

Stowford School News

September 2026 (1)



Stowford family,

A very warm welcome to the new school year! I hope you all had a wonderful Summer, making special memories with those closest and dearest to you. It's been great to hear the children share their holiday experiences with such enthusiasm! As we embark on the new year ahead, I've been so impressed with the way our super children have settled so well back into the school routine. Visiting all the classes, I see happy, focused, well-behaved children already working hard to create a super first impression for their new teacher! An extra special welcome and well done to our new recruits in Reception - the school journey begins for them and what a great first impression they have all made! I've been filled with pride to see our youngsters in EYFS build up from mornings to lunchtimes to a whole day of school, conducting themselves so well in both the classroom and the hall. Moving up to the top of the school, I've been equally impressed with our role models in Year 6, who are now participating in their residential trip to PGL Barton Hall. The children are having a great time, making us all proud with the way they demonstrate our Stowford values and Stowford Standard outside school. We have a special group of children in Year 6 who I have no doubt will inspire our younger academics to be the very best version of themselves. Sandwiched in between EYFS and Year 6 we have the rest of our year groups who have all been working equally hard and settling so well into learning, with real focus and positivity. A great start and so much to look forward to in the school year ahead.

Home School Communication:



Newsletters are sent by email and put on the school website. A paper copy can be collected from the school office if preferred. Please could you make sure you keep your records up to date and let the school office know of any changes to email addresses, addresses and mobile phone numbers so we can ensure you receive information from school.

School Website, Policies and GDPR:

The school website is a useful source of information www.stowford.devon.sch.uk for all parents and carers. Statutory school policies, including details of the complaints procedure and GDPR privacy notices, can be found on the website, under the 'About Us' tab. Safeguarding information is also available on the website under its own tab - this provides details of who to contact should you have any safeguarding concerns. The website is updated regularly, and details of school events are included in the calendar. Copies of letters and newsletters can also be found under the 'Parents' tab.

School Uniform Purchases:

All school sweatshirts, cardigans and polo shirts with the school logo are available to purchase online via the school trends website: <https://www.schooltrends.co.uk/uniform/StowfordSchoolPL210BG>. Orders will be delivered to your home address. Items with a school logo can also be purchased at 'Ivybridge Home and Hardware' in the village.

There is also a clothes rail of pre-loved, donated uniform located in the school reception stocked with good-quality items available to purchase for a small donation to Stowford Friends PTA.

Book Bags:

We would really appreciate it if all children could have book bags. It not only keeps the books clean and tidy but also provides a useful vehicle for letters and slips when young children sometimes find it hard to carry a lot of things at the same time. These can be purchased from the school office for £6.50. (Plain book bags are available from 'Ivybridge Home and Hardware'). Water bottles (with logo) are also available at the school office for £1. Book bags and water bottles can be ordered via ParentPay and paid for online.

Homework:

Homework will be set on ClassDojo and teachers in Foundation to Y2 may also use the Home School Diary communication with parents and carers.

PE/Sports:

Earrings: due to the difficulty that some children have in removing earrings for PE, and the potential loss of earrings once removed, we would request that children do not wear earrings on PE days. We would greatly appreciate your support with this as children can become upset when asked to remove their own earrings if this is something they are not used to doing. On non-PE days, earrings should be simple studs only. Please ensure children have the correct uniform and nail varnish and make up are not permitted. Hair ties should be plain and simple bands only.

Football:

Children love to play football at break and lunch, and we want them to have fun and keep fit. Children need to wear shin pads if they wish to play and if they are to be 'goalie' will need to wear gloves to protect their fingers. Children may bring their own (named) shin pads/gloves if they wish to, but school does have some spares. School will supply appropriate balls in accordance with guidelines (size 3 or 4). Please do not bring balls from home.

Wild Tribe:

Wild Tribe (outdoor education) will continue this year, as we utilise our wonderful outdoor spaces in our daily teaching practice. Where a full Wild Tribe Day is planned during the term, the class teacher will notify you in advance. In order for the children to participate fully in Wild Tribe, it is imperative that children wear suitable clothing - tracksuit bottoms and fleece/warm top that can be worn over PE shirt and shorts. The children will also require wellies; these should be in a named bag in school as they may be required for lunchtime play.

Volunteers in school:

We are keen to have volunteers in school and grateful for the help that parents and carers offer. Volunteers are asked to complete an application form and will have an appointment with Mr Pepper to make them aware of safeguarding procedures and guidance and agree an area in which to volunteer. In line with good safeguarding practice, all regular volunteers must undergo an Enhanced DBS check; details of the DBS checks are recorded on the school's Single Central Record (SCR).

Attendance/Holidays in Term Time:

Attendance continues to be a key focus this year. Please see the Stowford School Attendance Policy for detailed information and guidance on the management of attendance at Stowford School. Procedures will continue from the last academic year to track attendance and reduce absenteeism.

Schools are required to share daily attendance data with the government using an electronic management information system.

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure that children achieve well and have a wealth of experiences across the curriculum. Holidays in term time are strongly discouraged, and you will no doubt be aware that Government directives do not allow for authorisation of holidays during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Requests for term time absence should be submitted on an S2 form at least 2 weeks prior to the absence. Forms are available from the school office or to download on the website.

Where a request is not authorised, this does not prevent you from taking your child out of school, but schools are required to notify the Local Education Authority if a student has unauthorised absences.

If your child has unauthorised absences from school, this could result in a school absence penalty notice being issued. The fine for unauthorised absences is £80 (per child), escalating to £160 if not paid within 21 days. For further information please also see [School attendance and legal proceedings - Education and Families \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-absence-appeals/school-absence-appeals)

Please also see the attached attendance warning letter. This letter can act as evidence (if required) that parents/carers are aware of the law in regard to unauthorised term time absence.

School Absence due to ill health:

If your child is unwell, please ring the school absence line before 8.45am on the day of absence, in accordance with safeguarding requirements. Please note that you must ring and leave a message every day that your child will not be attending school so that we can ensure all children are safely accounted for. You can leave a message at any time: Telephone: 01752 894163.

Absence for Medical Appointments:

Where possible, appointments for non-urgent medical matters and routine dental appointments should be made outside the school day please.

Home time arrangements:

Please remember that to safeguard the children, staff need to be informed if there is a change to usual home time arrangements by the relevant parent. Please put the information in writing in a letter or note in the Home School Diary (F-Y2) to the class teacher. It is not necessary to email Admin of all arrangements, but last-minute changes can be advised by phone and will be relayed to class. Children will not be allowed to go with another parent/carer unless we have been informed. We hope you understand that this is in your child's best interests.

School Meals:

Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) will continue this year for children in Foundation, Y1 and Y2. Children in Y3 and above must pay for school meals. The cost of a school lunch is now £2.90.

School lunches must be pre-ordered via the SwiftKitchen App by parents and carers; this applies to all lunches, whether paid or free. Lunches must be ordered in advance and no later than 9.30am on the day the meal is required. If you are unable to order for any reason, please provide a packed lunch for your child. If you have forgotten to order, the kitchen should be able to provide pasta for your child which will be charged and added to your account.

Please remember to cancel your child's lunch if they will be absent from school for any reason. This is not something school staff can do for you, and you will be charged for the meal automatically as it will have been prepared for your child even if it is not taken.

Free School Meals:

Major updates to the Free School Meals (FSM) guidance in England have taken effect following the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026. This removed the previous income threshold for families on Universal Credit and introduced a two-tier category system alongside the removal of long-standing transitional protections.

Benefits-related free school meals are now split into two distinct categories:

- **Targeted FSM:** This covers children in households on Universal Credit with **annual net earnings of £7,400 or less**. These pupils remain directly linked to **Pupil Premium funding**, the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, and extended school travel assistance.
- **Expanded FSM:** This new category covers children in households on Universal Credit whose **annual earnings exceed £7,400**. These pupils are entitled to free school meals only; they **do not** trigger Pupil Premium or secondary welfare entitlements.

Devon CC has implemented an opt-out auto-award process which can automatically identify pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals but are not already claiming; these checks are taking place annually and the school has been notified of some new entitlements.

However, if you think you may qualify, it is worth applying through the [Devon Citizens Portal](#). This is the quickest and easiest way to apply and will result in you getting an instant decision. If you need assistance when making the online application, you can call the Education Helpline: 0345 155 1019. Do ask at the School Office if you have any questions.

Applications for Secondary School:

The Devon Admissions Portal is now open for families with children in Year 6 to submit their applications for secondary school places.

Families can apply online by visiting: www.devon.gov.uk/admissionsonline.

The deadline for applications is 31st October 2026.

Flu Immunisations:

The nasal flu vaccination will take place on Monday 21st September at Stowford School for children in Foundation to Year 6. Information has been sent out by email. To provide consent (if you have not already done so), please follow the link and code below:

[Flu Vaccination Consent Form](#)

School code: DV137963

Please complete the online consent form by 9am on 18th September 2026.

Clubs:

Extra-curricular clubs will run from wb 28 September to wb 30 November, avoiding the week of Parents' Evenings (wb 19 October) and the half-term holiday (wb 26 October). Letters to sign up for clubs will be issued next week - there will be lots of fun activities available across this academic year for the children to enjoy. Thank you to all the staff who give their time to provide children with enrichment opportunities.

School Photos:

The Tempest photographer will be here to take school photos on **Weds 30th September 2026**. Photos will be taken with siblings together, but if you would prefer your children photographed individually, please send this request to the office in writing or to the admin email address by Mon 28th September. If you are not resident with your child and require an order form for your child's photo, please request this via the admin email: admin@sto.westst.org.uk

Harvest Festival:



There will be a special Harvest Festival assembly for the children in school on **Thursday 22nd October**. During this assembly, we will be talking to children about how lucky we are to have food, clothing and families to support us, in addition to thinking about children throughout the world and locally who are less fortunate. **We would be grateful for donations for our Harvest Table in the week beginning 19th October or in the school hall on the morning of 22nd October.** We will be giving the donations received to the Ivybridge Foodbank <https://ivybridge.foodbank.org.uk/>. Please check their website for the list of items currently required for donations.
Thank you for your support.

House Captains 2026/2027:

These will be decided once the children have returned from Barton Hall and announced in the next newsletter.

Staff Updates:

We are pleased to report that our Assistant Headteacher/SENDCo, Miss Rumistrzewicz, got married during the summer holidays and is now known as Mrs Smith! Many congratulations to the happy couple!

At the start of September, we welcomed Miss Donaldson to the After School Club team, working Mondays to Friday. We still have an outstanding vacancy for a Wraparound Care Assistant for 7.5 hours per week if anyone knows someone who may be interested in the role. Please see the school website for further information.

Stowford Friends PTA:

Stowford Friends do an amazing job fundraising for the school. The current committee will be leaving soon, so the Friends are looking for volunteers to take over the leadership, as well as volunteers to help with events. The date is being finalised for the Stowford Friends AGM which will include discussion and creation of the new committee. Please think about volunteering to become part of the team and plan exciting events for your children throughout the year with the aim of raising funds for the benefit of the children and the school.

And finally, this is a very long newsletter! There are so many things to say. If there is anything that you want to know, any member of staff would be pleased to help and remember our website is a very useful source of information.

I am very much looking forward to my third year as the Headteacher of such a fantastic school. Stowford standard - the gold standard!

With very best wishes

Rob Pepper
Headteacher



Supervision before and after school:

Parents are respectfully requested to supervise their children when on school grounds before and after school. Please do not let children climb through gaps in the fence on the Foundation playground; climb on the walls or on the climbing walls. We would appreciate your support in this. Thank you.

On behalf of local residents:

We request that parents/carers park respectfully when dropping off and picking up children from the Dunsterville Road entrance. The garages at the end of the road are private property and the residents would appreciate it greatly if access could be left clear at all times. Thank you.

Dates for Your Diary Autumn 2026

September 2026	
21/09/2026	Letters out re Clubs
21/09/2026	F-Y6 Flu Immunisations
28/09/2026	Clubs start this week
30/09/2026	5.30pm Year 6 Open Evening at ICC
30/09/2026	Individual/Sibling School Photos
October 2026	
01/10/2026	School Census Day
06/10/2026	5.30pm Year 6 Open Evening at ICC
10/10/2026	World Mental Health Awareness Day
12/10/2026	Assessment Week
19/10/2026	NO CLUBS THIS WEEK
20/10/2026	3.30-6pm Parents' Evening Y1 - Y6
21/10/2026	3.30-6pm Parents' Evening Y1 - Y6
22/10/2026	Harvest Festival Assembly - Food Bank
22/10/2026	Last day of Term
23/10/2026	Non Pupil Day - School Closed
26/10/2026	Half Term Holiday
31/10/2026	Deadline for applications to Secondary School
November 2026	
02/11/2026	Return to School
11/11/2026	Remembrance Day Assembly (children in school)
13/11/2026	Children in Need
15/11/2026	Primary School applications open
24/11/2026	3.30-6pm Foundation Parents' Evening
25/11/2026	3.30-6pm Foundation Parents' Evening
26/11/2026	Y5 swimming - final session
30/11/2026	Last week of clubs
December 2026	
05/12/2026	TBC Stowford Friends Christmas Fair
07/12/2026	AM: KS2 Carol Service Rehearsal - Church
07/12/2026	1.30pm: KS2 Carol Service - Church
08/12/2026	1.30pm KS2 Carol Service - Church
08/12/2026	6.00pm KS2 Carol Service - Church
10/12/2026	AM Y1/Y2 Christmas Production
10/12/2026	6pm Y1/Y2 Christmas Production
11/12/2026	AM Nursery Christmas
15/12/2026	AM Foundation Nativity
16/12/2026	Christmas Jumper Day
16/12/2026	Christmas Lunch
17/12/2026	Last day of Term
18/12/2026	Non Pupil Day - School Closed
21/12/2026	Christmas Holiday

Dates for Your Diary Spring 2027

January 2027	
04/01/2027	Non Pupil Day - School Closed
05/01/2027	1 st day of Spring Term - Return to School
11/01/2027	Letters out re Clubs
15/01/2027	Deadline for applications to Primary School
18/01/2027	Clubs start this week
21/01/2027	School Census Day
February 2027	
08/02/2027	Assessment Week
09/02/2027	Safer Internet Day
09/02/2027	NO CLUBS THIS WEEK
10/02/2027	3.30-6pm Parents' Evening
11/02/2027	3.30-6pm Parents' Evening
12/02/2027	Last day of Term
15/02/2027	Half Term Holiday
22/02/2027	Return to School
March 2027	
03/03/2027	Secondary School National Offer Day
04/03/2027	World Book Day at school
15/03/2027	Y5 Bikeability Week (Mon - Thurs)
22/03/2027	Last week of clubs
25/03/2027	Easter Crafts - Stowford Friends TBC
25/03/2027	PM Nursery Easter Stay and Play
25/03/2026	Last day of Term
26/03/2027	Easter Holiday

Dates for Your Diary Summer 2027

April 2027	
12/04/2027	1 st Day of Summer Term Return to School
15/04/2027	Y4 swimming - session 1 of 10
16/04/2027	Primary School National Offer Day
19/04/2027	Clubs letters out
26/04/2027	Clubs start this week
May 2027	
03/05/2027	May Bank Holiday - school closed
10/05/2027	KS2 SATS week
20/05/2027	Class Photos
20/05/2027	Nursery Individual Photos
20/05/2027	School Census Day
28/05/2027	Last day of Term
31/05/2027	Half Term Holiday
June 2027	
07/06/2027	Return to School
07/06/2027	Y4 Multiplication Assessment 2 week period commences
14/06/2027	Y1 Phonics Screening Week
14/06/2027	4.00pm New Intake Meeting for September 2027
22/06/2027	AM KS1 Sports Day
23/06/2027	AM KS2 Sports Day
24/06/2027	AM Nursery Sports Day
24/06/2027	Y4 swimming - final session
25/06/2027	Non Pupil Day - School Closed
28/06/2027	Last week of Clubs
29/06/2027	Reserve KS1 Sports Day (AM)
30/06/2027	Reserve KS2 Sports Day (AM)
July 2027	
01/07/2027	Reserve Nursery Sports Day (AM)
05/07/2027	Annual Reports home
07/07/2027	Opportunity for parents to discuss Reports
08/07/2027	Y6 ICC Transition Day
08/07/2027	AM Whole school Transition Morning
14/07/2027	1.45pm Y6 Production
15/07/2027	6.00pm Y6 Production
19/07/2026	Y6 Woodlands Trip
19/07/2027	PM Nursery End of Year Celebration
21/07/2027	9.30am Y6 Leavers' Assembly - Y6 parents/carers invited
21/07/2027	Last day of Term
22/07/2027	Non Pupil Day - School Closed
23/07/2027	Summer Holiday



Please note
dates are intended to
provide advance information
and give you an
idea of the events
throughout
the school year.
Dates may
be subject to change.

(Dates for all Stowford Friends
events, including Discos, will be
published following their AGM).

Community Notices



Come and join us for a day of spooktacular fun! Filled to the brim with lots of Halloween themed activities running throughout the day.

No High 5 Camp experience would be complete without some extra special surprises, and we'll be revealing our amazing inflatables and extra activities at each of our sites very soon.

For October 2026 our standard days run from 8.30am until 4.30pm, Monday to Friday. The more days you choose to join us the more you will enjoy the full Halloween experience.

Please ensure your child is with us between 8.30am and 8.45am. Ideally, we ask that nobody attempts to collect their children before 4.15 pm. If you are needing to collect before 4.15pm, then please make staff aware at drop-off, as there are many things to get through in our day at camp.

If you need your little adventurers to stay with us for a longer day then please choose the Extended Day option when booking, which allows you to drop off at 8am and collect them again at 6pm.

It is going to be a spooktacular Halloween, and we cannot wait to take your children along for the spooky ride.

Spaces are limited so don't delay, book your child's seat today!

Quick booking link ; <https://high5sportscamps.co.uk/stowford-school/>