

Southmere Primary Academy Weekly News



Friday 16th January 2026

Update from the Principal

Hello everyone,
Thank you all for your amazing efforts with attendance last week. We saw a significant improvement and I hoping now we have some momentum we can keep this up. We have introduced a range of new incentives to try to encourage children to come. Ultimately it is parents that hold the main responsibility for ensuring children attend so please make sure your children come every single day. The maximum amount of days a child should be absent in one academic year is 11 days. If your child has had more than this already then please ensure you consider carefully any future absences.

Mrs R Binns

Important dates

- 26th January:** Year 4 Dallowgill residential
- 28th January:** Year 4 Dallowgill day visit
- 29th January:** Reception hearing tests
- 13th February:** End of half term
- 23rd February:** Back to School
- 27th March:** End of Term
- 13th April:** Back to School

Uniform

Please ensure children arrive at school in uniform everyday. If you need support with uniform please let us know. On PE days children should attend with blue or black jogging trousers, white t-shirt and their school jumper.

Assembly

On Monday 12th January the morning assembly topic was Ending Discrimination. We talked about what discrimination meant and what we should do about it if we see or hear it in school. We talked about how special our academy is as we have children from so many different backgrounds which makes us diverse and unique.

Safeguarding

What Schools Need to Know about THE ONLINE SAFETY ACT

The Online Safety Act was passed into UK law in October 2023, with the aim of establishing major new layers of protection for children when they're online. The government has pledged "a zero-tolerance approach" to protecting children from online harm, and the act certainly includes more powerful legislation which should help to safeguard young people in the digital world. Our guide summarises the key points for schools...

WHAT THE ACT WILL DO

HARMFUL CONTENT
Social media sites must rapidly remove illegal and harmful content such as bullying or harassing comments, pornography, and content that supports extremist activity or encourages or depicts violence, suicide, self-harm or eating disorders. If they fail to do so, they can be fined up to 1% of their global revenue while their executives may even face jail time.

ANIMAL CRUELTY
Content featuring cruelty to animals is now prohibited, even if it originates from abroad (where the law may be different). Again, it is the platform's responsibility to remove this.

MORE TRANSPARENCY
Sites must be transparent about the harmful content their children using their core encounter – by publishing risk assessments for their products, for instance.

HOSTING MISLEADING ADVERTS
Scams and fraudulent adverts must be blocked or removed, or the hosting companies are liable to be fined.

NON-CONSENSUAL SHARING
It's now easier to convict online abusers or people who share intimate images without consent, while legislation on the privacy of teachers has been clarified. The new laws also relate to any individuals who even threaten to share such images. This should help to protect women and girls in particular online.

REPORTING AND FILTERING
Sites should have easy reporting mechanisms for children (or their parents and carers) to flag up problems quickly. They must also provide systems to filter out unwanted content.

AGE-RESTRICTED MATERIAL
Sites must prevent children from accessing age-restricted material. This includes enforcing age limits and implementing robust age verification.

What this means for you

The act has some specific implications for schools. It's essential that leaders understand the new legislation's scope and limitations. The act is certainly a positive step, but as artificial intelligence and other advances in tech continue to produce new challenges, schools will still need to remain extremely vigilant.

KNOW WHERE TO GET HELP
Look out for the Code of Conduct that Ofcom is creating in response to the Online Safety Act. Note that the new legislation doesn't mean an instant change: many of its provisions will only come into force at the end of 2024. An Ofcom consultation on "protecting people from illegal harms online" will be running until February 2024.

REMEMBER THE ESSENTIALS
Remain mindful of your organisation's own online activities; the legal duty for schools to maintain appropriate software monitoring and filtering, will not change.

WATCH FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS
There are some issues on which the legislation remains less clear for now: whether it's possible for Ofcom to scan encrypted private messages (such as on WhatsApp) has yet to be resolved, for instance – making this an open debate. For the moment, young people have less legal protection.

UNDERSTAND AND EXPLAIN
Staff should learn how to raise concerns with tech companies whose platforms contain anything upsetting or unpleasant. Students also need to be made aware of the newly strengthened laws relating to cyber-bullying, sexting or posting inappropriate content. Young people do make mistakes online – so the clearer their understanding of the possible consequences, the better.

ENGAGE WITH PARENTS
Schools should also explain to parents and carers the new possibilities that the Online Safety Act affords them in terms of protecting their children. Many parents may have previously felt that there was little they could do about changing online platforms' content; they now have a far greater level of support when complaining about a company or the behaviour of an individual.

NSPCC
National

Attendance and Celebration

Attendance

Attendance is one of our top priorities this year.

Our Attendance target is **96%**.

Our Attendance so far this year is: **91.3%** we have improved by **0.3%** keep going Southmere let's Be the Best We Can Be!



Top attenders this week...

EY and KS1 - Y2I = 96.0% = 20 Dojos and Juice and Biscuits



KS2 - Y5K = 97.0% = 20 Dojos and Juice and Biscuits

It is vital that ALL children attend school as much as possible.

One day's absence equates to 5 hours and 30 minutes of lost learning. Two day's absence is 11 hours lost, Three days is 16 hours and 30 minutes lost. Children should not be absent more than 5 days in any academic year

School starts at 8.30am.

Please make sure you are here on time and ready to learn every day.



Thank you to parents and carers for all your support with attendance.



In the news this week

Class Attendance Golden Tickets

For everyday a class has every child in the class receives a letter for the word SOUTHMERE. Once they have completed the word they get a class reward. On Friday Y5M received their Golden Ticket and chose a Pizza Party to celebrate. Which class will win the Golden Ticket next?



In Class...

In Nursery: We have been learning the story of Goldilocks and the 3 Bears.

In Reception: We have been learning about the number 5 and how this can be shown in different ways.

In Year 1: We have been learning about the seasons in our Forest Schools lessons.

Year 2 : We have been learning about verbs in our English lessons.

In Year 3: We have been learning our times tables to support our arithmetic.

In Year 4: We have started our new science topic about states of matter.

In Year 5: We have started our new topic of Gymnastic in PE.

In Year 6: We are doing lots of home learning to support our learning as we approach SAT's. Please remember to return your tablet everyday for charging.

Southmere's Great Atten'DANCE'



you come to school every day from Monday 19th January to Friday 23rd January, you will be able to take part in our great AttenDANCE event! Can we set a record for the number of pupils dancing at once?!



This weeks Attendance Challenge

This week for the children who attend 5 days in a row we will be having Southmere's Great AttenDANCE. A dance party to celebrate all those who got to school everyday for the full week. Don't miss out on the fun, get yourselves in!



Safeguarding

Staff you can count on

Ensuring our pupils are safe and well looked after is our key priority.

Mrs R Binns (Principal and DSL)

Mr S Iqbal (SENDCo, DDSL and Y2 teacher)

Ms J Hague (Inclusion Lead, DDSL and Learning Mentor)

Miss L Crowther (Licensed Thrive Practitioner and DDSL)

Mrs A Qamar (Learning Mentor and DDSL)

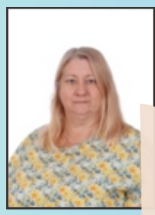
All staff in school have received safeguarding training to ensure that they can recognise signs and symptoms of abuse and also how to report/act if a disclosure is made.



Mrs R Binns



Mr S Iqbal



Ms J Hague



Miss L Crowther



Mrs A Qamar



Do you need us?

If you ever have any concerns about the safety or welfare of a child you can contact us on **01274 422040**.

Outside of school hours there is a 24 hour number that links to the duty team for social care.

01274 431010

This number can also be used during office hours to contact social care directly.

We also have lots of links on our website: www.smpa.org.uk

We hope you found this newsletter useful!

Your views and feedback are very important to us.

Contact us if there's anything we can improve, or if there's something you want to see featured in the newsletter which would be useful for you.



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