SELWOOD ACADEMY NEWSLETTER

11th February 2026 - Issue 9

DIARY DATES

- 23rd Feb - Return to school - Week 2
- 24th Feb - Author Visit
- 25th Feb - Paris Trip Parents Info Evening
- 26th Feb Year 7 Parents Evening - Online
- 27th Feb - Year 8 Coffee Afternoon
- 4th March - Sicily Trip Parents Info Evening

IN THIS EDITION

- Reminders
- School News
- Recent Events
- Useful info

2026 SPRING TERM PAYMENT DEADLINES

13/02/26 – Year 6 Mendip Camp – Instalment 1

23/02/26 – Author Visit Nat Harrison – purchase of book

23/02/26 – Year 8 Thorpe Park Trip – deposit

27/02/26 – Year 7 Black Country Museum Trip – balance

27/02/26 – Year 8 Phantom of the Opera Trip – payment

13/03/26 – Year 6 Portsmouth Historic Dockyard Trip – balance

16/03/26 – KS3 Geography Trip to Sicily – Instalment 3

16/03/26 – Year 8 Battlefields Trip – final balance

27/03/26 – School Production – Cast Contribution

REMINDERS

Half Term Holidays!

We wish you a happy half term and hope you enjoy a safe and relaxing break! We return to school on Monday 23rd February, week 2.

Lost Property

Our lost property collection will be emptied at the end of term. Any items that are clearly named will be returned to pupils via their tutors. Please remind your child to check the lost property for any missing belongings and ensure that all items are clearly labelled with their name.

UPDATE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL

As we reach the end of Term 3, we look back on a period that has truly been filled with both highs and lows. It has been a term of great emotion, particularly as we suffered the loss of our dear friend and colleague, Andrew. He will be deeply missed by everyone in our school community, but we will continue to remember him with a smile for all the light he brought to our lives. Amidst this, we have also seen a return to our important subject parent meetings, allowing us to stay connected regarding pupil progress.

The term started with a touch of magic during the Year 5 trip to the world of Harry Potter and is concluding with the excitement of the ski trip in France. We hope you are enjoying the videos of their adventures on the slopes. Beyond these long-distance travels, our pupils have been busy exploring the local area. Many classes participated in geography visits, while Year 5 took the opportunity to visit the local churches in Frome to learn more about our community's history and heritage.

We also celebrated some practical achievements this term. Our first round of Bikeability was a great success for a small group of Year 5 pupils, and we are working hard to secure more spaces for others in the future. On the competitive front, our pupils represented the school brilliantly in various fixtures, including a netball tournament hosted by Millfield and several county cup football matches. We also held our very first academic interform competition, which saw pupils engaging in a spelling bee, debating, a maths relay, and a general knowledge quiz. Looking forward to next term, the pace certainly does not slow down as we move into a season focused on the arts. The highly anticipated production of Oliver is nearly sold out, so please ensure you get your tickets soon if you have not already done so. We also have Year 5 and Year 7 pupils preparing for their PGL trip to Paris, which includes the much-awaited visit to Disneyland. Alongside these trips, we will continue with Year 7 subject parent meetings and a series of local geography trips specifically for Year 7 pupils. Furthermore, we are moving into our second sports interform. The pupils have been providing valuable feedback to the PE team to help make this the best event yet.

As always, we are incredibly grateful for your continued support of the school and our staff. We hope you have a lovely half term break and we look forward to seeing everyone back for the start of Term 4.

Mr Finlay

SCHOOL NEWS

Medication Policy

Polite reminder regarding our medication policy. We do not accept medication plans to administer non-prescription medication to pupils, such as paracetamol or cough syrups. Our handover of medication procedures and required forms can be found on the following link:

Selwood Academy Medication Policy

All medication must be in its original packaging, as dispensed by the pharmacist, and include instructions for administration, dosage, and storage. A Medication Plan (short term under 1 month or long term over 1 month) must be completed by a parent/carer and handed in alongside the medication.

The Academy cannot administer medication without written information and signed permission in place.

Medication can only be administered by Academy staff between 10:45am and 2:30pm during the school day. Parent/Carers are advised to spread doses of medication (e.g. antibiotics) across the day to account for this and manage medication at home where possible.

The Academy does not offer an 'as and when' provision of medicines, as we are not in a position to diagnose a child's needs. However, we are committed to working closely with parents and carers to determine an agreed process in individual cases or to facilitate a space for you to administer the medication yourself.

It remains the responsibility of parents/carers to provide the correct documents required for the Academy to administer medication. The necessary forms are available on the Academy website and at reception for convenience. If parents/carers wish to complete the forms on site, we advise that plenty of time is given to do so, as our staff team is available to offer support if needed.
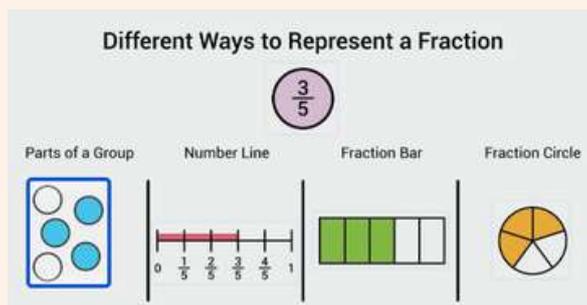
We appreciate your cooperation and understanding of these procedures and your support in safeguarding all concerned.

SCHOOL NEWS

Maths Update – Exploring Shapes, Symbols, and Shares

The mathematics journey continues in our classrooms this week, with pupils refining their skills and moving into new, exciting topics. From the abstract world of algebra to the practicalities of geometry, here what has been happening in the classroom:

- **Year 5** has embarked on a deep dive into **Fractions**. Pupils are mastering the art of finding equivalent fractions and learning the "seesaw" balance of converting between mixed numbers and improper fractions. They are also developing their logic skills by comparing and ordering fractions with different denominators.

Different Ways to Represent a Fraction

$\frac{3}{5}$

Parts of a Group · Number Line · Fraction Bar · Fraction Circle

- **Year 6**, having successfully navigated their recent assessments, has shifted focus to the physical world of **Geometry**. The groups are currently exploring 3D shapes and their nets and also calculating the space inside shapes by finding the volume of cuboids.

- **Year 7** is nearing the finish line of their unit on **Equivalences**. They are becoming experts at converting between fractions, decimals, and percentages, ensuring they can represent the same value in multiple ways with confidence.

- **Year 8** has stepped into the world of **Algebra** in more detail. They are learning how to "unpack" expressions by multiplying out brackets and tidy them back up by simplifying and factorising—essential skills for any budding mathematician or engineer!

Parent Challenge Question
For a fun challenge, see if you can solve this **Year 6-style problem** involving geometry and logic:
A cube has a volume of 27cm 3 .
1. What is the length of one of its sides?
2. Is that side length a prime number?
Happy problem-solving!

SCHOOL NEWS

Emails

To ensure you don't miss any important communication from the school, please check your junk/spam folder regularly. If you find an email from us there, kindly mark it as "Not Junk" or "Safe" and add our email address to your contacts or safe sender list.

Thank you for your support in helping us keep communication flowing smoothly.

Book Fair Success!

The book fair was a huge success! Pupils loved exploring the fantastic range of titles on offer, and we're delighted to share that the total raised was £1769.33, meaning £1061.60 was raised to support our school library.

Year 7B1 Data Collection Activity

7B1 took part in a questionnaire activity as part of their data collection work. Conditions were ideal with the sun shining, and the pupils approached the task with enthusiasm and focus.

Behaviour throughout the activity was excellent, and several members of the public commented positively on the group's polite and respectful manner. The class represented the school extremely well, and their conduct was a credit to them.

Well done to all involved — you should be very proud of the way you conducted yourselves.

Year 7 Netball

Congratulations to the Year 7 Netball Team, who played outstanding netball at the Millfield Netball Tournament. The team showed great skill, teamwork and determination throughout the day, winning six games and narrowly losing one game against Millfield in the semi-final. This excellent performance saw them finish in 3rd place overall.

Results below:

Selwood v Redmaids 2 -1 WIN

Selwood v Kings College Prep - 9 -1 WIN

Selwood v Taunton 2 - 1 WIN

Selwood v The Blue School 6 - 1 WIN

Selwood v Warminster 6 -2 WIN

Selwood v Millfield 4 - 2 LOSE

Selwood v Wellsway 3 - 2 WIN

Player of the Match - Poppy, Sharon and Ruby

SCHOOL NEWS

Bikeability 🚲

Some of our Year 5 pupils successfully completed their Bikeability course recently. Throughout the sessions, pupils developed essential cycling skills, including bike control, signalling, awareness of other road users and safe road positioning. They demonstrated excellent focus, confidence and determination as they practised both on and off the road. Well done to all pupils for their positive attitude and commitment to staying safe while cycling.

Children's Mental Health Week

Mental Health First Aiders

Did you know?

Our school has trained Mental Health First Aiders who provide wellbeing check-ins and pastoral support when children need it most. We also have a full-time ELSA practitioner, offering a safe and supportive space where children can share their thoughts and feelings through talking, drawing and journaling.

In addition, pupils are taught practical strategies such as breathing, grounding and emotional regulation techniques, helping them to feel calm, confident and supported when emotions feel overwhelming.

SCHOOL NEWS

Children's Mental Health Week

We are proud to be taking part in Children's Mental Health Week this week. Pupils are taking part in activities designed to explore emotional health, build resilience, and learn tools to navigate the modern world.

Activities include:
Mindfulness Moments in lessons
Acts of kindness and sharing positive messages
Exploring current affairs through a mental health lens
Discussing the impact of the digital world on wellbeing

Below is a Wellbeing Calendar with simple, daily activities to try at home. Check our social media and website for updates, resources, and to see the amazing things our pupils are achieving!

Thank you for helping us create a happy, healthy environment for our young people.

♡ week 1: Children's Mental Health week

MONDAY	Check In: Ask a friend/family member how they really are.
TUESDAY	Walk & Talk: 15-min walk, no phone. Notice 3 new things.
WEDNESDAY	The Feed Cleanse: Unfollow accounts that make you sad.
THURSDAY	Real Reading: Read 10 pages of a physical book.
FRIDAY	Kitchen Helper: Help cook a meal for the family.
SATURDAY	Sleep Recharge: No alarm clock today. Rest up!
SUNDAY	Gratitude: Write down 3 things you are grateful for.

🌿 week 2: Half Term Reset

MONDAY	Nature Fix: 1 hour outdoors (Woods, park, or garden).
TUESDAY	Create: Draw, bake, build, or paint. Use your hands!
WEDNESDAY	Tech Detox: No screens until 12pm. You can do it!
THURSDAY	Face-to-Face: Meet a friend in person, not online.
FRIDAY	Movie Night: Popcorn + favorite film. Phones away.
SATURDAY	Music Therapy: Listen to a favorite album start to finish.
SUNDAY	Goal Setting: Set one positive goal for the new term.

CAREERS ADVICE

Architect

What do they do?

Architects design buildings such as houses, schools, offices and museums. They think about how buildings look, how they are used, and how to make them safe, comfortable and environmentally friendly.

Key skills needed:

Creativity and imagination
Maths skills
Problem-solving
Good communication
Attention to detail

What do architects do day to day?

Sketch ideas and create designs using drawings or computer software
Meet with clients to discuss ideas and plans
Work with engineers and builders to make sure designs can be built safely
Review and improve plans
Visit building sites to check how projects are progressing

How do you become one?

Enjoy subjects like art, design and maths at school
Take GCSEs and A Levels, often including maths or art
Study architecture at university
Complete professional training and work experience

Salary range (UK):

Starting salary: around £25,000 per year
Experienced architects can earn £40,000–£60,000+

Why it's a great career:

Architects get to turn ideas into real buildings that people use every day.

Selwood Academy

LIONEL BART'S

Oliver! JR.

BOOK, MUSIC AND LYRICS
BY
LIONEL BART

25TH-28TH MARCH, 7PM

THE MERLIN THEATRE

TICKETS SELLING FAST CLICK BELOW:

BOOK NOW

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

SUPPORTING SAFE USE OF AI

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly woven into young people's digital lives. It can offer some educational benefits and day-to-day assistance; however, it also raises concerns about misinformation, privacy, fairness, and safety. This guide provides parents and educators with practical strategies to support young people to navigate AI tools responsibly, and to use them safely and with discernment.

1 DEMYSTIFY WHAT AI REALLY IS

Children encounter AI in most online places, including games, streaming platforms, and school tools. Explain that AI uses patterns from past data to make decisions, but it doesn't think or feel like humans. Use age-appropriate examples, like how recommendations on YouTube or Netflix work, to build understanding and prevent false beliefs about AI being all-knowing or alive.

2 TALK ABOUT RISKS OF MISINFORMATION

AI can create convincing false information, including deepfake videos, photos, and fake 'facts'. Encourage children to think critically about what they see and read. Teach them to double-check information using reliable sources, to look at images and videos carefully, and to ask an adult if something doesn't seem right.

3 DISCUSS DATA AND PRIVACY

Explain that AI systems learn by analysing lots of data, sometimes including personal information. Help young people to be mindful of what they share online and why protecting personal data matters. Model good habits like reading app permissions together or reviewing what's collected by voice assistants like Alexa or Siri.

4 ENCOURAGE CREATIVE USE OF AI

Support children, when using AI tools, to explore ideas, make art, or build projects. This fosters confidence, imagination, and independent thinking. When children use it creatively, rather than just passively consuming it, they are more likely to stay engaged and make thoughtful choices.

5 USE AGE-APPROPRIATE AI TOOLS

Not all AI platforms are suitable for children. Choose tools designed for education or creativity, with clear safety policies. Review terms of use and privacy settings, and help children use them in age-appropriate ways. For example, some chatbot tools mimic conversation but should only be used with guidance and boundaries in place.

6 USE AI TOGETHER

Exploring AI tools together can help adults understand how they work and spot potential issues. Try co-writing a story with an AI writing assistant or experimenting with an AI art tool. This encourages curiosity, helps you stay informed about the latest AI tools, and allows you to reinforce safe and respectful use while modelling critical thinking.

7 SET BOUNDARIES FOR AI USE

Establish when, where, and how AI tools can be used, just as you would with any digital technology. For example, you might agree not to use AI tools to complete school assignments without permission, or to avoid unsupervised use of voice assistants. Consistent boundaries help manage overuse and misuse.

8 WATCH FOR OVERRELIANCE

Some AI tools, like homework help apps, may be tempting shortcuts. Encourage children to use AI to support their thinking, not replace it. Celebrate effort and process over perfect answers. Reinforce that mistakes are part of learning and that relying too heavily on AI can limit real understanding.

9 TEACH DIGITAL ETHICS AND LITERACY

Help children explore how AI works, where it might be biased, and why ethical thinking matters. Building digital literacy alongside ethical awareness ensures children engage with AI critically, not just conveniently. Help young people to understand that not all people use AI for legitimate purposes; some use it for malicious reasons. Encourage questions about fairness, representation, and who benefits from certain tools; talk about algorithms, echo chambers, and the impact of automation on daily life.

10 STAY CURIOUS AND INVOLVED

AI is developing rapidly, and staying informed helps you support the young people in your care. Follow trusted sources for updates and keep the conversation going. If a child brings up a new AI trend or tool, take the opportunity to learn about it together. Showing interest builds trust and strengthens digital resilience.

ALL THE ANSWERS
12+12 = 1212

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#WakeUpWednesday®

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10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators
FOSTERING A SENSE OF BELONGING

Helping children feel like they belong is vital for their emotional wellbeing, academic success, and overall development. A true sense of belonging reduces anxiety, builds confidence, and supports resilience. These ten tips are designed to help parents and educators create inclusive, caring environments where children feel accepted, safe, and valued.

1 USE EVERYDAY MOMENTS

Belonging is built in the small moments. Use daily routines such as meals, school drop-offs, or quiet times, to check in, offer praise, or listen. These interactions don't need to be lengthy to be meaningful. Consistent gestures of connection and warmth show children they are important, making them feel seen, appreciated, and truly part of the home or classroom community.

2 INVOLVE THEM IN RULE-MAKING

Inviting children to help create rules or routines gives them a sense of shared ownership and responsibility. When their voices are heard, they feel respected and included in the decision-making process. This empowers children, fosters cooperation, and reduces resistance. Whether at home or school, co-created expectations are more likely to be followed because they come from a place of mutual respect.

3 VALIDATE ALL EMOTIONS

Acknowledging a child's emotions, whether positive or challenging, helps them feel accepted as they are. Validating statements like "I can see that made you upset," or "That sounds really exciting," support emotional expression and connection. Children who feel emotionally safe are more likely to seek help, participate openly, and trust the adults around them – all of which contribute to a sense of belonging.

4 HIGHLIGHT HIDDEN STRENGTHS

Go beyond academic success or good behaviour and take time to recognise a child's less visible qualities, such as thoughtfulness, resilience, or humour. Noticing these strengths sends a powerful message that they are valued for who they are, not just for what they do. This boosts self-esteem and helps children feel accepted in a world that often focuses on external achievements.

5 SHOW CURIOSITY ABOUT CULTURE

Ask respectful, open questions about a child's cultural background, family customs, or celebrations. These conversations create opportunities for children to share what matters to them and to feel proud of their identity. Whether at home or in school, valuing cultural experiences helps all children feel that their heritage is respected, and that they belong in a diverse, inclusive environment where every voice counts.

6 BELONGING BUDDIES

Pairing children with a peer they might not typically choose can foster new connections and break down social barriers. Assigning short projects, games, or shared responsibilities gives them a reason to interact. Buddy systems help quieter or less confident children feel included and supported. Over time, these intentional connections can develop into meaningful friendships, strengthening the wider sense of community and inclusion.

7 AVOID LABELS AND COMPARISONS

Avoid labelling children by behaviour or comparing them to others, as this can damage self-esteem and foster exclusion. Statements like "Why can't you be more like…" may unintentionally make a child feel less worthy. Instead, focus on individual progress and strengths. Encouraging children to celebrate their own achievements, however small, helps them develop confidence and feel valued for being themselves.

8 MAKE TIME FOR ONE-TO-ONES

Spending regular one-to-one time with a child shows that they matter on an individual level. These moments can be as simple as reading a book together or chatting during a walk. Focused attention, free from distraction, builds trust and emotional connection. It lets the child know they are important and cared for, which is crucial for developing a strong sense of belonging.

9 REFLECT THEIR INTERESTS

Whether at home or in school, including children's interests in daily life reinforces their importance. Display their artwork, talk about their favourite books, or include their hobbies in family activities or lesson plans. Seeing their identity reflected in their environment tells children they belong. It shows that their passions, preferences, and contributions are valued and that they have a place in the group.

10 EMPHASISE 'WE' OVER 'THEY'

Use inclusive language that reinforces unity and shared identity. Phrases like "Let's figure it out together," or "We all help each other here," promote collective responsibility and connection. Avoiding divisive terms like "those children," or "that class" helps children feel part of a supportive group. Language shapes experience, and inclusive language fosters environments where every child feels safe, welcomed, and included.

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See full reference list on our website

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WISE UP WORKSHOPS

Empowering Parent Carers to succeed

February Wise Workshops

12th- Empowering parents: Building strong SEN partnerships with schools-
Presented by The Inclusion Service @ 12.30 Wellington *& Online*

23rd- Understanding language development & disorders-
Presented by Bibic @ 19.00 Online

25th- Increasing independence & daily living skills over 12 years-
Presented by Bibic @ 12.30 Bridgwater *& Online*

27th- Understanding & supporting behaviour-
Presented by Link LD/A @ 10am Online

Book now:
www.somersetparentcarerforum.org.uk/home/wise-up-workshops/

These sessions are open to all parent carers in Somerset who have a child with additional needs and/or a disability.