



Edwinstree Term dates:

<https://www.edwinstree.herts.sch.uk/school/term-dates.aspx>

Homework week: A

Diary Dates:

15/10/25	Flu vaccination catch-up session
21/10/25	Harvest Festival - All Years
23/10/25	Year 5 Duxford Educational Visit
27-31/10/25	Half Term
11/11/25	School Photographs
17/11/25	Maya Workshop 5A & 5B
18/11/25	Maya Workshop 6C & 6D
20/11/25	Maya Workshop 6A & 6B
21/11/25	Maya Workshop 5C & 5D
05/12/25	Occasional Day
10/12/25	Christmas Dinner Day
19/12/25	End of Term 1:20pm.
05/01/26	INSET Day
06/01/26	Start of Spring Term
16-20/02/26	Half Term
27/03/26	End of Term 1:20pm.
13/04/26	Start of Summer Term
04/05/26	Bank Holiday
25-29/05/26	Half Term
26/06/26	INSET Day
09/07/26	County Transition Day
17/07/26	End of Term 1:20pm.

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Open Evening

Thank you to all the parents who consented for their child to help us at our open evening on Thursday night. They were astonishing in their confidence and care to ensure that all parents and Year 4 students were able to find out about the school. We loved hearing the speeches from the individual students talking about Edwinstree. They are proud of:

- Subject areas, learning and they have a great curiosity for life.
- Fullness days and courageous advocacy – their ability to make a difference and raise funds for causes they care about – with your help.
- Equity – they understand through the church and schools work that we work with everyone as individuals to help them to understand the difference between Equity and Equality.
- All students being ready for Freeman.
- The enrichment activities and school plays, music concerts, sporting events.
- The values and how they make them think deeply about themselves and who they want to be.
- The wellbeing hub and the compassion the school shows to all when someone is low and needing support.

It was a time to feel really proud of the beautiful young people we are so lucky to work with.

Flu Vaccinations Catch Up Sessions – All Years:

The Vaccination Nursing Team will be visiting us for a catch-up session on Wednesday 15th October, in the afternoon. They will deliver the vaccine to pupils who were absent on the previous visit and to pupils for whom we had not received parental consent.

Please complete this form, even if you do not want the vaccine.

<https://bed.schoolvaccination.uk/flu/2025/hertfordshire>

Safeguarding - Books authored by Andy Cope

The children's publisher Puffin has issued an alert regarding books authored by Andy Cope including those in the Spy Dogs, Spy Cats, and Spy Pup series.

Within the books, there is a link which encourages children to find out about additional information told during the story. The link is intended to take children to Mr Cope's webpage, however the domain is no longer owned by him and instead the link will direct children to a webpage now owned by a third party. This third party is publishing pornographic content.

There is no suggestion that Puffin or Mr Cope are responsible for the pornographic materials, and the content of the actual stories are fine to read, however if any children access the link with the intent to learn more about the story online, they will be exposed to highly inappropriate materials.

Puffin has paused sales, and libraries and retailers have removed these books from their shelves until further notice.

Advice to parents is to check their children's books at home and speak to them about talking to an adult first before following any links within books that they read.

We will share any further information when available.

Rib Valley Headteachers message

As you may have seen on social media, there is a growing movement among parents and schools in support of the **"Smartphone-Free Childhood"** campaign. You can learn more by clicking the links below:

[Smartphone Free Childhood](#)

[Delay Smartphones](#)

This initiative has been discussed at length within the **Rib Valley Schools Consortium**, which includes 12 First, Middle and Primary schools. We are keen to support this campaign in any way we can. When we refer to "smartphones," we mean devices that can access the internet, as opposed to basic mobile phones that allow only texting and calling.

We fully understand the importance of being able to contact your child as they gain independence, however, it's important to recognise that a phone does not need internet access to fulfil this purpose. A basic phone still allows for location tracking and emergency calls, providing safety without exposing children to the risks associated with internet-enabled devices.

Why Delay Smartphones?

Smartphones are now a common part of adult life, but the age at which children are being given their first smartphone is becoming younger and younger. In our schools, some children as young as four years old have access to smartphones.

While this technology can be beneficial in the right context, it can also expose children to a wide range of risks:

Addiction: Smartphones can be as addictive as gambling, especially for young, developing brains.

Mental Health: Linked to depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem in teenagers.

Exposure to Harmful Content: Including pornography, grooming, cyberbullying, and inappropriate material.

Reduced Attention Span: Overuse can affect brain development and hinder concentration.

Loss of Childhood: Screen time often replaces play, social interaction, and the development of key life skills.

Our Commitment

As Headteachers, we are committed to promoting our schools as **smartphone-free environments** and supporting parents in delaying smartphone use as long as possible. We believe that, as a community, we can work together to reset the 'normal' age at which children are given smartphones.

However, this movement requires your support being willing to resist peer pressure and delay giving your child a smartphone. By joining a wider network of like-minded families, we can create a positive cultural shift and remove the social pressure on children to own smartphones at a young age.

How to Get Involved

To make joining easier, you can sign the **Smartphone-Free Parent Pact** by completing the quick online form here:

 [Sign the Parent Pact](#)

You can also access the FAQs about the pact by clicking [HERE](#)

If this initiative resonates with you and you'd like to explore it further, please reach out to your child's school. We would be happy to coordinate a meeting where parents can come together to share ideas and support one another.

Thank you for considering this important step in supporting our children's wellbeing and helping them navigate technology in a healthy, age-appropriate way. If you would like more information about the campaign, including the research behind it and alternative phone options, please contact your school or click on the links provided.

Yours faithfully,

Rib Valley Headteachers

Ardeley St Lawrence C of E Primary School

Anstey First School

Buntingford First School

Edwinstree Middle School

Furneux Pelham Primary School

Hormead Church of England First School

Jenyns First School

Layston Church of England First School

Millfield First School

Ralph Sadlier

Roger De Clare

St Thomas of Canterbury

*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.*

Is there a Harvest Service this year?

Yes, on Tuesday 21st October the school will be walking to Aspenden Church in year groups for our Harvest Festival. As part of the experience, we get to enjoy the beautiful countryside around us. Students are offered two of the 50 things to do in nature before you are 11½ from the National Trust. They will have the opportunity to run/roll down the hill challenge.

Students will be required to wear non-uniform on this day and bring a spare pair of boots or shoes that you do not mind getting muddy. We walk whether it is rain or shine, so please keep an eye out for the weather.

To complete this walk, we are asking for parent volunteers to help us. If you are available between 9am and 12pm to walk with your child's year group, we would really appreciate your support. Please email admin@edwinstree.herts.sch.uk if you can offer your help on this day.

Year 5 News:

Duxford Visit

A gentle reminder that the deadline for the Y5 Duxford Visit is **today Friday 10th October 2025**. If you have not done so already, please complete the consent link in the attached letter and log onto School Gateway to complete payment.

Please note that if we do not have enough participants the visit may not go ahead. If your child does not want to attend, please contact us as they will be expected in school.

If you have volunteered to support this visit, thank you and the visit leader will be in touch shortly to confirm details.

Changes to Holiday Food Voucher Scheme for benefits related FSM Children

Since December 2020, the Local Authority has issued food vouchers to eligible families, funded through various government schemes. From October 2021, this was supported by the **Household Support Fund**, a Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) initiative.

In the latest grant allocation (April 2025 – March 2026), Hertfordshire County Council received **12% less funding**, prompting a review of all programmes to ensure continued support for residents.

As part of **Household Support Fund 7**, vouchers will now be issued only during the main school holiday periods:

Easter 2025 – £30 per pupil

May 2025 – £15 per pupil

Summer 2025 – £60 per pupil

Christmas 2025 – £30 per pupil

For families requiring additional support, we recommend [‘support with cost-of-living pages’](#) on the Hertfordshire County Council website.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at HertsVoucherQueries@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Year 5 & 6 News:

Maya Workshop – week commencing 17th November

We are delighted to tell you that as part of our new topic on the ancient Maya, *Past Productions* will be running workshops for all Year 5 and Year 6 students from Monday 17th November 2025. The workshops will provide the children with a real insight into the ancient Maya and will bring their learning to life!

Students will be visited by S’ak K’uk (AKA the Red Queen). She is one of the only known female rulers of the Maya people. They will learn about the history of chocolate, the importance of the sacred ball game and take part in some drama activities! They will have the opportunity to handle artefacts bought from Maya traders in Mexico. The workshops have been carefully curated to give a real insight into what life was like for the Maya people. The day will be rounded off with the creation story – starring two members of staff as the creator Gods. With the students help, they will find out just why maize was so important to those Maya people. Please find attached a letter with all information.

Year 6 News:

This year we will be communicating with you through the parent newsletter and/or Parentmail to update you on any information you may need for English and maths. We will also be providing some information on how you can help your child in these core subjects this year.

English - Split Intervention Lessons for Y6

Starting from Monday, for certain English lessons, we will be splitting the classes to cater specifically for the students' needs with regards to reading. The lessons affected are

- **Monday: P3 (6A and 6B)**
- **Wednesday: Period 5 (6C and 6D)**
- **Thursday: Period 1 (6A and 6B) and Period 2 (6C and 6D)**

These lessons will now be dedicated reading lessons where we can help the students to progress with their fluency and comprehension. Students will be grouped next week and will either be with Mrs Mayne, Mrs Doré or Miss Van Wyk/Mrs McCarthy. They will be told and reminded which classroom to go to so don't need to worry about this for the first few weeks! By tailoring the classes, we can cater for students' needs more effectively and help them to make better progress. Please get in touch if you have any questions.

 <i>The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go.</i> - Dr. Seuss								
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Parent/ carer Signature
W.B 29th Sept								
W.B 6th Oct								
W.B 13th Oct								
W.B 20th Oct								

Home Learning – Year 6

Some parents and students have been unsure about what home learning they will be getting in Year 6, so we wanted to clarify. Year 6 students will get three pieces of English home learning per week.

1. GPS quiz – This will be set on Satchel One every Monday. It will be a short quiz usually questioning the grammar or punctuation learnt that week or the week before. Attached to each quiz is the “GPS Toolkit” which they can use to help remind them of the terms if they are struggling.
2. Spelling – This will be set on a Tuesday for 6B and a Thursday for the remaining classes (as that is when their spelling lessons are). We will set the words to learn for the following week and provide some learning strategies. We will not be setting a test on Satchel One for the spellings as we have not found this to be particularly impactful in previous years. Students will either be red, orange or green spellers which dictates which spellings on the home learning they learn. They will be told which colour they are in by Tuesday next week although most have been told today if they have had library lessons. We will be using dictation sentences to test the spellings in the following lesson which will also help them with their basic punctuation and handwriting. The first spellings have either been set this week or will be set next week and due dates are as follows:
 - 6B – Due Tuesday 21st October
 - 6A, C and D – Due Thursday 16th October
3. Reading – We are encouraging as much reading at home as possible as this is how students will progress in their fluency and understanding of texts. You may have seen we have given the students a reading record bookmark (shown below) to keep in their reading books. We expect them to be reading for 20 minutes at least five times a week. They tick on the bookmark whether they have read for twenty minutes or more that day and we ask you to sign their bookmark weekly and we will ask to see them in class. If your child is having trouble finding a book they enjoy, please contact Mrs Doré who can help find one in their library lessons.

Food and Nutrition – All Years

Wow! What an awesome week in Food this week. We have prepped, taste tested, cooked, eaten and hopefully all have enjoyed the spoils of your children’s hard work. Please do remember that ingredient lists sent home are what has been demonstrated in class, and if your child does not eat something that is on the list, it can be substituted for another product. Everyone should be taking part in learning future skills, we do not want anyone left out because they do not like a specific ingredient. Please do get in touch with Mrs van Wyk to discuss alternate ingredients.

Year 5: 5A, 5B and 5D please remember your ingredients for your Dippy Divers practical next week – all information is on SatchelOne. 5C you will have your demonstration on Monday.

Year 6: Well done 6C – excellent results on your pasta Salads. 6A, 6B and 6D please remember your ingredients for next week’s lesson. Don’t forget a suitably sized container to take it home.

Year 7: Excellent knife skills with prepping your Classic French Cuts. Your carrots and onions are now ready for your next practical w/c 20/10. If your child was absent from the lesson this week, please ensure that as part of the ingredient list, they bring in prepped carrots and onions. I will remind them next week. We will not have time to prep these additional ingredients in class and it will have to be done at home.

Year 8: I was truly impressed with the wide variety of protein alternate curries this week. From Quorn, to tofu, to lentils and chickpeas and then a full on 5 veggie curry – I have been amazed at the broad array you have produced. 8A and 8C don’t forget your ingredients for your lesson next week.

A very big thank you to the Year 7’s who helped in the kitchen last night, and to all the pupils who helped prep the 14kg of apples for Open Evening. There were lots of fabulous comments and praise – over 250 pots were handed out. Great work! Mrs van Wyk

Gardening Club

Not only does Gardening Club involve turning over beds, removing of weeds, planting and watering, last week in 45 minutes we worked as a well-oiled machine, we prepped almost 9kg of apples for Open Evening. We used windfall apples from the school’s apple trees, and had donations from staff and the community to allow us to help reduce food waste that affects our environment.

Did you know that apples are a fabulous source of fibre which helps our digestive system and contain a large number of polyphenols. These are in the skin and help with lowering blood pressure and cholesterol. A versatile fruit that can be eaten both cooked and raw. Gardening Club will be making and enjoying their own crumbles next week.

Our final harvest has taken place and our pumpkin and squash collection contain 2 large orange pumpkins, 2 butternuts, 12 marrows, 1 small orange squash, 4 green peppers and a handful of tomatoes. Unfortunately, the caterpillars have attacked our 3 cabbage plants so I’m doubtful we will get to enjoy these. Not all is lost though, as I think the butterflies will be beautiful when they finally emerge from their cocoons. Mrs van Wyk



Edwinstree Production - "Star Wars: Revenge of the Umpire"

There will be an **optional** hour-long audition session on Wednesday 15th October from 3.10 - 4.10pm to help people prepare for the audition. We will go over the dance and song for the soloists and answer any questions that the students might have if they have not done a production before. Open to KS3 only. If students have auditioned before they are familiar with the process and do not need to attend. Year 8 Drama Leaders will be required!

Students have had the opportunity to collect consent forms all week but should any more students in Year 7 and 8 wish to sign up to audition for the school production of "Star Wars: Revenge of the Umpire", please complete the consent form and return to Mrs Brock in School by Monday 13th October at the latest!

Consent forms after this time may not be considered.
Physical copies of the consent form are available from the school office.

Consent Form: <https://forms.office.com/e/S12h7pXFMG>



Edwinstree School Association

Edwinstree School Association We will be holding our AGM at school on Wednesday 22nd October doors open 5.30pm for refreshments and chat with the meeting

starting at 6pm. This is an opportunity to come along and find out what the ESA have achieved over the past year and what we have planned for the coming year. Thank you to all the teachers and parents for helping out at the 'New Friends' disco on the 19th September. The weather was perfect, the DJ had the school field rocking, and the children seemed to enjoy themselves. £845 was raised at this event and if you have suggestions on how this money should be spent, please come along to the AGM. If you want to get more involved with the ESA but are unable to make the AGM please email us at:

edwinstreeschoolassociation@outlook.com

Mrs J Gant – Headteacher

admin@edwinstree.herts.sch.uk

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