

Dear Parents & Carers,

What a lovely start to the year it has been! It has been wonderful to welcome everyone back for a new term, and already the school feels calm, settled and purposeful.

It has been a pleasure showing visitors around our school and popping into each of the classrooms to see the children busy with their learning. There is a real sense of enthusiasm and positivity throughout the school, and it has been lovely to see everyone getting back into routines so quickly.

It has also been great to get our school clubs up and running this year. The children have been enjoying a range of exciting opportunities beyond the classroom, and we are looking forward to introducing even more activities throughout the year.

We are particularly excited about our new reading and writing texts this year. These carefully chosen texts will inspire our children, develop their love of reading and provide lots of opportunities for rich and engaging writing.

We are looking forward to a happy, successful and exciting Term 1, filled with lots of learning, new experiences and opportunities for our children to thrive. Please find to follow a slightly new format to our newsletter

A very warm welcome back to everyone!

Mrs Seward



MERIT AWARDS

Congratulations to all the children who received a merit award this month!



OWLS

Settling In

A big welcome to all of our new Owls and well done for settling in so quickly and getting used to the school routines! We are loving getting to know you and playing with you throughout the day! We have really enjoyed making our own school dinners this term too!



Communication and Language

As some of our receptions settle into school, we have been enjoying chatting and getting to know our friends! We have shared our "all about me" books and had lots of important telephone calls too!



English

We love listening to stories and we were delighted to meet our new reading buddies this week! We had a fantastic time reading with them! We have also been working hard on our writing by writing some silly sentences! This week, we are back to drawing club and looking at the story "The enormous crocodile" by Roald Dahl.



Reception have been busy learning some of our initial sounds this term and they have even been writing them in the sand whilst Year 1 have been busy learning some of the phase 5 sounds!

Phonics

We have been looking at spirals and using our whole bodies to make the artwork. We also had a quick look at the artist Yayoi Kusama so decided to cover the playground in dots!



Geography

The Y1's have been learning all about aerial views! We have identified where we live on a map and how things can look different from above! Check out our aerial views of the classroom!



Art

Miss Woolls

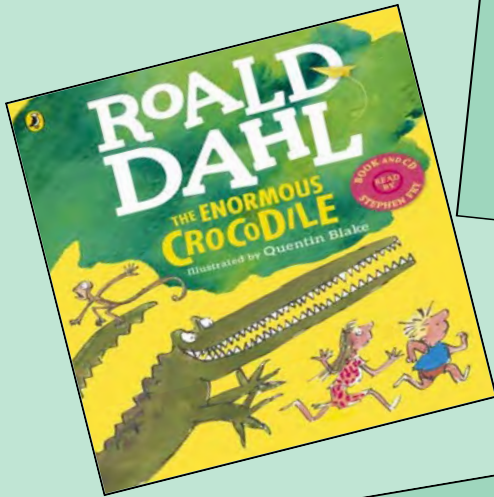


PEREGRINES

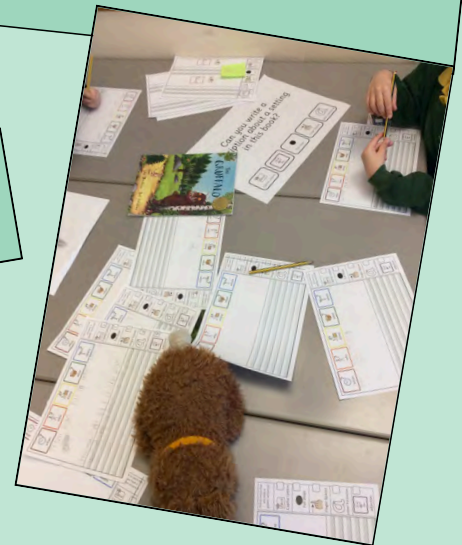
It has been a wonderful start to the year in Peregrines, and we are incredibly proud of how well our Year 1 and Year 2 children have settled into their new classes and routines. They have already shown such enthusiasm, confidence and kindness as they have begun their learning journey together. We have also been enjoying making the most of our new continuous provision space, the Rainbow Roost, which has quickly become a much-loved part of our learning environment.

English

Our class read this half term is 'The Enormous Crocodile', we have been using it as inspiration for our writing. We have loved coming up with interesting adjectives to describe Rumpy Pumpy and The Roly Poly Bird.



We have also been using lots of colourful semantics, and have just introduced 'when' have a look at some of our fantastic sentences! The sillier the better!



Continuous Provision

Year 1 and 2 have both been enjoying using the new updated balcony area, as well as our extended 'Rainbow Roost' which was lovingly named by the children. Just look at how much space we have for provision.



P.E.

In PE we have been enjoying the weather staying dry, and have been using our outdoor space to practice some fundamental skills like dodging, dribbling, throwing and catching.

Mrs Richardson &
Miss Peach



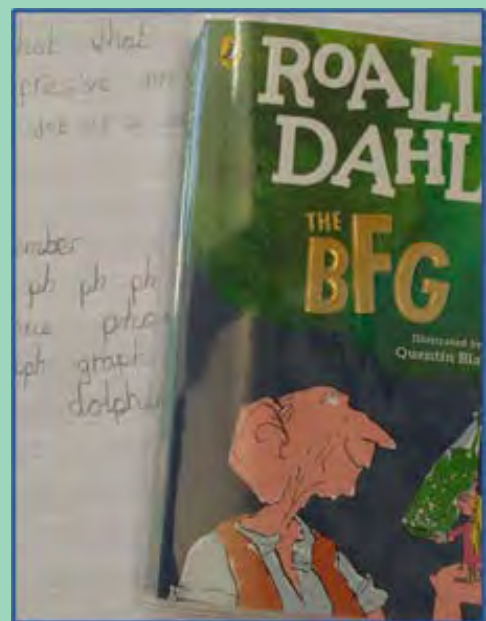
OSPREYS

Well done Ospreys on a positive start to year 3; here is a flavour of what we've been up to...

We've been over the to the land of giants, dreams and snozzcumbers with the BFG.

Other giants are big but not so friendly...

English



Ospreys have studied how bones and muscles support us and help us move, including having a go at making prosthetic hands.

Science

Experimenting with patterns, shading and mark making using charcoal.



Art



Mr Lowe

SPARROWHAWKS

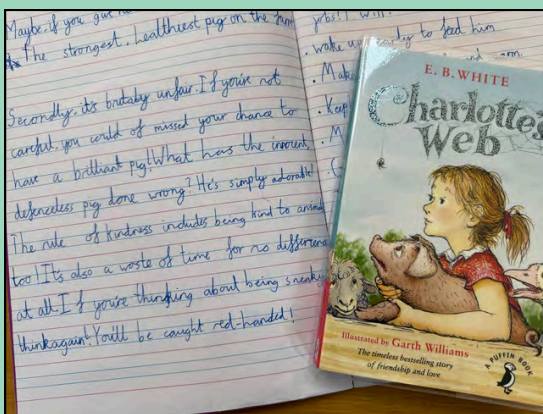
Welcome to the Sparrowhawks class page! We have had such a lovely first month of the academic year and it has been such a delight to welcome your children. Here is a little snap shot of some of the things we've been up to...



Nature

We love to embrace nature whenever we can. This month, I brought in a grass snake specimen and Peggy shared this stunning dragonfly!

Please always feel free to bring in natural treasures we can identify and explore and keep our curiosity flowing...



Sparrowhawks have been exploring E. B. White's *Charlotte's Web*, creating persuasive texts and understanding how to read with accuracy, expression and emphasis. The children have made some fabulous insights and they are using their new persuasive skills on my daily!

English



Watch this space as our Morris and Rousseau inspired tigers begin to come to life!



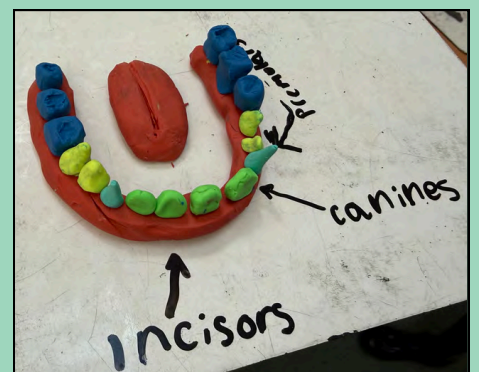
Art



Science

Miss Mahaffy & Mrs Radway

In science we have been learning about Digestion and Food, including carrying out a rather exciting digestion re-enactment with a bar of Weetabix, water, orange juice and some tights! Suffice to say, this was a lesson the children won't soon forget! We have also been understanding the function that each of our teeth have and how these compare in the animal kingdom. We were very impressed with the teeth models!



GOSHAWKS



Welcome to Goshawks! It has been a great pleasure to get to know the children over the last month. They are a great group of children, with such individual interests and perspectives. We have already done so much this year. Here is a glimpse of what we have been doing.

Thank you for all the support you give the children with spellings, TT Rockstars and reading at home. Your effort is vital and much appreciated.

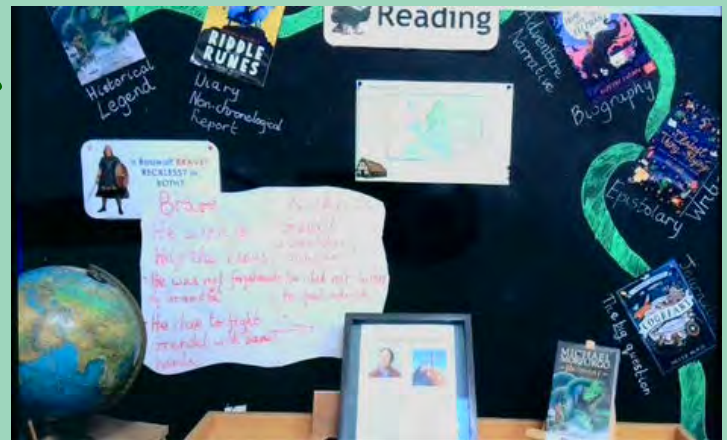


Science

In science we are exploring the properties of materials. So far we have investigated properties including: hardness, transparency and thermal conductivity. We are learning about the importance of a control in any test.

Reading and Writing

This half term our class book is Beowulf, the oldest story in English, retold by Michael Morpurgo. We are exploring how the language creates images in our mind or makes us feel. In writing we are creating our own version of an epic legend, complete with a hero and an antagonist.



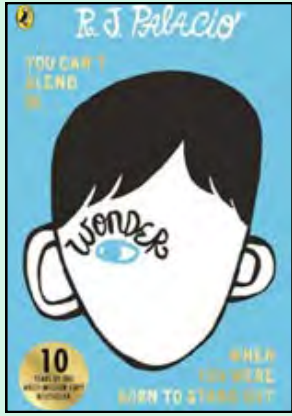
Art

We are exploring typography and map making. In particular we are taking inspiration from the amazing ideas of Louise Fili. We are exploring the shapes we find behind the images our brain tells us we see.



Dr Joyce-Gibbons

EAGLES



English

We have really enjoyed getting stuck into our first Year 6 class novel, *Wonder*, by RJ Palacio. The class have shown great empathy for the protagonist, August Pullman, and we're looking forward to seeing how August's first year at school turns out.

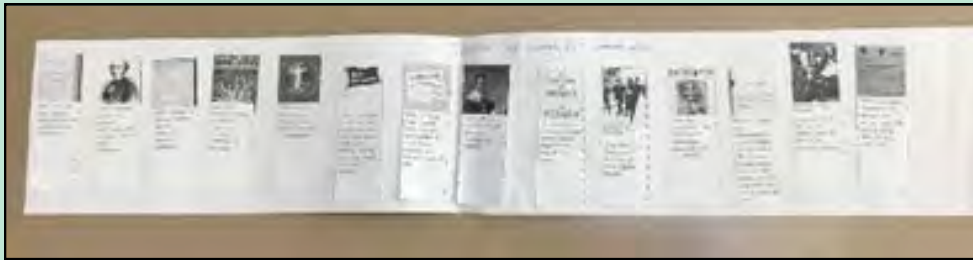
Welcome to Eagles class page! We've had a wonderful start to the year and it's hard to believe that we've only been together for less than a month. Here's a small sample of the many things we have been getting up to...

A sample of some of the wonderful journal writing that we have been working on, based on our reading so far.



History

In history, we have used historical census data to learn about Victorian lives and jobs, as well as the Suffragette movement.



In art, we're looking at 'Exploring Identity' (including the work of Njideka Akunyili Crosby and Mike Barrett), and we've started work on our own layered portraits.



Art



Buddies!



Already a Year 6 highlight: reading with our KS1 reading buddies.

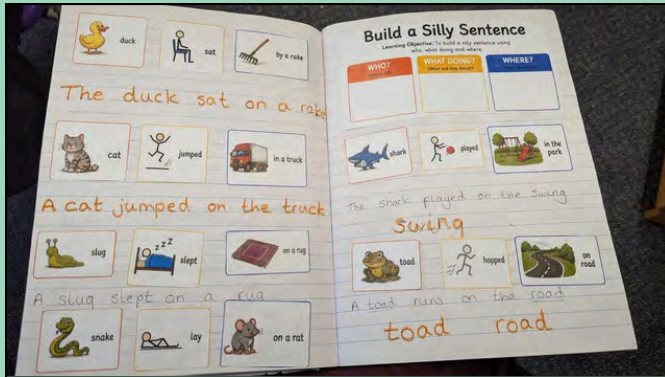


Mr Brown &
Mrs Evans



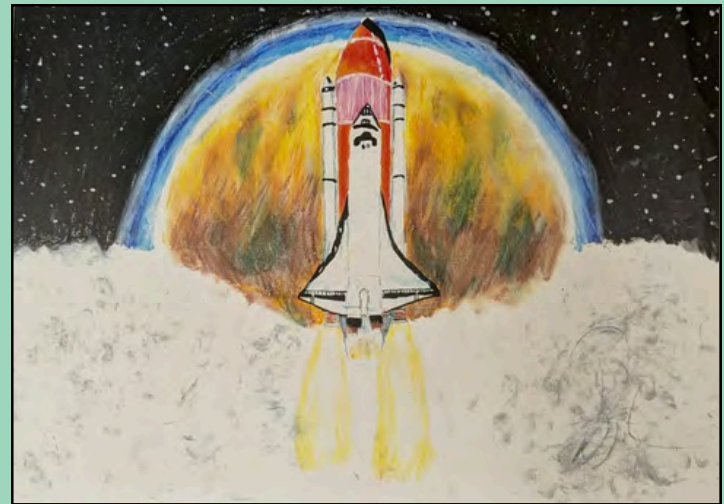
A Creative Month in Merlins!

Some of the children in Merlins have been exploring a wonderful range of books this month, including *What the Ladybird Heard*, *Harry and the Dinosaurs*, *The Wonky Donkey* and *Oi Frog!*. The stories have inspired us to think of rhyming words, invent silly sentences, explore different materials and learn more about the world around us.

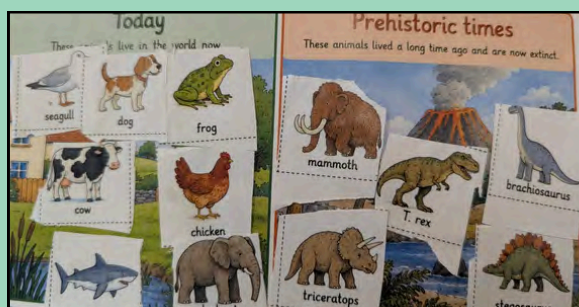


We have also been busy in the kitchen and at the craft table. The children followed recipes and weighed ingredients to make playdough, baked cakes and created Halloween costumes. It has been a wonderfully creative month!

Merlins is home to some talented artists. One of our children have been experimenting with a range of materials and techniques, and we are delighted to share his incredible rocket launch picture. He is now working on a piece inspired by Edvard Munch's *The Scream*. Here is a glimpse of one of his pieces in progress—we cannot wait to see the finished picture.



Another talented Merlin has been making fantastic dinosaur creations, inspiring the children in Peregrins to get creative with playdough too. We look forward to seeing what this pupil creates next!



Mrs Hyatt



IN OTHER NEWS...



We bid a very sad farewell to our wonderful friend and colleague... Mrs Proosky....Mrs Paraskki....Mrs Prohaffy....Mrs Prochaski (and many other names we have heard the children say over the years!) who has been part of the Gastrells family for an incredible 31 years.

In her time at Gastrells, Mrs Prochaski has made an **incredible** impact on over one thousand children, as well as giving so much to the wider life of the school including as a staff governor. Now enjoying a well-deserved retirement, we will miss her enormously – not least hearing her wonderful laughter echoing through the corridors. Mrs Prochaski, we wish you a very happy and relaxing retirement as you leave such an incredible legacy of your time with us.

We also say a very fond farewell to Mrs Callum, who has been part of Gastrells for an incredible 17 years, working on reception as well as serving as Clerk to the Governing Board. Mrs Callum has been one of those familiar and welcoming faces at the heart of the school, supporting children, families and staff with her warmth, positivity and boundless energy. She has made a lasting impact on so many children and has been a tremendous support to colleagues over the years.

Mrs Callum will be very much missed, and we wish her every happiness in her retirement.



We also say goodbye to our wonderful Paula, who first joined Gastrells seven years ago as a dinner lady before moving into her role supporting the After School Club. Throughout her time with us, she has brought energy, warmth and a real sense of fun to everything she has done. Paula has been a much-loved member of the school team and has made such a positive difference to so many children. She will be greatly missed, and we wish her every happiness for the future.

A huge thanks to Catherine, who has worked as a midday supervisor at Gastrells and has played an important role in making lunchtimes run smoothly. Her presence in the lunch hall has made a real difference, helping to ensure that this busy part of the school day is a positive experience for the children. Thank you for all of your care and support and we wish you well for your next endeavours!

As we bid farewell to some much-loved colleagues, we are also delighted to warmly welcome some new faces to Gastrells. Dr Joyce-Gibbons has joined us in Goshawks Class, while Miss Tyler has joined our KS1 team. We are delighted to have them with us and look forward to all they will bring to our school community.



If you can't spare time, donations are also needed;

Wine (full)
Wine (empty with screw top)
Raffle prizes
Pumpkins
Cakes
Books
Teddy's

There will be a box under the stairs for donations

Fog Friends
friendsofgastrells@gastrells.gloucs.sch.uk

Hello everyone,

Volunteer opportunities for "Autumn Fayre - Volunteer - 10 October 2026" are now open.

Please click on the following web link (or copy it into your web browser if clicking doesn't work) to go to the signup sheet:

volunteersignup.org/BP7MY

To sign up, just follow the instructions on the page. It only takes a few seconds to do. Either sign up to the "I'll help anywhere in a specific time slot" or further down for more specific tasks and to see what's going on.

Right at the bottom on donations and props we might need.

Thank you for volunteering!

Design a LEAF CREATURE Competition!

Create your own 2D leaf creature - with a pencil, one leaf, or a whole pile of them!

Entry: £1 per child
(on the day or totalgiving - <https://www.totalgiving.co.uk/charity/friends-of-gastrells>)

Bring your leaf creature to the Autumn Fayre - Saturday 10th October

Entries will be judged by year group on the day, with prizes to be won!

Can't make the Fayre? No problem - just bring your entry into school by Friday 9th October with the entry fee

Let's fill the hall with leaf creatures!

Fog Friends
friendsofgastrells@gastrells.gloucs.sch.uk

FREE SCHOOL MEAL UPDATE

Free School Meals: What Has Changed From September 2026?

There has been an important change to free school meals in England from 1st September 2026, making free school meals available to many more children.

Previously, families receiving Universal Credit generally had to meet an income threshold to qualify. From the start of the 2026/27 academic year, **all children living in households receiving Universal Credit can qualify for free school meals, regardless of household earnings.**

This means that families who were previously earning too much to qualify may now be entitled to free school meals.

Who is eligible?

From September 2026, there are two categories of free school meal eligibility for children in England:

Targeted Free School Meals: Children in households receiving Universal Credit with annual household earnings of £7,400 or less.

Expanded Free School Meals: Children in households receiving Universal Credit whose annual household earnings are above £7,400.

Both groups are entitled to a free school meal, however, the distinction is important because some additional support, such as Pupil Premium and certain holiday and travel support, continues to be linked specifically to the targeted category.

Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 at government-funded schools continue to receive universal infant free school meals, regardless of their family's income or benefits.

How do I apply?

If your child is not already registered for free school meals, you should apply through your local authority.

The easiest way to start is through the government's free school meals service, which allows you to enter your postcode and find the correct local council application process.

It is important to apply even if you think your child may not qualify. The school or local authority will check the information provided and confirm eligibility.

How much could your family save?

Free school meals could make a significant difference to household budgets.

For example, if a school meal normally costs £3 per day, receiving a free meal on 190 school days could save £570 per child over a school year.

Don't miss out

If you think your child may now qualify, please apply through your local authority or speak to the school office for help. <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>



SPREAD THE WORD!

OPEN MORNING

Join us and discover why children love being part of our vibrant school community, where creativity and curiosity shines.



ANY DAYS IN THE WEEKS BEGINNING
28TH SEPTEMBER
2ND NOVEMBER
OR 14TH DECEMBER

Call 01453 765 959 to book a viewing

TERM DATES

AUTUMN 1 TERM

SEPTEMBER

03	Term Starts
18	Swimming Begins Y5 & Y6
28	Prospective Parent Viewings Week

AUTUMN 2 TERM

NOVEMBER

02	Term Starts
02	Prospective Parent Viewings Week
02	Forest School Begins Year 4
04 - 08	Stroud Book Festival
10 - 11	Parents Evening
18	London Trip - Year 5
20	Children in Need

OCTOBER

13	Polling Station at Gastrells
14	Kulachee Arts - Black History Month
22	Term Ends 3.15pm
23	Inset Day

DECEMBER

01	Christmas Panto (in School)
04	Stroud Good Will & Lantern Parade
10	Christmas Jumper & Christmas Lunch
14	Prospective Parent Viewings Week
15	Nativity Production KS1
17	Tabernacle Carol Concert 6pm
18	Term Ends 12.15pm

We will continue to add events to this page
throughout the term.

TERM DATES 26-27

Term 1	Tue 1 st Sept - Fri 23 rd Oct 2026
Term 2	Mon 2 nd Nov - Fri 18 th Dec 2026
Term 3	Mon 4 th Jan - Fri 12 th Feb 2027
Term 4	Mon 22 nd Feb - Thur 25 th Mar 2027
Term 5	Mon 12 th April - Fri 28 th May 2027
Term 6	Mon 7 th June - Wed 21 st July 2027

INSET DAYS

Tue	1 st September 2026
Wed	2 nd September 2026
Fri	23 rd October 2026
Mon	4 th January 2027
Mon	22 nd February 2027

ATTENDANCE ACROSS THE SCHOOL (September)

Owls	94% average
Peregrines	
Ospreys	
Sparrowhawks	
Goshawks	
Eagles	

TERM DATES 2026-27

SCHOOL TERMS AND HOLIDAYS
2026/27



Gloucestershire
COUNTY COUNCIL

SEPTEMBER					OCTOBER					NOVEMBER								
Mon		7	14	21	28	Mon	5	12	19	26	Mon	2	9	16	23	30		
Tues	1	8	15	22	29	Tues	6	13	20	27	Tues	3	10	17	24			
Wed	2	9	16	23	30	Wed	7	14	21	28	Wed	4	11	18	25			
Thur	3	10	17	24		Thur	1	8	15	22	Thur	5	12	19	26			
Fri	4	11	18	25		Fri	2	9	16	23	Fri	6	13	20	27			
Sat	5	12	19	26		Sat	3	10	17	24	Sat	7	14	21	28			
Sun	6	13	20	27		Sun	4	11	18	25	Sun	1	8	15	22	29		
DECEMBER					JANUARY					FEBRUARY								
Mon		7	14	21	28	Mon	4	11	18	25	Mon	1	8	15	22			
Tues	1	8	15	22	29	Tues	5	12	19	26	Tues	2	9	16	23			
Wed	2	9	16	23	30	Wed	6	13	20	27	Wed	3	10	17	24			
Thur	3	10	17	24	31	Thur	7	14	21	28	Thur	4	11	18	25			
Fri	4	11	18	25		Fri		8	15	22	29	Fri	5	12	19	26		
Sat	5	12	19	26		Sat	2	9	16	23	30	Sat	6	13	20	27		
Sun	6	13	20	27		Sun	3	10	17	24	31	Sun	7	14	21	28		
MARCH					APRIL					MAY								
Mon	1	8	15	22	29	Mon		5	12	19	26	Mon		3	10	17	24	31
Tues	2	9	16	23	30	Tues		6	13	20	27	Tues	4	11	18	25		
Wed	3	10	17	24	31	Wed		7	14	21	28	Wed	5	12	19	26		
Thur	4	11	18	25		Thur	1	8	15	22	29	Thur	6	13	20	27		
Fri	5	12	19	26		Fri	2	9	16	23	30	Fri	7	14	21	28		
Sat	6	13	20	27		Sat	3	10	17	24		Sat	1	8	15	22	29	
Sun	7	14	21	28		Sun	4	11	18	25		Sun	2	9	16	23	30	
JUNE					JULY					AUGUST								
Mon		7	14	21	28	Mon	5	12	19	26	Mon	2	9	16	23	30		
Tues	1	8	15	22	29	Tues	6	13	20	27	Tues	3	10	17	24	31		
Wed	2	9	16	23	30	Wed	7	14	21	28	Wed	4	11	18	25			
Thur	3	10	17	24		Thur	1	8	15	22	29	Thur	5	12	19	26		
Fri	4	11	18	25		Fri	2	9	16	23	30	Fri	6	13	20	27		
Sat	5	12	19	26		Sat	3	10	17	24	31	Sat	7	14	21	28		
Sun	6	13	20	27		Sun	4	11	18	25		Sun	1	8	15	22	29	

Term Time		Holidays	
Bank Holiday		INSET	

Term 1: Tue 1 st Sept – Fri 23 rd Oct 2026	39 days
Term 2: Mon 2 nd Nov – Fri 18 th Dec 2026	35 days
Term 3: Mon 4 th Jan – Fri 12 th Feb 2027	30 days
Term 4: Mon 22 nd Feb – Thur 25 th Mar 2027	24 days
Term 5: Mon 12 th April – Fri 28 th May 2027	34 days
Term 6: Mon 7 th June – Wed 21 st July 2027	33 days
Total	195 days*

Christmas Bank Holidays	25 th December 2026
	26 th December 2026
New Year Bank Holiday	1 st January 2026
Good Friday	26 th March 2027
Easter Monday	29 th March 2027
Early May Bank Holiday	3 rd May 2027
Spring Bank Holiday	31 st May 2027
Summer Bank Holiday	30 th August 2027

*195 days are defined as "School days". In the school year 2026/27 pupils must attend for 190 days. Schools may decide individually or collectively which 5 days in the year are INSET or non-contact days (days pupils do not need to attend). Academies and free schools are not legally bound by school day and school year regulations; however, the DfE has stated they should be working towards a minimum of 32.5 hours per school week by September 2024 at the latest.

Please Note: As per the Governance handbook, academies and free schools can choose to set their own term dates. Schools considering alternative dates or considering changes to their school opening times may wish to contact our Transport Team to discuss transport implications and contact local childcare providers to discuss what impact this could have.

Thanks to the internet, there are now many ways for your children to watch TV, both the old fashioned way on a big screen and via the internet with on-demand programming. Restricting and controlling what your kids can watch is harder than ever, but with our help you can make TV safer for your kids and limit the amount that they can watch.

How to manage what your children WATCH ON TV

TRADITIONAL TV

Traditional TV covers programmes broadcast directly to your TV without having to use the internet. This is the standard way that most of us watch television programmes.

BROADCAST TV

Free-to-air broadcast television is delivered via an aerial or satellite to your TV directly or through a PVR that also handles recordings. Most modern TVs and PVRs sold in the last few years will have parental controls, which restrict the content available, requiring a PIN for unsuitable programmes. The exact settings vary by manufacturer, so check your TV or PVRs manual for full details. Parental locks work by checking the rating of a programme as it's broadcast. If a show is unrated or has an incorrect rating, some content may not be blocked.

SKY TV

The version of Sky that you have defines the options available to you. If you have a Sky+ HD box, you'll need to press the Services button and select Parental Control & PIN. From here, you can turn on the Family Setting, which gives you the option to remove Adult Channels and content, and requires a PIN to be entered to buy anything or for pre-watershed playback. More granular control allows you to block specific channels, either completely or only after 8pm, requiring a PIN to watch. You can also block programmes based on ratings, although this feature only works for programmes with correct ratings, so some shows may slip through. Sky Q owners have the more powerful Kids Safe Mode, which locks the system to show only kid-safe material. This includes locking the list of viewable channels and filtering recordings to only those suitable for children. Kids Safe Mode can be enabled either on the main box or on the Sky Q Mini boxes that you might have elsewhere in your home.

INTERNET TV

There are plenty of ways to watch TV online, whether that's via the likes of iPlayer or with streaming video services, such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Instant video. Here, we'll show you how to control each.

AMAZON PRIME VIDEO

Amazon Prime Video has Parental Controls available in the Settings section of the Prime Video website. The settings let you set the age range of content that can be watched without entering a PIN: U, PG, 12, 15 and 18. Settings apply to all devices (bar the Xbox 360, Wii U and Fire TV, which have their own settings), but you can opt-out devices of your choosing in the settings.

For example, you may not want to have any restrictions on your iPad, which only you use. PINs can also be used to block purchases.

NETFLIX

Netflix lets you create profiles for everyone in your house. On the Netflix home screen, if you select Manage Profiles, you can change each one to show different content, defined by age group. Children should be encouraged to use their profiles only, particularly as there's no way to PIN protect adult profiles. However, you can PIN-protect content globally, so if a child does use your profile, they're blocked from watching inappropriate content. Go to Netflix, select Account from the drop-down menu by your name and select Parental Controls. You'll be prompted to enter a PIN, but then can select which content is PIN protected by age range: Toddlers, Older Children, Teens and Adults. You can also PIN protect specific programmes by typing their name in, which could be handy if you feel a programme is unsuitable or a child has been watching it too much.

ON-DEMAND PLAYERS

If your children are watching content from on-demand services, such as BBC iPlayer or All 4, you can turn on parental controls for each via the main websites. Controls work across all devices signed into your account. Controls vary by platform. With BBC iPlayer, the parental lock requires a PIN for anything marked as requiring Guidance by the BBC. ITV Hub parental controls let you PIN protect for content with a G-rating (a guidance rating). For All 4, you can choose to protect programmes rated 16+ or 18+. If you use My5, you can set up a PIN to protect against anyone watching G-rated content. For UKTV Play, you can add a PIN to restrict content selecting one of two levels: all content that's rated 15+ or all content that's rated 18+.

HOW CAN PARENTS MANAGE THEIR CHILDREN'S TV TIME?

Particularly with on-demand content, it can be hard to restrict how much viewing time a child has. However, you can restrict internet time with parental control software, restricting how much time a child can spend online, whether they're using the internet or watching TV shows. Parental control software will generally only work on laptops, computer, tablets and phones. However, if you have parental control software that runs on the router, you can manage other devices, such as a child's smart TV and games console, and restrict time usage on these, too.

Meet our expert

This guide has been written by David Ludlow. David has been a technology journalist for more than 20 years, covering everything from internet security to the latest computing trends and the smart home. A father of two (a nine-year-old and a six-year-old), he's had to control and manage how his children access online services and use apps.



You may also be interested in our smart home devices guide!