



The Rackham NEWSLETTER



Therefore encourage one another and build each other up.

1 Thessalonians 5.11

Working together to be the best we can possibly be.

Message from Miss Turner

1st September 2026

We hugely look forward to welcoming our pupils and their parents and carers back to school for the start of term on Thursday. The Government have updated some policies over the summer holiday. The first to update you on is some changes to our Uniform Policy. Further information in this letter and a copy attached. Please note there will be no newsletter this Friday 4th September but newsletters will be sent weekly from Friday 11th September.

Safeguarding: The Rackham is a mobile phone free school

The DfE's [guidance on mobile phones in schools](#) became statutory on 29th June 2026. Schools begin following it from 1st September 2026. The guidance states that all schools should be mobile phone free environments by default. Anything other than this should be by exception only.

Schools are required to develop, implement and publish a policy that prohibits the use of mobile phones and similar devices throughout the school day. The policy also includes the school's approach to staff, volunteers, pupils and visitors' use of mobile devices.

The term 'mobile phones' includes Smart watches and Smart glasses.

The Rackham continues to be a mobile phone free school.

Wellbeing & Mental Health

As part of our continued development as a school, we are adding one further colour to our traffic light system, **blue**.

Traffic Light Check-In:

- Green Zone (Optimal State): Feelings like happy, calm, focussed and ready to learn. This is the ideal state for a classroom setting.
- Amber Zone (Heightened Alertness): Feelings like frustrated, anxious, excited or silly. The child still has some control but emotions are elevated.
- Red Zone (Intense Emotions): Feelings like angry, terrified, elated, or overwhelmed. This represents a loss of control and an inability to access learning
- Blue: (Low Energy): Feelings like sad, tired, bored or sick/unwell. The body and mind are operating at a slow pace, requiring rest or comfort.

Early Years: Attendance adjusted expectations

The Government over the summer have adjusted the expectations upon our younger pupils and their attendance at Pre-School and Reception class.

Whereas historically pupils under five years of age would not be expected to attend all sessions, attending all sessions now has far greater emphasis.

Regular attendance in Reception and Pre-School is strongly encouraged because of its positive impact on learning, development and school readiness.

Settings are expected to monitor attendance, follow up unexplained absences for safeguarding reasons and promote regular attendance.

Free School Meals - action may be required

Please see the attached information from the Local Authority regarding changes to Free School Meals that take effect in September.

If your child has received Free School Meals, you do need to reapply as soon as possible, using this link: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals

If you are unable to apply using the link, please let us know.

Early Years: Pre-School weekly update

Each Friday Pre-School will update parents and carers about the learning themes for the following week. The first week back will be focussed on settling in and the children getting to know one another, the adults and environment. Watch this space for more details!

Pre-School - wraparound care

Early drop off and late collection sessions are available to book via MCAS. Please ensure sessions are booked in advance. Early drop off is at 8.45am and costs £1.50 per child per session. Late collection is at 3.30pm and costs £3.00 per child per session.

Flu vaccinations - Reception to Year 6

Flu vaccinations for children in Reception to Year 6 will be taking place in school on Thursday 17th September. Further information regarding this will be sent to parents and carers as soon as we receive it.

Therapy dog Tuesdays

We are delighted to welcome Sancho, a trained therapy dog and his handler into school on Tuesday afternoons again this year. We will share with our pupils that they require permission from their parents and carers before they can spend time with Sancho. Sancho is a Shih Tzu which are generally considered to be hypoallergenic or low allergen. Please follow the link here to advise us about your child taking part:

[Therapy Dog Tuesday with Sancho](#)

Meet the teacher

We would like to invite you to our Meet the Teacher Open Mornings during week commencing 7th September. Our usual booking system will apply and for these events there will be two tickets per child. Please see below for the booking form links.

The Meet the Teacher sessions will start in the hall with a cup of tea or coffee at 8.30am. This will be followed by a presentation by the year group Team Leader from 8.45 - 9am. The Team Leader will share the curriculum planned for pupils for this half term. Parents and carers will then be invited to join their child in the classroom from 9 – 9.30am. Departure of parents and carers from classrooms at 9.30am.

Dates for Early Years (Pre-School and Reception) will be advised later in the term.

Year group	Date	Link to book (up to 2 adults per child)
Year 1 and 2	Tuesday 8 th September	Meet the Teacher 2026 - Year 1 & 2
Year 3 and 4	Wednesday 9 th September	Meet the Teacher 2026 - Year 3 & 4
Year 5 and 6	Thursday 10 th September	Meet the Teacher 2026 - Year 5 & 6

FWR AGM 17th September at 7.30pm at The Rackham



School Uniform Policy update

There have been some important updates made to our school uniform policy to ensure we comply with new Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance coming into effect in September 2026.

Our governing board has approved these changes, and I'm pleased to share the key updates with you. Please find a copy of the policy attached to this email.

What's Changed and Why

The DfE's new statutory guidance requires schools to limit the number of compulsory branded uniform items to make uniforms more affordable for families. Schools must limit the number of compulsory branded items of uniform and PE kit to 3 or fewer.

I am delighted to tell you that at The Rackham, we have ZERO compulsory branded items. All items with the school logo are completely optional, which means you can purchase all required uniform from supermarkets and high street retailers, making our uniform as affordable as possible for all families.

Where to Purchase Uniform

Generic (required) items: Available from all major supermarkets and high street retailers

Branded (optional) items are available online from [Sigma Embroidery](#) or in person at Sigma Embroidery, Sedgeway Business Park, Witchford.

Second-hand uniform:

The FWR runs a monthly second-hand uniform stall before and after school. You can donate uniform your child has outgrown and purchase good-quality second-hand items for a monetary donation to fit your budget.

Inclusive Uniform Policy

We are committed to ensuring our uniform policy is inclusive for all pupils.

We will:

Allow reasonable adaptations for pupils with sensory or physical needs;

Allow pupils to wear headscarves and other religious garments;

Allow all pupils to wear the uniform they feel most comfortable in;

Consider requests for adjustments on a case-by-case basis;

If your child requires any uniform adaptations due to SEND, religious beliefs, or other protected characteristics, please contact the main office to discuss.

School Dinner menu

Please ensure that you have booked and paid for meals in advance on MCAS

Games and PE Days

Class	Outdoor Games	Indoor PE
Rowan	Thursday - Forest School	Friday
Ash	Wednesday - Forest School	Thursday
Beech	Monday - Forest School until October half term	Thursday
Larch	Monday	Wednesday
Chestnut	Monday	Wednesday
Hazel	Thursday - Forest School until October half term	Friday
Sycamore	Tuesday	Thursday
Elm	Wednesday	Tuesday
Willow	Thursday	Friday
Cedar	Friday	Tuesday
Oak	Friday	Monday

Forest school sessions for children in Pre-School to year 4 will take place in all weathers. Please ensure your child has access to:

- * Sun hat
- * Winter hat/gloves
- * A waterproof coat
- * Filled in shoes (trainers, boots, wellies) these need to be additional to school shoes
- * Waterproof trousers if available
- * A spare change of clothes (including socks)

These can be left at school on your child's peg so that they have access to them for every session.

Forest School sessions for Years 1 - 4 will rotate on a half termly basis.

Year 6 - Horstead Parent meeting

We would like to invite parents and carers of year 6 children attending the Horstead residential in October to a meeting in the school hall at 6pm on Wednesday 9th September. There will be a short presentation about the trip and an opportunity for parents and carers to ask any questions they may have. Please complete [this form](#) to confirm if you will be attending or not.

myHappymind - Bronze award

We are proud to announce that we are a myHappymind Bronze Accredited School!

This means that, as a school, we consider the mental health and wellbeing of our children as one of our top priorities. We have created a whole-school culture that helps build our children's resilience, confidence, and self-esteem, as well as teaching them how to self-regulate during stressful times.

This Accreditation badge has been awarded thanks to all the effort our staff, children, governors and parents have put in to bring the lessons of myHappymind to life across our school.

To learn more about the myHappymind for Schools programme, visit their website here: <https://myhappymind.org/>

Guitar or Ukulele lessons

Is your child interested in learning guitar or the ukulele?

Cambridgeshire Music has a couple of spaces available for guitar and ukulele lessons at The Rackham C of E Primary School, starting in September.

Lessons are taught by Ben, a guitar and ukulele teacher with Cambridgeshire Music.

If you would like to enquire or book a place, please [click here](#)

Term dates for 2026 - 2027

Term dates for 2026 – 2027, are available on the website and can be found here: [The Rackham Primary School - term dates](#)

Pre-School September 2026

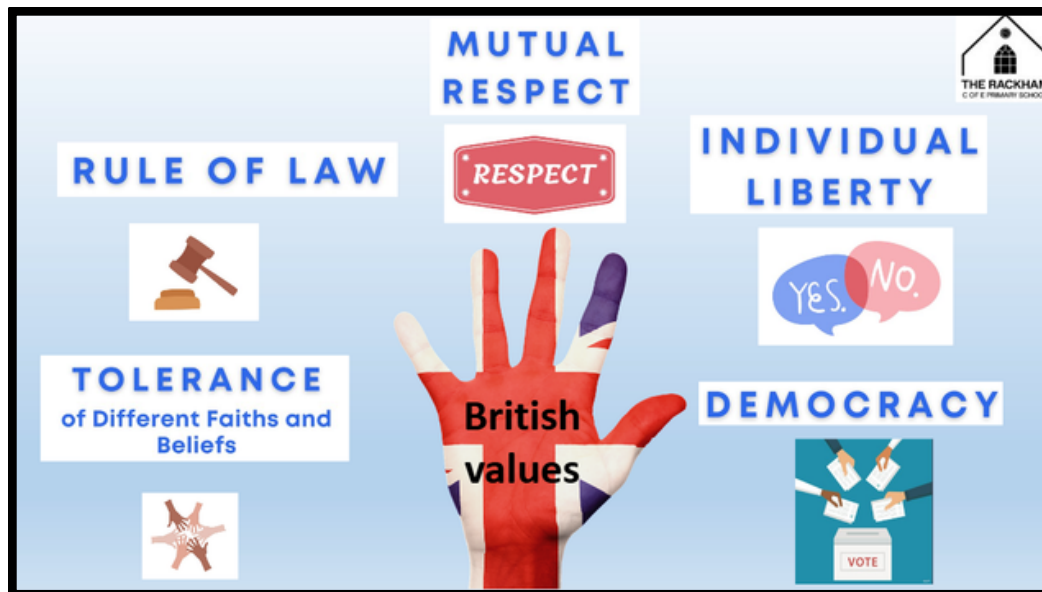
Places available at The Rackham Pre-School for September 2026.

Do you, or anyone you know, wish to secure a place at The Rackham Pre-School?

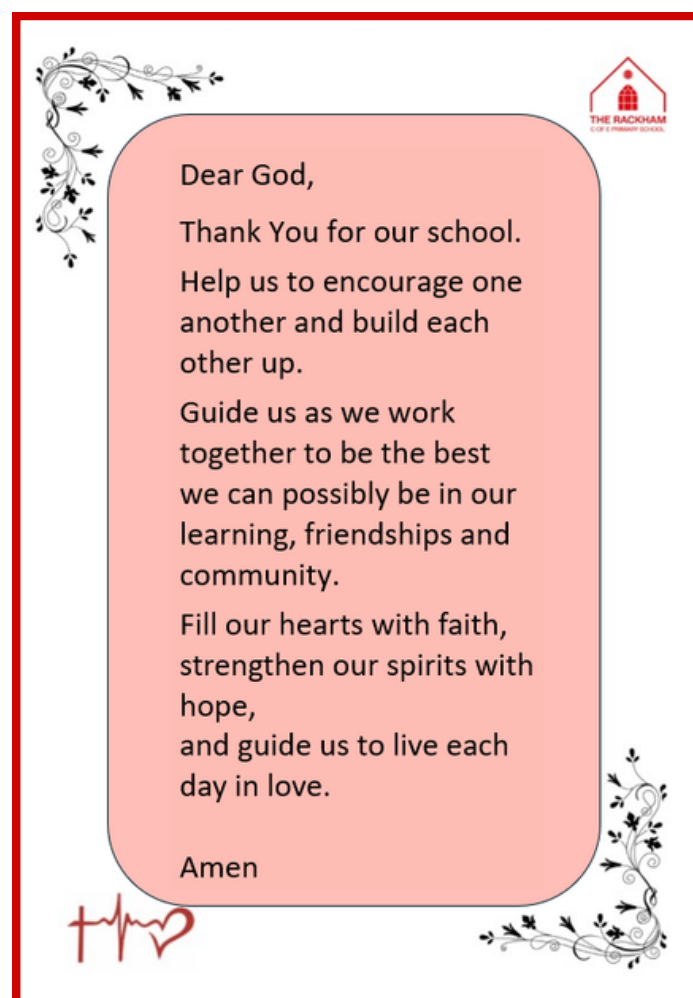
If so, please phone 01353 662436 or email the school office:

office@rackham.cambs.sch.uk

Focus for next week in Collective Worship



Prayer For This Week



Looking forward to seeing everyone on Thursday.

Best wishes,

Miss Turner

Activities and Events

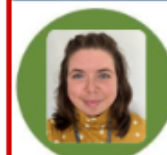


Wellbeing & Mental Health

Education Inclusion Family Advisors offer you an opportunity to ask for information, advice and support on any issue affecting your family life in a relaxed and confidential environment. These areas include:

- Challenging behaviour
- Routines
- Supporting emotions and wellbeing
- School transitions
- Parenting strategies
- Building resilience and confidence

Your Education Inclusion Family Advisor



Emily Norman

For more information, please speak to your school's office, or contact me directly on ☎ 07879 426 947 /

✉ Emily.Norman@cambridgeshire.gov.uk or by using this link or QR code to request support:

<https://forms.office.com/e/WEIqpqr7G>



St. Andrew's Church



NEWS from the Parish church of St. Andrew Witchford for the community

Church wardens:

**Dr Rosemary Westwell, (01353) 663918 rjwestwell@hotmail.com; mobile: 07432342845
email@ rjwestwell@hotmail.com**

**2nd church warden: Mr Freddie Lawes, tel (01353) 665369 mob: 07799596697 email:
hemlocks42@btinternet.com**

Rector: Rev. Chris Hollingshurst 07534970127

SERVICES: Unless stated otherwise, services take place in the church at 10.00 on Sunday mornings every week. Occasionally, there may be changes to services. These will be on our Facebook page ('St. Andrew's Church Witchford') and on the church notice board. Coffee/tea and biscuits are served at the end of services. All welcome.

If you wish to arrange a baptism, wedding, funeral or home communion please contact the church warden.

SERVICES: July 19th Morning Prayer; July 26th Communion

VACANCIES:

The Friends of St Andrew's Church Witchford are seeking new members, Why not join them for fun activities while helping our church stay open and upright? They are also seeking a secretary. Contact Rosemary Westwell

COFFEE MORNINGS

are held on the first and third Wednesdays of the month at 1000 -1130 in St Andrew's Hall Witchford. Cost: minimum £5 for coffee, cake and a raffle strip.

CRAFT MORNINGS:

on the second Thursday of the month.

10.30 -12. a.m. in St Andrew's Hall. contact: susanmaud.sm@gmail.com 07954 178560

VILLAGE LUNCH CLUB

takes place on the first Friday of the month at 12.30 p.m. in the Village Inn. Contact Rosemary Westwell (see above) or Gill Brand (01353) 662073 mobile: 07770932 to pay in advance.

FREE FOOD

is available at the FOODSWAP on the first and third Wednesdays of the month from 11.30 a.m. overnight in St Andrew's Hall porch in Witchford. Please feel welcome to bring or take in-date and sealed food. Rosemary Westwell and Susan Maud can be approached for applying to use using Ely Foodbank too.

ST. ANDREW'S HALL

may be hired at £12 per hour for locals, £15 per hour for others. Please contact the Church Hall caretaker, Jan King (01353) 658621 M:07761341325 rule.king.uk@gmail.com

St. Andrew's Church: future dates

Saturday 12th September

50s and 60s night 7.30 pm St Andrew's Hall tickets £8 incl refreshments

FROM 4th OCT ALL SERVICES START AT 11AM

Sunday 4th October

Harvest CHANGE 1100 a.m. service then lunch 1230 in St Andrew's Hall

Sunday 11th October

Pet Service 1100 a.m

Friday 16th October

Quiz night 7 p.m. and Fish and chips £12

Sunday 8th November

Remembrance Sunday 1030 a.m. (not 1000 a.m.?)

Monday 9th November 2.00 p.m.

Beetle and Bingo £6 St Andrew's Hall

Sunday 29th November for St Andrew's Day on the 30th 6 p.m. Lighting the Star

Friday 4th December

Christmas lunch 1230 St Andrew's Hall

Monday 7th December 730 p.m.

PCC meeting St Andrew's Hall

FRIDAY 11th December

Isle Singers Christmas Concert St Andrew's Hall 7 p.m

Saturday 12th December 4pm

Christingle in the church

Sunday 20th December 6 p.m.

Readings and Carols in the church

Friday 25th December 1100 a.m.

Christmas Service in the church