

Newsletter -

02.10.26

Dear Parents and Carers,

What a busy and wonderful couple of weeks we have had! It has been a real pleasure walking around school and seeing so many fantastic things happening. From the children looking so smart for their school photographs, to Year 5 enjoying their ukulele lessons, children developing their musical talents through keyboard lessons, and everyone getting outside and enjoying OPAL – there has been so much going on!

We also loved celebrating our Dream Big Champions with their special pizza party 🍕🌟 and seeing children being voted into their pupil leadership roles. It has also been fantastic to see children beginning their Road to 500, working hard to earn their Dojos and already reaching some of those important milestones. Seeing our children demonstrate our DREAM BIG values every day has been a real pleasure.

A gentle reminder for mornings: please do not come up the school path when dropping children off. We appreciate that a small number of children have individual needs which mean parents need to hand them over directly, and these arrangements will continue. Members of SLT will be positioned outside each morning and will be happy to take and pass on any messages. Thank you, as always, for your continued support. There is so much to celebrate and be proud of at Winhill Village!

Mrs Howard



Important Diary Dates for Autumn Term:

Tuesday 13th October

Reception Parent Workshop: Phonics & Reading for Pleasure

Tuesday 20th October

Nursery Parent Workshop: Speech & Language and Independence

Friday 23rd October

Pupils Break Up for Half Term

Monday 26th - Friday 30th October

Half Term - School Closed

Monday 2nd November

School Opens to Pupils

Wednesday 4th & Thursday 5th November

Parents Evening

Monday 9th November

Reception Open Evening

Tuesday 1st December

Reception Parent Workshop: Festive Maths & Christmas Crafts

Monday 7th - Friday 11th December

Year 6 Residential at Laches Wood

Tuesday 8th December

Nursery Parent Workshop: Health Habits, Toilet Training & Christmas Cheer

Friday 18th December

Pupils Break Up for Half Term

Monday 21st December - Friday 1st January

Half Term - School Closed

Monday 4th January

INSET Day - School Closed to Pupils

Tuesday 5th January

School Opens to Pupils

🍕🏆 Pizza Party for Our Dream Big Champions! 🏆🍕

On Wednesday, we celebrated our amazing Dream Big Champions with a well-deserved Pizza Party! 🎉🍕

It was a fantastic opportunity to recognise their hard work, determination, positive attitudes, and wonderful achievements. Everyone enjoyed coming together, sharing some delicious pizza, and celebrating their success.

A huge well done to all our Dream Big Champions – we are so proud of you! 🌟👏



A Gentle Reminder to Parents & Carers

We would like to remind all parents and carers that, if you have any concerns or issues relating to something that has happened in school, please speak directly to a member of the school team rather than approaching another parent or child.

We understand that concerns can arise from time to time, and we are always happy to listen, support and help resolve any issues appropriately. By bringing concerns to us, we can ensure that they are dealt with fairly, sensitively and in the best interests of everyone involved.

Thank you for helping us maintain a positive, respectful and supportive school community for all our children and families.

🌟 Values Superstar Family Lunches 🌟

We are delighted to be introducing our Values Superstar Family Lunches, giving families the opportunity to celebrate their child's success with us.

Each month, children who have been recognised as Values Superstars will be invited to a special celebration lunch, where their parents or carers can join them and the other superstars in the main school dining room. 🏆🍴

Parents can enjoy a school lunch for £4, booked and paid for through the MCAS app, while children can order their lunch as usual or bring a packed lunch.

For our nursery superstars, parents can collect their child from nursery shortly before the lunch and bring them along to join the celebration. Nursery children can also order a school lunch for £1.50.

Invitations will be sent to the families of our Values Superstars with details of the date, time and how to RSVP.

We're really looking forward to welcoming families into school and celebrating our wonderful Values Superstars together! 🌟🌈



Reception Open Evening – Monday 9 November 2026, 4.30pm

Open Evening – Monday 9 November 2026, 4.30pm – 6.00pm

We are delighted to invite parents, carers and prospective families to our forthcoming Open Evening on Monday 9 November 2026, from 4.30pm.

As the admissions window for Nursery and Reception places opens in November, this is a wonderful opportunity for families considering joining Winshill Village Primary and Nursery School to come and look around our school, meet staff and see what makes our school such a special place to learn.

☁️ OPAL – Ready for All-Weather Play! ☁️

As we head into the colder and wetter months, a reminder that our OPAL playtimes continue in all kinds of weather! 🍂🌧️

To help children make the most of their outdoor play and stay warm, dry and comfortable, all children should have a pair of wellies and suitable waterproof clothing in school. Please ensure items are clearly named and are appropriate for your child to put on independently where possible.

A little rain won't stop the fun – with the right clothing, our children can continue to explore, play, get muddy and enjoy everything OPAL has to offer!



🎃👻 Halloween Bingo is Coming! 👻🎃

Get ready for a spook-tacular evening of Halloween Bingo at Winshill Village Primary and Nursery School! 🕷️🦋

Join us on Wednesday 21st October for an evening of family fun, organised by the Friends of Winshill Village.

- Doors open: 5.30pm
- Eyes down: 6.00pm

Come along, have some fun and support our school – all proceeds will go towards supporting our children. ✨

We'd love to see lots of our families there!



Lost Property – Please Label

Everything!

We currently have lots of lost property in school, including jumpers, cardigans, coats and PE kit.

Please help us reunite belongings with their owners by making sure all clothing and personal items are clearly labelled with your child's name. 🏷️

With so many children wearing similar uniform, a name label makes a huge difference and helps us return lost items quickly.

Please also encourage your child to check lost property if they are missing anything.

Thank you for your help!



PTFA Raffle Prize Donations – Can You Help?

Our PTFA is looking for raffle prize donations for our upcoming Halloween Bingo on 21st October and Christmas Fayre on 3rd December. These events help raise much-needed funds to provide additional opportunities and enrichment for our children.

If you, your place of work or a local business could donate a prize, big or small, we would be incredibly grateful! 🎁

Please contact the PTFA if you can help – collection can also be arranged.

Thank you for supporting our children and school community!

Who Should I Speak To?

If you have a question or concern about something that has happened during the school day, please speak to your child's class teacher first. If you need a longer conversation, the school office can arrange a suitable time to talk.

If further support is needed, the concern can then be passed to a member of the Senior Leadership Team. We also kindly ask that concerns are brought directly to school rather than approaching other parents or children. This helps us deal with matters fairly, sensitively and appropriately.

Thank you for working with us to maintain positive communication.



Can You Help Our Nursery?

Our Nursery team are still looking for bark donations to help refresh and improve their outdoor play area. If any parents, carers, local businesses or members of our community are able to help, we would be extremely grateful. Every donation, big or small, will make a difference and help us create an exciting outdoor space for our youngest children. 🌱

Please contact the school office or Nursery team if you can help.

Thank you for your continued support!

Free School Meals – Important Changes

From September 2026, Free School Meal eligibility is expanding to include all children from households receiving Universal Credit, regardless of household income.

We encourage families receiving Universal Credit or other qualifying benefits to apply, even if you haven't been eligible before.

Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 already receive Universal Infant Free School Meals, but eligible families should still apply, as this can provide valuable additional funding for our school.

Applications only take a few minutes, and if you have applied previously, you do not need to apply again.

If you need any help applying or would like a paper form, please contact the school office.



Dear Parents/ Carers and Colleagues,

It is with great pleasure that we announce that nominations are now open for the JT MAT Exceptional Achievement Awards (Autumn 2026) for which all John Taylor MAT pupils are eligible to be nominated for.

The awards are an opportunity for young people to be recognised and celebrated for their achievements, and pupils may be nominated based on the following criteria:

Primary Aged Pupils (Early Years, KS1 & KS2)	Secondary Aged Pupils (KS3, KS4 & KS5)
▪ County, National or International status in any given activity in the last 18 months ▪ Grade 1 or above at KS1, or Grade 3 or above in music or singing at KS2 ▪ Performing in televised programme/ film or National stage production ▪ Fundraising for a charity over £2000 ▪ Success in overcoming adversity	▪ National or International status in any given activity in the last 18 months ▪ Grade 8 or above/ Diploma in music or singing ▪ Performing in televised programme/ film. ▪ Fundraising for a charity over £5000 ▪ Success in overcoming adversity

Please complete the online form via this link:

[John Taylor MAT- Exceptional Achievement Award Nomination Form \(Autumn 2026\) – Fill in form](#)

The form will ask you to complete a short paragraph; as a guide, **please work to a minimum of 50 and a maximum of 250 words** for the nomination to be fully considered. Please be as specific as possible and provide a good amount of information regarding the achievement.

Once you have made your nomination, please be advised that, if successful, you will be invited to attend an online presentation ceremony, where Mike Donoghue OBE, CEO, will speak about each of the incredibly talented recipients, who will then be presented with a very special gold pin-badge and certificate from their Headteacher in school; parents will be welcomed to attend via Teams.

Please be advised that the presentation is scheduled for **Friday 11th December 2026 at 9:00-10:15am**; once you submit your nomination, please hold space in your diary to be available to attend.

Please be advised that we may request supporting evidence regarding your nomination, which you should provide to the student's headteacher.

Please be advised that, regretfully, we cannot accept nominations for students who have previously been successful in securing an award in a very similar activity/ discipline; we understand that you will be incredibly proud, and have every right to be, particularly where progress has been achieved in a given activity where the young person has already displayed a great talent, however, they will be ineligible to receive another award on this basis.

We very much look forward to seeing our school community embrace this opportunity and celebrate those who achieve the award. The deadline for nominations is **4pm on Wednesday 18th November 2026** and we will be in contact with all who have made nominations shortly after that date to notify whether their nomination has been successful.

If you have any enquiries, please email jtmat-subjectexcellence@jtmat.co.uk

Sent on behalf of Gill Martin and Lisa Farmer, Directors of School Improvement, John Taylor MAT.



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OUR AIM

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AFTER 10PM

Calls will be answered by a call handler who will ensure CAMHS receives the information for appropriate follow-up the next morning.



NHS 111 – OPTION 2

CONTACT CAMHS BEFORE REFERRING UNDER 18s TO A&E



What Parents & Educators Need to Know about DISCORD

AGE RESTRICTION
13+

(with a 17+ app rating on app stores)

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

A CHANNEL FOR EVERYTHING

While Discord is strongly associated with video games, it also hosts communities for almost anything you can imagine, such as books, music, influencers, cooking and sport. Some large servers focus on popular games like Minecraft or Fortnite, but many are private, invite-only spaces where friends or communities with shared interests can chat across phones, computers, and gaming consoles.

REAL-LIFE DISTRACTION

Like many social platforms, Discord can become a real time-sink. Although it does not rely on endless scrolling in the same way as some apps, constant messages, group chats, and voice channels can keep young people engaged for long periods, especially in larger servers. As Discord is closely linked to gaming, it may also increase the time they spend playing games.

STRANGER DANGER

Users can choose to stay within private servers with only people they know, but joining public servers will most likely bring them into contact with strangers. Many users are just friendly enthusiasts, yet others could have harmful intentions, including grooming, extortion, or radicalisation. In these types of environments, anyone can claim to be another teenager, which can make it harder for young people to judge who is safe to talk to.

A HARASSMENT RISK

There is also a risk from people a young person already knows in the real world. Bullying in the real world can continue online, and Discord servers can make this feel more intimidating, especially if someone uses anonymous or multiple accounts to carry out threatening behaviours. Because Discord works across computers, phones, and gaming consoles, unwanted contact can follow young people into online spaces that should feel safe and private.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

This huge amount of choice can help young people "find their tribe", especially when they have niche interests. However, because users can create servers around almost any topic, younger users may still encounter unsuitable or distressing content. Even in spaces linked to child-friendly games, Discord cannot directly control every conversation, image, or video shared by other users.

A MONEY DRAIN

Discord is free to use, but users can still spend real-world money on it. This may include Discord 'Nitro', a monthly subscription that unlocks customisation features and larger media uploads, or purchases through the 'Shop' for profile cosmetics and game-related items. Small purchases can add up quickly, especially if spending controls are not in place.

Advice for Parents & Educators

USE FAMILY CENTRE

Parents and carers should make use of Discord's 'Family Centre', which gives an overview of a younger user's activity while respecting their privacy. Messages are not shared, but adults can view an activity feed and receive weekly email summaries. Discord says this is designed to support conversations about online behaviour, rather than be about constant monitoring.

CHECK, TALK, REPORT

Review Discord's privacy settings together, including who can send them friend requests or private messages. Use this as a chance to talk to them about strangers, privacy, and personal information, making sure young people know to question suspicious behaviour, such as requests to keep conversations secret. Show them how to block and report these kinds of users and reassure them that asking for help will not get them into trouble.

MANAGE TIME ONLINE

Agree clear expectations around when and how Discord can be used, especially during homework, bedtime, and family time. Encourage young people to turn off unnecessary notifications and leave servers that feel overwhelming. If Discord is mainly used alongside gaming, discuss healthy limits for both activities so that schoolwork, sleep, and offline friendships are not affected.

REVIEW SPENDING CONTROLS

Talk openly about paid features such as Discord Nitro, profile cosmetics, and in-game purchases. Make sure the young people in your care understand that digital items still cost real money. Check payment settings on the device they use, avoid storing card details where possible, and consider adding approval requirements for purchases, particularly for younger or more impulsive users.

Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, TechRadar, Tom's Guide, The Evening Standard, and The New Statesman.



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