



Dear Parents/Carers

This week in School:

It was fantastic to see the children back in school after their Christmas break. We had a very exciting start to the term – Early Years had their first school trip – they visited Pizza Express to make their own pizza! Local estate agent Cheffins has shown incredible generosity by donating the Three Little Pigs houses from last year's carnival float to Katherine Semar Infant School. This creative act of reuse and recycling has helped Year One children launch their fairytale topic in a truly magical way. On returning from their Christmas break, the children in Year 1 began their learning journey with a special visit from Mrs Trotter and the Wolf, characters from the beloved tale *The Three Little Pigs*. Thanks to Cheffins' thoughtful donation, the children will be learning more about the story's characters and using their imagination to invent their own fairytales. In the coming weeks, the children will be making their own houses and thinking about which materials will make them strong enough to keep the Big Bad Wolf out! Year 1 also visited the theatre in Bury St Edmunds to see Rapunzel – what a great start to the term!



Two Johns Online Safety Workshops

On Thursday 15th January 'The 2 Johns' from EST – E Safety Training will be running a live workshop on Zoom for Katherine Semar parents and carers. The 2 Johns are former police officers who now work as independent online safety specialists, speakers, and trainers. They are experts in online child exploitation and, through their regular interactions with children, staff, and parents across schools, they understand how children engage with the online world and the potential dangers they might encounter. They will also be visiting children in Year 1 to 6 during the day to run workshops. This Zoom session is incredibly informative and practical. It will raise your awareness and give you real strategies to help your children navigate the online world safely. We strongly urge all parents and carers to join – it's so useful and really worth your time!

The parent workshop takes place from 8.00-9.30pm via this link. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87859886261>

PE Timetable

Please find below the timetable for PE for the first half of the **spring term**.

Spring Term – First Half	PE	Swimming	Forest School
EARLY YEARS	Tuesday & Friday	n/a	n/a
YEAR 1	Tuesday & Wednesday	n/a	n/a
YEAR 2	Friday	Wednesday	n/a
YEAR 3	Thursday	Monday	n/a
YEAR 4	Monday & Tuesday	n/a	n/a
YEAR 5	Monday	n/a	n/a
YEAR 6	Wednesday	Monday	n/a

- Children should come to school wearing their PE kit on their PE days.
- Year 2 children should also wear their PE kit to school with their swimming costume on underneath on swimming days.
- Year 3/6 children should wear their school uniform on Swimming days and bring their swimwear to change

Menu (w/c 12 Jan)

Week 2

Monday 12th January

Year 3/6 Swim

Wednesday 14th January

No Year 2 Swim due to Gala

Thursday 15th January

Deadline for Primary School Applications via Essex County Council

8.00-9.30pm – “The 2 Johns” online safety workshop for parents/carers

Just a reminder squads begin at 8.15am. (8.10am for netball). Please be punctual. We cannot admit children after 8.20am. You will need to stay with your child until school starts if you arrive late.



Attendance

There has been a lot of media attention on school attendance recently, with reports of an epidemic of persistent absence amongst children. At Katherine Semar we are feeling the effect of this as our attendance has never quite recovered to pre-pandemic levels – but this doesn't tell the whole story, as the good news is that most children at Katherine Semar are attending as well as ever. Next week you will receive a personalised breakdown of your child's attendance since joining Katherine Semar. We hope it will be helpful to you.

Golden Acre Car Park

Following recent changes to the Golden Acre car park security, the gate will now be locked when there are no hall bookings. We understand that parents appreciate being able to use the car park during school drop-off and pick-up times, as it helps ease congestion and makes the process safer for everyone. Golden Acre has very kindly offered to allow us use of the car park however to make this possible, we would need to arrange for the gate to be opened for approximately 30–40 minutes at the start and end of the school day. To do this, we need volunteers who can help by unlocking the gate before drop-off and locking it again after parents have left, and the same at pick-up time. This will ensure the car park remains secure and prevent vehicles being left for long periods or overnight. If you are willing to help or would like more details, please get in touch with Kate. Your support will make a big difference to families and help us keep the area safe.

Survey from Healthy Schools team

The Healthy Schools team is conducting research to better understand children and young people's drinking habits. They aim to identify the challenges schools and parents face in encouraging water consumption. Their objective is to develop a resource campaign that supports both parents and schools. This initiative focuses not only on promoting increased water intake but also on educating parents that sugary drinks, such as squash, juice, and flavoured water, are generally not permitted in schools. We want to encourage parents to help their children adopt water-only habits before they begin school. Please complete the survey here - [Hydration survey for Parents – Fill in form](#)

Essex SEND Ofsted Inspection

Ofsted are undertaking a SEND inspection of the Essex Local Area from 5th January to Friday 23rd January. They would be grateful if parents/carers could complete their Ofsted Survey here:

[Area SEND inspection for Essex Local Area Partnership](#)

INFANT SCHOOL

Join Joyful Noise! - A fun, free singing group for children aged 5–8

Does your child love to sing? *Joyful Noise* meets every Friday during term time from 4:00–4:45pm in the Parish Rooms at St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden. Children enjoy lively songs, musical games, and—of course—juice and biscuits.

At the end of each term, the group puts on a short performance for friends and family, celebrating everything they've learned.

To find out more, email Helen Counsell at music@stmaryssaffronwalden.org.

Come and make a joyful noise!

JUNIOR SCHOOL

Year 3 Maths Workshops – Tuesday 27th January (Flame Robin) and Wednesday 29th January (Grey Falcon)

If you have a child in Year 3 we are inviting you to a special maths workshop designed for parents and children. These sessions are a fantastic way to support your child's learning, boost confidence, and discover fun strategies to make maths enjoyable at home. Attending really sets a great example for your child and shows how important learning is. Please complete the form here to indicate if you will attend: [Year 3 Maths Workshops – Fill out form](#). **Workshops for year 5 will take place on Tuesday 3rd Feb (Orangutans) and Thursday 5th February – a form will be sent out next week for this.**

Junior School Lunch Payments – Reminder.

We completely understand that life gets busy, which is why we encourage families to load funds ahead of time to avoid any disruption. On SchoolMoney, there is a green highlighted box for lunch payments, pre-set to £12.50 (the cost of one week's lunches), but this amount can be increased if you'd prefer to pay for a longer period.

To help manage this smoothly, we will offer a one-week grace period (£12.50). After this, if payment hasn't been received, we will contact you to request immediate payment. If the debt remains unpaid, unfortunately, we will be unable to offer a lunch until the balance is cleared.

We really appreciate your cooperation with this. It would be a great help to our office staff, who spend a considerable amount of time chasing overdue payments. If we find that we are persistently having to follow up, we will call to advise that lunches must be pre-paid going forward.

Thank you for your understanding and support.





FUNDRAISING

Plea for help

As school budgets get tighter each year it is vitally important that we raise some additional funds from fundraising events or projects. Our school's success and ability to provide enriching experiences for our children heavily depend on the collaborative efforts of our dedicated parent community. We believe that with your creativity, enthusiasm, and organizational skills, we can orchestrate successful fundraising initiatives that will greatly benefit our school. In an ideal world we would have an active fundraising team with a committee that meets with staff members on a regular basis to help plan and run events. If this is not possible (and we know how busy parents are) then we would welcome parents volunteering to run one off events.

We will be holding a coffee morning on Friday 23rd January at 9.00am where we would love to chat to anyone who might have ideas or be interested in running an event. If you are able to attend please just come to the main office after drop off – younger siblings are of course welcome!

We know this time isn't ideal for everyone – so we will hold an evening meeting if there is enough interest. Please contact the office (admin-inf@katherinesemar.net) if you would be interested in attending an evening meeting.

Pre Loved Uniform

Should you ever need contact any preloved uniform please contact preloved@katherinesemar.net. Thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards

Julie Puxley
Executive Headteacher