



Edwinstree Middle School
A Voluntary Controlled Church of England School

NEWSLETTER for PARENTS & CARERS
Week Ending: 02/10/2026.

Edwinstree Term dates: Term Dates 2026-27

Homework week: - A

Diary Dates:

12/10/26	Flu Vaccinations – All Years
20/10/26	Year 5 “Getting to know you” Parents meeting 5pm
23/10/26	Harvest Services at Aspenden Church (AM)
26/10-30/10/26	Half Term
03/11/26	School Photographs
06/11/26	Year 8 HPV Vaccinations
11-12/11/26	Year 6 Lancaster Model
17/11/26	Flu vaccination Mop Up
19/11/26	Year 7 Hertfordshire Lieutenancy presentation
01/12/26	Year 5 Christingle (PM)
03/12/26	INSET DAY
04/12/26	Occasional Day
10/12 – 11/12/26	Christmas Services at St Peter’s
18/12/26	End of Term 1.20pm.
04/01/27	INSET DAY
05/01/27	Start of Term

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Many thanks to the large number of students who took part as guides in subjects or tours for our open evening event. The students represented the school beautifully, and it was lovely to hear them explaining to year 4 and prospective year 7 students what they enjoy about the community of Edwinstree.

Communication with staff

We won’t get everything right all the time, but this is a school that will listen, own its mistakes, and learn from them. But please may we ask parents to be mindful, we are also human beings and many of us have families in the community. An angry post or a late-night email can cause harm when its tone becomes abusive and personal. Thank you.

School Photographs

The school photographer has changed our booking to 3rd November 2026. Sibling photos will take place first, followed by individuals.

Please may we ask that your child comes in with clean uniform, wearing their Edwinstree School sweatshirt and hair has been styled if necessary.

*As a Christian school we recognise the unique and wonderful in everyone.
As a community we support one another to flourish and live life in all its fullness.*

Benedicts Law

At Edwinstree we aim to support all pupils to flourish, this extends to any medical needs a pupil may have.

We have been working in line with Benedicts Law and Allergy Safety in Schools 2026 to ensure we offer all our pupils a safe and supportive environment.

As part of this, and in line with this guidance, we will be asking pupils who have an epi-pen prescribed to them to carry one on their person in any trips/excursions from school.

Accompanying staff will still have a spare epi-pen with them. More specific details will follow in any trip/excursion letters. We thank you for your support with this.

Lockdown assembly

In the week beginning 12th October, Mr Rowlands will be speaking to pupils about what we would do in the unlikely event that we ever needed to place the school into lockdown. We deliver this information session twice a year, but we do not practise lockdown procedures with pupils. We wanted to give you some advance notice, in case your child comes home and talks about what was discussed.

What happened in COWO this week?

We continued with the value of **Humility**. In the hall, we continued to explore *Humility* but with a football focus, looking at how players from the opposition reacted to Gabriel's penalty miss, in the Champions League Final. Marquinhos' quote resonated:
"When that moment happened, the first thing I thought of was the time I missed the penalty in the World Cup... I simply thought about the moment I went through myself, which was very difficult, and I just wanted to give him a hug and tell him that I've been through it, too. I know how hard it is..."

Mrs Gant's tutor COWO's explore the opposite of *humility* - *pride* with an example of her own pride coming before a fall.

Today, Year 6 helped to teach Year 5 'My Lighthouse' and 'God of Science', both by a group called Rend Collective.

The Second COWO introduced **Pete's Place** which is club opening up for students at St Peters Church on Friday afternoons starting from next week from 4pm to 5pm. It will be a place to come and explore the church teachings and bible, to reflect and have fun. If you would like your child to attend, sign up sheets will be sent out next week.

Out of school behaviours

Whilst we as a school are not responsible for behaviours outside of school, we are seeing a very small number of students whose behaviours that are taking place away from school impacting **IN** school. These behaviours may be behaviours towards other students / members of the public in the park, around Sainsbury's / the Coop and on social media. Sometimes this does involve children that do not attend our school.

Can we ask that, if you allow your child to be in public spaces, particularly after school, that they are mindful of their behaviours. *We also strongly recommend you take an active interest in your child's social media footprint.*

The overwhelming majority of our children are great, represent you, themselves and the school really well and should be commended for that. If we are aware of anti-social behaviours outside of school, we invariably inform the PSCO with whom we have a good relationship.

Term-Time Holidays and Leave of Absence

Following changes to legislation introduced by the Department for Education (DfE) in August 2024, schools are now required to treat requests for term-time leave—such as holidays—as unauthorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. In such cases, a penalty notice must be considered.

Exceptional circumstances are typically unavoidable, one-off events. Holidays taken for leisure or recreation do not meet this threshold.

If you believe your request involves exceptional circumstances, please discuss it with the Headteacher. Schools must consider each application individually, taking into account the specific facts and background of the request. To do this email admin@edwinstree.herts.sch.uk or attendance@edwinstree.herts.sch.uk

If leave is granted, the Headteacher will determine the number of days permitted

Please note:

All requests must be made in advance by the parent/carer with whom the child normally resides.

The decision to authorise or not authorise absence rests solely with the Headteacher.

Schools may apply to the Local Authority for a penalty notice to be issued for unauthorised leave. Once issued, there is no statutory right of appeal.

The Local Authority may only withdraw a notice if it was issued incorrectly. If the penalty is not paid within the required timeframe, the Local Authority will initiate legal proceedings.

We know that you want the best for your child. By ensuring that any leave of absence is taken during designated school holidays, you are helping to support your child's learning, development, and attendance.

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The Importance of Regular School Attendance

Hertfordshire County Council are committed to ensuring every child receives a high-quality education. A key part of this is regular school attendance, which plays a vital role in your child's academic progress, personal development, and future opportunities.

While we understand that children may occasionally be unable to attend due to illness, frequent absences can lead to them falling behind their peers—both academically and socially.

Why Attendance Matters

Attending school regularly helps children to:

- Achieve stronger academic outcomes
- Build friendships and develop social skills
- Strengthen emotional wellbeing and resilience
- Establish positive habits for future education and employment
- Engage fully in school life and activities

Commitment to You

In Hertfordshire, we are dedicated to working with families to remove barriers to regular attendance wherever possible. We recognise that challenges may arise, and we are here to support you and your child.

Hertfordshire County Council Key Expectations

We ask that all families support the following expectations:

- Children attend school every day it is open, unless they are unwell or have a valid statutory reason
- Children arrive on time and ready to learn
- Families follow the school's attendance policy
- Parents/carers notify the school promptly when their child is absent unexpectedly
- Medical appointments are scheduled outside of school hours where possible
- Requests for leave of absence are made in advance and only in exceptional circumstances

How You Can Help

You play a crucial role in supporting your child's attendance. You can help by:

- Encouraging daily, punctual attendance
- Communicating with the school about any concerns or barriers
- Engaging with any support offered to avoid the need for more formal interventions

If you have any concerns or need support, please contact your child's school in the first instance.

Schools are here to work with families to ensure every child can thrive.

For further resources and support, please visit:

- Families First
- Hertfordshire SEND Local Offer

Year 5 news

Educate First

You may have heard your child talk about "Educate First". In Year 5 we believe in using Educate First as part of our behaviour policy, as it plays an important role in our Restorative Conversation, which addresses the behaviour exhibited. It is circumstance dependent but allows us to have a conversation and find out what the root cause of the behaviour was. This in turn helps us decide which consequence, if any, would be best for the situation.

In Year 5, it does not automatically become a card. We find it best to work through what the issue is and see how it can be prevented from happening again. However, if the antisocial behaviour is repeated, then there is no excuse for the pupil's actions, and the policy is followed immediately. The pupil is making a conscious decision to carry out the antisocial behaviour.

With the various schools that pupils have come from all having differing behaviour policies, we have found this method one of the best ways of introducing our Behaviour Policy to pupils, and helping them understand where they are going wrong with behaviour choices. Through a pupil's journey with us we have found this a very beneficial way to introduce positive social behaviours.

We always appreciate your opinions and look forward to working with you on promoting good, social behaviour.

Mrs van Wyk - Head of Year 5

Year 5 Football

It's been lovely to see how Year 5 have adapted over the past week. Away from football, they have enjoyed spending time with friends, relaxing in the sunshine, playing games and even turning the school site into one large game of 'It'!

Football will return from Monday **lunchtime** next week. The morning PowerPoint will explain how this will be managed and outline the expectations that will help ensure everyone can enjoy playing safely and positively.

Year 8 News:

It was lovely to hear how excited Year 8 were about their visit to Freman Open Evening. We look forward to working with the upper school to ensure they transfer well. Congratulations to the students who applied and been accepted onto leadership this week.

Food and Nutrition – All Years

A reminder about health and safety in the Food Room/Workshop and Science Labs about uniform policy regarding suitable footwear, nail requirements and long hair and fringes being tied back. Our rules are there to protect pupils from harm. Please ensure your son/daughter is adhering to these thereby allowing them full access to the lessons. This applies to all year groups. A very big 'thank you' to the pupils who continuously follow the rules.

Year 5 - our first practicals are due to take place next week. Pupils watched a demo this week, learnt H&S skills and how to handle a knife correctly using two cutting methods. Ask your child to explain these to you. Please ensure all ingredients for Dippy Divers are labelled and the correct sized containers are sent in for the final product. Please do not send in more than the required amount of ingredients, we are extremely limited on cold storage and do not have space for extra, unnecessary products. Ingredients required are: 1 medium carrot, half a pepper (any colour) and a 1/3 of a cucumber (2 finger lengths - they know what this means). They also need 100g of hummus. School will provide yoghurt and chives. A reminder that you are able to change ingredients to suit your child's preferences, so that they make a product they will enjoy.

Year 6 - we looked at the Eatwell Guide and what proportion we should be eating from each section. Ask them about Hermans menu that we looked at - he had some strange food choices which left him with an unbalanced diet. Luckily the pupils were able to make some excellent suggestions on how he could improve it. One more week of theory before our first demo.

Year 7 - entered the world of baking and I am very much looking forward to smell of bread baking in the ovens next week. A reminder that all that is needed is a packet of high fibre bread mix (granary, seeded, wholemeal), school will provide the rest. If you can only find a white mix, please bring in your additional ingredients to add to it - seeds, dried fruit, olives, etc but no nuts please.

Year 8 - we are getting closer to our first practical, but still one week to go. Alternate proteins are on the cards and pupils will get to try Quorn in their curry next week. The thought of eating a fermented fungus has certainly caused a few upturned noses in class this week, but perhaps tasting it next week will change some minds to trying vegan and vegetarian alternate protein choices.

Mrs van Wyk

DDG

An overwhelming response of applications to join the DDG was received this week. It is so heartwarming to have so many pupils who are wanting to make a positive impact on their community, both in and out of school, as well as with charities that are close to their hearts. The core team will be working through these at the next DDG meeting and will let applicants know the outcomes w/c 5 October.

Mrs van Wyk and Mrs Lane

Afterschool Enrichment Clubs

If your child is signed up to attend an afterschool club and will not be attending on a particular day, or no longer wishes to attend, please ensure you email us for safeguarding reasons. admin@edwinstree.herts.sch.uk

Parent Governor Vacancies

Please find attached details regarding an opening for a Parent Governor for Edwinstree Middle School.

The Department for Education produces some useful guidance about being a school governor including a list of some of the 'soft' skills school governors need.

Committed – For instance, devoting the required time/energy to the role and ambitious to achieve best possible outcomes for pupils. Prepared to give time, skills and knowledge to developing themselves and others to create highly effective governance.

Confident – Of an independent mind, able to lead and contribute to courageous conversations, to express their opinion and to play an active role on the board.

Curious – Possessing an enquiring mind and an analytical approach and understanding the value of meaningful questioning.

Challenging – Providing appropriate challenge to the status quo, not taking information or data at face value and always driving for improvement.

Collaborative – Prepared to listen to and work in partnership with others and understanding the importance of building strong working relationships within the board and with executive leaders, staff, parents and carers, pupils/students, the local community and employers.

Critical – Understanding the value of critical friendship which enables both challenge and support, and self-reflection, pursuing learning and development opportunities to improve their own and whole board effectiveness.

Creative – Able to challenge conventional wisdom and be open-minded about new approaches to problem-solving; recognising the value of innovation and creative thinking to organisational development and success.

If any parents are interested in becoming a governor and have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch via email chairgb@edwinstree.herts.sch.uk with your contact details and I will do my best to get back to you promptly.

John Boulter – Chair of Governors



Edwinstree School Association (ESA)

We hope everyone who attended the disco last Friday had a good time. Our DJ provided their services for free but was unable to start until 5.30pm hence we finished at 7.30pm. At this time of year it was quite dark and if we have to do the same next year we will finish earlier.

With funds raised last year we will once again be offering each year group £500 to enrich their education and make memories at Edwinstree. In the past, this has been used to subsidise trips, workshops and provide a treat after SATS exams.

We will be holding our AGM soon and if you would like to get involved with the ESA please get in touch. This will be the final year for over half of the members and events and opportunities will not continue unless new members come forward. EdwinstreeSchoolAssociation@outlook.com

Pete's Place

Pete's Place is a fun and welcoming Christian youth group for students in Years 7 and 8. It's a place to hang out with friends, enjoy games and activities, ask big questions about life, and discover more about Jesus and faith.

Meeting at St Peter's Church in the Upper Room, Fridays 4-5pm during term time, starting Friday 9th October. Everyone is welcome at Pete's Place!

Coram Family Lives Autumn Term Workshops



Anxiety around ADHD Workshop - Wednesday 21 October, 9.30am to 11.30am

This workshop helps parents/carers understand what ADHD is, why it makes sense for a child to be anxious if they have ADHD, strategies to help support you and your child, plus signposting to other support that is available.

Sibling Rivalry Workshop - Monday 9 November, 9.30am to 11.30am

This workshop provides parents/carers with practical strategies and tools to effectively foster positive sibling relationships, promote cooperation and manage conflicts between children.

Reducing Conflict Workshop - Wednesday 25 November, 7pm to 9pm

This workshop is for parents/carers struggling with conflict within their family life and provides tools to promote a cooperative and collaborative approach to resolving the conflict.

It's a Dad's Life Workshop - Thursday 26 November, 7pm to 9pm

This workshop empowers fathers with the knowledge and skills to develop deep connections with their children, enhancing their parenting journey.

Navigating the Storm (Teens) Workshop - Wednesday 2 December, 9.30am to 11.30am

This workshop is designed to support parents of pre-teens and teenagers facing challenging behaviours. It aims to equip parents with effective strategies and tools to manage the complexities of raising adolescents, fostering a positive parent-teen relationship.

The two-hour workshops will be online via MS TEAMS

All our programmes provide support, information and resources to parents, carers and adult family members in Hertfordshire so they can help their children reach their full potential. For more info, please contact Louise on 0204 522 8700/8701 or email services@coramfamilylives.org.uk or scan the QR code for our online form.



We build better family lives together

www.coramfamilylives.org.uk

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Funded by
Hertfordshire
County Council



Mrs J. Gant – Executive Head
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