



# Rush Common School Newsletter



Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2026

## *Dream, Aspire, Succeed*

Dear Parents/Carers

I must start this newsletter by thanking everyone for their commitment and support for our Walk to School Week. Alongside the many children who walk or cycle to school on a daily basis, I know there are a number of families who have swapped the car for walking and cycling. In addition, those who have to travel by car due to distance, have been increasingly using the Park and Stride across the week. Today there were 30 cars parked in the car park, while families were taking the short walk into school. The impact of all of this is hugely reduced traffic along Hendred Way, safer roads as families arrive at school and children enjoying the benefits of a little exercise before school. The percentage of children walking, cycling or using the Park and Stride increased to 88% by the end of the week, which is a great achievement. Please can I ask parents to try and stick to the changes made this week for the rest of the year (and beyond) to help everyone in our school community enjoy safe active travel to and from school. The Park and Stride can be used every day of the school year at drop off and pick up.

Last week Year 6 pupils carried out their SATS tests, and all of the children should be immensely proud of how they approached the week. They went into all the tests with confidence and determination, and we know they will have achieved their best. Congratulations to them all! Year 6 also really enjoyed the first aid training this week through the IMPS programme and their classrooms are now awash with colour on PE days as children are allowed to wear their leavers hoodies. Year 6 have many exciting events coming up, including the Call of Wild residential, Year 6 Production and Leavers Party to ensure a fantastic end to their Rush Common journey.

On Friday of last week we held our House Competition Day and it was a huge success. Children took part in exercises with Phoebe Gibbons, who plays wheelchair rugby for Great Britain, and they enjoyed a range of different competitive events in their house groups. Points were awarded for winning the different activities, and the overall winning house was Falcons. There was also time during the morning, for Phoebe Gibbons to tell the children her inspirational personal story. The children listened incredibly well, and it was a poignant reminder of what can be achieved despite adversity if you really put your mind to it.

This week our Y5/6 children competed in the Abingdon Schools Orange Tennis competition. As usual, the competition was fierce and our children approached every match with impeccable attitude and effort. Overall our two teams finished 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> out of 16 teams. They should be very proud of how well they competed and we know all the children thoroughly enjoyed this opportunity.

We are proud of the wide range of authors we arrange to visit the school, and this week we had Laura Ellen Anderson provide a talk and book signing for children in Years 2 and 3. The children were spellbound by the presentation, which also included a live illustration which will be framed in our school library. It was really inspiring to have a visit from such a successful author and we hope children treasure their signed copies of her book.

Today we held our Whole School Picnic, and it is such a lovely way to end the half term (especially with the sunny weather!). We hope parents enjoyed the experience, and found it a great opportunity to visit children in classrooms and see some of the workbooks and other outcomes. A huge thank you to everyone who attended and created such a special atmosphere on the school field.

Finally, I would like to wish all of our families an enjoyable and safe half term holiday in the sun!

Kind regards

*Kristen Fawcett*

Headteacher



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### School Dinners

The cost of school dinners this term is **£2.80** per day. Payment for school dinners can be made via ParentMail. Meal choices must be made at least 3 days in advance.



### Homework Champions

Amella 3CM  
Juliet 3CM  
Isabelle 3HC  
Josie 3HC  
Teddy 3HC  
George 3HC

Ava 4TJ  
Leo 4TJ  
Darcy 4TJ  
Freddie 4TJ  
Robyn 4TJ

# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about MINECRAFT

As the best-selling game in history, Minecraft has made a name for itself by empowering audiences of all ages to harness their creativity. Originally an indie hit, it's become a cultural phenomenon with merchandise, spin-off titles, and video media adaptations. Even if you don't know your Creeper from your Enderman, this guide will explore the risks of Minecraft in 2025 and explain how to support a safe gaming experience for the children in your care.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### PUBLIC SERVER COMMUNICATION

Many players enjoy Minecraft with others, including friends and children, through public servers. In-game text chat is commonly used to coordinate building projects and gameplay, and this can extend to adding friends in real life. While often harmless, this creates risks around contact with strangers, and in some cases server hosts may expose IP addresses (if hosted independently), which raises privacy and security concerns.

### GRIEFING BEHAVIOUR

Some players deliberately damage or destroy other players' creations. This behaviour, known as "griefing", is a form of bullying that can involve harassment or abuse through or without in-game play. Although many servers treat griefing as a serious offence, enforcement varies. Children who prefer to build independently may find entering public servers or restricted servers.

### ADDICTIVE GAMEPLAY LOOPS

Minecraft's creative focus can make it easy for players to lose track of time. The cycle of gathering resources and building projects can be highly engaging, which may challenge agreed screen-time limits. If not managed effectively, this can impact children's sleep, behaviour, and real-world social interactions.

### SCARY GAME ELEMENTS

Although often compared to digital construction toys, some gameplay modes include battle mechanics with unsettling sounds and sudden occurrences. While there is no graphic violence, younger players may still find zombies, spiders, or dark environments frightening. These experiences can lead to anxiety or reluctance to play, depending on the child's age and sensitivity.

### IN-GAME SPENDING

Minecraft requires a one-off purchase after a free trial, usually around £6, but additional spending is possible. Players can buy cosmetic content or subscribe to Minecraft Realms for private servers. Without supervision, children may make unauthorised purchases. In-game items and add-ons can also increase overall costs over time if not controlled.

### ONLINE INTERACTIONS

Playing with others can introduce broader online safety concerns, including exposure to inappropriate language or behaviour. Some players may attempt to make connections beyond the game, which can increase risks to children's safety and welfare. Children may not always recognise these situations, making guidance and ongoing conversations about safe internet use essential.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### CHOOSE SUITABLE GAME MODES

Creative or peaceful modes remove battle mechanics and reduce the pressure of gathering resources. These options allow children to focus on building and exploration without fear of attack. They are also ideal for shared play between adults and children, creating a relaxed environment to learn the game and enjoy collaborative projects.

### USE PRIVATE SERVERS

Setting up a private server helps control who can join a child's game. Access can be limited to trusted friends through passwords or invitations. This reduces the likelihood of unwanted interactions and gives adults greater oversight. While some options involve a subscription fee, they offer a safer and more controlled multiplayer experience.

### DISCUSS ONLINE STRANGERS

Children should understand that not everyone they meet online is who they claim to be. Clear guidance about not sharing personal information is essential. Encourage children to report any worrying or uncomfortable interactions and reassure them that they can seek help without fear of punishment. Open, ongoing conversations help build their confidence and awareness of these issues.

### SET SPENDING BOUNDARIES

Agree on clear rules around purchases before letting children play, and use device settings or platform controls to restrict spending within agreed limits. Explaining that in-game currency uses real-world money can help children make informed choices. Regularly reviewing purchases together can also prevent unexpected costs and encourage responsible behaviour.

### Meet Our Expert

Ugoi Coombes spent 17 years in games media, before moving into the games industry via PR and marketing. A parent himself to a Minecraft-loving son, he understands why it's so important to stay safe online.



[www.thenationalcollege.com](https://www.thenationalcollege.com)

[www.wakeupwednesday.com](https://www.wakeupwednesday.com) @wake\_up\_weds #wakeupwednesday

Version of this guide is at [www.thenationalcollege.com](https://www.thenationalcollege.com). Correct as of the date of release: 28.03.2025

This poster and others can also be viewed on the link below:  
<https://www.rushcommonschool.org/information-for-parents/other-useful-information-2/online-safety-information/>

## Dates for your diary 2026

<b>Inset Day (Children Not in School)</b>	<b>Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June</b>
<b>Start of Term 3b</b>	<b>Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June</b>
<b>Class Photos</b>	<b>Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June</b>
<b>FoRC Non School Uniform Day</b>	<b>Friday 5<sup>th</sup> June</b>
<b>Phonics Screening</b>	<b>Week of the 8<sup>th</sup> June</b>
<b>FoRC Second Hand Uniform Sale</b>	<b>Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> June 3.00pm</b>
<b>Year 3 Hill End Trip</b>	<b>Friday 12<sup>th</sup> June</b>
<b>FoRC Summer Fete</b>	<b>Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> June 12.00pm – 2.00pm</b>
<b>Year 2 Abingdon Museum Trip</b>	<b>Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June (2LG) and Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June (2JB)</b>
<b>Vision Screening (Reception Children Only)</b>	<b>Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June</b>
<b>Reception and KS1 Sports Day</b>	<b>Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June 9.00am – 12.00pm</b>
<b>Reception and KS1 Back Up Sports Day</b>	<b>Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 9.00am - 12.00pm</b>
<b>Year 6 Call of the Wild Residential</b>	<b>Monday 29<sup>th</sup> June – Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July</b>
<b>Reception Curriculum Assembly</b>	<b>Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July at 2.15pm</b>
<b>Move Up Morning</b>	<b>Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> July</b>
<b>KS2 Sports Day Tilsley Park</b>	<b>Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July 9.00am - 2.00pm</b>
<b>Year 6 Performance</b>	<b>Monday 13<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> July 6.00pm</b>
<b>KS2 Back Up Sports Day Tilsley Park</b>	<b>Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> July 9.00am - 2.00pm</b>
<b>Year 6 Leavers Party</b>	<b>Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> July 4.30pm -6.30pm</b>
<b>End of Term 3b</b>	<b>Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July at 1.30pm</b>

## Local Community News

Please note items and events detailed below are for information purposes only. Rush Common School do not endorse or make recommendation



### May half-term holiday camp at our school

The World Cup is coming — and this May half-term, Holiday HQ brings that excitement to life with a **high-energy, multi-activity holiday club** at our school. It's not about standing in lines or repetitive drills. Instead, children take part in a four-day celebration filled with creative challenges, fast-paced games, teamwork and play — all inspired by one of the biggest sporting events in the world.

This May half-term, **Holiday HQ** returns to our school, delivered by **Junior Adventures Group (JAG)**.

**Tuesday 26 – Friday 29 May**

- [Check out What's On!](#)
- [Register/Book Now!](#)

#### Holiday HQ: World Cup Challenge

During the holidays, children will:

- 👥 Create team names, flags and anthems to kick off the week
- ⚽ Take part in striker, defender and goalkeeper skill challenges
- 🏆 Design and build their own World Cup trophy
- 🧠 Compete in quizzes, team missions and problem-solving games
- 👕 Design football shirts, bottles and flipbooks to take home
- 🏈 Play matches, footgolf and high-energy team games
- 🎉 Finish the week with finals day, celebrations and awards

Every day combines **movement, creativity and teamwork**, with activities tailored so younger children feel supported while older children enjoy greater independence, challenge and leadership.

Children come home **happily tired**, proud of what they've achieved — often already asking about the next day.

#### What this means for families

- ✓ Safe, structured days delivered by experienced, DBS-checked staff
- ✓ Ofsted-registered holiday childcare you can trust
- ✓ A convenient, familiar school setting
- ✓ Full and half-day options — book only the days you need
- ✓ 48-hour cancellation policy if plans change
- ✓ Tax-Free Childcare accepted

For parents, it means dependable holiday cover and a calmer, more organised half-term — without disrupting work or existing routines.

#### Book early and save

##### 🕒 **Early bird discount – Save 10%**

Book by Sunday May 10 using code **JOININ10** at checkout

##### 👨👩 **Sibling discount – Save 10%**

Automatically applied when booking more than one child

##### 📅 **Multi-day booking discount – Save 4%**

Applied when booking four days or more within the same week. All eligible discounts are combined automatically at checkout.

Parents can view session times, prices and availability online.

📍 [Find our school club](#)

#### Active days for them. An easier week for you.

##### 🗨️ **Have any questions?**

☎️ 0333 577 1533

✉️ [hello@junioradventuresgroup.co.uk](mailto:hello@junioradventuresgroup.co.uk)

# Sutton Courtenay

Environmental Education Centre

*A journey of learning and discovery*



**Berkshire  
Buckinghamshire  
& Oxfordshire**  
Wildlife Trust

## **Big Family Day Out**

Saturday 10 August; 10am-4pm

An amazing day out for all the family on the summer nature reserve, with activities particularly suited to primary and preschool aged children.

£8 per child aged 18 months - 16 years

£2 per adult (aged 16 plus)

BOOKING ESSENTIAL

## **Family Event: Summer Nature Trail**

Tuesday 28 July and Thursday 30 July; 10am-2pm

A fun family nature trail around the reserve, with a craft to take home and live storytelling. Suitable for 4-11 years.

£8 per child; BOOKING ESSENTIAL

## **Toddler Event: Teddy Bears' Picnic**

19, 20, 21, 22 August; 9:30am-11:30am

Bring your toddler and their teddy for a summer adventure in the woods and meadows. Suitable for 18 months to 4 years.

£10 per child; BOOKING ESSENTIAL

## **Day Camp**

Wednesday 26 August; 9:30am-3pm

A day camp for unaccompanied 8-12 year olds, packed with wildlife themed outdoor fun – visit the website to find out more.

£37 per child; BOOKING ESSENTIAL

**Plus monthly Saturday wildlife clubs** – Nature Tots (18 months to 4 years with an adult); Nature Explorers (4-7 years with an adult); Young Rangers (8-11 years unaccompanied); Teen Rangers (11-17 years unaccompanied). Visit the website for upcoming dates and booking.



**Visit our website to book or for more info:**



[bbowt.org.uk/events](http://bbowt.org.uk/events)

01235 862024 or [sceec@bbowt.org.uk](mailto:sceec@bbowt.org.uk)

[bbowt.org.uk](http://bbowt.org.uk)

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**PETER PAN JR**

Acting for Film  
ages 9-18

**BLACK ELK**  
PRODUCTIONS

## SUMMER HOLIDAY WORKSHOPS

**STAGECOACH ABINGDON, BOTLEY, DIDCOT, WALLINGFORD & WANTAGE**

**ACTING FOR FILM** (9-18 yrs old) with Black Elk Productions  
Abingdon: 20-24 July, Abingdon school  
**FILM & MUSICALS FUN**  
Abingdon: 20-24 July, Abingdon school (4-9 yrs old)  
Wallingford: 10-14 Aug, Wallingford School (4-12 yrs old)  
**'SHOW IN A WEEK'** (4-18 yrs old)  
Didcot: 27-31 July, Aureus School  
Abingdon: 3-7 Aug, Amey Theatre, Abingdon School

[stagecoach.co.uk/abingdon](http://stagecoach.co.uk/abingdon) 01235 390 810 / 07305 439 825

**BOOK NOW**

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## THE OXFORD & CAMBRIDGE SINGING SCHOOL

The Singing School was established in 2013 to provide children with the opportunity to sing great classical music with world class coaches in a relaxed and fun environment and to develop their confidence and ability in singing and performing.

This summer at Somerville College, we will be learning some beautiful seasonal music, and, as always on our courses, we will be giving sessions on vocal technique, music theory, music appreciation and history.

To join our mailing list and for more information on our courses, please see [www.oxbridgesingschool.com](http://www.oxbridgesingschool.com) or email [oxbridges@gmail.com](mailto:oxbridges@gmail.com)

21 - 23 July 2026

also 21 & 22 December 2026

Courses for those aged 7-13 who love to sing

[www.oxbridgesingschool.com](http://www.oxbridgesingschool.com)

## School holidays just got more exciting!

Fresh air, freedom and adventure!

### Ready for a school holiday full of excitement?

Active Adventures at Youlbury is the ultimate outdoor adventure club for children aged 8-16. Packed with thrilling challenges, nature connection activities, and epic team games, each day offers a new adventure to inspire a love for the great outdoors!

[www.scoutadventures.org.uk/events](http://www.scoutadventures.org.uk/events)

### Give your child an unforgettable school holiday filled with fresh air, freedom and adventure!

Set within 42 acres of stunning woodland in rural Oxfordshire at Youlbury Boars Hill, children aged 8-16 will take part in a daily programme of non-stop outdoor action. With expert instructors leading the way, creating a safe and supportive environment where children run, climb, explore, and build confidence while unplugging from screens and having a blast with friends in the great outdoors!

**What's on offer:**

- High-energy adventures such as archery, ziplining, and climbing.
- Fun team building games and problem-solving challenges.
- Survival skills such as shelter building, backwoods cooking and fire lighting.
- Connect with the natural world with mindful activities, outdoors arts and crafts, wildlife spotting and nature walks.

**When is it:**

- Running throughout February, Easter, May, Summer and October school holidays (see website for dates).
- 8.30am - 5.30pm daily (activities run 9am - 5pm)
- Participants can attend individual days, or the entire week.

**Pricing:**  
£35 per day, per child. Save 10% on a 5-day block and each additional child.

**Book now and join the adventure!**

[www.scoutadventures.org.uk/events](http://www.scoutadventures.org.uk/events)

✉ [activeadventures@scoutadventures.org.uk](mailto:activeadventures@scoutadventures.org.uk)

📍 Scout Adventures Youlbury, Boars Hill, Oxford OX1 5HD

Scout Adventures is owned and operated by The Scout Association, Reg Charity number 202121 (England and Wales), Reg Charity number 202121 (Scotland), Reg Charity number 202121 (Northern Ireland), Reg Charity number 202121 (Ireland). The Scout Association, 100 St. Dunstons, London, England, SE1 6NU.

# MAY HALF TERM AT WHITE HORSE LEISURE & TENNIS CENTRE



**BANK HOLIDAY HOURS**  
Monday 25th May  
7am-6:30pm

Kids swim for **£1**  
everyday Monday- Friday  
during our 9-10am swim  
sessions.



### Open to all Tennis Camps

We will be running camps suitable for children aged 6-11 years, that are either new to tennis or those looking to improve on their skills.

**Tues 26th, Weds 27th & Thurs 28th May 9:00-15:30**  
£47.25 per day

Children will be supervised over the lunch hour. A packed lunch & snacks must be provided.

To book, please visit our website or **BETTER UK app**.

For further information please contact our Tennis Manager [sue.auger@gl.org](mailto:sue.auger@gl.org)



### Aqua Splash

Our inflatable session is suitable for both adults & children aged 5 years+

**Mon 25th & Wed 27th May**  
12:00-13:00 & 13:10-14:10

Children under 8 years **must** be supervised by a competent adult swimmer.  
Buoyancy jackets will be supplied and **must** be worn.

### Toddler Splash

A fun swim session with toys, aimed at building water confidence in children under 8 years of age.

**Tues 13:00-14:00**

**Weds 11:00-12:00**

**Thurs 13:00-14:00 & 14:00-15:00**

During the half term we will also be running an extra session on **Tues 26th 14:00-15:00**

All children must be supervised in the water by a competent adult swimmer aged 16 years+

Max 2 children aged under 8 years per 1 competent adult swimmer.



# DONATE YOUR BIKE

Help us get young people cycling!

Introducing the new Bike Library at  
**Fitzharrys Secondary School!**

A collaboration between Active Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire  
County Council & Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue

We loan second-hand bikes to students without  
access to one, and plan to offer bikes for  
younger children too.



## BIKE DONATION EVENT

**Saturday**  
**23<sup>rd</sup> May**  
10am - 12pm

**Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue**  
**Abingdon Fire Station,**  
Ock Street, Abingdon,  
OX14 5DH

We're looking for:

- 24"
- 26"
- 27.5"

bikes for teenagers up  
to young adults



### TO DONATE

- Come along with the bike(s) to Abingdon Fire Station, Ock Street, Abingdon, OX14 5DH between 10:00am - 12:00pm.
- Members of Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service will be on hand to receive your donation - it's as simple as that!



Donated bikes will be refurbished, safety checked and provided to students to loan until they outgrow the bike or no longer need it.



We reserve the right to decline bikes that aren't economically viable to fix.



Do not leave bikes outside the 10:00am-12:00pm slot.



**YOUR BIKE COULD MAKE  
A BIG DIFFERENCE TO A  
LOCAL YOUNG PERSON.**

**THANK YOU!**