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**Thought for the week:** 'While we try to teach our children all about life, our children teach us what life is all about' ~Angela Schwindt

### Music and Literacy, a New Learning Adventure

We are excited to share that this term our school has been selected to take part in the Literacy and Music Advocacy Project. Hertfordshire Music Service have chosen us as one of just four schools to join this global research project, which explores how music can support language and literacy development, drawing on international research led by Dr Anita Collins and her work on brain development.

Our Reception children will take part in short daily music activities, including singing, rhythm and movement. These sessions are designed to support focus, memory, emotional regulation and participation, while building the strong foundations children need for confident reading, writing and lifelong learning.

As we begin this exciting journey, we look forward to seeing how the project develops over the coming year and the positive impact it will have on our children's learning and development.

### Curriculum information and homework expectations

Monday 19<sup>th</sup> January, each family will have received details of the curriculum for the Spring Term.

The homework teachers set is extra learning for children to do at home and it is a valuable supplement to a child's development. There will be deadlines set that children must meet. Please help your children to meet these, regularly.

### Our School Values and Independent Learning Focus

At the start of this new term and new year, our assemblies are focusing on our school values. These are the values chosen by the children two years ago and they continue to guide how we learn, behave, and treat one another at Purwell.

We are reminding pupils of the importance of **Friendship, Honesty, Opportunity, Perseverance, and Equity**, and exploring what these look like in everyday school life. Assemblies have helped children think about what it means to be a positive member of a class, a team, and the clubs and groups they belong to both inside and outside of school. We have discussed how every group has its own principles and expectations, and how learning to respect these is an important life skill.

We have also linked our school values to the wider British values we promote, including **respect, fairness, responsibility, and understanding different viewpoints**, helping children see how their daily choices connect to the wider world.

Alongside this, we are placing a strong emphasis on independent working in class, linked to *The Purwell Way*. New posters are going up around the school, see below, encouraging children to be resourceful, to think for themselves, and to make the most of their learning time. This supports children in developing confidence, resilience, and independence as learners.

### **THINKS for Independence**

**Task-** What do I need to do?

**Help myself-** Working wall, resources, examples

**Independent try-** Have a go first

**Neighbour-** Ask a friend

**Keep trying-** Try again, change strategy

**Speak to an adult-** Explain what I tried and where I am stuck.



We look forward to sharing more about this focus with you over the coming weeks, and we appreciate your continued support in reinforcing these values at home.

### **Clubs for this half term**

In addition to our lunchtime clubs, the following after school clubs will be running for the first half of the Spring Term. Yoga continues to be offered on Wednesday mornings (8:00 - 8:45am).

After school clubs for this half term are:

Running Club - starting Tuesday 20th January (3:15 - 4:30pm)  
Cheerleading - starting Monday 19th January (3:15 - 4:30pm)  
Cookery Club - starting Monday 19th January (3:15 - 4:30pm)  
Chess Club - starting Monday 26th January (3:15 - 4:30pm)  
Netball Club - starting Wednesday 28th January (3:15 - 4:30pm)

Please inform the office if your child would like to attend any of these clubs or if, having attended in the Autumn Term, they no longer wish to attend one of these clubs.

Whilst cheerleading is currently full, places will be offered to those on the waiting list if, and when, they become available.

For cookery club, there is a £5 charge to cover ingredients for 2 sessions, Mrs East and Mrs Walker have a list of children keen to attend from the Autumn Term. If your child would like to be included on this list (or is no longer interested in attending), please let the office know.

### **Legislation update for parents taking holidays during the school term**

Since last year, should parents remove their children for a holiday on a second occasion, the fine will be increased to £160, per child. Legislation now supports on the third transgression, parents would receive a summons to appear at judicial court. This is part of a government initiative to ensure that all children come to school every day, if they are able.

### **Attendance update**

As part of our regular feature on attendance, I am pleased to announce that the current attendance for the school stands at 93.6%, which means we are slightly off-track to achieve our 94% target this year. So, let's keep coming to school every day!

Don't forget there are prizes to be won in the summer term for best attendance.

<b>Pupil prize</b>	<b>Class prize</b>
A toy of their choice, up to the value of £50  AND  Family shopping vouchers worth £100	A special best class attendance pencil.  A special day where they can come to school in home clothes. On that day they will have an extra-long play time, and can play football, if they wish.  That afternoon, they will have a class party with pizza and ice cream.

We would like to thank parents for their support with this initiative to help boost school attendance.

### **School closures - Winter 2026**

As part of the school's planning for emergencies, parents are reminded that incidents that necessitate school closure include such things as extreme weather and loss of essential electrical,

water or heating services. Details of school closures will be texted to parents via Schoolcomms. They will also be displayed on the front page of the school website and on Facebook. On days when the weather conditions are poor, but the school is open, parents are advised to walk to school, if possible, and, for those driving, it is advisable to park on Purwell Lane or Kingswood Avenue and walk the remainder. We hope you appreciate that the decision to close is never made lightly, as the safety and welfare of our children, school staff and parents/carers is of paramount importance, and no one would like to see this compromised.

### Communicating with teachers

If you wish to contact your child's teacher for any reason, please do so via the school office by email, [Absence-Misc@purwell.herts.sch.uk](mailto:Absence-Misc@purwell.herts.sch.uk) or by phoning 01462 432950. Alternatively, if you are able to, you can speak directly with the teacher at the start and the end of each day, before they enter the classroom to start the day, bearing in mind the limited time they have, but it might be long enough to deliver a message, or to arrange a meeting, if necessary. We can now also arrange video meetings on line for parents.

### Dealing with bullying

In our continued endeavour at Purwell to eradicate all types of bullying, we found it useful last year to share with parents the school's definition of bullying, which the children know well. We know that bullying is taking place when all these criteria are met.

**B**eing mean  
**O**n purpose  
**O**ver and over

The children remember this as **BOO** for short.

At the start of this term, we are seeing children who feel confident in telling their peers if they have been upset by them. In most instances this has resulted in apologies being offered and received. In some cases, pupils have reported to adults, instances of unkindness and staff have responded quickly to nip matters in-the-bud, before they happen again.

### Coats and Cold Weather Reminder

As the weather continues to be changeable, please make sure your child comes to school with a warm coat with a hood each day. We go outside whenever possible, even in light rain, so it's important they're properly dressed for the conditions.



Please ensure that all coats and other items that your child brings in to school are clearly labelled with their name, so that any lost belongings can be quickly returned. Thank you for your help in keeping everyone warm, dry and organised this season!

### Reception Admissions 2026-2027

Admissions information for the Reception class are available on the Hertfordshire website, [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions). **DEADLINE** for applications is this Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2026.

**Nursery admissions is open from 1<sup>st</sup> February until 20<sup>th</sup> March 2026, application forms can be obtained from the office or on the website, Nursery admissions is with the school not HCC.**

### PSA News

Thank you to everyone who supported our Christmas events!

Your generosity helped us raise over an amazing £700 through the raffle. We're thrilled to put these funds towards new resources and experiences that will benefit all our children.

## Purwell Party Pack - Eco-Friendly Fun for Just £5!

Planning a birthday bash or class get-together? Make it easy, affordable, and planet-friendly with the Purwell Party Pack!

For just £5 per hire (+£1 refundable damage deposit), you'll receive:

- 30 cups, plates, bowls, and cutlery sets
- Serving dishes, jugs and bunting
- All dishwasher-safe and reusable

Every hire supports school fundraising, so it's a win-win!

To book, email the PSA at [purwell.school.association@gmail.com](mailto:purwell.school.association@gmail.com)

## Easyfundraising

Thank you to everyone raising donations with easyfundraising! Not joined yet? It's easy and free!

Sign up to easyfundraising and every time you shop online with your favourite brands, they'll donate to us - at no extra cost to you.

With over 8,000 retailers involved - including big names like John Lewis & Partners, BT, Expedia, Argos, ASOS, Just Eat, Uswitch, and many more - your everyday shopping can help fund exciting opportunities for our children.

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/purwellprimaryschoolhitchin/>

## Stay Connected with the PSA

Want to stay in the loop with school events, updates, and everyday chatter?

- Join our Facebook Group: Purwell School Association
- Make sure you're in your Class WhatsApp Group - perfect for quick questions, lost jumpers, party invites, and homework reminders!

New to Purwell and not sure who your Class Rep is? Just drop us a line at [purwell.school.association@gmail.com](mailto:purwell.school.association@gmail.com) and we'll point you in the right direction.

## Coming up this half term:

- Wednesday 4th Feb - "Wednesday Warmer" - after school hot chocolate sale
- Friday 13th Feb - Friendship Disco

... More details coming soon!

Next PSA meeting - Wednesday 28th January, 8pm, Community Room. All very welcome!

## Taking holidays during term time

Another reminder to parents that you should not take your child on holiday in term time, as it is disruptive both to your child's education and to school and could result in a severe fine. The next academic year's dates are detailed below, so any parents making holiday plans can check that they fit around the school dates first before booking anything.

## Dates and events for Academic Year 2026

### **Spring Term 2026**

16 <sup>th</sup> - 20 <sup>th</sup> February	Half-term
Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> March	Last day of term

### **Summer Term 2026**

Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> April	Children return to school
Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> May	Bank Holiday
Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> - Friday 29 <sup>th</sup> May	Half term
Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> June	Inset Day
Friday 26 <sup>th</sup> June	Sports Day
Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup> July	School Open Day
Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> July	Pupils meet their new teacher for September
Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> July	Inset Day
Thursday 23 <sup>rd</sup> July	End of Term 2pm