October 2026

The Topsham School NEWSLETTER

A love of learning and commitment to the success of every child at the heart of all we do

Respect ~ Opportunity ~ Partnership ~ Success ~ Happiness ~ Aspiration ~ Motivation

Diary Dates

OCTOBER

- **Friday 23rd - Sunday 25th:** Doddi Art Show
- **Friday 23rd:** Last day of Autumn A - 3:30pm finish

HALF-TERM

Monday 26th October May - Friday 6th November 2026
(2 weeks - inclusive)

NOVEMBER

- **Monday 9th:** Return to School for Autumn B
- **Wednesday 11th:** Flu Immunisations
- **Thursday 12th:** School Tour 1:30pm (Book a Place)
- **Friday 13th:** School Ambassadors Day*
- **Friday 13th:** Children in Need
- **Friday 13th:** Non-Uniform Day for Christmas Hamper donations
- **Monday 16th:** Anti-Bullying Week begins - Odd Sock Day
- **Tuesday 17th:** MHST Online Parent Workshop
- **Wednesday 18th**: Work sharing for parents
- **Thursday 19th:** School Tour 4pm (Book a Place)
- **Tuesday 24th:** M&M Production: Beauty and the Beast
- **Tuesday 24th:** Parent Consultations 01: BA, Y1, Y2, Y3, Y4, Y5, Y6
- **Wednesday 25th:** Little Acorns Drop In
- **Thursday 26th:** Parent Consultations 02: BA, Y1, Y2, Y3, Y5, Y6
- **Friday 27th:** Parent Consultations 03: Y4 only

DECEMBER

- **Friday 4th:** Christmas Fair
- **Tuesday 8th:** EYFS and KS1 Nativity 9:15am
- **Tuesday 8th:** EYFS and KS1 Nativity 9:15am
- **Wednesday 9th:** EYFS and KS1 Nativity 2:45pm
- **Tuesday 15th:** KS2 Christmas Song Performances*

*More information about these events and further dates for the term will be sent shortly via Schoolcomms.

ARTICLE 28 - Every child has the right to an education

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to your October newsletter. Please read on to find out more about what we have been up to this term, as well as some of the developments that we are excited to share with you all after half term.

I would like to take the opportunity to say a HUGE thank you for the welcome I have received this half-term. I have been made to feel so welcome by the whole school community and I am so excited about my time to come in school.

On behalf of myself and all of the staff in school, we would like to wish you all a wonderful half-term break. Remember: this year we begin a 2-week half term, returing on Monday 9th November 2026. Whatever you have planned, please be safe and enjoy your time together.

As always, thank you for your continued support of our school.

Best wishes,

Joanna Crathorne

Head of School

Amazon Wishlists

We are often asked for ways that people can support our school with resources, so we have put together 'Class Wish Lists' on Amazon with some of the book titles that we are keen to purchase for our new library spaces. You can find out more about our new reading and library developments later in the newsletter, as well as in the parent information about reading which will be sent shortly.

The list links are as follows:
Main Library List:
https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/3ARVYRVM4IJ1K?ref_=wl_share

EYFS and KS1 Picture Book List:
https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/17M3W7LO7GLOS?ref_=wl_share

Thank you for all the wonderful donations of pre-loved books and items from the wishlists so far. We are all very grateful of the support.

Halloween Safety

With Halloween approaching, we would like to remind families of a few simple ways to keep children safe over half term.

- Stay visible: Wear reflective clothing and carry a torch when out after dark.
- Cross safely: Use pedestrian crossings and remember to stop, look and listen.
- Stay together: Younger children should always be accompanied by a responsible adult.
- Check treats: Ensure all sweets and treats are checked by an adult before eating.
- Choose safe costumes: Keep costumes away from candles and naked flames.
- Be respectful: Remember that not everyone celebrates Halloween. Encourage children to be polite, stay with their group and never enter a stranger's home.
- Be mindful of younger children and those who may find Halloween frightening.

We wish all our families a happy, spooky and safe half term!

Attendance

The school's attendance rate is currently at 96.5%. This year, our school is still aiming to try and keep our attendance rate at 97% or above, so we are off to a great start!

If your child is unwell and not attending school, please make sure that you contact the school office by 9am to report the reason for their absence.

In line with our safeguarding policies and protocols, if we have not heard from a parent by 9:30am, we will contact you to check the reason for your child's absence.

A reminder that, in line with local authority policy, we are unable to authorise absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Your understanding and cooperation with this is greatly appreciated.

Online Safety

This month, we are sharing online safety guidance which focuses on the online game Fortnite.

With over 650 million registered users, Fortnite remains one of the world's most played and discussed online games globally.

known for its vibrant graphics, fast-paced gameplay, and cultural crossovers with everything from music artists to superhero franchises, the game continues to capture the attention of young people.

The guide we are attaching outlines the risks trusted adults need to know about, including game updates, and offers practical safety tips to help address them.

Keep in touch

admin@topsham.devon.sch.uk
www.topsham.devon.sch.uk
01392 874498

ARTICLE 28 - Every child has the right to an education

House Points

After half term, we are relaunching the school's positive behaviour system - House Points. There is already lots of excitement from the children today, as we have been reminding them about house point badges, house point totals for their teams and all the lovely treats we will be introducing after the holiday.

This half term, the winning team has been **Emerald** who had the highest team total this half term. Their treat after half term will be a non-school uniform day. A letter will be sent to the children who are in this team shortly.

At the start of the next half term, the children will be given their starting total of house points so that they can see how far off their next badge they are - the children receive a badge for every 1000 house points earned.

Please encourage your child to remember to wear their badges with pride. Sometimes, I will announce a 'surprise treat' for the children who have remembered to wear their badges. These are small treats such as: extra house points, extra playtime, going in first for their lunch and lots more.

If they lose their badges, replacements can be purchased from the school office for £1.

I am looking forward to the children all sporting their 'bling' after half term! Your support to help them remember their badges is very much appreciated.

Keep in touch

admin@topsham.devon.sch.uk
https://topsham.devon.sch.uk/
01392 874498

Mental Health

Building Children's Confidence and Resilience

On Tuesday 17th November, our Mental Health Support Team (MHST) will be delivering an online session for parents on Helping Children Build Confidence and Resilience.

In today's world, children can face pressures around friendships, learning and fitting in, so helping them believe in themselves and feel able to cope when things don't go to plan is more important than ever.

We'll explore simple ways to help children learn from mistakes, see them as opportunities to grow, and find the confidence to keep trying when things feel difficult.

If you're able to join us, we'd love to see you there and will send out a link nearer the date! In the meantime, check out this short video about Resilience from leading Children's Mental Health Charity, Place2Be.

https://parentingsmart.place2be.org.uk/article/raising-a-resilient-child

Bikes & Scooters

It is lovely to see the children riding bikes and scooters to school and keeping fit and healthy.

Please remind the children of road safety and awareness when riding on the road, as the road is busy with cars at both the beginning and end of the day. Please make sure that your children stay within your range of vision at all times.

Please also ensure that the children wear helmets when riding their bikes, skateboards and scooters, even if only for a short distance from the car or parking nearby.

ARTICLE 28 - Every child has the right to an education

2027 Secondary Applications

For children in Year 6, applications for Year 7 secondary school places opened on 1st September 2026.

Please be aware that applications for a place at secondary school in Year 7 **need to be submitted by 31st October 2026.**

Offer day will be 1st March 2027 when you will find out the allocation that has been made for your child.

To complete your application, you need to apply online at www.devon.gov.uk/admissionsonline to ensure that your child gets their place.

If you cannot apply online, please contact the Education helpline on 0345 155 1019 and ask for a paper copy of the form to be sent to you.

USF Cross Country Event

Some children from across Key Stage 2 represented The Topsham School brilliantly at the recent USF Cross Country Event in Christow. Luckily, the weather was on our side and a great morning was had by all who took part. All of the children showed great determination and resilience, all earning a well-deserved certificate and some even earning medals! Well done Team Topsham!

ARTICLE 28 - Every child has the right to an education

Reception Starters 2027

Applications for Reception spaces for September 2027 will soon be opening. Families will have until mid-January 2027 to apply for a school place of their choice.

All applications must be done through admissions. Further information with key dates will be available on the Devon admission portal towards the end of the month.

If you know anyone who would like to apply for a reception place at our school, please spread the word about our amazing school and tell them to check the school website for dates and times of upcoming school tours.

Alternatively, please advise anyone interested to contact the school office to arrange a time for a show round and we will do our best to help. We can't wait to welcome new families to our school.

Some things to look forward to...

This half term, we have been busy preparing some new and exciting developments for the children and families at The Topsham School! Many of these will be launching after half term and we are excited to share some of these with you on the next few pages. More detailed information about each of these will be sent in the first week back after half-term.

Rainforest Reading Challenge

We are excited to launch our brand new challenge – the Rainforest Reading Adventure!

This year, as part of our Reading for Pleasure initiatives, the children are being challenged to read or share 50 recommended book titles for their year group, with a different set for every age group.

They will receive a list of books to keep at home showing all the different book titles, as well as a rainforest adventure recording sheet to keep in the reading diary.

The rainforest challenge runs for the school year, so there is no rush! Just enjoy reading and sharing the titles – there are a range on offer, including poetry books, information texts and storybooks too!

As part of our school developments, our lovely PTA have also donated £1000 towards the exciting library and reading plans ahead. Some of this has been used to purchase the set of 50 books for each of the year groups, as well as for the development and furnishing of some of the spaces in school. A HUGE thank you from all of us for your help in funding our big ideas!

Virtual Library

In order to support children's access to books and reading, we are also delighted to share our new Virtual Library on the school website.

There is a whole school bookshelf on the main page of the website, as well as individual links to class bookshelves on the class pages. If you are looking for a book to share and enjoy and fancy a change from reading yourself, why not try this?

For our older readers, whilst the whole audio versions are not always available, the bookshelf is a lovely way to sample a text or listen to the first chapter to see if you want to read on. There will also be some useful links to Accelerated Reader and Oxford Owl too.

The Virtual Library will 'go live' after half term.

School Book Club

We are also introducing our termly book club! The children are invited to read or share the books selected for their class/year groups by Friday 11th December 2026.

We will discuss the book with the children who have read it, to listen to their views over a hot chocolate and a biscuit! We will also try to create displays of our reading journey and rating the books too.

We have a copy of each title in our school library for the children to borrow, or families may borrow from public libraries or purchase if you so wish. If your child borrows the school copy, we encourage them to return the book as soon as they have finished in order that other children may borrow it too. We can't wait to hear all their views!

The titles will be revealed after half term.

Spelling Bee

After half term, we will be launching our brand new Spelling Bee Challenge for home learning.

Alongside the spelling and phonics that we teach the children every day in school, we are challenging the children to learn some key spellings at home to support their writing outcomes.

The Spelling Bee Challenge will be for children in Year 1 to Year 6. There are spellings set across 9 levels which focus on High Frequency Words, Common Exception Words and words from the statutory spelling lists for children in Lower Key Stage 2 and Upper Key Stage 2.

Each level is split into three sections - Bronze, Silver and Gold - with approximately 20 spellings to learn for each section. The children will practise these spellings at home and progress through each level once they are confident. Once they have completed a level, they will earn a raffle ticket for a prize draw at the end of each term for a chance to win a prize.

We are launching this after half-term and we will send further instructions then; watch this space for more information!

Some more things to look forward to...

You thought we were finished, but there's more! Over the course of the next year, we are going to be developing and updating some of the existing spaces in our school. This includes the creation of some more reading spaces within the building, as well as the outdoor area for our littlest learners in school. If you know of any businesses, near or far, who may be able to help with the funding of these spaces, please get in touch.

EYFS & KS1 Library Space

We are looking to develop the corridor space outside Big Acorns and Year 1 into an additional library and reading space for our littlest learners in school. This will enable us to create appealing reading spaces for children to snuggle up and share books with others. We are in the process of acquiring some new furniture to create a cosy area with book shelves that will allow the children easy access to beautiful picture books. Below is an idea of what we are hoping to achieve. We look forward to sharing the developments with you over the coming months.

KS2 Reading Zones

At the other end of the school, in the KS2 resources area, we are also hoping to create some reading zones for our older children. These will be spaces they can go to read or be more mindful, as well as spaces where learning can continue to take place outside of the classrooms. Some of the children have already shared some lovely ideas for the themes for these zones, and the children in Year 5 are excited about a trip to IKEA which will be organised after half term (meatballs may be involved!). The most popular idea at the moment is a comic book zone (see idea below). It is lovely to see such excitement and enthusiasm from the children, so we are keen to get started as soon as possible.

EYFS Outdoor Area

This is perhaps our biggest area for development at the moment and we are super excited about the possibilites and ideas we have so far.

Part of the curriculum for our youngest learners is access to continuous provision opportunities within the outdoor environment. What we have at present, has been well-loved and well played with over the years and is now in need of an upgrade.

Our plans for development include enlarging to area by moving the fence and creating clearer zones for the children to enjoy and develop their skills. This includes creating a construction zone with sit-on excavators, a new mud kitchen, water area and lots, lots more!

The Federation are putting £10,000 towards the development of the projects, alongside grant applications which we are hoping will bring in an additional £6,000-£10,000. We are keen to achieve as much of the plan as possible, so if you think you would be able to help in any way, please get in touch.

PHASE 01
Water Play

PHASE 02
Construction & Mud Kitchen

We are currently looking for a carpenter or builder who may be able to help with the construction of Phase 2 of the project (see above picture). If you know of anyone who could help, please get in touch.

Doddi Art Show

This weekend, the Doddiscombsleigh Art Show will be taking place in the Teign Valley Community Hall. There is lots of beautiful art to view and/or buy, as well as a small shop selling unique gifts and crafts, and a cafe selling lots of delicious cakes.

This year, some of the children from across the Federation have been given the opportunity to sell their artwork. This will be a small selection of artwork from each school. The children will receive a 35% commission from any artwork sold and presents an exciting opportunity for all the children to learn about careers in the arts. All of our children in Years 3 and 4 are selling their beautiful works of art. Why not pop along and show your support over the weekend!

A percentage of the money raised through sales of artwork goes to Doddiscombsleigh Primary School - a United Schools Federation School - and your support for this tiny school would be very much appreciated.

Poco Rave

It was great to experience my first Poco Rave last weekend - I think I may still be recovering! But what great fun was had by all who attended!

A HUGE thank you to the PTA for organising the event and to Poco Drom for such an amazing performance and party atmosphere. I think I am still finding confetti around the building!

The event raised well over £1000 from both ticket sales and sales of refreshments and other items at the event! WOW! All of the money raised will go to the PTA to hopefully fund more of our development plans throughout the coming year.

Thank you, as always, for your support of the school events. We hope you all enjoyed it as much as we did.

Keep in touch

admin@topsham.devon.sch.uk
www.topsham.devon.sch.uk
01392 874498

Community Events