



Spetisbury News 8th September 2025

✿ Welcome or Welcome Back! – Autumn Term 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

Today we had the great pleasure of welcoming not only all of our returning pupils but also our brand-new Reception children — our **Acorn Class** — for their very first day at school. They did brilliantly, settling quickly into classroom life, and their families managed the emotions of drop-off with real strength and positivity. It was wonderful to see them begin their journey with us.

The rest of the school has also made an excellent start. Children look incredibly smart (though after a day or two on our rather soggy field, we'll see how long that lasts...) and have settled back into school routines with focus and determination. Already they've shown commitment to our simple behaviour rules: **Be Ready, Be Respectful, Be Safe**. In our welcome back assembly, we revisited our expectations and shared some of the exciting developments for the year ahead. Many children are already buzzing about the new roles of responsibility they can apply for, linked to our *Spetisbury Silver* award — forms will be coming out tomorrow.

Last year was not without its challenges, particularly with staff absence and other difficulties, but we begin this year with optimism and gratitude. I'm delighted to share some uplifting news: Mrs Hill's son, Toby, has 'rung the bell' to mark the end of his treatment. Mrs Hill is hugely grateful for the kindness and support shown by our families and children throughout, and I know many of our new Year 5 pupils were keen for an update this morning.

You may also have noticed improvements around our school grounds. We've been holding off on some changes while our mobile classroom was being lifted, its foundations redone, and the building carefully returned to place. The transformation is clear: it looks much smarter, and the contractors have worked

wonders fixing the previous issues. They were still tarmacking between rain showers on Thursday afternoon! Staff had the unusual challenge of setting up classrooms and preparing training days while navigating a building site — but, true to form, they managed it with smiles and good humour. We're excited to make the most of our refreshed facilities.

All in all, it has been a fantastic start, and I'm confident this will be a year of growth, resilience, and joy for our children. Thank you for the part you play in making our school such a supportive, caring community.

As always, we are happy to talk, so please do not be afraid to approach me or any member of staff with a question or worry.

Mr Brown

Autumn Term Music Lessons



We are delighted to offer **1:1 music lessons** in Piano/Keyboard, Guitar and Recorder with Mrs Cooper (BA, PGCE, LTCL, MISM).

Lessons focus on developing skills in playing technique, reading notation, improvisation, composing, music theory and aural work. Mrs Cooper accompanies and demonstrates alongside pupils to ensure each half-hour lesson is enjoyable, creative and enriching.

If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Mrs Cooper directly at musicteacher@keebo.co.uk.

Key Reminders

- **School day times:** 8:45am – 3:15 pm. Gates open from 8:30 so children can enter their classrooms and settle. All children should be in school by 8:45 am.
- **Drop-off/pick-up:** Please use the main school gate or if walking from Spetisbury, the gate through from the church is easier. Please remember that the car park can get busy and so try not to linger in the mornings. However smiles and patience go a long way. 🚗 😊
- **Uniform refresher:** Smart uniform, **black shoes**, long hair tied back, small studs only (tape for PE).
- Label everything - in two places. If we have unnamed jumpers in lost property, any parent is allowed to take them so it is imperative that everything is labelled, including coats and hats etc.
- **Snacks:** Fruit is provided for KS1; remember it is a healthy snack for KS2 please. Named (or identifiable) water bottles every day.
- Please park considerately and avoid the yellow zig-zags. If in doubt, **walk the last five minutes** – it's healthier, safer, and often quicker.

Swimming Lessons

We are fortunate to be able to offer swimming lessons again this year, starting with **Oak Class** in the first half-term, followed by **Maple, Sycamore and Beech** later in the year.

Lessons cost **£4 each**, which covers transport, qualified swimming teachers and lifeguards. We ask for this contribution to help us continue providing swimming, though please be reassured that **no child will ever miss out due to financial circumstances**. If the cost is a concern, do speak to the office in confidence.

The **first week** is always a swimming assessment. This allows instructors to group children by ability so they feel safe, supported, and challenged at the right level. Sometimes children are less enthusiastic about that first week, but once placed in groups they usually enjoy it and grow in confidence quickly.

Swimming is not only a vital life skill but also a **statutory part of the National Curriculum by Year 6**. All children are expected to swim at least 25 metres confidently, use a range of strokes effectively, and know how to perform a safe self-rescue.

PE Days

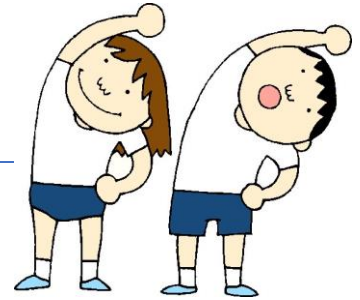
Monday : Sycamore (Year 4), Maple (Year 5)

Tuesday: Beech (Year 3), Oak (Year 6)

Wednesday: Acorn (Reception), Ash (Year 1), Elm (Year 2)

Thursday: Ash (Year 1), Elm (Year 2), Beech (Year 3)

Friday: Sycamore (Year 4), Maple (Year 5), Oak (Year 6)- Swimming



On PE Days, children are able to come to school in their PE kit. This maximises the amount of time that can be spent being physically active within the lesson.

How We'll Keep in Touch



- **Primary channels:** Arbor emails and newsletters.
- **Class newsletters:** These will be sent out today to give you more detail about routines, learning and expectations for your child's class.
- **Quick queries:** Class teachers at pick-up, or via the school office.

Autumn Term Clubs



2025-26 (Please sign up via Arbor Parent Portal)

CLUBS	Monday	All clubs finish at 4.00pm unless indicated otherwise		Maximum numbers
Monday	Tennis Academy	Blandford Tennis Academy – to begin 22/9 – flyer with booking info to follow	Years 4-6	18
	Drawing Club	Miss Moody - Teacher Y2	Years 1-3	25
	Choir	Miss Smith - Teacher Y5	Years 3-6	25
	Forest School	Ria - Treehouse	Treehouse	25
Tuesday	Dance Club	Miss Burn - Teacher Reception	Years 1-6	30
	Girls Football Club	Miss Thorns - Teacher Y6	Years 4-6	25
	Art Club	Mrs Andrews – TA Y1	Years 4-6	25
	Forest School	For Treehouse children TBC		
Wednesday	Multi Sports	Total Sports Kev (finish 4.15)	Years 1-6	
	Craft Club	Holly Smith (volunteer parent) TBC Sign up via school office not Arbor	KS2	10
	Drama Club	Ella Stanley (4.30)		
	Forest School	For Treehouse children TBC		
	Yoga Club (8.30-9.00)	Mrs Orth (no need to sign up, just turn up)	KS2	25
Thursday	Lego & Construction	Mrs Hitchen TA Y4 KS2 Mrs Brown TA Y3 KS1	Years 3-6 Years 1&2	25 25
	Netball	Miss Edmonds - Deputy Head	Years 3-6	25
	Football	Total Sports Kev (finish 4.15)	Years 1-6	
	Forest School	For Treehouse children TBC		

Arbor Parent Portal

We use the **Arbor Parent Portal** as the main system for signing up to clubs, paying for school trips, and booking parent evenings. All new parents should have received an email invitation this morning to sign up. If you need help getting started, please see this guide: [Quick introduction to Arbor for guardians and parents.](#)

Below our the clubs that we will be offering from next week. We find that reception children are still adjusting to their longer days and so we will not open up clubs for them at a later date.

Attendance & Punctuality

- **Target:** 96%+ for every child.
- If your child is unwell, please call the office on day one of absence.



Government Update on Absence

The Department for Education has introduced a national attendance framework. Schools are now required to consider a penalty notice (fine) if a pupil has **10 sessions of absence within a 10-week period**. Each school day is split into two sessions (morning and afternoon), so this equates to five full days of absence. You can track your child's attendance in the Arbor parent app.

A penalty notice may be issued if children are absent in the following circumstances:

1. Holiday taken without permission
2. Where the reason for absence is not provided
3. When the absence is unauthorised
4. When a pupil arrives after the register has closed (lateness after 8:55 am)

Only absences due to **exceptional circumstances** can be authorised, and this is at the discretion of the Headteacher. If you know your child will be absent, please complete an Absence Request form from the school office — even if you suspect the absence will not meet the criteria for authorisation. We will always look more favourably on families who are open and honest with us about planned absences, rather than taking a less transparent approach.

Feeling Under the Weather

If your child is a little off-colour but still able to attend, please just have a quiet word with the class teacher at drop-off, pop a note in their bag, or email the office. This helps us keep an eye on them and understand the situation. We will always try to keep a child in school and learning unless they are really struggling or showing symptoms that could be contagious.

? Playtime Donations Wanted!



We're developing our playtimes to be more active, imaginative and inclusive — and we're already seeing brilliant results! The children have loved trying out some new equipment last year. We want to continue that this year - especially as the children take more responsibility in looking after the equipment.

To keep this momentum going, we're building up a collection of open-ended resources and would be incredibly grateful for any donations of the following:

Kitchen & Household Bits

- Old pots, pans, utensils, baking trays
- Clean lengths of fabric, netting, or tarpaulin
- Funnels, tubing, plastic pipes
- Sturdy cardboard boxes
- Old suitcases, prams, pushchairs
- **Storage boxes** (large or small — any condition, as long as they're functional!)

Outdoor & Construction Materials

- Buckets, crates, cable reels
- Clean tyres (child-safe)
- Wood chips or bark chippings for play areas
- **Old garden slides** (to be safely fitted onto our mound)
- **Old trays or tough plastic panels** (for sliding down the mound)

Dress-Up & Imaginative Play

- Dressing-up clothes, hats, bags, belts
- Small world toys (cars, animals, figures)

Gardening & Nature Play

- Small trowels or child-safe gardening tools
- Plant pots, containers, watering can

And honestly — **we'll probably take almost anything** as long as it doesn't have too many rough edges or nails! If you were planning to send something to the tip, our wonderfully creative children would probably find a brilliant use for it.

Please drop any items off at the school office. Thank you so much for your continued support.



Keeping Our School Tidy – A Shared Effort



We're really pleased that so many families choose to stay and enjoy the school site after pick-up — it's a lovely part of our community feel. We're more than happy for you to do so **until 4pm**, but we do ask for a little help in keeping things tidy for everyone.

We've been talking to the children about how we all have a role in looking after our shared space — and we'd love for families to help reinforce that too.

Please could you ensure that any equipment used is returned to its proper home:

- 🏓 **Table tennis bats and balls** back in the box — and the **box tucked under the table** to protect it from the rain.
- ⚽ **Football**s tucked neatly into the **corner of a net**.
- 🛹 **Scooters and skateboards** either in the rack or **stood neatly against the wall**.
- 🏊 **Skipping ropes** tidily **hung back on the hooks by the office**.
- 📦 **Other equipment** returned to its **correct box or storage area**.

And a gentle reminder: if your child sees something out of place, we're encouraging them to take action — returning things not just because *they* used them, but because it's *our* school and we all take pride in it.

It's a small act, but it sets the tone for responsibility, respect, and that sense of community we value so much.

Thanks for your support — and for helping keep our school looking as brilliant as the people in it.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

Please remember that **Mr Brown** is our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at Spetisbury. If you have any concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing — no matter how small they may seem — he is always available to talk.

Miss Edmonds is also a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and a key part of our safeguarding team. She's available to support you at any time, whether in Mr Brown's absence or simply as an alternative point of contact.

All members of staff at Spetisbury are trained in safeguarding and will do their utmost to help you feel heard, supported and reassured.

Safeguarding is at the heart of everything we do. If you ever need to speak with someone, we are here — and we are always ready to listen.



Free school meals and Pupil Premium



Do you know about...

free school meals

Dorset Council

If your child qualifies for free school meals, they will have a **healthy meal every school day**, and can get:

- access to **free holiday clubs**
- **extra money for their school** towards more teachers and activities

You could save over £450 a year!

Decorative elements include a purple box with 'free', a white box with 'school meals', a purple box with a question mark, and a green circular badge with the savings information. There are also icons of a knife, fork, and spoon.

It's easy to find out if you qualify - complete our confidential checker at dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/free-school-meals or phone **01305 221090**

Pupil Premium

If your child is in reception to year 2 and you receive qualifying benefits, **you could get extra £££'s for your school!**

Apply for the Pupil Premium at dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/pupil-premium

Decorative elements include a purple box with 'Pupil Premium' and a white box with the main text.

Many parents of children in Reception, Year One, and Year Two mistakenly believe their child qualifies for the Pupil Premium because they receive Universal Infant Free School Meals. However, these meals are provided to all children in these year groups, regardless of household income, and are not means-tested. As a result, we may be missing out on valuable additional funding for eligible younger children. This funding is crucial, as it helps support catch-up programs, provides assistance with uniform purchases, and covers the costs of school trips and other enriching experiences.

Have a look here: [Pupil Premium](#)