



Friday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you and your families enjoyed the Christmas break after a busy and extremely long Autumn term. First, I would like to reiterate my message on Class Dojo at the end of term. Thank you for your support at our Christmas events. The turnout for all our workshops and performances was definitely the highest we have known since the pandemic and it was heart-warming to see our children from across cultures and faiths retelling Christmas stories and singing festive songs, with a high level of performance and entertainment. At a time when there is a lot of negative talk out there in the world, our children brought positivity, energy and joy and demonstrated our school values of kindness, honesty and respect. It was also a highlight to see so many former pupils back at Southwood over this period. We love to see them and hear how they are getting on, as they will always be part of the Southwood School Community.

We also really appreciate your support at our Parents/Carers' Evenings in November, working together in the best interests of the children is really important and we are already planning for Parents/Carers' Evening in March. If for any reason you were not able to make it, please speak to your child's teacher, to make a mutually convenient time to talk about how your child's progress last term. Our plans include moving to one date for the term, Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2026, when we plan to close school early, at 1:30pm, giving a longer period, until 6:00pm for teachers to meet with all their parents/carers. This format works in other local schools, so we intend to trial it this term, and ask for your feedback afterwards, to inform our plans for the next academic year. After School Club will also be closed on this day, we appreciate that alternative arrangements may need to be made, so are giving plenty of notice.

Finally, we understand the cold weather at this time of year provides schools with challenges, and some local schools have closed recently, due to heating issues. Please be assured that our intention is for school to remain open during cold weather, with any specific conditions risk assessed on a case-by-case basis, and any updates on site safety, staff availability etc. will be communicated to you via Class Dojo.

Kind regards,

Scott Halliwell

**Highlights from the second half of the Autumn Term**



**(please see Class Dojo for photos/ more details)**

**School Events:** Odd Socks Day (Anti-Bullying Week), Remembrance Day, Children in Need, Book Fair, Individual School Photos, Christmas Jumper Day/Lunch

**Special Events:** Choir singing @ Queen's Hospital, Romford and on the playground, Nursery Christmas Singing & Crafts, Christmas Performances (Reception to Year 6), Southwood Community Christmas Lunch

**Year Group Workshops and Trips:** Reception walk to the Post Box, Reception Winter Crafts with parents/carers, Year 1 Zoolab workshop, Year 1 to Wood Lane Baptist Church, Year 4 @ Pantomime, Year 5 to Science Museum, Year 6 at Trewern,

**Sporting Events:** Year 5/6 Indoor Athletics, Year 5 Boys' Football v James Cambell, Hunters Hall & Monteagle, Year 5 Bikeability, Year 6 Boys' Football v Roding Hewett, Girls' Football v Roding, Henry Green, St Vincents, Goresbrook & Rose Lane





**Parents/Carers' Events:** School Readiness Programme, SEND Parent Workshop, Parents/Carers' Evenings, Year 1 & 2 Maths Parent Project

**Headteacher: Scott Halliwell**

SOUTHWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL  
Keppel Road, Dagenham,  
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Telephone: 020 8270 4915  
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<p><b>School Places</b></p> 	<p>The school continues to be fully subscribed in some year groups, but has spaces in other year groups. If you or someone you know is interested, please use the following link. <a href="#">School admissions   London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (lbbd.gov.uk)</a></p> <p>A reminder to parents/carers with Nursery aged pupils, the application deadline for Reception 2026 is 15<sup>th</sup> January 2026, see the link below to apply. <a href="#">Starting school (children aged 3 and 4)   London Borough of Barking and Dagenham</a></p> <p>We currently have a small number of spaces in the Nursery in the afternoons (Rising 3s are welcome to apply) and our waiting list for Nursery places for September 2026 is also open, so if you or someone you know is interested in a place at Southwood Nursery, please contact the School Office for a short application form to complete.</p>
<p><b>Southwood Community Governor</b></p> 	<p>We are currently looking for someone from the Southwood Community to join our Governing Body. This could be a parent/carers, another family member or someone who works in a local business. We are particularly interested if someone has Finance, HR or Premises/Health &amp; Safety experience. At Southwood, we have a strong core group of governors, including two parent governors, who have supported and challenged school leaders over a significant period of time and it is a great opportunity for someone to make a difference to our local community. If you or someone you know is interested, please email the School Office or speak to myself or Mr O'Byrne, thank you.</p>
<p><b>Holiday FSM vouchers</b></p> 	<p>We were extremely pleased to be able to provide £40 vouchers to support families over the Christmas break. This funding was provided to the school from Barking and Dagenham Council and was distributed to parents/carers of all pupils who according to information received from the LBB D Revs and Bens team, are currently entitled to benefit-related free school meals. This can be confusing, as all other children in Reception and Key Stage receive free school meals across the country, and in London all other children in Key Stage 2. As part of enrolment into school, either at the start of Reception or later where applicable, we request parents/carers complete a Pupil Premium registration form, which we send off to the LBB D Revs and Bens team. At present, if you are entitled they contact you before granting entitlement. So if you believe you are entitled, and did not received a voucher, either you need to complete the registration form using the following link, <a href="#">Free school meals (Pupil Premium)   London Borough of Barking and Dagenham</a> or you need to contact the LBB D Revs and Bens team. Obviously, as all children currently receive free schools meals, you will only notice this when we issue these vouchers, or in Year 6 if your child attends Trewern, as we offer a 50% reduction in cost, however, we encourage all parents/carers who believe they are entitled, to register and check/confirm their entitlement, as the school also receives a grant based on the number of benefit-related free school meals pupils attending the school. Please also note previously we had a small number of spare vouchers, which we allocated on a discretionary basis, however, unfortunately we did not have any this year. If you need any support with this, please speak to the School Office.</p>
<p><b>School Lunch Menu</b></p> 	<p>The 2-week lunch menu, is available on our school website. This will be updated for after half term, with our Health Ambassadors meeting with our catering provider this week to provide feedback on the new menu. Please note we recommend that you choose your child's food with them at home through your School Grid account. This enables you to support your child in choosing food they like, and also reduces the time taken in class at the start of the day, so the children can make a prompt start to their day.</p>

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<p><b>Breakfast and After School Club</b></p> 	<p>Breakfast Club starts at 7:30am until 8:45am and After School Club starts at 3:15pm until 5:00pm. Mrs Lyons and her team oversee both clubs. Prices are Breakfast Club £4 per day, After School Club £5.60 per day. ParentPay should be used to book Breakfast Club and After School Club with payment taken in advance. If you are unable to do so, for any reason, please phone or email the School Office, however we do expect ParentPay accounts to have sufficient credit to be able to cover late bookings. If you are interested in using Breakfast Club or After School Club, please speak to the School Office, thank you.</p>
<p><b>Educational Visits this term</b></p> 	<p>Reception – Freshwater Theatre: Rainbow Fish &amp; Barleylands Farm          Year 2 – Golden Hinde          Year 3 – St Paul’s Cathedral          Year 4 – William Morris Gallery &amp; Author visit to Southwood          Year 5 – Mosque          Year 6 – Valence House Museum (World War II)</p> <hr/> <p>STEM ambassadors @ Excel for BETT (Education technology)          Southwood Choir @ O2 for Young Voices          Year 3 &amp; 4 Indoor Athletics          Girls’ Football v St Teresa          Year 4 &amp; 5 Bike-ability</p>
<p><b>Upcoming Whole School Events</b></p> 	<p>29/01/26 – Class Photographs          10/02/26 – Safer Internet Day          03/03/26 – Parents/Carers’ Evening (school closing at 1:30pm)          05/03/26 - World Book Day          18/03/26 – Siblings Photographs          20/03/26 – Red Nose Day          23 &amp; 24/03/26 – Southwood Easter Egg Hunt          26/03/26 – Southwood Drama Club Showcase</p>
<p><b>Term Dates</b></p> 	<p><b>Spring Half Term:</b> Week commencing 16th February 2026  <b>Last day of Spring Term:</b> Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2026  <b>First day of Summer Term:</b> Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026  <b>Summer Half Term:</b> Week commencing 25th May 2026  <b>Last day of Summer Term:</b> Friday 17th July 2026  <b>First day of Autumn Term:</b> Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2026</p>

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