



DIARY DATES

January 2024

Mon 15th

Deadline for Reception
2024 Admissions

Visit from
Berkhamsted Fire
Station

Tues 16th

Shared reading –
Voles

Wed 17th

Parent talk about life
as a Dr – Voles

Thurs 18th Shared
reading – YR

Fri 19th

Premier Sports
Workshop

Mon 22nd

09:30 Open Morning
for Nursery 2024/25
Admissions

Tues 23rd

Reception screening –
School Nursing

Fri 26th

Premier Sports
Workshop

February 2024

Fri 2nd

NSPCC Number Day

Premier Sports
Workshop

Fri 9th

09:30 Open Morning
for Reception/Nursery
2024/25 Admissions

Mon 19th – Fri 24th

Half term break

For further dates visit [the school website](https://www.swinggate.herts.sch.uk).

12th January 2024

It has been great to welcome the children back to school after the Christmas break. They have been enthusiastic and ready to continue their learning adventures with us. We've had a busy week including scooter workshops for Year 1 and a visit from local pre-schools who came to our Little City session.



Admissions Deadline 2024

The deadline to apply for reception and year 3 places for September 2024 is **Monday 15th January**. It is essential you apply via the [Herts Admissions portal](https://www.hertsadmissions.com) by the deadline for your application to be considered in the first round allocations.

Open Mornings

We are proud to continue to be a 'Good' school following our Ofsted inspection in December 2022.

Our next Nursery Open Morning dates are at 09:30 on:

- Monday 22nd January
- Friday 9th February.

These take place ahead of the online application system opening on Monday 26th February. The deadline to apply is Thursday 28th March. To reserve a place, [contact the office](#).

Attend & Achieve

Our overall attendance for December was 90.1%. The winners, for the third time in a row, of the cup for December is **Badgers Class**, with an attendance of **92.4%**, Mrs Gallagher will be presenting them with the trophy on Monday. The other classes' attendance were:

- Rabbits with 92%
- Voles with 92%
- Squirrels with 91.1%
- Foxes with 90.4%
- Owls with 87.5%
- Hedgehogs with 86.2%.

The DfE target is over 95% and we hope that in spring we can bounce back to the fantastic attendance achieved at the start of this year. As we have mentioned before, good attendance is key for us in supporting children in their social and academic development.

From Monday we will also be reinstating the **Late Arrival** slips. If your child is late then you will need to complete a slip in the foyer, detailing the reason for your child's absence and their lunch choice.



Pause for thought

"There's no such thing as perfect, nobody is perfect. Practise makes progress."

Terry Price, BMX Academy

Cold weather

Now winter has truly arrived we wanted to remind families that children should have suitable clothing with them each day. This includes a warm winter coat (not raincoat style), a hat and some gloves.

The East of England is now under a yellow cold health weather warning. We will communicate with families via Arbor should the extreme weather affect school opening.

External After School Clubs

Our external provider after school clubs for this term began today with a full programme next week. There are spaces still available for the some of the clubs including Karate, Streetdance, Gymnastics and Game On, if your child is interested please get in touch with the provider Details of how to book were sent before Christmas by email. A reminder of the clubs that run from 15:15-16:15 are below:

- Mon – Karate (Y1 & Y2)
- Tues – Streetdance (YR – Y2)
- Wed - Game On Football (Y1)
- Wed - 'Art Venturers' Art Club (YR - Y2)
- Thurs - Game On Football (Y2)
- Fri - Lego Engineering Club (Y1 & Y2)
- Friday - Gymnastics Club (YR - Y2)

PL Schoolwear

Our school uniform provider has moved to a new shop. You can now visit them at 23 Bennetts Gate, Hemel Hempstead, HP3 8EW. They also still provide free delivery to school for orders placed. Their new opening hours will be Monday 9.30am-5pm and Friday 9.30am – 4.30pm.

The Big Ambition

A reminder the deadline to complete [The Big Ambition survey](#) by Dame Rachel De Souza, Children's Commissioner for England is Friday

19th January. The Big Ambition is open to children and young people in England aged 0-18.

Parents are being encouraged to complete the survey for those who may need additional support or on behalf of younger children (under 6) to make sure the needs of early years children are represented too. It asks for information about the person responding, the child's age, and what school they attend. The questions are slightly different depending on the age of the child answering but everyone is asked what they think the Government should do to make children's lives better. Visit [their website](#) for more information.



Home learning!

We received a very sweet email from Sophia in Voles mummy this week. Sophia has enjoyed 'playing schools' at home, Sophia is always Mrs Hardwick and mummy is Mrs Ray. Apparently 'Mrs Hardwick' took some convincing by 'Mrs Ray' to go to bed when it was time.



Parent Workshops

Healthy Families Programme

Henry & The Swan Youth Project have collaborated to bring parents and carers a free 'Healthy Families' course for those with children between 0-5 years. Henry provides an effective way of working with parents that helps support them and provide a healthy start in life for their children.



The programme runs for eight weeks from week beginning 30th January and is based at The Swan Youth Project Centre in Berkhamsted. A flyer with further information is attached. You can also access further details about the programme using [this link](#).

Supporting Families with Protective Behaviours

Families Feeling Safe are running an online course for Dads 'Supporting Families with Protective Behaviours'. The online course begins on Thursday 25th January from 19:00-21:00 via Zoom. There is no cost to attend as places are fully funded for Dads and male carers who live in Hertfordshire and may need some additional support.

The eight-week course can help Dads to:

- understand what may be influencing their child's behaviour
- understand how feelings, thoughts and behaviour link together
- respond to a range of feelings such as anger, frustration, anxiety, stress and worry
- improve communication to build better relationships
- build on their own and their child's strengths
- learn strategies to help them and their family feel safe.

You can find out more by emailing enquiries@familiesfeelingsafe.co.uk or call 07850 518216.

Nippers & Netiquette

Apps

Keep control of the apps installed on devices by setting your security so that your children have to ask for your permission/password entry before being able to install apps or make purchases. Investigate the features of apps, including GPS, nearby device functionality and casting.

Wellbeing in Action

Healthy Eating

Ham, cheese & potato pie

Ingredients

- 350g new potatoes
- 375g ready-rolled puff pastry
- 100g crème fraîche
- 50g thinly sliced ham
- 125g brie or camembert cheese, halved and sliced
- green salad, to serve (optional)

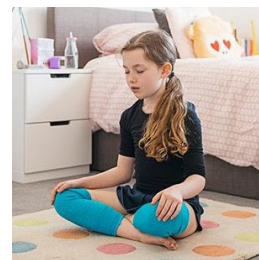


Method

1. Boil the potatoes in salted water for 8-10 mins, until tender but still firm. Leave to cool, then slice.
2. Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/ gas 6. Unroll the pastry with its baking parchment on a baking tray. Reserve 1 tbsp of the crème fraîche, then spread the rest over the pastry, leaving a 2cm border around the edge. Season. Layer the potatoes, ham and cheese over half of the pastry, seasoning the potatoes as you go.
3. Fold over the other half of the pastry and use a fork to seal the edges. Trim with a knife for a neat finish – the pie should look like a big sausage roll. Mix a little water into the reserved crème fraîche, then brush all over the pastry. Make a few cuts along the length, then bake for 35-40 mins until golden. Leave to cool for 10 mins, then serve with a salad, if you like.

Mindfulness

Introduce a peaceful pause to your child's day with this mindfulness activity. Snuggle down somewhere safe, close your eyes and listen to all the sounds around you. What can you hear? The clink of coffee cups, snippets of conversation, sounds from nature? Get curious and feel the buzz of life around you.





And finally...



As we start the New Year, I have been reflecting on the kindness of our school community. Firstly, a big thank you to the Friends of Swing Gate team, especially the Trustees who worked really hard last term organising fundraising opportunities to provide additional equipment and experiences for our children.

Secondly, I would like to say thank you to my fantastic staff who work tirelessly in order to make school an exciting, safe and inspiring place for your children to learn.

Thirdly, the staff and I would like to thank you for all your kind wishes, cards and gifts that you gave at Christmas. They are not expected but we really appreciate them all.

Lastly, a big thank you to all our volunteers who give up their time in order to support staff and children in school. Thank you to Ms Murray, Mrs Baxter, Miss Osmond, Mrs Wilson, Mrs Turner, Miss Long, Mrs Galvin, Mrs

Newman, Mr Gallagher and our two latest recruits, Mr Price and Miss Stelfox. In addition, I would also like to thank the seven Berkhamsted students who also volunteer.

We have had a very active and inspiring week at school and it has been a delight to see the children's faces as they have been taking part in different experiences.

The scooter assembly was inspirational, hearing how someone overcame their fears and difficulties to then become a World Scooter Champion. We talked about fears and worries in an assembly this week and also discussed using the friendship bench. Here are the children holding their class worry monsters. I even have one in my office!



I hope that you have a lovely weekend with your families and take time to connect with others.

*Francesca Gallagher (Mrs)
Headteacher*