



Friday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2025

Dear Parents/Carers,

**Welcome Back**



Happy New Year and welcome back to the first half of the Spring Term 2025.

I hope you have all had an enjoyable Christmas and New Year break and are ready for 2025!

**Admissions**



Please be reminded that you needed to apply for a **Reception and Middle School place** by 15th January 2025. The link to apply is below if you have still not completed this task.

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Education/Admissions-primary/Apply/Application-forms-for-admission-to-school.aspx>

**Inspire Dance Rehearsals - Monday 13th January - 3.30pm-4.15pm**



Inspire Dance after school club starts Monday 13th January 2025. Letters were sent out before the Christmas break for anyone that would be interested. You should have received a text confirming that your child has been allocated a place.

**Snow/Adverse Weather Conditions Procedure**



As we are entering into the wintery period, I thought it would be appropriate to update you on the snow/adverse weather conditions procedures. The health & safety of your child is of paramount importance to all the staff here at Squirrel Hayes First School. Any decision taken to close the school due to snow or dangerous weather conditions will be considered very carefully following health and safety guidance.

If the school has to be closed due to health & safety reasons surrounding snow or adverse weather conditions then you will be informed as soon as possible through the following:

- Text message on your mobile
- Message on the school's website
- Message on the Staffordshire school's website ([www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/schoolsandcolleges/emergencyclosures](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/schoolsandcolleges/emergencyclosures))
- Parents can also sign up to the county council's [alert system](#) which links into the above process to alert parents of their specific closures via text and email.

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- Announcement on the local radio stations (BBC Radio Stoke, Signal Radio + signals website [www.signal1.co.uk](http://www.signal1.co.uk))
- Notice on the school gates - (where possible)

If an emergency closure is made during the day you will be required to come and collect your child from school and will be informed about where to collect your child/children from.

Please do not phone the school to see if the school is closing, this will only jam up the phone lines and prevent us from making emergency calls or contacting the relevant bodies to inform them of school closure. We do not take the decision to close schools lightly and will be considering the safety of all if a closure is needed.

### Updated contact details



We kindly request that you inform the office as soon as possible if there have been any changes to your contact details, such as telephone numbers, email addresses, or home addresses. Keeping our records up to date ensures that we can reach you promptly when needed.

### Absences & Attendance



We would like to remind you of the importance of regular attendance for your child's education. If your child is absent, please ensure you inform the school by replying to the text message sent each morning at 08:15 am, calling the school office on 01782 973 820, leaving a voicemail if no one is available, or emailing us at [admin@squirrelhayes.staffs.sch.uk](mailto:admin@squirrelhayes.staffs.sch.uk). Your cooperation helps us maintain accurate attendance records and support your child's learning.

We recognise that the recent weather has meant that the school has had to close on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> January 2025 for health & safety reasons and that the conditions getting into school are still a little tricky on the estate even though we are now open again. We ask that you keep in contact with school and let us know as soon as possible if your child is unable to attend.

### Supporting Children to return to routine

Returning to the usual routine after the holidays can be a stressful time for anyone 😞 and this can sometimes include those children and young people who are making their way back to school.

It only seems a moment ago that the winter break began 🌲❄️ but now it's time to return back to school. This week's guide 📅 and the latest episode of the [#WakeUpWednesday](#) podcast 🎧 offer expert advice helping children and young people return to the routine for a new term.

Download >> <https://ow.ly/iNOT50Uv5ZG>

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Listen >> <https://ow.ly/Nccv50Uv5ZF>

At The National College, our [wakeupwednesday.co.uk](https://wakeupwednesday.co.uk) guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Further guidance is available from National Crime Agency. These guides have a focus on safety and wellbeing. For further guides, tips and tips please visit [nationalcollege.com](https://nationalcollege.com).

## 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators SUPPORTING CHILDREN TO RETURN TO ROUTINE

Most of us look forward to the school holidays as an opportunity to slow down and relax, stay up later, sleep in and generally approach life in a more leisurely fashion. However, this does mean that returning to 'normal' school-day routines can feel like an uphill battle. Here are some practical tips to ease that transition, reduce stress and set children up for success.

- 1 START SMALL AND EARLY**  
Begin reintroducing elements of the school routine at least a few days before term starts. Introduce a regular bedtime, wake-up times and mealtimes to be more in line with school rhythms. Small changes can make a big difference in easing back into school and helping children to re-adjust smoothly.
- 2 REVISIT THE SCHEDULE**  
Involve your child in mapping out their daily routine and help understand what's going to change. Visual tools like charts or calendars can help keeping to that schedule and help engage. When children understand and anticipate their general timetable, they feel more secure and in control.
- 3 CREATE A SLEEP PLAN**  
Sleep can present one of the biggest challenges, as children can sometimes become night owls, resistant to playing up late during the holidays. Limit screen time before bed and encourage winding-down activities like reading or listening to calming music. A bedtime routine that improves focus, mood and overall wellbeing, making mornings much easier.
- 4 ENCOURAGE FRIENDSHIPS**  
Help your child to reconnect with school friends by encouraging playdates, catch-ups or arranging to go to after-school clubs. Re-establishing social bonds can make the return to school more exciting and less intimidating, allowing youngsters to focus on the positive aspects of the new term.
- 5 GRANT RESPONSIBILITY**  
Give children control over some aspects of the morning routine. Make them responsible for choosing what to wear, setting breakfast or choosing the radio station that they listen to while getting ready. Something that gives them a sense of ownership over their morning schedule can help them view the task as one they've chosen to do, rather than being told to do it.
- 6 FOCUS ON NUTRITION**  
Make sure children are receiving balanced meals with regular healthy snacks to boost energy and concentration, putting them in the best possible state to return to school. A nutritious breakfast is particularly crucial for a positive start to the day. Involve children in meal planning to make it enjoyable and collaborative.
- 7 COMMUNICATE OPENLY**  
Talk with your child about how they're feeling about returning to school, what they're excited about or a bit of both. Validating their emotions helps them feel supported and understood. Try asking them about the things they're looking forward to, such as seeing their friends again. Focusing on the positives can be useful for children struggling with change.
- 8 RECONNECT WITH LEARNING**  
Ease children back into a learning mindset by incorporating fun, educational activities into their home life. Reading a favourite book, playing games that involve maths or teaching an interesting topic, can gently reawaken their focus and prime them to learn, which can have helpful impacts on their academic performance.
- 9 PREP TOGETHER**  
Turn preparation into a shared activity, to shoulder the responsibility together and provide support where needed. Pack school bags, lay out uniforms and plan lunch the night before. This not only reduces early morning stress but also gives children a sense of ownership over being ready for school.
- 10 BE PATIENT AND FLEXIBLE**  
Transitions take time, and every child adjusts differently to its important to be calm and supportive, especially if they're reacting negatively to the change. Be ready to be ready to be ready, and work with the child to make the return to education as easy as possible for them. Patience can go a long way to setting a positive tone for the new school year.

**Meet Our Expert**  
Becky Dawson is an education expert with a focus on mental health and wellbeing. Passionate about supporting children and young people with and care for young people, Becky specialises in creating practical strategies that promote wellbeing and resilience in children during life's transitions.

**Wake Up Wednesday**  
The National College

Source: See full reference at the end of page 10. <https://nationalcollege.com/blog/wakeupwednesday-10-top-tips-to-ease-the-transition-to-school>

@wake\_up\_weds | www.thenationalcollege | @wake\_up.wednesday | @wake\_up.weds

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**Space Cadets - Before and After School Club (based at Squirrel Hayes First School)**



We understand that working around the school day can sometimes pose a challenge with the increasing demands of work and home life. Space Cadets is based at Squirrel Hayes First School and runs a before and after school club for school aged children aged 4 to 11 years old. Breakfast club runs from 7.30am - 8:45am (Squirrel Hayes children can just turn up so long as they are registered with Space Cadets). After school club runs from 3.15pm-6.00pm (needs to be pre-booked). Space Cadets also run a holiday club available from 7.30am to 6.00pm. For further information please either speak to the office or call Krystle 07500803876.

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**Air Aware Project**



Staffordshire Moorlands have an 'Air Aware project' currently running across all schools in the district. This project aims to encourage Parents/carers to switch off their car engines when they are picking up and dropping off children at school. Over the next few weeks posters will be attached to the lampposts and fencing outside schools to encourage your support with this project.

**DfE Cost of School Uniform Survey**



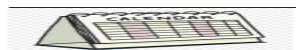
The Department for Education has published their School Uniform Survey report in September 2024. This report shares information about the typical cost of school uniforms and PE Kits for children in State funded education. At Squirrel Hayes we regularly review our School Uniform Policy and expectations and have carefully considered the costings involved for Parents/Cares when setting out our expectations.

The report shared that the average cost for both school uniform and PE combined for Primary aged children is £ 350.81. Our school records show that our families typically pay about £170.00 per child in total over a year. This includes school shoes and trainers etc. We are pleased to see that this compares favorably to the average in the report. We will continue to review of Uniform Policy and are always happy to listen to suggestions from our learning community.

Please see the link below to the full report:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/677ea36522a085c5ff5c04db/Cost\\_of\\_school\\_uniform\\_survey\\_2023.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/677ea36522a085c5ff5c04db/Cost_of_school_uniform_survey_2023.pdf)

**Important Dairy Dates**



Please find below a table of events that have been planned for the Autumn Term. Please note that we always try our best to stick to the planned dates and times but on occasion's changes have to be made due to unforeseen circumstances. If this is the case, we will always try to give you as much notice as possible. *Please note dates in blue have been added or changed:*

DATE	EVENT	CLASS
Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> January 2025	School opens at 08:45am at the start of the New Year	All classes

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(a mutual co-operative membership trust)



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Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> January 2025	Change 4 Life - Biddulph Leisure Centre	Hydra Class
Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> January 2025	Year 4 School Council Reps to attend meeting at the Town Hall	Y4 Reps
Monday 10 <sup>th</sup> February 2025	Valentines Disco	All Classes 3.30pm - 4.30pm
Tuesday 11 <sup>th</sup> February 2025	Online Safety Assembly	All Parents/Carers - 2.30pm
Friday 14 <sup>th</sup> February 2025	School closes for pupils and staff at 3:15pm for the half term holiday.	All classes
INSET Day Monday 24 <sup>th</sup> February	School closed to pupil but open to staff for training.	All classes
Tuesday 25 <sup>th</sup> February 2025	School re-opens to Staff and Pupils at 08:45am	All classes

Yours sincerely,  
 Mrs E. J. Pickford (Headteacher) & Team

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