







Friday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are really pleased to report the academic year in school has started very well, and the transition work from last term, has definitely helped the children settle into their new classes. If, for any reason, your child is finding things difficult this term, please speak to their new teacher or come and find one of our inclusion or leadership team in the playground at the start or end of the day. Please note Autumn Parents' Evenings are scheduled for shortly after half term (Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025).

We hope that our previous Year 6 cohort are enjoying their start to secondary school life, and wish those former Southwood pupils starting sixth form, university or the world of work, all the very best and hope, one day, they come back and let us know how they are getting on. It is always good to hear, and recently we have had pupils from the start of my time here at Southwood return and tell us about how they are starting their careers in medicine and teaching! There are so many success stories and as we move towards the school's centenary (in 1928), we will consider how we can capture these, to inspire the next generation. It is always great for our current children to hear about what is possible for Southwood pupils, which, as we found out recently, includes playing basketball in the NBA in America!





<p><b>Request for donations</b></p> 	<p>After a successful start to our Opal playground initiative, that promotes children's play at lunchtime, we are currently reviewing our provision and would be really grateful for donations to replenish our resources (see message from Mr O'Byrne on Class Dojo). We particularly need suitcases/trunkies, dressing up clothes, small world toys (dolls, cars/trains, animals/dinosaurs), hats/scarves, handbags, fabric and plastic crates.</p>
<p><b>Educational visits</b></p>  <p><b>Help needed!</b></p>	<p>Parent/carer helpers on our educational visits are really important, and much appreciated, we would not be able to give our children as many great experiences without them. Unfortunately, we have been advised that local safeguarding procedures have changed. Where previously we have been able to complete a List 99 check (at no cost) for any parents/carer who accompanies a class on a school trip, this is no longer possible. Therefore, we have reviewed our processes and have two options, either for parent/carer helpers be under the supervision of a member of school staff at all times on a visit, or to complete a DBS check for any parent/carer helper who would be willing to help out on multiple trips across the school year and even with classes that your children are not part of (as there is a small cost to the school). If you are interested, please speak to or email the School Office and we will be in touch with what you need to do to complete the check, thank you.</p>
<p><b>Trewern</b></p> 	<p>We are very pleased to report that 50 of our Year 6 children will be visiting Trewern in Wales again this year, during the week beginning 3<sup>rd</sup> November. This is a fantastic opportunity which we encourage as many children as possible to take up. Some of our parents/carers still remember their Year 6 visit to Trewern themselves, so the experience can truly create memories that last a lifetime. The cost of the week is significantly lower than other centres, and the school has agreed a 50% price reduction for children who we received pupil premium funding for. I would highly recommend Year 5 parents/carers attend the information session later this year and if anyone in Year 6 is interested in going but has not put their name down, please speak to Mr Stevens as a matter of urgency.</p>
<p><b>School Places</b></p> 	<p>We are really pleased to be able to report that the school continues to be fully subscribed in many year groups, but we still have some spaces available. If you or someone you know is interested, please see the following link: <a href="https://www.lbbd.gov.uk">School admissions   London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (lbbd.gov.uk)</a>. We are currently finalising our Nursery places for this academic year, and will soon be in a position to allocate our last remaining afternoon spaces to Rising 3s. If you or someone you know is interested in a place at Southwood Nursery, please contact the School Office.</p>

**Headteacher: Scott Halliwell**

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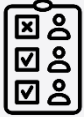

<p><b>Start and End of Day</b></p> 	<p>Please note our registration period at the start of the day is 8:45am to 8:55am, with the school gates closing promptly at 9:00am. Whilst we understand there may be pressures and challenges in getting to school on time in the morning, it is really important for the children to be in school and ready to learn before their lessons start at 9:00am. Ideally, we would like to see all children in school ready to start the day at 8:45am as they have morning work to do as soon as they enter class. It is also really helpful if you book your child's lunch choices at home via School Grid, to avoid them having to do so when they get into class or at the School Office if you are running late for any reason.</p> <p>Please also note that the school gates are closed just after 3:30pm, and we need to clear the school site as quickly as possible at the end of the school day, to allow for our after-school clubs to use the outdoor spaces safely. We therefore appreciate all parents/carers exit the school grounds once they have collected their children, and should you want your child/children to play with their friends, please use the facilities in the local parks nearby, thank you.</p>
<p><b>School Uniform</b></p> 	<p>Our expectations for school uniform have been shared with you via Class Dojo. We ask that you make sure the clothing your child wears to school is in line with this guidance, thank you.</p> <p><b>School Uniform:</b> plain navy trousers, jogging bottoms, shorts, skirt or pinafore dress + jumper or cardigan + white or pale blue polo top (or pale blue and white checked summer dress) + white, navy or black socks + plain black shoes or trainers + navy or black religious headwear</p> <p><b>PE Kit:</b> white, pale blue or navy polo top + navy sports shorts or jogging bottoms + navy jumper or fleece + plain black trainers or plimsolls + hair must be tied back on PE days</p> <p><b>Jewellery:</b> only small stud earrings and small wrist watch are permitted (no smart watches)</p>
<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 in exceptional circumstances. A further reminder that we do expect prompt collection from After School Club. Although we understand from time to time, there may be exceptional circumstances, we reserve the right to charge an additional fee where children are picked up much later than 5pm or a child is picked up later than 5pm on multiple occasions. If you are interested in using Breakfast Club or After School Club, please speak to the School Office, thank you.</p>
<p><b>School Lunch</b></p> 	<p>The 2-week lunch menu for this half term is available on our school website. Our Winter Menu will be introduced after the October Half Term, following consultation with our Health Ambassadors. 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> <p>Healthy packed lunch guidance has been shared on Class Dojo, promoting fresh fruits and vegetables, wholegrain bread, wraps, or rice, lean proteins such as chicken, beans, or eggs and water or milk instead of sugary drinks. We would really appreciate this guidance is followed as much as possible and a reminder we are a nut-free school, this includes nut-based products such as Nutella.</p>

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<p><b>Party bags</b></p> 	<p>We kindly request that parents/carers refrain from providing party bags for the children in their class when it is their child's birthday. Whilst we appreciate this is a very kind gesture, there are a number of reasons why we ask this. First, we are a healthy school, second, not all children are collected by their parents/carers, who know whether their child can eat what is being given out (some sweets contain gelatine, some children have allergies, etc) and third, dismissal at the end of the school day is an extremely busy time, and our school staff need to be able to focus on dismissing their children. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.</p>
<p><b>Bikes and Scooters</b></p> 	<p>We have noticed a growing number of bikes and scooters being ridden to school, which is great as part of being a healthy school. A reminder for health and safety reasons, children must dismount from their bike or scooter before coming onto school premises, thank you. We are currently reviewing the storage we provide for bikes and scooters, due to the increased usage. Please make sure your bike or scooter is locked securely, thank you.</p>
<p><b>Attendance</b></p> 	<p>Mr O'Byrne has already shared information with you about the National Framework for Penalty Notices with thresholds for fines. Families may face fines if a child misses 10 sessions (5 school days) in a 10-week period without a valid reason. These would be unauthorised absence (including late arrivals after 9:30am) and reports go to the Local Authority. If you have any questions or would like to discuss any of the changes, please contact Mr O'Byrne or Miss Harrington.</p>
<p><b>Term Dates</b></p> 	<p><b>Autumn Half Term:</b> Friday 24<sup>th</sup> October to Friday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2025  <b>Last day of Autumn Term:</b> Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2025  <b>First day of Spring Term:</b> Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2026  <b>Spring Half Term:</b> Week commencing 16<sup>th</sup> 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 25<sup>th</sup> May 2026  <b>Last day of Summer Term:</b> Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2026</p>

We look forward to working together with you across the new academic year.

Kind regards,

Scott Halliwell  
Headteacher

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