

SOUTHDOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER BACK TO SCHOOL 2026



We hope you all had a wonderful summer break and enjoyed spending time with family and friends. It was lovely to welcome everyone back to school today. There was a real buzz of excitement at the gates, and it was great to see so many happy faces arriving ready for a new year of learning, friendships and opportunities.

A very warm welcome to all the families joining our school community this year, whether in Nursery or other year groups. We are delighted to have you with us and look forward to getting to know you and working alongside you to support your children.

The children have made a great start to the new school year. They have settled into their classes and routines well, and it has been wonderful to see them catching up with friends, getting to know their teachers and embracing new experiences. We are looking forward to an exciting and successful year ahead.

Miss Luke, Headteacher

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

All dates will soon be added to our school calendar on the website

<https://www.southdownprimaryschoolbuckley.co.uk/> You can subscribe to the calendar so that you get updates on your phone/email - just click on the subscribe button. You'll also find the monthly school newsletter and term dates.

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| • Monday 14 th September | Parents 'Meet & Greet' (3.00-5.00pm) |
| • Tuesday 15 th September | Year 3 'First Experiences' Violin to start |
| • Thursday 17 th September | Year 4 and 5 trip to Jodrell Bank |
| • Friday 25 th September | Macmillan Coffee Morning (9.15-11.15am) |
| • Monday 5 th October | 'Wellbeing Week' |
| • Monday 5 th October | Harvest @ Bistre Church -tbc |
| • Wednesday 7 th October | Individual and Family photographs |
| • Friday 9 th October | 'Hello Yellow Day' (children to wear yellow clothes in support of mental health, no donation required) |
| • Monday 19 th October | Parents Evening 3.00-5.45pm |
| • Tuesday 20 th October | Parents Evening 3.00-5.45pm |
| • Thursday 22 nd October | School closes for Half Term |
| • Friday 23 rd October | School closed: Staff Training Day |

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| • Monday 2 nd November | Back to School |
| • Monday 4 th November | Nasal Flu Immunisation (Rec-Year 6) |
| • Thursday 12 th November | Nursery 2027 Open Morning |
| • Monday 16 th November | Anti-Bullying Week/Odd Socks Day |
| • Friday 13 th November | Children in Need |
| • Friday 27 th November | Wear Purple Day in memory of Aaron Wharton |
| • Tuesday 1 st December | Years 1-3 Christmas Concert 2pm/5.30pm |
| • Wednesday 2 nd December | Years 1-3 Christmas Concert 9.30am |
| • Friday 4 th December | Children's Christmas Dinner |
| • Monday 7 th December | Years 4-6 Christmas Service 1.30pm/5.30pm |
| • Tuesday 8 th December | Panto at Elfed High School (Rec-Year 6) |
| • Thursday 10 th December | Nursery/Reception Concert 10am |
| • w/b Monday 14 th December | Party week -days for each year to be confirmed |
| • Friday 18 th December | Fancy Dress: School closes for Christmas |

We will be collecting food items for Flintshire Foodbank as part of our Harvest Celebrations and we will also be supporting Operation Christmas Child again this year. Information about Friends of Southdown Events such as the Christmas Film Night etc will be provided soon and we will also confirm with you any extra-curriculum after club opportunities for this half term by next week. These clubs will start w/b Monday 14th Sep.

OUR NEW TRIM TRAIL

We are delighted to finally unveil our new Trim Trail! This exciting addition to our playground has been a year in the making, and we were thrilled to see it installed over the summer holidays. We're sure parents, staff and children will agree that it looks fantastic and is a wonderful new resource for our school. Shame we couldn't use it today due to the rain but hopefully there will be some sunny days ahead.

A huge thank you to our incredible Friends of Southdown and to all our families who supported the Challenge 26 initiative. Your fundraising efforts made this project possible, and we are extremely grateful for your continued support of the school. We would also like to thank our current Year 6 pupils, who played an important role in designing the Trim Trail. Their ideas have helped shape a space that will be enjoyed by children for many years to come, creating a lasting legacy for future generations of Southdown pupils.

Important Safety Notice

Whilst we are excited for the children to enjoy the new equipment, we would like to remind families that the Trim Trail, swing and grass hills are for school use only and may only be used during the school day under the supervision of school staff.

To help keep everyone safe:

- The Trim Trail, swing and grass hills must not be used before or after school.
- Children should remain with their parent or carer at all times during drop-off and collection.
- Families are asked to leave the school site promptly after collection.

Clear signage is displayed around the playground, and we kindly ask everyone to respect these arrangements so that the equipment remains safe and enjoyable for all and we are able to keep our children safe too. Thank you for your cooperation and support.



A FEW IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- We are a nut and egg free school due to some children having allergies. This includes Nutella type products.
- In line with Welsh Government guidelines only fresh fruits or vegetables can be eaten at snack time. As a school we can provide daily snack at small charge. If you don't want your child to have snack from school then please provide them with fruit/vegetables only -yoghurt, fruit rolls etc are not allowed. Thank you for your support with this.
- It is important the correct school uniform is worn each day. This includes school shoes and not trainers. PE kits are black shorts and a plain red t-shirt.

- If the weather is cold, then a tracksuit can be worn and we do have a school hoodie. Football kits are not appropriate for PE Kit.
- No dogs are allowed on the school grounds/premise unless prior agreement has been given. This includes carrying them.
- Please continue to be patient and considerate when parking during drop off and pick up. This includes respecting our neighbours.
- The school car park is for staff only.

FREE SCHOOL MEALS

Universal Free School Meals (UPFSM) is the Welsh Government's initiative which will now ensures that all children in primary school receive a free school meal regardless of income. Some families may be able to access Eligible Free School Meals (eFSM) which are provided to all pupils whose parents/carers meet the criteria of an income assessment. **Just by registering your child for entitled Free School Meals means that the school gets extra money and we don't want Southdown to miss out!**

Please take the time to see if you qualify, and ensure that you claim what you, and Southdown are entitled to -thank you.

<http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Schools/Education-Benefits.aspx>

ATTENDANCE

Each year the school has to provide the Local Authority with an attendance target. This year our target is **94% -this is an increase from last year.** As part of our commitment to improving the attainment of our pupils we monitor pupil attendance on a regular basis in conjunction with the school's Education Support Officer Mrs Julie Mayos. During this regular monitoring we identify any pupil, whose attendance causes concern, including those pupils who have arrived late to school on a number of occasions.

Over the coming weeks, we will be sharing more information about the importance of good school attendance. We will also be contacting families whose child's attendance was below 90% last academic year to discuss how we can work together and offer support where needed. In the meantime, please take a moment to read the helpful information and reminders below.

- The gates will be open from 8.45am to allow pupils to settle into the school day.
- The gates close at 8.55am.
- Children should arrive in school to ensure they will be ready to enter for registration at 8.55am.
- If your child arrives after this time they must enter via the Main Entrance.
- Late marks are awarded after 9.05am until 9.30am. If your child is going to be late due to an authorised reason, please contact school to let us know. It will be recorded as evidence to support your child's whereabouts.

- After 9.15am if no contact has been received to notify school of your child's absence, then we will contact parents to check the whereabouts of your child. At Southdown we initially do this through a reminder text to ask you to contact school.
- We believe it is important for pupils to be punctual and to attend regularly, to receive the best education we can offer.
- If your child is going to be absent from school, please let the school office know on 01244 544473 -you can leave a message if there is no answer.
- Please remember that if you need to take a holiday during term time a holiday form should be requested and returned to school 4 weeks in advance of the holiday.
- There is a common misconception that any pupil is allowed to take 10 days holiday during term time per academic year – this is not strictly true. Parents are entitled to ask for leave of absence of up to 10 school days for an annual holiday, and this may be authorised by the school.
- Only in exceptional circumstances can any more than 10 days be granted.

ILLNESS –WHAT TO DO

This is just another update about what to if you child is unwell. Obviously, this doesn't cover everything and is only about the main areas but if you are ever unsure please just contact us at ask.

- Upset tummy, sickness or diarrhoea they must be kept off school for at least 48 hours from the **last episode of illness not from the start.**
- Sore throat, runny nose, headache or ear-ache, you must judge whether their health is affected and whether they are well enough to attend school or not. If not, they should stay at home.
- Chickenpox: children must be kept off school for 5 days from the onset of the rash AND until all vesicles (blisters) have crusted over.

In general, school should not need to administer medicine and if your child requires medicine again you should consider if they are well enough to be in school. We can however support you with administering a course of antibiotics if it is for 4 times a day. If it is 3 times a day this can be managed around school hours.

SCHOOL ADMISSION DATES

Applications for your child to attend school are accessed from the Flintshire County Council website. <https://Flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Schools/School-Admissions.aspx>

- Applications for Year 7 September 2027 are now open.
- Applications for Reception September 2027 will be open from Monday 21st September
- Applications for Nursery in September 2026 will be open from Monday 4th January 2027

SCHOOL CALENDAR FOR 2026-2027

Autumn Term		
Staff Training Day	Tuesday	1 st September 2026
School Opens	Wednesday	2 nd September 2026
School Closes (Half Term)	Thursday	22 nd October 2026
Staff Training Day	Friday	23 rd October 2026
School Opens	Monday	2 nd November 2026
School Closes (Christmas)	Friday	18 th December 2026
Spring Term		
Staff Training Day	Monday	4 th January 2027
School Opens	Tuesday	5 th January 2027
School Closes (Half Term)	Friday	5 th February 2027
School Opens	Monday	15 th February 2027
School Closes (Easter)	Friday	19 th March 2027
Summer Term		
School Opens	Monday	5 th April 2027
May Day	Monday	3 rd May 2027
School Closes (Half Term)	Friday	28 th May 2027
School Opens	Monday	7 th June 2027
Buckley Jubilee	Tuesday	13 th July 2027
School Closes (Summer)	Friday	16 th July 2027
Staff Training Day	Monday	19 th July 2027
Staff Training Day	Tuesday	20 th July 2027