



Friday 8th  
September  
2023

### Welcome back

It's been great to start the new term and to see all children back from their holidays. The children have had an enjoyable reintroduction to school and have been pleased to get back together with their friends. The good weather has helped, of course. It's a shame the sun was so difficult to spot during the holiday. I would also like to say that the children look super smart and ready for learning in their uniform. Thank you to you all for making an effort with this and being especially watchful over hair braids and shoes - they are always the two parts of the uniform that trouble us the most. And nail-polish, don't forget that. Oh, and tattoos - they can also be a bit of a problem :) As always - uniform guidance is available on the website. Thank you for your support with this important area of school life.

### Welcome to all our new children

I hope you will all join with me in extending a warm Southill welcome to all our new starters and their families this term. I'm sure they will be very happy here and enjoy being part of our fabulous Southill community.

<b>Reception</b>	Ambar, Amiyah, Reem, Belle, Pearl, Octavia, Arthur, Noah, Dakota, Blake, Riley, Bethany, Elsie-Maya, Brodie, Eddie, Flynt, Reggie, William, Jasper, Amy and Layla.
<b>Year 1</b>	Luis and Isabella
<b>Year 3</b>	Emilia-Lily and Ella
<b>Year 4</b>	Eliza
<b>Year 5</b>	Benjamin
<b>Year 6</b>	Ellouise and Joshua

### Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete

There has been much commotion in the media about the dreaded RAAC this week, but rest assured that our school was recently inspected for this and no RAAC was identified in the building at all. Dorset schools will also now be assessed in more detail to update the council buildings register so that, hopefully, any problems can be identified and dealt with in good time.

### PE kit days

You will recall I hope that I wrote to you last term describing a plan to ask children to wear PE kit to school on the day they have their PE lesson. We have now finalised the PE timetable, so ask that you prepare to send your child in their kit on the following days, starting from next week:

<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>
<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>
<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Thursday</b>
<b>Year 5</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<b>Year 6</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>

Reception are a slightly different case at the moment. Please don't worry about PE kit for now, we'll speak to you separately about this later in the term.

### Reception baseline assessment

During the first six weeks of a child's time at school, Mrs Puddick and Mrs Murray will be carrying out a number of simple assessments with the children to identify a baseline of children's skills and abilities. The activities themselves are very low-key - children will see them as part of the fun when playing in class. If you wish for more information, come and see us or [follow this link](#) to the DfE information for parents.

### Admission into Year 7

I have been asked to remind all parents and carers of Year 6 pupils that they need to make an application for a secondary school place before 31st October 2023. Letters have been pinged out to you about this and I know you will be visiting the local secondary schools for their open evenings soon.

[More details about the application process can be found on the Dorset website here.](#)

## Term-time absence

Southill is part of a wider group of 8 Dorset primary schools in Weymouth and Portland. We work closely together and have agreed a joint approach to promoting good attendance across all the schools. We will share with this with you shortly.

At Southill, we know that attendance is usually higher than the local average but we also know that this overall figure masks some very low individual attendance indeed. It is an area we could do better on as a school and I will be sharing attendance data with you more regularly this year.

As an early glimpse, I am sharing the paragraph on term-time holidays for you to read - hopefully before any of you book holidays during the term. All 8 schools recognise the harm this does to children's progress and we urge you not to do this. Here are the words from the agreed statement:

### Holidays in term time

No school will authorise absence for a holiday during the term.

Whilst we all understand the financial pressures which make these holidays more attractive, we are asking you to prioritise your children's learning over a holiday.

There are 6 designated holiday periods in the school year, of around 12 weeks in total, and we ask all parents to use these times instead.

If parents or carers disregard the need for regular attendance, and still insist on removing their children for a holiday, any such absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence and will be liable to a fine from Dorset Council. It may also result in legal action.

## Water safety during the warm weather

I have been asked to pass on this message from Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service

*With the warm weather still with us, please help your children remember how they can stay safe when in or near water. Please take a few minutes to go through our quizzes with them to remind them how enjoy the water safely, especially if you are considering going to one of our lovely beaches, rivers or other waterways this weekend.*

*Every entry will be sent a certificate and one winning entry will be chosen from each quiz to win a VIP trip to a DWFRS fire station and a Playmobil or Lego set (please see quiz for details of which prize)*

All children <https://forms.office.com/e/mTeYPWqQWw>

Reception and Key Stage 1 children <https://forms.office.com/e/jPCVnGHGjw>

Key Stage 2 children <https://forms.office.com/e/7r6XZbKJb7>

*During this warm weather there is an amber wildfire alert, so please avoid having BBQs and open fires in the countryside.*

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That's it from me this week. Have a great weekend

Paul Mason  
Headteacher



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