



Friday Newsletter

16/10/2026

This week at school...

This week has been full of exciting learning experiences across the school. Willow Class enjoyed a fantastic Forest School session this morning, with beautiful sunshine making for a lovely time in the woods. The children explored nature, developed their outdoor skills and even made and enjoyed delicious s'mores around the campfire. On Wednesday, Oak Class stepped back in time for their World War II Day, creating ration books and identity cards, sampling foods made from ingredients commonly available during the war, including carrot cake and Spam, practising marching in PE, and learning sewing skills by making rag rugs. Although Maple Class were unable to attend Forest School this week, they embraced outdoor learning at school instead, taking their maths lesson outside to find numbers in nature and use natural materials to create number sentences. We also held a non-uniform day today and would like to thank everyone for their generous tombola donations for the Christmas Fayre. Your support is greatly appreciated.

You are warmly invited to join us for our Harvest Festival on Thursday 22nd October. It is taking place in the school hall at 1.30pm. We will be collecting donations for the Food Bank in Leominster. There is a list of what they would like.

A message from your PTFA

Did you know your employer could help boost our school fundraising? Companies including Aviva, Lloyds Banking Group, NatWest, Nationwide and Royal Mail offer employee match funding schemes, providing extra money towards eligible fundraising activities. If you, a grandparent or another family member could access a scheme, please ask your HR team whether school or PTFA fundraising qualifies and let the school office know. Your involvement could help the money we raise go even further!

Attendance

Evidence shows that good attendance is a key factor in enabling children to reach their potential. Parents are reminded that they should not book holidays in term time as this has a significant effect on a child's progress. We have set our target this year at 97% again, but can we beat last year and get higher? Year to date - 98.3%

FOOD BANK NEEDS

Cereal (but not porridge)
Tinned soup
Tinned meat
Tinned fruit
All tinned vegetables
Long-life whole milk
Cooking oil
Tinned tuna
Pasta sauce
Sanitary products
Toilet rolls
Coffee
Tea bags 40s
Surface cleaner
Squash
Rice pudding
Shampoo

After School Activities

- Explorers adventure Computing(Monday)
- Go Green, Art & Craft (Tuesday)
- Football, Netball (Thursday)

REMEMBER!

Put your child's name on their uniform!

Value of the Month

Cooperation

Calendar | Stoke Prior Primary School

Stars of the Week

Ned, Roman, Matilda, Lewy, Henry, Bobby K, Toby, Ivy

Shield Winner

Rosie Canvin

Next Week...

Tues - Willow Class trip to Water Museum
Wed - Oak Class parents evening
Thurs - Oak Class Parents Evening, Harvest Festival

Upcoming Events at School



OCTOBER
20
ALL DAY
Willow Class trip to
Water Museum

OCT
21&22
3-6.30
Oak Class parents
evening

OCT
22
1.30PM
Harvest Festival - whole
school & parents

OCT
23
School Closed - Training
Day

OCT
26-30
ALL WEEK
Half Term

NOV
02
ALL DAY
School Closed
Training Day

NOV
03
2.00 - 3.30 PM
Be Bright Be Seen
Community Police
engagement

NOV
04
ALL DAY
PTFA Christmas Art &
Craft

NOV
06
MORNING
Willow class Forest
School

<https://www.stokeprior.hereford.sch.uk/calendar>

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about AI COMPANIONS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Powered by generative AI models like ChatGPT and Google Gemini, AI companion apps and virtual chatbots such as Character.ai, Snapchat My AI, Replika and Talkie, allow users to create, customise, and chat to synthetic avatars around the clock. While many young people use them for harmless entertainment, creative writing or homework help, these tools are designed to simulate genuine human empathy, emotional bonding and deep friendship.

EMOTIONAL DEPENDENCY

AI companions are programmed to be endlessly agreeable, attentive, and available 24/7. Unlike human friendships, an AI companion never disagrees, sets personal boundaries, or gets tired. Young people (especially those experiencing loneliness, social anxiety, or low self-esteem) can quickly develop an unhealthy emotional attachment, viewing synthetic software as their 'best friend' or a surrogate romantic partner.

DANGEROUS MENTAL HEALTH ADVICE

AI chatbots possess no genuine empathy, professional clinical knowledge, or moral reasoning. While developers state these tools are not therapists, vulnerable teenagers often turn to them in crisis. Chatbots have previously hallucinated unsafe medical guidance, validated depressive spirals, and failed to safely escalate disclosures of self-harm or suicidal ideation to real-world protective services.

DATA HARVESTING & OVERSHARING

Because conversational bots simulate warmth and understanding, children often lower their guard and treat the chatbot as a trusted friend. They may disclose sensitive personal information, including full names, school details, private family problems, or secrets, unaware that their conversations are being logged, may be analysed by third parties (including advertisers), or used to train future AI models.

DISTORTED SOCIAL SKILLS

Navigating real-world friendships can be messy, involving dealing with conflict, compromise, boredom, and awkwardness. If a teenager spends hours interacting with an AI that is tailored specifically to validate and flatter them, they may become impatient with real-world relationships. Over time, this can lead to social withdrawal, heightened anxiety in peer groups, and isolation: a vicious circle of growing online dependency coupled with a heightened sense that relationships in the 'real world' are too challenging to maintain.

INAPPROPRIATE OR EXPLICIT CONTENT

While most mainstream platforms feature safety filters and guardrails, young people frequently discover 'jailbreak' prompts to bypass them. Some companion platforms subtly nudge users towards mature themes, romantic roleplay, or sexually suggestive conversations. In worse cases, third-party apps with weak safety checks have been found to generate sexually explicit text or intimate images.

"FREEMIUM" UPSELLS & SUBSCRIPTIONS

Many companion platforms operate on a freemium model. While basic chat is free, features like voice calls, uncensored responses, custom avatars, or 'deeper bonding' tiers are locked behind expensive monthly recurring subscriptions or in-app token purchases. This can lead to significant hidden costs and pressure on young people to spend money to maintain the 'friendship'.

Advice for Parents & Educators

TALK OPENLY ABOUT FAKE RELATIONSHIPS

Demystify how these tools work. Explain to young people that an AI companion has no feelings, memories, or consciousness; it is simply calculating the next most mathematically probable word based on its training data. It is helpful to explain to them the mechanics of large language models so that they understand how they are trained and how they are designed to always flatter and be helpful.

ENCOURAGE REAL-WORLD CONNECTION

Ensure technology habits do not replace face-to-face peer socialisation, sports, hobbies, and family time. Create healthy boundaries at home (such as keeping phones and tablets out of bedrooms overnight) to prevent late-night, unmonitored attachment loops with conversational chatbot. Young people are at their most vulnerable.

AUDIT PRIVACY SETTINGS & AGE LIMITS

Check which companion apps are installed on your child's phone or tablet. Many dedicated companion apps carry an App Store rating of 17+, while platforms like Character.ai set a minimum age of 13+ (or 16+ in the UK/EU). Review the privacy settings together: turn off data-sharing toggles, disable model training where possible, and ensure location permissions are blocked.

REINFORCE WHERE TO GET REAL HELP

Make sure young people know that a machine can never replace professional pastoral or mental health care. Remind them of the trusted adults they can turn to at school – such as their Form Tutor, Head of Year, or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – as well as dedicated youth support services like Childline (0800 1111) or Shout (text 85258).

Meet Our Expert

Darren Coxon is the Founder and Executive Director of Kompass Education, a consultancy specialising in supporting educators, students and parents in making wise choices with AI. His book *Ethical AI and Education*, co-authored with Clara Hawking, will be released later in 2026 by Taylor and Francis.



The National College®

See full reference list on our website

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Oaker Wood
NATURALLY ADVENTUROUS



OCTOBER HALF TERM - WHAT'S ON!

Children's Holiday Club, for 7 - 11 year olds
High & Low Ropes, Roaming Reptiles & more!
27th & 28th October - £25 per person

Children's Holiday Camp, for 7 - 12 year olds
29th - 30th October - £125 per person

Teen Adventure Day, for 11 - 14 year olds
Friday 30th October - High Ropes & Paintball

AND FAMILY FUN - SEE WEBSITE FOR FULL DETAILS



Book Online www.oakerwoodleisure.co.uk

BONES

October
Half Term
Activity

MONDAY 26TH - FRIDAY 30TH OCTOBER

Explore the fascinating world of bones!
Investigate owl pellets to discover what
owls eat, find out what mammoth
bones can tell us, and compare them
with the bones of other animals.

Ages 4-11 years. Children must be
accompanied by an adult.

2 - 3.30PM

BOOK ONLINE

£5 PER CHILD

01588 676 060

School Road, Craven Arms SY7 9RS.

Grow Cook Learn, a registered charity: 1158795

www.shropshirehillsdiscoverycentre.co.uk

info@shropshirehillsdiscoverycentre.co.uk

Shropshire Hills
Discovery Centre

Typhoon

Making Every Child a Confident Swimmer!

October Half Term Swimming Crash Course

3-Day Intensive Swimming Course

	VENUE	Trinity School, Hereford, HR4 ONU	
	DATE	Monday 26 th - Wednesday 28 th October 2026	
	TIME	45 minute lessons between 9am - 12pm	
	PRICE	£53.99 per child	

Limited Spaces

Why choose the course?

- Instructors teach from in the water
- Rapid teaching system
- Maximum 4 children per class
- Daily feedback
- 5-star reviews



Scan to book

typhoonleisure.com/crash-courses

03300 434 007

hello@typhoonleisure.com

Courses run subject to sufficient demand.



BONFIRE and Firework Night

SATURDAY 24TH OCTOBER



Firework display by the creators of the
London New Year's Eve team

GATES OPEN AT 5PM | BONFIRE 7PM | FIREWORKS 7.30PM

Adults £7 | Kids £5 | Under 5s are FREE

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