



The Longvernal Letter

Term 3 Newsletter 2025/26

"part of the Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership"

Dear Parents and Carers,

As always, Term 3 simply flies by. It is only 6 weeks long and yet it is crammed full of activity! In addition to the usual weekly library visits and Forest sessions, somehow we have achieved lots of other exciting enrichment opportunities.

STEM Week

A huge thank you to Miss. Black for organising a very successful STEM week (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths). We are very grateful to the many speakers who kindly gave up their time to offer enrichment opportunities to our pupils. Speakers included: a chief mechanic of professional motorbikes; a farmer talking about agriculture (with a large John Deere tractor!); a veterinary nurse; a psychiatrist and pilot. Additionally, throughout the week, children were engaged in carrying out a variety of experiments covering Working Scientifically 'Big Ideas': in *Comparative and Fair testing; Observing Over Time; Pattern Seeking; Classifying and Grouping and Research Using Secondary Sources.*



History and Geology

We were fortunate to be given the opportunity to experience a variety of free History/Geology curriculum-linked interactive workshops provided by Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution. These were as follows:



Oak Class- Fossils and Mary Anning

Maple Class- Stone Age to Iron Age

Cherry Class- Rocks and Fossils

Y 5 Science Trip

Willow Class visited *We The Curious* in Bristol with a focus on Space. They participated in an Earth, Sun and Moon workshop in addition to experiencing a Solar System Planetarium show.



Y4 History Trip

Cherry Class recently visited The Roman Baths, enhancing their understanding of the Romans and their legacy.



Reception Police Day

Holly Class was transformed into a Police Station with many children dressing up. A real life police officer kindly visited, with not only his police car but his two dogs!



Speak Out! Competition

On Monday 2nd February, three keystage 2 pupils represented Longvernal in MNSP Speak out! Competition. It was a very enjoyable evening showcasing a lot of talent. Team Longvernal were delighted to be placed third.



Dance

Years 2 and 5 are busy rehearsing for their Dance Umbrella performance which will take place at Bath Forum next term. Additionally, Miss Cheshire and Miss Cleaves are enjoying working with Dance Club on Mondays; both teachers have a background in dance so this is a wonderful opportunity for our children.

Mid-Somerset Festival

It is really impressive that 23 children from across Years 1-6 have entered this festival this year. They will be taking part on Tuesday 10th March. Most are participating in Verse Speaking with a handful entering Prepared Prose Reading Aloud. If your child is entering, please note the following:

Verse Speaking: Your child will need to select one of the given poems. Please give your child help at home learning their chosen poem off by heart. Once they have done this, they need to practise reciting this aloud from memory, showing understanding of the themes of the poem through the use of their voice and facial expression. It is important to reflect the punctuation – pauses etc. No acting/extreme actions are allowed as the idea is that the voice communicates effectively by the use of variety of tone, pitch and pace together with accompanying emotions being visual facially. Ideally for most of the performance hands should be at their sides or behind their backs. Small gestures such as a shrug – if relevant- tend to be acceptable.

Please aim for your child to know their poem off by heart by Monday 23rd February to allow us some time at school before the event to practise with the children. We are limited what support we can offer until they know their poems. This year lots of children from Longvernal have entered, which is brilliant but it does mean that it would be challenging to fit in sufficient practice if it is left to the last minute. They should introduce their poem as per the following example:

(Title) "I Do Not Mind You, Winter Wind' by Jack Prelutsky' " – pause – begin reciting.

Primary Prepared Prose Reading: This consists of them selecting (we can help if you like) a passage from a book and reading it aloud. They will, by the time of the competition, be familiar with reading the passage aloud. The aim is to use intonation to bring the passage to life and entertain the listener e.g. by selecting a section with: different voices; good description which creates atmosphere or perhaps a passage with humour, characterisation or tension. They will practise being able to look up at the audience when reading aloud and taking breaths according to cues from the punctuation. Years 5 and 6 may read aloud from any Cressida Cowell book. The max. limit is 90 seconds. I have given some books by this author to the children already but they can ask myself or Miss James if they wish to select a different book.

Years 3 and 4 may read aloud from any Sue Moncreedian book. The max. limit is 90 seconds I have sent some out already but have several more available should your child not like the one/s they have borrowed.

By working together we can give every child the best possible chance to enjoy school and achieve their potential. Good attendance plays a part in this. Thank you for your ongoing support and cooperation.

Meet the Governors – Karen Flemming

I have been a school governor for three years .
My own children and grandchildren attended the school and all have very fond memories of their time there.

I have always loved the family atmosphere of the school and how supportive everyone is.

I wanted to give some time back so I have been supporting the early years to develop . I have done some sunshine circles at the nursery and supported the Early Years Foundation Stage .

I am qualified in early years, playwork ,theraplay and portage.

I love the forest school approach that the school use.

Children learn best when they are outside.

If I was a superhero, it would be wonder woman so I could help many people .

ATTENDANCE

Attendance Update and Reminder

Whole school attendance – 96.3%

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and remind families of the importance of regular school attendance.

Regular attendance plays an important part in helping children feel happy, confident and secure at school. Being in class every day helps build strong routines, friendships and learning habits that support their overall wellbeing.

We understand that children may sometimes need to be absent due to illness or other unavoidable reasons and we appreciate you keeping us informed in these situations. A reminder that if your child has a cough and cold without a temperature please send them into school. If your child is unwell in school we will always ring you if necessary so they can be collected. If attendance becomes a concern, our aim is to work alongside families to offer support and help where needed.

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Toys and accessories from home

Learning is being negatively impacted in some classes by a high number of toys brought from home; cuddly toys, fidget toys etc. In a small number of cases, these have been advised to meet a child's particular needs which is fine however even then these can sometimes hinder rather than support a child. Sometimes children cannot write properly as toys are in the way on their desk or the board is obstructed by a huge cuddly toy. Also, children can get upset if they lose or damage toys they bring from home. Thank you in advance for your support with this.

Communication

Further to the communication earlier this term regarding emails being sent via the office or to the senior leadership team:

We are very proud of our 'family' ethos and open door policy. To be clear, we are still very much available to try and address any issues and offer help. Class teachers continue to be available from 8.40am each morning on the playground and we are fortunate in that every classroom opens directly to the outside so again class teachers can usually be available at the end of the day also - except when running a club. Emails sent via the office are forwarded to the class teacher and an email can be as simple as 'Please ask Miss X to call me' and they will endeavour to do so; it is not the intention that the office 'filters' your emails.

I wanted to explain the reasoning behind the decision. Until Covid, it was not the norm for parents to email a teacher directly. In order to support home learning this was introduced. The vast majority of primary schools do not allow direct emailing. Longvernal has a very low staff turnover which is down to the combination of: great teamwork, children who are a joy to teach and supportive parents. However it remains a challenging job, as reflected in the national teacher recruitment and retention crisis. I therefore have to prioritise staff wellbeing. We are living in a world where we are constantly accessible if we are not careful and this is a strategy to protect teachers' downtime and allow them to switch off. Thank you for your understanding

Supporting Families with Online Safety

We are pleased to introduce a new focus within our newsletter. Each term, we will be supporting parents and carers with different aspects of online safety, sharing practical advice and helpful guides to promote safe and positive online use at home.

This term, our focus is 'Essential Online Safety'. Please see the attached poster for key messages that you could explore with your child at home.

The internet can be a fun and valuable place for primary - aged children, but they need support to stay safe. Families can help by:

- Talking regularly about online activities
- Setting clear rules and boundaries about screen time and apps
- Using parental controls like Qustodio and Google Family Link
- Encouraging children to speak to a trusted adult if something online worries or upsets them

Helpful websites for parents and children:

- NSPCC Online Safety- Guidance on games, apps and websites <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/online-safety>
- Lego- Internet Safety for Kids. A fun and engaging way to explore internet safety and online gaming safety as a family.

<https://www.lego.com/en-gb/families/staying-safe-online>

-Internet Matters- practical tips and parental control guides

<https://www.internetmatters.org/>

By working together, we can help children feel safe, confident and supported online.

Best Wishes

Mrs Courtier-Hird

Dates for your Diary:

Friday 13th February 2026 - End of Term 3

Monday 23rd February 2026 - Start of Term 4

Thursday 26th February 2026 - Y6 Lifeskills Trip

Thursday 05th March 2026 - World Book Day

Tuesday 10th March 2026 - Midsomerset Festival

Tuesday 17th March 2026 - Parents Evening

Thursday 19th March 2026 - Parents Evening

Monday 23rd March 2026 - Easter Service - YR - Y2

Friday 27th March 2026 - Easter Service - Y3 - Y6

Monday 30th - Tuesday 31st March 2026 - Y4 Camp

Wednesday 01st April 2026 - Dance Umbrella

Thursday 02nd April 2026 - End of Term 4

Friday 03rd April 2026 - Bank Holiday

Monday 20th April 2026 - Start of Term 5

PE Days for next term

Holly - Friday

Oak - Friday

Chestnut - Monday

Maple - Wednesday

Cherry - Friday (Swimming)

Willow - Monday

Sycamore - Wednesday

Forest Days for next term

Holly - Tuesday

Oak - Friday

Chestnut - Friday

Maple - Tuesday

Cherry - Tuesday

Willow - Monday

Sycamore - Monday

Please remember Headlice don't go on holiday!

We have had a number of cases in school recently so please keep checking (and treating if necessary) your child/children's hair over the holiday.

Thank you!



REMINDERS:

- Breakfast Club and After School Club should be booked and paid for on Arbor.
- Please also remember that school dinners need to be ordered **in advance by the Thursday of the preceding week** via School Grid. 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.
- It is wonderful that lots of children are continuing to choose to walk, scoot or cycle to school. Please note that next term, we would prefer for **all** children to be collected after clubs finish at 4.15p.m.
- 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.

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

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.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

ESSENTIAL ONLINE SAFETY

Children and young people use the internet every day to learn, play, and connect, but the online world is not always safe. For adults, it can be hard to keep up with the risks, including harmful content, cyberbullying and scams. These 10 tips provide clear and practical advice to support safer and healthier digital habits, helping young people to make informed, secure choices when using technology.

1 START EARLY CONVERSATIONS

Begin talking about online behaviour from the moment children start using devices. Use age-appropriate language and revisit topics regularly, making it clear they can speak to you about anything that upsets or confuses them. Keeping these chats open helps build trust, so children are more likely to come to you when needed.

2 PROMOTE SAFER SHARING

Children can overshare without understanding the risks. Remind them that photos, locations, or messages can be copied or shared beyond their intended audience. Explain how even private messages or group chats can be saved and/or misused. Talk about what is appropriate to post, message, and who it's safe to share with.

3 ENCOURAGE DIGITAL BALANCE

Many apps and games are designed to keep users engaged through rewards, likes, or constant updates. These features can make it hard for children to switch off. Talk openly about how these systems work and help children recognise when it's time to take a break. Building in tech-free routines supports a healthier balance and awareness of their screen time.

4 CREATE A SAFE SPACE FOR CONCERNS

When children come to you with a concern, respond with interest and care, rather than with alarm. Keeping your reaction measured helps them feel safe and supported. This doesn't mean ignoring serious issues: it means showing that you're there to help. When children trust that they can speak openly, they're more likely to feel supported through unpleasant online experiences, and to ask for help in future.

5 STAY INFORMED AND CURRENT

With emerging technologies like AI moving and changing so quickly, it's important to stay updated on how children are using new platforms, apps and games. Ask them to show you what they use and let them take the lead as you explore together. This opens up valuable conversations and helps you stay ahead of emerging risks and trends.

6 TEACH CRITICAL THINKING

Talk to children about how to recognise unreliable information or scams online. With AI-generated videos, photos, and stories becoming harder to spot, help children question what they see and encourage them to look for evidence, check sources, and ask questions. These skills will help them avoid risks, make smart choices, and develop healthy habits for the future.

7 SET CLEAR BOUNDARIES

Involve children in conversations about device usage so they feel included. Agree on digital rules such as screen-time limits, age-appropriate apps, and no devices in bedrooms overnight. Use parental controls to block or filter harmful content and explain that rules are there to protect and support them, not to spoil their fun.

8 LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Children often copy the behaviour of adults around them. Show them what balanced, respectful, and mindful use of technology looks like, such as avoiding scrolling during family time and speaking kindly in messages. If you expect certain behaviour from them online, make sure your own habits reflect the same standards.

9 EXPLORE PRIVACY SETTINGS TOGETHER

Show children how to use privacy tools on apps, games, and websites. Teach them to use strong passwords, block or report others in response to problems, and avoid sharing personal details. Explore ratings together so they feel confident and in control, and explain that these features are there to help them stay safe online.

10 KNOW WHERE TO GET HELP

Familiarise yourself with tools and organisations that support online safety. The National College offers online safety guides and webinars which provide tips on staying safe. Websites like Report Harmful Content and CIOIP can be used to report when something goes wrong. Show children how to report or block users, and where to go if they feel unsafe. Make sure they know that asking for help is always the right thing to do, and be prepared to support them.

Meet Our Expert

Home to the world's largest CPD library for educators, The National College has transformed the way education establishments go about developing their workforces and managing compliance. Our three memberships help all phases and types of setting raise standards, save time, reduce risk, and build a culture of improvement.

See full reference list on our website



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#WakeUpWednesday

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