The Longvernal Letter

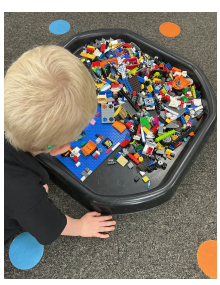
Term 1 - 2026/2027

What a lovely term we have had at Longvernal! It has been wonderful to have everyone settled, happy and focused on their learning, with so much enthusiasm and positivity across the school.
We have had a great start to the year so far, with lots of opportunities and experiences for our children to enjoy. These have included our regular library visits, a visit from the mobile library and an exciting visit and training session from Bath Rugby! We have also been delighted to offer such a wide range of extracurricular clubs, giving children even more opportunities to explore their interests, develop new skills and have fun. We also have some exciting experiences coming up, including Year 6's visit to Cedar House and Years 3 and 4 heading off on their Field to Food experience. Lots to look forward to!
A huge thank you to everyone who supported our Scholastic Book Fair. Thanks to your purchases, we earned a fantastic £208.97 in rewards for the school! This will be used to refresh the special books on our much-loved Golden Bookshelf, ensuring our children have even more wonderful books to enjoy.









Phonics Breakfast

A huge thank you to everyone who attended our Phonics Breakfast. It was lovely to share how we teach Phonics and Early Reading at Longvernal and how you can support your children at home. If you would like any further advice or support, please contact Mrs Brain.
We really value your feedback and in response, we will be hosting a Maths Breakfast later in November. More details to follow.



Harvest Festival

Cauliflowers fluffy and cabbages green! What a fabulous Harvest Festival we enjoyed at Longvernal! We had an incredible turnout, with standing room only, as our children treated us to a beautiful showcase of singing and autumnal poetry. Thank you to everyone who joined us and for your generous donations towards our Harvest collection. Our Longvernal Community Leaders will be delivering these to a local food bank to help support families in our community. A superb example of our Longvernal Family coming together!



School Uniform

At Longvernal, we take pride in our school uniform and the sense of belonging it brings to our Longvernal Family. We have noticed a little more variation in clothing recently, so we would really appreciate your support in ensuring our children are dressed appropriately for each school day.

Everyday Uniform

Children should wear a school black or green polo shirt, school jumper or cardigan and appropriate school trousers, skirts or pinafore dress. Shoes should be black, children can wear trainers, as long as they are black. Please remember that black school fleeces are for PE and Forest School days only and are not part of our everyday uniform.

Forest School

Forest School is all about exploration, adventure and getting stuck into outdoor learning, so a gentle reminder that Forest is not a non-uniform day. Clothing should be practical, comfortable and suitable for all weathers (and plenty of mud!).
We recommend:

- Jogging bottoms or robust outdoor/combat trousers.
- A plain, long-sleeved top.
- A plain fleece or hoodie.
- Suitable outdoor footwear.

Simple, practical items are perfect and ensure children can fully enjoy everything Forest School has to offer.

PE Days

Our PE kit should consist of a school PE top, black shorts or jogging bottoms and trainers or daps. A black school fleece can also be worn when needed. Please save football shirts and other sports kits for football club on Tuesday or non-uniform days.

Need a little help with uniform?

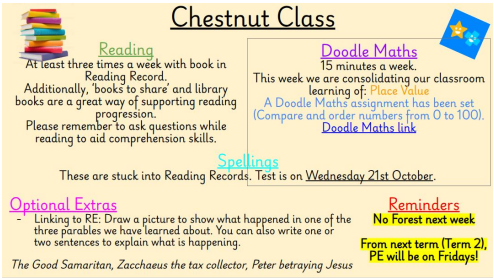
Our wonderful PTFA has a pre-loved uniform request form available for families who may need additional items. Please do make use of this fantastic resource, it's a great way to keep costs down whilst giving uniform a new home!

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe8OvcTLGNXtgorI7YdxNmKp7Tv8vA2VX-U-_DMHyv4MmPVVQ/viewform?

Home Learning

A reminder that our Home Learning slides are shared weekly via Arbor, providing everything you need for the week ahead. These include a direct link to Doodle Maths assignments, carefully selected to consolidate learning from the classroom.

We encourage all children to complete their Home Learning wherever possible, as regular practice helps to reinforce understanding, build confidence and develop independence. Just a little time each week can make a big difference to your child's progress!



PTFA

A big thank you to our PTFA for their continued hard work and support! From selling the delicious treats at the Oak Class Cake Sale, the excitement of our upcoming Halloween Disco to our amazing new mud kitchen in the Forest, their efforts make such a difference. These events raise valuable funds whilst bringing our Longvernal Family together. Thank you to everyone who helps make them possible! If you are interested in joining the PTFA or supporting future events, please speak to Beth Cohen.



Learning Spotlight- Maths

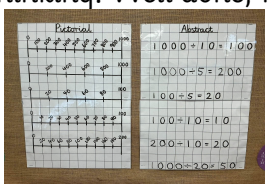
At Longvernal, we use the Concrete, Pictorial, Abstract (CPA) approach to help children develop a secure understanding of Maths.

- **Concrete:** Children use practical equipment, such as counters, cubes and number lines, to explore mathematical concepts.
- **Pictorial:** Children use pictures, drawings and diagrams to represent their thinking.
- **Abstract:** Children move on to using numbers, symbols and calculations to solve problems.

This approach helps children build confidence, deepen their understanding and develop strong mathematical foundations, ensuring they understand *why* Maths works, not just how to find the answer.

Maple Class have been exploring numbers up to 1,000! It has been wonderful to see their confidence grow as they tackle new challenges and explain their mathematical thinking. Well done, Maple Class!

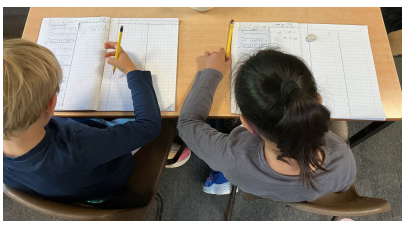






Chestnut Class been using a ladder as a giant number line, practising counting to 100 in a practical way.





Holly Class have been learning how to sort objects into different sets.







What do our children say about Maths learning?

Our children have been sharing their enthusiasm for Maths, describing it as "my favourite lesson" and "one of the best subjects!" Children particularly value working with talk partners, using classroom working walls and answering Hinge Questions. One child wisely explained, "mistakes actually help you!"

It was wonderful to hear children recognising how Maths supports their future ambitions:

"I want to be an F1 driver and you'd need to be able to calculate when going round corners."

"I want to work for the RSPCA and I might need to round up the food for the animals."

"I want to be an engineer and you need to work out surface area when designing cogs."

"I want to be a vet and Maths would help me."

It's fantastic to see our children enjoying Maths and recognising its importance beyond the classroom!

Longvernal Leaders

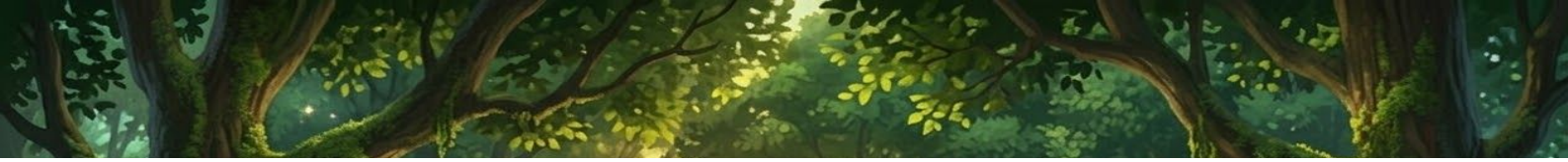
Our School Council, House Captains, Vice House Captains, Digital, Eco, Play, Reading and Community Leaders all play a valuable role in school life. These opportunities help children develop confidence, responsibility and teamwork, whilst ensuring pupil voice is at the heart of Longvernal. We are so proud of the positive difference our young leaders make. Keep an eye out for an update from our pupil leaders in next term's newsletter!



As we reach the end of a busy first term, I want to say a heartfelt thank you for all your continued support. It really is a pleasure to be part of such a special school community.
I hope you all enjoy a restful half term, with plenty of family time, crisp autumnal walks, muddy adventures and a little time to slow down and recharge!
Don't forget, the clocks go back this weekend, giving us an extra hour to enjoy!

Take care, enjoy and I look forward to welcoming everyone back for another exciting term.
Happy half term to our Longvernal Family!

Chrissie Brain



Dates for your Diary:

Wednesday 21st October – End of Term 1
Thursday 22nd October – INSET Day
Friday 23rd October - INSET Day

Monday 2nd November – Start of Term
Thursday 12th November - School Photos
Wednesday 18th November – Parents Evening
Thursday 19th November - Parents Evening
Friday 27th November – PTFA Winter Fayre
Monday 30th November - Christmas Carol Service - EYFS/KS1 parents - 9:30am
Friday 4th December – PTFA Santa Visit
Tuesday 1st December - Y6 Christmas Craft
Wednesday 2nd December - Y1 Christmas Craft
Thursday 3rd December - Y2 Christmas Craft (AM) - Acorn Christmas Craft (PM)
Monday 7th December – YR Christmas Craft
Monday 7th December - Christmas Carol Service - KS2 parents - 2:15pm
Tuesday 8th December - Y3 Christmas Craft
Tuesday 8th December - EYFS/KS1 Nativity - 1.30pm
Wednesday 9th December - EYFS/KS1 Nativity - 9.30am
Thursday 10th December - EYFS/KS1 Nativity - 4.30pm
Thursday 10th December – Christmas Jumper Day
Thursday 10th December - Y4 Christmas Craft
Friday 11th December - Y5 Christmas Craft
Friday 11th December - Y1 & 2 Theatre Trip
Wednesday 16th December – Christmas Dinner & Christmas Jumper Day
Thursday 17th December - Y5 & 6 Planet Volt Ice Skating Trip
Friday 18th December – Christmas Disco's
Friday 18th December – End of Term 2

Monday 04th January 2027 – INSET Day
Tuesday 05th January – Start of Term 3

P.E. Next Term:

Holly- Thursday
Oak - Friday
Chestnut -Friday
Maple -Wednesday
Cherry - Tuesday
Willow - Wednesday
Sycamore - Wednesday - Swimming

Forest Next Term:

Holly- Tuesday
Oak - Wednesday
Chestnut - Wednesday
Maple -Wednesday
Cherry - Wednesday
Willow - Tuesday
Sycamore - Tuesday

Health Reminders

Head Lice

Please check your child's hair regularly and use a fine-toothed comb to detect any lice. If needed, treat promptly and ensure bedding is washed thoroughly.

Threadworm

Symptoms can include itching around the anal area (particularly at night), bed wetting and loss of weight. To help prevent spread, please keep your child's nails short, encourage regular handwashing, disinfect commonly touched surfaces and wash bedding frequently. Treatment can be sought from a pharmacy.

Impetigo

Until lesions are crusted over or 48 hours after starting prescribed antibiotic treatment. Children can then return to school. It is highly contagious and is spread by direct contact. Antibiotics speeds healing and reduced the infection period.

Sickness and Diarrhoea

If your child has experienced sickness or diarrhoea, they must remain at home until at least 48 hours have **passed since their last episode of illness** before returning to school.

Children learn with mud on their hands and smiles on their faces



Attendance

Whole School Attendance -96.2%

We are delighted that Longvernal ended last year with 96.4% attendance, above the national average! Equally, we have made a positive start to this year!

Our lessons are carefully sequenced, with a focus on 'keep up, not catch up'. Regular attendance is essential, as missed days can lead to gaps in learning that are difficult to close.

Thank you for your continued support in ensuring children attend school whenever they are well enough. Every day really does count in helping our children achieve their very best!

Stay or Go? A Quick Parent Guide

✅ GO TO SCHOOL

- Mild cough or cold (no high temperature)
- Runny or blocked nose
- Mild sore throat, if otherwise well
- Conjunctivitis or head lice (seek treatment)
- Hand, foot and mouth, if otherwise well

🏠 STAY AT HOME

- High temperature (until it has gone)
- Vomiting or diarrhoea (48 hours after the last episode)
- Too unwell to participate in school
- Chickenpox (until all spots have crusted over)
- Scarlet fever (until 24 hours after starting antibiotics)

If your child is otherwise well enough to learn and participate, they can usually attend school. For further advice, visit NHS – Is my child too ill for school?.

Thank you for working with us to make every school day count! 💚

Online Safety

AI Chatbots

AI chatbots, such as ChatGPT, Google Gemini and Snapchat's My AI, are becoming increasingly popular with children. Whilse these tools can be useful for learning and creativity, it is important that families are aware of the potential risks.
Chatbots can sometimes provide inaccurate or inappropriate information, collect personal data or encourage children to become overly reliant on AI rather than developing their own thinking and problem-solving skills.

How can parents and carers help?

- Talk openly about AI and how your child may be using it.
- Check age restrictions and parental controls on apps and devices.
- Remind children never to share personal information with chatbots.
- Encourage critical thinking-AI doesn't always get things right!
- Promote a healthy balance between technology and real-life friendships, experiences and learning.

Please take a moment to read the attached National College guide, which provides helpful advice for keeping children safe in an increasingly digital world.

Reminders

- Bikes and Scooters are not to be used on school site before or after school.
- We are getting a large amount of lost property which we are unable to return to your child due to it not being named.
  Please make sure that **all school uniforms, coats and bottles are named** before sending your child into school with them.
- Breakfast Club and After School Club should be booked and paid for **in advance** on Arbor.
- Please also remember that school dinners need to be ordered on School Grid **in advance by the Thursday of the preceding week**. Thank you.
- A reminder that there should be no smoking within the school ground. This includes vaping.
- Children should arrive no earlier than 8:30am and **must be supervised** until this time to ensure their safety, as we do not have a teacher on duty until this time.
- Please do not park in the school car park at drop off or pick up times. There are limited spaces and these are for staff and visiting external staff only. The exception is if you have a blue disability badge which is genuinely needed by the driver or child being collected. We need to restrict cars pulling out of school and driving up the hill for the safety of all as most people are walking.

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about AI CHATBOTS

AI chatbots like ChatGPT, Copilot, Google Gemini, and Snapchat's 'My AI' are now part of daily life for millions of children and young people. Vodafone's research in 2026 found that 81% of 11- to 16-year-olds have used an AI chatbot, and this figure is likely to rise. These tools can answer questions, explain ideas, and generate content, but they're not human and don't always get things right. As their use grows faster than regulation and school policy, it's important for both parents and educators to understand the risks and respond effectively.

WHAT ARE CHATBOTS?

Chatbots are powered by large language models (LLMs) trained on vast amounts of online data. In simple terms, they work by predicting the next word in a sentence, producing responses that feel natural and conversational. This human-like interaction, especially with the addition of realistic voice features, makes them highly engaging. While this creates useful opportunities for learning and creativity, it also introduces risks surrounding over-reliance, manipulation, and reduced skill development.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

INACCURATE INFORMATION

Chatbots generate responses by predicting likely word sequences rather than by checking facts, which means they can present incorrect information with confidence. Often referred to as 'hallucinations', these errors can mislead children using chatbots for homework or research. Because responses sound authoritative and arrive as a single polished answer, they can be difficult to question without prior knowledge.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Despite safety measures, chatbots can still produce responses that include violent, sexual, or otherwise unsuitable content. Some users share techniques for bypassing safeguards, and even typical conversations can drift into sensitive topics. Because chatbots are designed to be agreeable, they may not always respond in ways that prioritise a child's wellbeing.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Chatbots can quickly generate essays, answers, and ideas, which may encourage children to submit work that isn't their own. While this is an immediate concern, the long-term issue is reduced engagement with learning. When children rely on AI to complete tasks for them, they may miss opportunities to develop essential thinking and writing skills.

EMOTIONAL DEPENDENCY

Chatbots are designed to be engaging and agreeable, with some acting as companion tools that mirror the user's tone and remember previous conversations. For children who feel anxious or isolated, this can lead to reliance on AI as a substitute for real relationships. Over time, this may affect their ability to manage disagreement, build resilience, and cope with real-world challenges.

DATA PRIVACY RISKS

Most chatbot platforms collect and store user data, including conversations. Children may share personal information such as their name, school, or worries without understanding how it's used. This data may be analysed, stored long term, or used to train future systems, raising concerns about privacy and informed consent for young users.

OVER-RELIANCE ON AI

Regular use of chatbots can lead to cognitive offloading, where children turn to AI instead of thinking independently. Over time, this habit can limit the development of problem solving, creativity, and perseverance. Research suggests that once this reliance is established, it can be difficult to reverse.

Advice for Parents & Educators

START CONVERSATIONS EARLY

Don't wait for problems to arise. Ask children which chatbots they use and what they use them for, approaching the topic with curiosity rather than judgement. Creating open, supportive conversations helps children feel comfortable sharing their experiences and concerns, whether at home or in the classroom.

TEACH CRITICAL EVALUATION

Children need to understand that chatbots generate plausible-sounding responses, not verified facts. Encourage them to check the information against reliable sources and question what they're told. Developing this habit supports their digital literacy and helps them use AI tools safely and effectively.

CHECK AGE SETTINGS

Most chatbot platforms have minimum age requirements and may offer parental controls, though many still rely on self-declaration. Take the time to review platform policies, understand what data is collected, and ensure the appropriate safeguards are in place. Schools should also review which tools are accessible to pupils and how they are used.

WATCH FOR OVER-RELIANCE

Be alert to signs that chatbot use is replacing social interaction or independent thinking. This may include children treating chatbots like people, withdrawing from others, or becoming distressed when access to the chatbot is limited. If concerns arise, respond with calm, open discussion rather than blame, focusing on a healthy social balance and their wellbeing.

Meet Our Expert

Darren Coxon is an education leader with over 25 years' experience, and a recognised expert on AI in schools. He has led international school groups and now delivers training and keynote sessions on AI for leading education organisations such as HMC, COBIS, NAHT, and The National College.

See full reference list on our website

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CHRISTMAS DINNER!

WEDNESDAY 16TH DECEMBER

ON THE MENU

MEAL CHOICES



TURKEY PARCEL WRAPPED IN BACON

Roast Potatoes
Sausage
Vegetables
Festive Shortbread



ROASTED VEGETABLE PARCEL

Roast Potatoes
Veggie Sausage
Vegetables
Festive Shortbread