of women and **Best Overall Speaker** of the night, went to one of the team.

We are hugely proud of all speakers, including the teams who participated in last week's internal heat. Speaking in front of an unknown audience is a great skill and tonight's speakers were brilliant at it.

Our thanks go to the Shepton Mallet Rotary Club, who run the competition and give our young people a voice to debate whatever topic they choose. Our next round is in February; we can't wait!



Youth Speaks Winners



ROTARY YOUTH SPEAKS

PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION

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Youth Speaks Senior Comp



We've had another excellent evening this week, listening to the debates of the young people in our local area. Thank you to Shepton Mallet Rotary Club once again for running such a great competition.

Joined by Ansford Academy, the winners of this week's event, the teams spoke ably on topics such as the possible regulation of alcohol and whether martial arts should be compulsory in schools.

We were proud of our brilliant year 10 team for their thorough research and presentation skills. They were mature, interesting and spoke as experts in their area. Well done year 10!



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Young Chef Competition



This week we held our school heats of the Midsomer Norton Trust Young Chef of the Year competition 2026.

Eight year 9 students were chosen as finalists in this competition based on their fantastic menu designs. The brief was to create a seasonal dish that demonstrated skill and finesse. They have been working tirelessly at home perfecting their dishes.

Our chef judge was Ayesha Kalaji. Ayesha is the head chef at the Queen of Cups in Glastonbury and a Masterchef 2023 competitor. Our school judge was Headteacher, Mr Balkwill.

The judges had an incredibly hard job deciding the winner as all the competitors were outstanding.

The winning dish was made by Lily, who served 'Tteok-bokki and Pork Soup.

Well done to Harry, Charlie, August, Honey, Harriet, Lily, Bella and Megan who all created superb dishes and they should all be incredibly proud of themselves. There was nothing but praise and admiration for the competitors. All three dishes could have been served in any high end restaurant.

Lily will now go to the grand final at Writhlington School in March to compete against finalists from 12 other schools within the Midsomer Norton Partnership Trust.

Thank you to our judges who gave up their time to support our young chefs and give them invaluable advice, guidance and feedback!



Young Chef Competition



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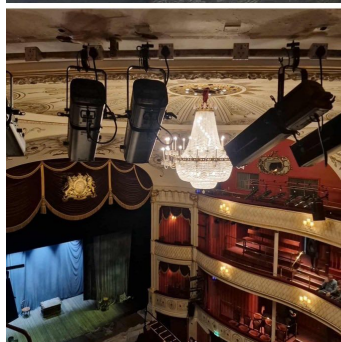
Year 10 Bath Theatre Trip



What a wonderful day we had this week with our year 10s in Bath. As a reward for an excellent start to their GCSE courses, Year 10 went to see The Woman in Black at Bath Theatre Royal and shopped at the Bath Christmas Markets.

We were thrilled by the stagecraft and how a play can instil such fear in its audience and lots of students ticked off their Christmas present shopping.

They were a credit to our school with their behaviour and timekeeping.



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Glastonbury Christmas Tree



Last week, some of our year 7 and 8 students joined the Mayor of Glastonbury to decorate the community Christmas tree. Students have been working hard decorating over 200 wooden bells.

It was wonderful to be part of a community initiative, joining other local schools to provide something uplifting for the people of our town.

Well done to all students that created decorations.



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SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH EATING DISORDERS ACROSS THE SOUTH & WEST

Over the last week, students in Years 8 to 11 have taken part in assemblies delivered by Gavin Osborn from SWEDA (SW Eating Disorder Association).

These sessions were an important opportunity for students to learn about eating disorders, body image and where to go for support if they or someone they know is struggling.

Further details about the support SWEDA offers can be found here:

<https://swedauk.org/services>



St Dunstan's Library presents...

THE BOOK NOOK

Welcome to the Book Nook, the section of the newsletter where we update you with what has been happening in the Library.

This week we appointed our new Year 7 Librarians and Library Helpers!

Twenty students applied for only five roles and they were all fantastic. It was an incredibly hard decision, and it is so wonderful to see so much enthusiasm surrounding the library, and how many students want to be involved! We finally chose five librarians who now make our total of student librarians 15! Those who had excellent interviews have become library helpers, ambassadors for the library throughout the school (without the formal duties, but still with a badge!) Well done everyone! Pictured below are some Librarians, and some Helpers (not all of them).



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Student Spotlight



A group of St Dunstan's students travelled to the University of Bath to participate in the South West Trampoline Championships representing Griffin Association Gymnastics and Trampoline Club.

Phillippa, in the under 18 group, completed 2 fantastic routines to take 5th place overall and helped her team to become South West Champions.

Aisha, in the under 15 group, showed great tenacity and adaptability in her routines following a challenging year from a fractured ankle and finished a credible 16th place. **Imani**, in the under 13 group, stepped up her technical skills and difficulty, competing in a really tough competitive group and did brilliantly to finish in 30th place.

Well done to all!



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PTA Fundraising



We are delighted to report that our magnificent PTA raised an incredible £755 by organising the car park at the weekend's Frost Fayre!

Thank you to everyone who helped out or supported the event.

If you would like to find out more about the PTA, please email: stdunstanscommunitypta@gmail.com



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Holiday Activities



Activity Calendar

Community Inclusion
and Activity Team

Christmas Holidays
Sat 20 Dec - Fri 2 Jan 2026



For ALL children and young people in Somerset with a disability or additional needs
*You DO NOT have to be referred to any service to access these activities, unless otherwise stated.

Key for activities:



Family Activity - for all members of the family to attend and enjoy



Child/Young person can attend on their own under group supervision or with parent/carer if additional 1:1 support is required - please call the organisation to have a chat



Child/young person must attend with a parent or carer



Staff provided by the organisation to support the child/young person 1:1 if required - please call the organisation to see what they can provide as this may not include personal care



Some parts of the activity are wheelchair accessible please call the organisation to find out more



Accessible changing facilities are available please call the venue to find out more



Activities aimed at young people/teenagers/young adults

Useful Information

Who are the people offering the activities? Organisations who have experience of working with children and young people with a disability or additional need and their families. Activities can be adapted to suit the children and young people who would like to attend. Please call them to chat about your child / young person's needs.

Activities offered by the Community Inclusion and Activity Team - Dependant on the child / young person needs, we can provide a day out without parent / carer as we offer group supervision. If it is the first time your child / young person has accessed a trip with our team, a parent/ carer will need to attend. We require payment a minimum of 2 weeks prior to the day. Please note, spaces for children and young people with a disability or additional need will be prioritised first, with spaces offered to siblings once bookings have closed if we have room.
Online payment at www.somerset.gov.uk/cwd

Don't forget our Activity Day Passes - Available to ALL families in Somerset with a child or young person with a disability or additional need - Puxton Park, Noah's Ark, The Bristol Zoo Project, Abbotsbury, Ferne Animal Sanctuary, Hestercombe gardens, Court farm. Email ciateam@somerset.gov.uk to find out more or visit www.somerset.gov.uk/activity-passes to view the flyer.

Max Card - A FREE card for all children and young people with a disability or additional need in Somerset aged 0-25 years. This card can be used at many places all over the UK offering discounts and special rates when you show the card. Visit www.somerset.gov.uk/max-card for more information on how to access this card. **Cards can ONLY be issued by Somerset Council to people living in Somerset.**

If you would like help with the calendar and how to access activities, please email ciateam@somerset.gov.uk and someone will be in touch to support you.



Holiday Activities



SATURDAY 20TH DEC

Childrens World
The Pitton Stage, St Mary's Lane, Pitton, BA4 5HX.
Children's World Xmas Family Rave and Interactive DJ Experience in partnership with Big Fam Disco. Fun for all ages and abilities. Experience and learn to DJ yourself with Bass and Rave classics and with a dedicated break out space so you can have some quiet time trying out DJ equipment and creating your own Graffiti Big Fam Logo. 2-4pm. For all ages. £5 per person.

To book, please contact Angela Bolton 01458 883693 or email info@childrensworldcharity.org



SUNDAY 21ST DEC

Wildierwoods
Wildierwoods Forest School, Drayton Woods, Langport TA10 6JZ.
Midwinter Candelit Celebration. Decorations, candles and songs in the woods with refreshments around the campfire afterwards. 3-6pm. For all ages. £8 (1 child/1 adult), £15 per family (max 2 adult, 3 children). Additional children/adults £5 per person.

To book, please call Hannah Attkin on 07970 883264 hannah@wildierwoods.org



MONDAY 22ND DEC

Rainbow Roots
Dove Barn, Manor Farm, Silver St, Barton St David, TA11 6DB.
Mindful Christmas Crafts. Join us at Rainbow Roots for a magical mix of creativity and calm! Each morning, children will make festive crafts and learn simple mindfulness techniques to help them feel relaxed, focused, and joyful through the Christmas season. 10am-12:30pm. For 5-11 yrs. £7.50 per person.

To book, please email Lou Stockley on hello@rainbowroots.uk



TUESDAY 23RD DEC

Rainbow Roots
Dove Barn, Manor Farm, Silver St, Barton St David, TA11 6DB.
Mindful Christmas Crafts. Join us at Rainbow Roots for a magical mix of creativity and calm! Each morning, children will make festive crafts and learn simple mindfulness techniques to help them feel relaxed, focused, and joyful through the Christmas season. 10am-12:30pm. For 5-11 yrs. £7.50 per person.

To book, please email Lou Stockley on hello@rainbowroots.uk



20TH

Purple Elephant
The Assembly Rooms, Christchurch, Street West, Frome, BA11 1EB.
Family Holiday Fun! Christmas party! With festive crafts, Santa, and a hot meal, followed by a silent disco. 10am - 2pm. For all ages. £2 suggested donation. Free to those on free school meals.

To book, please email purpleelephant.org.uk



22ND

Rainbow Roots
Dove Barn, Manor Farm, Silver St, Barton St David, TA11 6DB.
Gifts from the Heart. In our cosy afternoon sessions at Rainbow Roots, children will craft thoughtful handmade gifts to share at Christmas. We'll explore gratitude, kindness, and the joy of giving - celebrating how special it feels to make something with love for someone else. 1:30-3:30pm. For 5-11 yrs. £7.50 per person.

To book, please email Lou Stockley on hello@rainbowroots.uk



23RD

Rainbow Roots
Dove Barn, Manor Farm, Silver St, Barton St David, TA11 6DB.
Gifts from the Heart. In our cosy afternoon sessions at Rainbow Roots, children will craft thoughtful handmade gifts to share at Christmas. We'll explore gratitude, kindness, and the joy of giving - celebrating how special it feels to make something with love for someone else. 1:30-3:30pm. For 5-11 yrs. £7.50 per person.

To book, please email Lou Stockley on hello@rainbowroots.uk



ACTIVITY PACKS

Step4ward-in2-growth

Christmas holiday activity packs tailored to young person's interests with a festive theme. Christmas Eve boxes also available, with small, individualised gifts to be opened the night before Christmas! Hanc delivered if local to Shepton Mallet or sent by Royal Mail. For ages 3-18th birthday. £3 per pack/box.

To order, please contact Becky on 07737 331174, email Step4ward-in2growth@mail.com or facebook: [step4ward-in2growth](https://www.facebook.com/step4ward-in2growth)

Community Inclusion Activity Team

'Winter' or 'Christmas' themed activity packs, containing arts & crafts, puzzles and more! £3 per pack, to be paid prior to delivery. Please ensure payment is made by 12 Dec.

To order, please email clateam@somerset.gov.uk by 8 Dec with your child's name, age, nature of disability, address, phone number and where we can safely leave the pack if you're not in. Delivery w/c 15 Dec.

FRIDAY 2ND JAN

In the Mix
The Hub Centre, Hartswell, South Street, Wiveliscombe TA4 2NE.
Create and Bake! Join us to make your own chocolate bark, mug decorating and creating your own hot chocolate to take home. 10am-12:30pm. For 11-18yrs. £2 per person.

To book, please contact Emma Carberry@ inthemixproject.org.uk 07494 839782.



TUESDAY 30TH DEC

Community Inclusion Activity Team

Sanders Garden centre, Brent Knoll, Burnham-on-Sea, Somerset, TA9 4HJ.
Join us on a family day at the festive Big Top! Prepare to be mesmerised by twirling fairies, cheeky elf Nia, breathtaking aerialists and daring acrobats. Marvel at dazzling lasers, the heart stopping wheel of death and the adrenaline pumping motorbikes in the globe. Even Santa makes a magical appearance!

Venue has a limited number of ear defenders which can be borrowed for the duration of the show, so please bring your own if needed. Show includes flashing lights. Staff will be on site for support. 5-7pm. Please arrive by 4:30pm to allow time to be seated. For all ages. £5pp.

To book, call 07977 412199 from 10am on Tuesday 2nd December.



WEDNESDAY 31ST DEC

Mad Community CIC

The Mad Hub, Unit 14 Orchard Shopping Centre, TA1 3TP.
New Year's Eve inclusive disco with lower-volume music to create a lively but sensory-friendly environment. There will be gentle disco lighting & party decorations to build excitement in a welcoming, festive space. TV-projected countdown with fireworks will give children the full New Year's experience in a way that suits their needs. 12.45-1.45pm. For 4-11yrs. 2:30-3:30pm. For 11-16 yrs. £2.95 per person.

To book, please call Kelly Gauntlett on 07467235607 or email themadhub@outlook.com



2ND

Minehead Eye
Minehead Eye centre, 1A Mart road, Minehead, Somerset, TA24 5BJ.
Enjoy games, music, sensory room, arts and crafts, water and sand tray activity! Café style space available for parent carers. 2 youth workers on hand for support and advice. 2-4pm. For 9-10 yrs. £1 per person.

To book, please email reception@minehead-eye.co.uk



2ND

Escape Support Group
Icescapes Clark's Village, Street, BA16 9BB.
Glide into the festive season at Clark's Village magical ice skating rink! Penguin and seal skating aids will be available for help with balance. 1-4:50pm. For all ages. Children 12 and under £5. Adult & children 12+ £6. Carer - Free Wheelchair user £5.

To book, fundraising@ escapesupportgroup.com Bookings through the website [escapesupportgroup.com](https://www.escapesupportgroup.com).



For more inclusive activities, groups and organisations in your area, please visit the Local Offer: www.somerset.gov.uk/send-events

where you can search by keyword or location.

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