

Monthly Newsletter September 2025

Great Kingshill CE Combined School



Aspiring to be our best with kindness, respect and faith.

"Love your neighbour as yourself" Luke 10:25

Message from Mrs Best

We've now reached the end of September and the first month of the school year—it's hard to believe how quickly it's flown by! The start of term is always a busy time, full of new faces and adjustments, but I'm pleased to say that both children and staff have settled in brilliantly and are already hitting their stride.

This week has brought a more autumnal feel, and with the changing season, coats and hats will soon become part of the daily routine. Please remember to label all items clearly. If your child misplaces something, do feel free to look for it in the lost property box (located in the foyer). Please note that the box is emptied at the end of each half term.

As we begin the school year, it's a great opportunity to revisit our school values and rules. We've worked hard with the children to embed these principles, and we're proud to say that

they've become second nature to most of them. As a whole-school community, we continue to aspire to be our best at all times, act with kindness, show respect, and have faith that our values will guide us to do what is right—not just what is easy.

Here's a reminder of our school rules:

- **We are kind**
- **We show respect**
- **We always try our best**
- And our unofficial rule: **We have fun!**

Creating a school environment where children feel loved, safe, and know that they matter is what makes GK stand out—and it's what makes our school such a special place.

Finally, I'd like to extend a warm welcome to all our new families. We hope you've felt embraced by our community and are settling in well.

This year, we've decided to restructure the newsletter and other communication methods with the hope that *less is more*. We'll be sending a full newsletter at the end of each month, featuring short updates from across the school. You'll also receive a link to view all upcoming dates. By streamlining our communications, we hope to make things easier for parents.

In addition, year group-specific information will be sent via email and Class Dojo. Class teachers will continue to use the Class Story to share weekly updates, so please check regularly. We hope this new approach will be helpful, and we'll keep it under review.

Mrs Best

[News from around the school](#)

A Glimpse Across the School

While we know you regularly see updates from your child's year group on Class Dojo, we thought it would be lovely to share a broader view of life at Great Kingshill. Each month, we'll include a selection of photos from across all key stages—capturing moments of learning, creativity, play, and celebration.

It's a chance to see what's happening elsewhere in the school and to appreciate the vibrant, caring community your child is part of. From Early Years exploration to Upper Key Stage 2 achievements, we hope these snapshots bring a smile and a sense of connection.

Keep an eye out for your favourite moments—and who knows, you might spot a familiar face!

Early Years









Key Stage 1



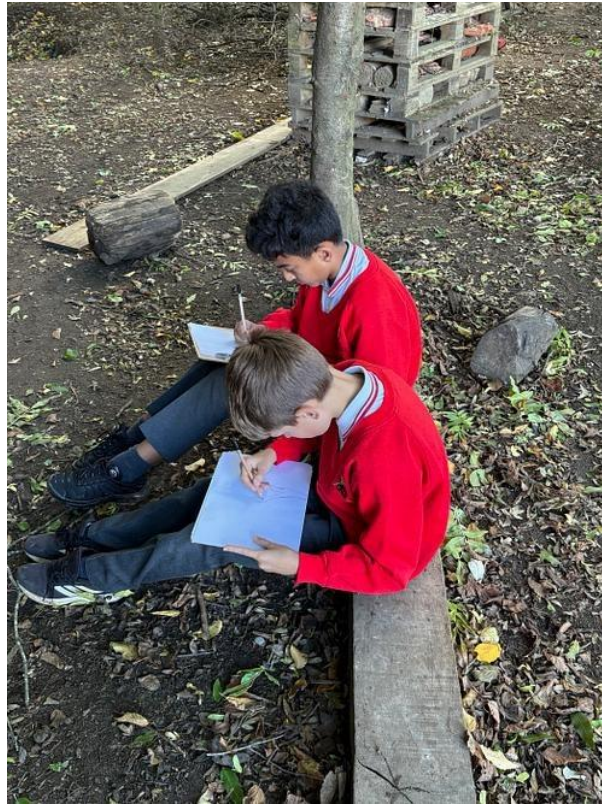




Year 1 are feeling very excited about their trip to Windsor Castle on Friday. As well as enjoying a tour of the beautiful castle and its grounds, they will be taking part in a 'Meet the Monarch' workshop where there will be opportunities to try on ceremonial robes and handle replica items such as the Orb and Sceptre. What a fantastic way to enrich their understanding of British history and the monarchy.

Year 2 have been celebrating National Poetry Day this week by learning and performing the poem 'Five Little Polar Bears'. They also impressed their teachers by writing their own 'If I were a penguin...' poem. Another highlight was this week's Earth Art lesson where the children worked in groups to create beautiful mandalas using natural resources such as leaves, petals, pinecones and conkers. The finished mandalas were stunning!

Key Stage 2









It has been an engaging and energetic start to the new academic year in Key Stage Two, and the children have loved getting back to their learning.

Year 6, delighted to have got their Secondary Transfer Test out of the way in Week 1, have enjoyed diving straight into their history topic, focusing on World War One. After half term, they'll move onto World War Two, and they have their visit to the Imperial War Museum in London to look forward to as well.

The first year group to venture out to a sports tournament this year was Year 5, who represented the school in a handball competition. They've also been working hard in science, looking at mixtures and solutions and conducting some great experiments. In a fortnight, they'll be off to Liddington for their residential – I can't believe it's that time of year again already!

Year 4 have started swimming in Princes Risborough, and the children are loving their sessions. They have also been doing some fantastic cross-curricular learning, using their history knowledge in their English lessons to write persuasive speeches as Boudicca!

The Harvest Festival celebration took place this week, and Year 3 did an amazing job! They gave us an insight into where our food comes from and entertained us with songs about fluffy cauliflowers and yellow combine harvesters! As a school, we supported a fantastic

local cause by donating many tins and packets of food, which Miss Forbes and Miss Tilbury took to the One Can Trust – a big thank you to everyone who was able to contribute.



We are incredibly grateful to the PTA for their unwavering dedication and hard work in securing some amazing resources for our children. Thanks to their efforts and the support of our wonderful parent community, last year's fundraising is now directly benefiting our students.

Following the most recent PTA meeting, we're thrilled to share that we've been able to secure 60 iPads on a 3-year lease, refresh our reading books for KS2 children, bring in new guided reading resources for KS1, purchase an online spelling and typing programme, and provide exciting new gross motor resources for our early years students. It's an incredible feeling to see these funds directly impacting our children's learning and development.

On behalf of the school, we want to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone involved. The PTA has big plans to continue expanding our resources and facilities this academic year, and these will be made possible through more fantastic events—events that are loved and supported by our community. But we can't do it without you! We need volunteers to help with event preparations, to lend a hand on the day, or even assist with running things behind the scenes. If you're able to contribute your time or expertise, please reach out to us at pta@gkcs.school

Together, we're making a huge difference for our children, and it truly feels amazing to be working as one community. Thank you PTA, and thank you to everyone who helps make these efforts possible.

Superkind, Collective Worship & Values

Black History Month

October is Black History Month in the UK: a time to recognise, reflect upon and celebrate the invaluable contributions of black individuals and communities to society. In the weeks leading up to half term, the children will be learning all about the achievements of black men and women in the past and today. The theme for 2025 is 'Standing Firm in Power and Pride,' and the children will be learning about the late British writer, poet, actor, musician and professor of poetry and creative writing, Benjamin Zephaniah. After this, each year group will be exploring the achievements of different inspirational individuals including Rosa Parks, Katherine Johnson, Mary Seacole and Simone Biles. Finally, the children will be reflecting on their own hopes and dreams for the world, referring back to Martin Luther King Jr's famous 'I Have a Dream' speech.

It is always really wonderful to see the children recognise the school values of love, courage, forgiveness, hope, respect and truth in the achievements of others during our Black History Month lessons.



Scannappeal

On Friday 10th October, Stuart House would like to invite the children to come dressed in blue Mufti. Stuart House's chosen charity this year is 'Scannappeal'.

This is a local charity which raises funds to purchase life-saving state of the art equipment for Amersham, Stoke Mandeville, Wycombe and Community Hospitals, serving people living in Buckinghamshire and the neighbouring counties. In return for the children wearing their own clothes, we are asking for a minimum of a £1 donation towards this wonderful charity, which seeks to support and care for our local community.

This can be donated in cash at morning drop off in the buckets provided.



Personal Development & Safeguarding



Starting the Conversation: Online Safety at Home

Talking regularly with your child about their online experiences—just like you would about their day at school—can help keep them safe. When these chats become part of everyday life, children feel more relaxed and are more likely to come to you with any worries.

We know the digital world can feel overwhelming: new apps, unfamiliar language, and ever-changing risks. But staying informed and involved makes a big difference.

Here are five key tips for supporting your child's digital wellbeing:

1. **Talk in an age-appropriate way** Start early. For younger children, explain what to do if they see something upsetting. For older ones, discuss privacy, peer pressure and online behaviour.
2. **Connect with other parents** Share your approach to internet safety and understand theirs. It helps set consistent boundaries across different households.
3. **Follow your child on social media** If they're old enough to be online, stay engaged with what they're posting and seeing.
4. **Watch out for harmful content** Not all risks are obvious. Help your child develop a healthy relationship with technology and body image.
5. **Check in regularly** Ask questions without judgment. Open communication builds trust and helps you spot concerns early.

Online safety isn't about fear—it's about preparation, conversation, and support. If you'd like help setting up parental controls or talking through tough topics, please reach out. We're here to help.

Road Safety & Walking Home: A Reminder for Families

We know that the roads around school can be busy, especially during drop-off and pick-up times. Parking restrictions add to the challenge, but safety must always come first—for both children and adults.

Please take a moment to think carefully about **where you cross the road**. The main road outside school is often busy, and unfortunately, some drivers exceed the speed limit. **Using the designated crossing—even if it takes an extra minute—can make all the difference.**











Let's work together to keep everyone safe.

Walking Home Alone: Building Independence Safely

As children grow, walking home alone can be an important step toward independence and preparing for secondary school. While we understand that walking all the way home may not be possible for every family, there are ways to support this transition.

Children in **Years 5 & 6** may walk home **with a signed permission slip**. Many parents begin by meeting their child at a nearby location—such as the **lay-by, bottom of Cryers Hill**, or **Great Kingshill Common**. These are popular routes and often shared by other families.

Before allowing your child to walk home, we recommend discussing and agreeing on the following:

-  **Collection point & time:** Decide where and when you'll meet.
-  **What to do if plans change:** Agree on a backup plan if you're delayed or not there.
-  **Visibility & behaviour:** Remind them that others are watching—be respectful and responsible.
-  **Road safety:** Agree on safe crossing points and how to cross properly.
-  **Prompt departure:** Leave school promptly—no hanging around or messing about.
-  **If something goes wrong:** Make sure they know what to do and who to contact.
-  **Mobile phone use:** If they have a phone, ensure they know how to use it, who to call, and what to do if they have no credit.
-  **Situational awareness:** Encourage them to stay alert and avoid walking while looking down at their phone.
-  **Emergency support:** Remind them they can always return to school if they need help—someone will be there.
-  **Walking with friends:** It's often safer to walk in small groups or pairs. Agree who they'll walk with and how they'll make sure no one is left behind or walking alone.

Attendance Matters

Attendance Really Does Matter!

We're writing to inform you of an important update to our **attendance policy**, which takes effect immediately. To support the best possible learning environment for all children, we are placing a renewed emphasis on **punctuality**.

From now on, any child not present in school when the doors close at 8:45 AM will be marked as late, and the attendance will be recorded as unauthorised.

We understand that mornings can sometimes be challenging, and we want to reassure you that this change is not intended to penalise families. Instead, it's about highlighting the value of a calm and timely start to the school day. When children arrive on time, they are better prepared to:

- Engage with their learning
- Settle into routines
- Feel confident and connected with their peers

Prompt arrival also helps minimise disruption for the whole class and ensures every child receives the full benefit of the day's teaching.

We are committed to working with families to support good attendance and punctuality. If you are experiencing any difficulties, please reach out—we're here to help.

If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to contact us. Thank you for your continued support in helping us create the best possible learning environment for your child.

[Exceptional Request for Leave of Absence](#)

Leave of Absence Reminder

We would like to remind all parents and carers that **requests for leave of absence should only be made in exceptional circumstances**. Unfortunately, we are **unable to authorise family holidays or extended visits abroad** during term time.

Please be aware of the following important points regarding unauthorised absences:

- **Unauthorised absences are reviewed on a "10 in 10" basis**—this means that if a child accrues **10 unauthorised absences within a 10-week period**, the school is required to refer the case to the Local Authority.
- This review process runs **concurrently throughout the school year**; it is not reset at the start of each academic year.
- While the school makes the referral, **the decision to issue a penalty notice lies with the Local Authority's Attendance Team**.
- If you have previously received a penalty notice, please note that **you will not be eligible for the reduced rate payment option**.

We understand that family circumstances can be complex, and we are here to support you. If you have any questions or need further clarification, please contact Mrs Marks on attendance@gkcs.school

Thank you for your continued cooperation in helping us maintain high standards of attendance and punctuality.

Absence Monitoring & Home Visits

Home Visits & Absence Monitoring

We want to remind families of our procedures regarding **sickness near school holidays** and **absences lasting more than three consecutive days**.

To ensure transparency and uphold our attendance standards:

- If a child—or multiple children in a household—are absent for **more than three consecutive days**, we will conduct a **home visit**.
- We also carry out home visits for **any child absent during the three days leading up to a school holiday**.

Last year, we conducted a significant number of these visits. In many cases, families had reported illness, but no one was at home. We understand that travel logistics and costs can make it tempting to leave early before the end of term. However, if this is your situation, **please do not report your child as sick**.

Instead, we ask that you **complete the leave of absence form** and be honest about your plans. If a home visit is conducted and no one is present, the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised**.

We appreciate your cooperation in helping us maintain a fair and consistent approach to attendance. If you have any questions or need support, please contact Mrs Marks on attendance@gkcs.school

Clubs and Enrichment

Educational Visits, Enrichment & Clubs

We are incredibly proud of the wide range of **educational visits, enrichment activities, and clubs** we offer at Great Kingshill. These experiences add real value to our curriculum and provide children with opportunities to explore, discover, and grow beyond the classroom.

We recognise, however, that these opportunities come at a cost—and we are mindful of the financial pressures families may face. That's why we're committed to being transparent and thoughtful in how we plan and communicate these activities.

Alongside today's newsletter, you'll find a letter outlining our approach to educational visits and enrichment for the year ahead. Please take a moment to read it—it contains important information about planning, contributions, and how we aim to make these experiences accessible and meaningful for all.

Thank you for your continued support in helping us offer a rich and inspiring school experience for every child.

We need you! Do you have the skills to help us?



Join Our Local Academy Committee – Be a Foundation Member

As we begin a new school year at Great Kingshill, we're reaching out to our wider school family—parents, grandparents, and community members—with an invitation to play a vital role in shaping our school's future.

We are currently seeking **Foundation Members** to join our **Local Academy Committee (LAC)**. These are individuals appointed by the Diocese to support school leaders in upholding and nurturing our school's **distinctively Christian ethos**. It's a meaningful opportunity to serve, reflect, and contribute to the spiritual and educational life of our school.

Our committee is small—and growing smaller—and we need fresh voices, new perspectives, and helping hands to continue the important work we do. You don't need to be an expert in education, but you do need to have:

- Time to commit
- A heart for service
- An open mind
- A willingness to listen, learn, and support

This is not a role for those looking to drive personal agendas. It's a chance to walk alongside our leadership team, ask thoughtful questions, and help us capture what makes Great Kingshill special.

Together, we explore three key questions:

- *What is it like to be a pupil at Great Kingshill?*
- *What is it like to work at Great Kingshill?*
- *What is it like to be part of the Great Kingshill community?*

The LAC meets termly and works closely with school staff and the Kings Education Trust Trustee Board. The Trust Board focuses on five strands of accountability:

- Safeguarding
- School Improvement
- Staffing
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Systems & Compliance

We're especially keen to hear from individuals with experience in:

- Education
- Communications & Marketing
- Finance
- Health & Safety
- Premises Management
- Travel Planning & Sustainability

This is an **active role**—you'll spend time in school, engage with staff and pupils, and receive full training and a clear workplan. It's a rewarding way to give back, make a difference, and be part of something truly special.

If you—or someone you know—might be interested in joining our committee, we would love to hear from you. Let's work together to ensure Great Kingshill continues to be a place where children feel loved, safe, and inspired to be their best.

Our Local Academy Committee

Meet Our Local Academy Committee

Our Local Academy Committee (LAC) is a dedicated group of volunteers who work closely with school leaders to support and uphold the distinctively Christian ethos of Great Kingshill. Each member brings unique skills and perspectives, helping us answer three key questions:

- *What is it like to be a pupil at Great Kingshill?*
- *What is it like to work at Great Kingshill?*
- *What is it like to be part of the Great Kingshill community?*

Here's a snapshot of our current team:

  **Ryan – Parent Member & Chair**

Elected in 2023, Ryan's daughter has now moved on to Year 7, but he continues to serve as our Chair. With a background in finance and risk management, and experience working with Buckinghamshire and several London boroughs, Ryan brings valuable insight into education and local authority systems.

Elizabeth – Parent Member

Also elected in 2023, Elizabeth's son is still a pupil at GKCS. With a professional background in social work, she supports the safeguarding strand by working closely with our pastoral team.

Denise – Foundation Member

Appointed by the Diocese and supported by her local church, Denise has served on the LAC for several years. Her youngest daughter attends GKCS, and her expertise in family law makes her a key lead on staffing and HR matters.

Mrs Last – Staff Member

Elected by the staff body, Mrs Last represents the voice of the staff team. Her journey from parent to LSA to qualified teacher gives her a deep understanding of the school. She also oversees the sports premium.

Reverend Keith Johnson – Ex Officio Member

Keith has been a cherished part of our school community for many years. As he prepares to move on from St Michael's parish to a new adventure, we will deeply miss his presence and guidance. We hope a new member of the ministry team will join us in due course. Please keep Keith and his family in your thoughts and prayers.

Mrs Garner & Myself

We round out the committee, and are occasionally joined by Miss Garlick or Anthony Kent (Chair of the Trustee Board) during meetings.

Can You Lend a Hand?

To meet the accountability measures of the Kings Education Trust—and to ensure we're ready to showcase our school to external visitors like Ofsted and SIAMS—we need more helping hands.

We're especially looking for **Foundation Members** appointed by the Diocese. If you're someone who:

- Has time to commit
- Can be objective and collaborative

- Is passionate about supporting our school's Christian ethos
- Has skills in education, communications, finance, health & safety, premises, or sustainability

...then we'd love to hear from you!

This is an **active and rewarding role** with full training and a clear workplan. You'll spend time in school, engage with staff and pupils, and help us capture what makes Great Kingshill truly great.

So—can you be a Good Samaritan and lend a helping hand? After all, many hands make light work!

To find out more, please contact Mrs Foy in the office or send me a message via Class Dojo.

Would you like me to format this into a flyer or social media post as well? I can also help draft a follow-up email or interest form.

Important Reminders

Parents' Evening Reminder

Parents' Evening is taking place next week—please ensure you've booked your appointment with your child's class teacher. A gentle reminder: **children must not attend in-person meetings held at school**. For the safety and wellbeing of everyone, these meetings take place in a single classroom and are not suitable for children to be present. We are offering **childcare during Parents' Evening**, but this must be booked in advance via **Magicbooking**. If you arrive with your child and have not booked a creche space, they will need to attend the creche—and you will be charged accordingly. Unfortunately, they cannot accompany you into the classroom. We continue to offer both **in-person and virtual appointments** to help accommodate families and reduce childcare challenges. However, last year, despite several reminders, a number of parents brought children to in-person meetings and declined to use the creche. We're sharing this message again to help avoid confusion and ensure a smooth experience for everyone. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation—we truly appreciate your support in helping us maintain a calm and focused environment for these important conversations.

No School-Run Clubs This Week

Due to **Parents' Evening**, there will be **no school-run clubs this week**, including those held on **Wednesday and Thursday**.

When clubs were set up, **no charges were applied for this week**, so families will not be out of pocket.

If your child normally attends a club and you need after-school care on that day, please ensure you book them into **Wrap Around Care** for the **Early Bird session** via **Magicbooking**.

Important Reminder: If your child is not collected and would usually be at a club, they will be taken to Wrap Around Care and **you will be charged**, including a **late booking fee**.

AMA Soccer and Smashing Tennis will still be on.

Tuesday 9th December

Advance Notice: School Closure – Tuesday 9th December

We want to give families early notice that **school will be closed to all pupils on Tuesday 9th December**.

Southern Electric has informed us that they will be carrying out essential work on the overhead cables along Cryers Hill to stabilise the mains electricity supply. Although this work was originally scheduled for October, it has now been confirmed for **9th December**.

This planned outage will result in a **complete loss of power to the school building**, including water, electricity, and alarm systems, making it **unsafe to open the school** for the day.

We understand that this may cause inconvenience and appreciate that families will need time to make childcare arrangements. Please know that this closure is due to circumstances beyond our control, and we apologise for any disruption it may cause.

A copy of the communication from Southern Electric is included for your reference.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support.

I'm contacting you on behalf of Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks to inform you of a scheduled power outage on the following dates:

- **Tuesday, 9th December** between **08:30AM to 16:30PM**

This planned outage is necessary to carry out essential maintenance on the overhead lines. The work is designed to improve network reliability and ensure the safety of our engineers while working.

Once the maintenance is complete, you should experience a more stable and reliable power supply with a reduced risk of future outages.

Kindly ensure that all relevant personnel are informed and avoid editing or working on important documents during the specified times.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to get in touch.

The Month Ahead - October

The Month Ahead - October				
W/C 6th October				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
No School Run Clubs - All Week Due to Parents Evening				
* ADHD AWARENESS Collective Worship	* Parents Evening	* Open Morning for Prospective Parents 9:30 * Parents Evening		* Stuart House - Scan Appeal Multi-Day E1 donation * Year 4 Netball Festival HGSS - appropriate sports clothing to be worn and school jumper to be brought in
W/C 13th October				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	* Year 2 Explorers Day * Prospective Parents Open Evening 4.30 - 7.30pm	* Year 5 to Liddington		* Year 1 Multi-skills Festival - PE Kit to be worn * Year 5 Return
W/C 20th October				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	* Football Match V Kingswood			INSET DAY - SCHOOL CLOSED
W/C 27th October				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
HALF TERM - SCHOOL CLOSED				
W/C 3rd November				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
* Year 6 Visit to Imperial War Museum	* Visit Pantomime - Snow White Reception & KS1		* Year 4 Visit to Verilanium * Yr 6 Remembrance Service - to parents 2.30pm	* Yr 6 Remembrance Service - to school * PTA Disco