



Lower Halstow Primary School



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**KINDNESS
PERSEVERANCE
RESPECT
HONESTY**

Dear Mums, Dads and Carers

We are at the end of another busy year at Lower Halstow! This summer the upgrades continue, with the Computer Suite being re-modelled and expanded to allow a whole class to have individual access to the more powerful desktop computers that are needed for some elements of our computing curriculum. FoLHS are match funding the cost of this upgrade, which we are very grateful for. We are also refreshing the room used for wrap-around care, launching this as 'Chestnut Tree Corner' in September. Please watch this space for more activities before and after school and in the holidays. Behind the scenes we are moving fully into 'the cloud' during the holidays as our old on-site servers come to the end of their life. With most of our systems already cloud-based we are hoping for a seamless transition.

As we make our preparations for the next academic year, funding is at the forefront of our minds. The combination of LA cuts to SEND funding and increased costs have left a gap in our finances. The governors and I have worked carefully in the past 2 years to build up our reserves (savings) by reducing running costs and back office function wherever possible. For example, moving to electronic reports and permission slips. This is not only good for the environment, but also saves money. Our current level of savings means we should be able to weather the current funding storm with minimal impact on the educational provision we provide for the children.

However, as a result of the funding situation and increases to staffing costs, we are having to reduce the amount by which we subsidize our optional after school activities. Therefore, all clubs run by teaching assistants or external providers will cost £3 from September. This is to ensure that we are still able to offer a wide variety of after-school options and not limit these. Support will continue to be available for low-income families and clubs run by teachers will continue to be fully subsidized by the school, so free to attend.

However, more important than any of the work in the background to keep the school finances and estate in good condition, is the work with the children and on our curriculum to ensure we continue to deliver a rich and varied experience in line with our vision. Our enrichment and personal development curriculum which complements the national curriculum is now very well established. The Rock Steady music showcase event last week was a great example of this and the support shown by the pupils towards each other embodied the Lower Halstow School spirit.

Planning for next year is well underway with teachers across both schools getting excited about potential joint activities. The latest one I saw go into the calendar was a Viking battle against Newington Y4!

We are also looking forward to introducing the Federation Shield – to celebrate the sporting competitions we have between our sibling schools and increase participation across all year groups. The list of activities for each year group is steadily growing.

Enriched play has been a real success story this year with very positive feedback. Unfortunately, staff absence, followed by the hot weather has meant that the lunchtime sports activities have been missing most of the past 2 terms with only a handful of games taking place, led by Ms Brougham. We hope to have this back on the daily schedule in September with reorganized lunch-time staffing. This will also include a sportsmanship charter, with those pupils who are not able to play according to our values, having a short time out in a dedicated space to self-regulate before rejoining the games. Hopefully this will ensure lunchtime sports is enjoyable for everyone and more children will feel they can join in.

TastEd has also been a delicious addition to our enrichment and personal development curriculum. I have included some of the feedback from pupils below. More info can be found at [Primary School Resources | Taste Education](#) FoLHS have kindly agreed to fund the cost of this next year to allow this to continue.

Year R

- The food always looks very yummy
- I definitely want to do it again!

Year 1

- I like eating fruit as it is so healthy
- I like tasting food
- I like that we don't have to try things if we don't want to

Year 2

- I like tasting new things
- Sometimes my mum buys the food I like after TastEd (Melon)

Year 3

- I like trying different things
- I get to learn how things grow

Year 4

- I want to do it all the time to try more new foods
- It's fun describing the foods and I like trying new foods

Year 5

- We learn about senses and our taste buds, I love it!
- We get to taste new foods
- My parents buy the foods I tried and liked
- We get to explore the world of new foods

Year 6

- I love it!
- I like the eating part
- I like the powerpoints
- It's good as you try new foods and it encourages you to eat different things
- We like using the blind folds
- We get free food!
- Can we do it more often?

As always, the staff, ably led by Miss Crowe, have gone above and beyond to provide exciting learning opportunities and continued support for the children in their care as befits

our school vision. Hopefully the memorable moments captured in the reports helped communicate the palpable sense of joy your children bring to the school – there is always something to smile at every day and reading these always brings a smile to my face.

No round up would be complete without a mention of our successful Ofsted, but external validation and data have never been what drives us. Our aim is to send the children off to secondary, confident and able to thrive academically and socially. In a school our size, we can cherish and celebrate the success of each individual pupil, which makes saying goodbye to our last 'tiny' cohort as they start secondary school all the more emotional.

From September, we will be nearly full, with only 4 spaces left across the school, a waiting list for several year groups and a record 16 siblings joining us. This means arrangements for playtimes, lunchtimes, shared celebrations etc. may have to be tweaked, so please bear with us if things need to evolve as we reach capacity.

Thank you for your ongoing support for the Lower Halstow team. We wish you a very restful summer and we look forward to seeing all of you on Wednesday 3rd September.

Kind regards

Mrs Deevoy

NOTE FROM CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

On behalf of the governors, I would like to say thank you to Mrs Deevoy and all the staff and leaders for their hard work this year in helping the children reach their full potential. This year we have continued our success with very positive feedback from Ofsted and achieving the Gold School Games Award for the high level of sport and physical activity happening in school.



As ever, your role as parents is very important and looking at data it is clear that the children who attend regularly have continued to achieve well in school. Thank you for your support with ensuring your children are in school regularly. Our attendance is still broadly in line with national averages, despite a chicken pox outbreak across several year groups. This means even more pupils have benefitted from the great teaching going on in school and the progress outcomes for pupils this year reflect this.

Next year, I will have been a governor at the school for 50 years and it will be the first time the school has been full since it's expansion from a two-class village primary to the current one form entry. In a time of falling birth rates this is the biggest indicator that Lower Halstow continues to go from strength to strength.

Have an enjoyable break and stay safe and well.

Peter Marshall

(Chair of Governors)

STAFFING

Goodbye

Earlier this term we said goodbye to one of our cleaners, Mrs Dickson, and last week we said goodbye to Mrs Casey, an agency teaching assistant who has worked with us all year firstly in year 1 and then in year 3. It will be all familiar faces in September!

VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteer readers and club leaders have a key role to play and we all benefit from them giving freely of their time. They deserve a special mention as they make a real difference to the children they work with. It was lovely to be able to invite them in, as special guests, to a volunteers' tea party organised by the school council. We hope they enjoyed the scones with fresh strawberries, clotted cream and jam, and the homemade cakes made by the children.



A few of our lovely volunteers

FRIENDS OF LOWER HALSTOW SCHOOL (FoLHS)

FoLHS have done an amazing job of raising money for the school as a newly registered charity this year. Thank you to everyone on the committee: Rachael Dyke and Lucy Jessey (Co-chairs), Claire Parsons (Treasurer), Stacey Marsh (Secretary) for their time and dedication to the school and to all the parents who volunteered at events to ensure that the children had a great time. All money raised goes directly towards enriching the children's education.

CHARITY WEEK

Charity week is an important event within our personal development curriculum in school. Each class chooses their charity, then organizes and leads their own fundraising activity with minimal input from staff. Each year the school council vote on the list of charity suggestions which includes every single suggestion from across the whole school! They narrow this list down to an international charity, a national charity and a local charity. Classes then make their choice from this list.

We are incredibly proud of our pupils for their efforts in raising money for three very worthy causes this term. Through a variety of fun and engaging events – including sponsored obstacle courses, cake sales, table top sales, a pyjama day, dressing up day and even a break-the-rules day – the children raised an impressive total for each charity. The amounts raised were:

- Swale Foodbank – £43.50
- Save the Children – £408
- The Little Princess Trust – £99

A big thank you to all families and friends who supported these events!

HOUSE POINT WINNERS



On sports day, last year's winners Dover were beaten into third place by Hever and Rochester, with Hever coming out on top with 100 points!

1 st	Hever	100
2 nd	Rochester	92
3 rd	Dover	90
4 th	Leeds	89



Last year's overall winners Dover, were also beaten into 2nd place by Rochester who amassed a huge 15,087 points! This is a great reversal for Rochester who were last overall last year. Well done Rochester, your perseverance has paid off.

1 st	Rochester	15,087
2 nd	Dover	14,534
3 rd	Hever	13,666
4 th	Leeds	12,815

This year the school council voted for the winning house to have a session of using the enriched play equipment. House points are hotly contested and a great source of pride for houses. The system reflects our commitment to our values and vision as the children can earn house points in a range of ways, not just for academic success.

SAFETY

Following a recent incident where a child at another school tripped over their laces and required facial surgery, we are going to be stricter on allowing pupils to wear lace up shoes if they cannot tie their own laces. This has always been encouraged, but staff are having to spend increasing amounts of time at break times tying shoelaces or teaching the children this skill. This is impacting on the supervision of the other children. Moving forwards, children without tied laces will not be allowed to continue playing and may have to wait until a suitable moment for an adult to tie them if they are unable to do this themselves. Staff are not always able to spot loose laces and intervene when the pupils are in a large group, so please be aware of this risk if you send your child in with laces they cannot tie.

SUMMER HOLIDAY CLUB



Tetita are not running a holiday club this year. However, moving forwards we will have regular holiday clubs running. Our closest full daycare holiday club run by Martin Forbes (who runs our sports clubs) is at Napier Primary in Gillingham, so if you require childcare, just click the 'book now' button on his website <https://www.mfse.org.uk/>

Have a great summer and we look forward to seeing you all on Wednesday 3rd September



SEPTEMBER INFORMATION

GOODBYE PING, HELLO MCAS

Our contract with Ping will expire in August, so please feel free to delete the app during the holidays. All future communication will be via the MyChildAtSchool (MCAS) app which is free for us to use, automatically syncs with our data system in school and accepts permissions, payments and bookings for clubs too.

CLUBS

Extra-Curricular Clubs will be running from the **second full week of term. Monday 15th September**. Please look out for notifications on MCAS of how to book.

BREAKFAST AND AFTERSCHOOL CLUB

This is now 'in-house' and being relaunched as Chestnut Tree Corner. Currently the only change is how to book but we will develop based on need and work to bring the price down by encouraging additional attendance. If you are a tax-payer you can get tax-free childcare (the government pay £2 for every £8 you pay). You just need to set up an online account via <https://www.gov.uk/tax-free-childcare>

A flyer went out on ping with full details and timings etc.

ENTRY TO SCHOOL

Classrooms open at **8.30am** and pupils need to be in school by **8.45am** at the latest.

Y1 – Y6 please continue to drop your children at the main gate. New YR parents will be dropping on the playground and we want to keep things calm and quiet on site at the start of the day for everyone.

PICK UP FROM SCHOOL

3.15pm pick-up for everyone. Please can everyone remember to stand where the class teacher can see you to allow us to dismiss the children quickly. If you want your child to walk home please ensure you have emailed the office with permission for this.

SNACKS

Tuck shop for KS2 pupils will be starting from Monday 8th September run by Year 6. Everything is 20p. Details of what is on offer will be messaged via MCAS app at the start of term. Please provide a suitable break-time snack for the first week back – fruit, savoury crackers, breadsticks etc. EYFS & KS1 are provided with fruit by the school, so no break-time snack is needed. If you do send a snack, this needs to be a fruit or vegetable.

PACKED LUNCHES

Please save the chocolate and sweets for home. These will be removed from packed lunches as they adversely affect afternoon learning, so please do not put them in lunchboxes as this causes unnecessary upset. Please use common sense, for example, cereal bars containing a few chocolate drops & Fruit Winders are fine, but snacks such as chocolate covered raisins are not, as these always melt and cause a mess. Plain raisins are just as sweet.

WATER BOTTLES

Year 1 - 6 pupils need to bring their own clearly named water bottle – any bottles with juice will be emptied and replaced with water so please only send water in. Juice boxes etc. can be included in packed lunches. We will be providing water bottles for Year R and these will stay in school.

BAGS

Book bags & drawstring bags only. Just a reminder about this rule. If your child brings a large rucksack the contents will be put in a named carrier bag which they can hang on their peg and the rucksack sent to the office to be collected by parents. As the school population has grown we are really pushed for corridor hanging space and this rule helps keep corridors safe and clear for everyone. Thank you for continuing to help with this. Overnight bags can be handed to the office who will look after them until pick up.

UNIFORM

www.forsterskent.co.uk

The 'active' uniform, which was introduced fully in Sept 2023, having been trialled in 2022, continues to work really well, saving both time -with children not getting changed for PE - and money. This has also enabled greater levels of other physical activity outside of PE lessons. We continue to ask pupils to wear their royal blue sweatshirts/cardigans/ fleece everyday including PE days. **No other sportswear is permitted.**



Our active uniform consists of the following:

- Footwear PLAIN black trainers / trainer style shoes. The children run EVERY DAY and need suitable footwear. NO LACES unless your child can tie their own shoes.
- Tops Plain/logoed white polo shirt
 Plain/logoed royal blue sweatshirt/cardigan/fleece
 (optional plain white round necked t-shirt on PE days if you wish)
- Bottoms PLAIN black, navy blue or dark grey leggings, shorts or jersey jogging bottoms
 (optional royal blue shorts on PE days if you wish)

Summer dresses are still part of our uniform.

Children can still wear hand-me-down legacy grey items if you have siblings in school. But please do not purchase new traditional uniform items. Legacy items should not be worn in YR and Y1. Plain black school shoes are still permitted if you prefer, but they **should be suitable for active playtimes** and sporting activities, including PE lessons.

Our 'New to You' uniform is still available and offers a range of items in different sizes. If there are any items that you are interested in, please send an e-mail into the school office and Mrs Fox will prepare some items for your perusal.

Other Uniform Reminders

Only small **stud** earrings are permitted and pupils must be able to remove these themselves for PE. If your child arrives at school with hooped earrings, they will be asked to remove them.

Long hair should be tied back. Please help us keep everyone lice free! Bows in hair should be small. Save the giant neon JoJo bows for parties rather than the classroom please.

Please ensure your child has coat, hat, sunscreen as appropriate for the weather as we will continue to use the school grounds for outdoor learning and the British weather is notoriously changeable.

NEW FOR SEPTEMBER 2025

Wellies – please provide named wellies for your child to keep in school. We have welly racks ready to store these. In order for us to use the field all year as a learning and play space, we need the children to be wearing suitable footwear.