Howardian Primary School

Newsletter: October 2026



Dear Howardian Families,

It is amazing to think that we are fast-approaching the first half term break of the school year. The children are all well-settled into their classes and it is a delight to walk around the school and see how engaged the children are in their learning. Thank you for your continued support.

I hope you find the information in this newsletter informative and of interest.

Warmest Regards,

Mrs Sian Burt (Headteacher)



Jeans for Genes

Thank you to those families who supported this very worthwhile charity on Friday 18th September. £362 was raised in total.

Parent Governor Elections

Thank you to our parents who stood for the recent parent governor vacancy, and thank you to those who voted. The successful candidate was Dr Jose Castro. On behalf of the Governors, I would like to welcome Dr Castro to our Governing Body.

Contexts for Learning

Please see below your child's contexts for this year.

If you go onto our website, and look under the 'Our Learning' section,' you will find the termly curriculum overviews for each year group.

[Howardian Primary School - Year group pages]

Termly Topics

	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Nursery (2-year cycle)	Why do you love me so much?	• Winter Wonderland • The World Around Us	• Food Explorers • Colours, Colours Everywhere!
Reception	You've got a friend in me	Once Upon A Time	Animal Adventures
Year 1	Superheroes	Muck, Mess & Mixtures	Endangered
Year 2	The Greatest Show	On Our Doorstep	Are we there yet?
Year 3	Invaders	Tremors	Predators
Year 4	Wonders of the World	Burps, Bottoms and Bile	Blue Abyss
Year 5	Scream Machine	Lights, Camera, Action	Allotment
Year 6	A Child's War	Frozen Kingdom	Tomorrow's World

Priorities for School Improvement Plan 2026-27

Please see below the priorities for this academic year. These have been set in response to our self-evaluation processes and to national priorities.

As you can see, one of our priorities is reading. Please support this by encouraging your children to read at home and read to them, use your local library and make reading an enjoyable and fun activity.

We have two parent/carer presentations which aim to inform you how you can support your children with reading. Both are aimed at those families with children who are Year 3 or younger though parents / carers with older children are very welcome to attend.

These will take place in school shortly after 9am.

Friday November 6th - An Introduction to Monster Phonics
Friday November 27th - Supporting Early Reading at Home

If you are interested in coming into school as a volunteer to listen to children read, please contact Mrs Liddington in the school office to make arrangements to apply for a DBS.

Priority	Key staff member
1. To improve provision, standards and attitudes towards reading, including those of vulnerable pupils.	David Brind
2. Continue to develop and make changes to the curriculum and provision in line with the Curriculum for Wales.	Kelly Jones
3. To Develop The 'Three Enablers' in order to promote pupil independence and improve standards.	Lauren Hardwick
4. To strengthen pupil engagement and pupil voice in order to promote positive attitudes to learning.	Dean Wheeler
5. Further develop a distributive leadership system across the school.	Sian Burt

Current Year 6 - Applying for Secondary School

Parents / Carers of Year 6 pupils should have received information about how to apply for secondary school. We strongly advise that you include your top **five** schools as part of your application process. Some parents/carers think that just putting their 1st choice will guarantee them a place at their chosen school, but that is not the case. We also strongly recommend that you submit your application by the deadline of **30th October** so that you have the best chance of getting a place in your top chosen schools.

The table below also outlines the deadlines for Nursery and Reception applications.

SCHOOL	APPLICATION SYSTEM OPENS	APPLICATION DEADLINE	OFFER DATES	OFFER RESPONSE DEADLINE	APPEAL CLOSING DATE
Nursery Children born between 1st Sept 2023 and 31st August 2024	Monday 25th January 2027	Monday 22nd February 2027	Wednesday 5th May 2027	Wednesday 19th May 2027	N/A
Nursery Children born between 1st September 2024 and 31st December 2024	Monday 7th June 2027	Monday 5th July 2027	Monday 4th October 2027	Monday 18th October 2027	Dd/b
Nursery Children born between 1st January 2025 and 31st March 2025	Monday 7th June 2027	Monday 5th July 2027	Friday 7th January 2028	Friday 21st January 2028	N/A
Primary	Monday 16th November 2026	Friday 15th January 2027	Friday 16th April 2027	Friday 30th April 2027	Friday 30th April 2027
Secondary	Friday 4th September 2026	Friday 30th October 2026	Monday 1st March 2027	Monday 15th March 2027	Monday 15th March 2027

Uniform

Our School Uniform and Appearance policy can be found on our website: https://www.howardianprimaryschool.co.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=70&type=pdf

We kindly ask that pupils do not wear football kits to school or bring them in for PE lessons as this can lead to disagreements which have a negative impact on learning. **Please put your child's name in every piece of school uniform and PE kit so that lost items can be returned to their rightful owners.**

We have a good stock of pre-worn uniform. There is a rail located in the main foyer, and there is also uniform in the shed in the loading bay. Please help yourselves!

Communication *(this information was sent out via an email on October 8th)*

Clear, timely and effective communication is very important to us at Howardian Primary School.

We understand from conversations with you, and communications you have sent us, that many people are having problems and issues with Arbor, our new method of communicating. These problems include:

- Not receiving in App message or emails sent to the whole school

- Receiving multiple copies of the same message
- Delays in receiving important messages e.g. club cancellations
- Not receiving responses to messages you have sent us via Arbor
- Not receiving in App messages until you have good signal or are on your home wifi

We understand this can be very frustrating and we are doing all we can to sort out these issues. All Cardiff schools have been directed to move over to Arbor and many schools are reporting the same problems. We continue to work with you, the local authority and Arbor to iron out these issues, some of which are outside our control. To support effective communication we will implement the following to try to solve issues that we have some control over.

- Continue to work with Arbor and the Local Authority to ensure they are aware of the problems
- Start using text messages for more urgent messages so that they get to you quicker (e.g. headbump messages / club cancellation etc) These will come from the following number if you want to save it - 07853 306903
- Use emails for longer messages as these should go to your email address and not via the app
- Provide information to parents/carers to help them overcome app problems (See help sheets attached)
- Provide additional training for staff in school to ensure messages are always being sent correctly and it is clear who they are for.

What can you do to ensure you receive the messages or emails ?

- Go into your phone settings and make sure that notifications have been set up for the Arbor app on your phone (See attached sheet). This also gives guidance on what to do if you have turned notifications on and it's still not working.
- Ensure that Arbor emails are not going to your Spam email folder (See attached sheet)

- Email the school if you have not received a response to an in app message to us as not all of these are getting through to us - howardianprimary@cardiff.gov.uk

Safe Driving and Parking

Unfortunately, I have regular correspondence from both school families and local residents regarding issues around parking and unsafe driving on the streets around our school. Positive relationships are really important to us as a school. I would encourage you to be respectful to residents and not to block driveways. Please also drive safely, especially at busy drop-off and pick-up times. If possible, please avoid Hammond Way in particular and park a short walk away to ease congestion.

PTA



Thank you to the PTA for organising very successful discos for our pupils on Thursday October 8th and for those families and staff who supported this event. As always, the discos were very much enjoyed by those who attended.

We are incredibly fortunate to have a very hard-working and dedicated PTA. In the current climate, we are increasingly reliant on the PTA to support us with many enriching activities and resources that the school budget just cannot sustain. However, our core PTA group has children who have either left Howardian to go to High School, or who are very close to doing so. Please support their work by attending any meetings or events that you are able to. It is also a great opportunity to mix socially with other parents and carers. The next PTA event will be our annual Winter Celebration which will be held straight after school on **Friday November 27th**. Please support and attend this if you can.

You will also soon receive your child's design for Christmas merchandise. The funds from this go towards the PTA. You will have 2 weeks to get your orders in!

Attendance

At Howardian, we are committed to promoting positive attitudes to learning and school in general. Good attendance supports this ethos. Pupils who have low

attendance at school are at risk of a negative impact on their social, emotional and academic development and progress.
In order for our pupils to make the most of every learning opportunity, they need to attend as regularly as possible (aside from illness or appointments that cannot be taken outside of school hours) and arrive at school on time. School starts at 9am and learning starts at 9am, mostly with the class's daily Guided Group Reading sessions.
Please support your child's development by getting them to school on time, booking holidays during the school holidays, taking appointments outside of school hours as much as possible, and informing us on your child's first day of absence, giving the reason for that absence. We do understand that life happens and we are sympathetic to any family or personal circumstances that might affect your child's attendance. We are really happy to engage with you in such situations. This year, we have a new School Attendance Officer, Mrs Anna Lehal, and she will be working closely with our Deputy, Mr Brind, to help and advise any families who need support with attendance.

Punctuality

Please ensure that your children arrive in school on time. Lateness has a negative impact on your child's progress. It also affects your child's emotional wellbeing as children who are late often feel that they have missed out on learning opportunities and this can be very unsettling and upsetting for them.

Is your child entitled to Free School Meals (eFSM)?

Whilst all primary-school aged pupils are universally entitled to free school meals (uFSM), there are a number of benefits for pupils who apply to receive eFSM status. eFSM pupils receive a discount on their educational and residential trips, group music lessons (provided by the Cardiff and Vale music service) are subsidised by the school, and a free playtime snack is provided to foundation phase children. Pupils who receive eFSM will also be entitled to a uniform grant and other offers from Welsh Government and the council. The school also obtains extra funding for every pupil who is registered as eFSM. This is used to employ staff to run interventions and provide various types of support for the pupils.

Primary (and secondary) school pupils will get free school meals if their family receives:

- Income Support
- Income Related Employment Support Allowance
- Income Based JobsSeeker's Allowance
- Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit with an income less than £16,190 or
- Universal Credit if the net household earnings are less than £7400.

*Families who get Working Tax Credit do not qualify.

Once you submit an application, you will be notified in writing of the outcome. If you are eligible for free school meals, we will be notified so that we can update our records. Please click the link below to apply for eFSM.

https://www.cardiff.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals

Mrs Curran (Senior Admin Assistant) is able to provide support with your application if needed.

Dates for your Diary



We strive to include all key dates on the school calendar. Schools are very busy places and dates may be subject to change, or events might be communicated at relatively short notice, but we will endeavour to communicate such changes as soon as we can.
If you have not yet subscribed to the school calendar, please do so at your earliest convenience so that you do not miss key events. Mr Brind sent an email to you on September 28th outlining how you can access the calendar:

The school calendar, which includes key dates planned throughout the year, can be accessed from the link on the home page of our school website - (see Quick links) https://www.howardianprimaryschool.co.uk/

It can be accessed directly by clicking on this link - https://calendar.google.com/calendar/u/0/embed?src=c_classroombdd677f5@group.calendar.google.com&ctz=Europe/London

If you would like to subscribe to the calendar you can use the following iCal link: https://calendar.google.com/calendar/ical/c_classroombdd677f5%40group.calendar.google.com/public/basic.ics

Key events for the rest of this term are:
Tuesday 13th & Wednesday 14th October: Parents/Carers Evenings
Wednesday 14th October: flu vaccinations for Reception to Year 6 pupils.
Thursday 15th October: Shwmae day: wear red to promote the Welsh language
Friday 16th October: Wear red to support Show racism the Red Card
Tuesday 20th October - Thursday 22nd October: Year 6 Streetwise Travel Training
Tuesday 20th October: 4P class assembly (Mr Wheeler)
Wednesday 21st October: 4M class assembly (Miss Taylor)
Wednesday 21st October: Year 5 trip to West Midlands Safari Park
Friday 23rd October: INSET day- school closed to pupils for staff training

Monday 26th October - Friday 30th October: Half term

Monday November 2nd: back to school.
Tuesday 3rd and Thursday 5th November: Scholastic Book Fair (in the main hall after school)
Wednesday November 4th: Year 6 trip (6 Melyn, Mrs Martin) to the Royal Welsh Museum, Brecon
Thursday November 5th: Year 6 trip (6 Porffor, Miss Griffiths) to the Royal Welsh Museum, Brecon
Friday November 6th: 9am - parent / carer session: An Introduction to Monster Phonics
Thursday November 12th: Wear blue for Diabetes awareness.

Friday November 13th: Children in Need: details to follow.
Monday November 30th Years 2 & 3 Pantomime - Cinderella at the Riverfront, Newport.
Monday December 7th: Years 4, 5 & 6 Pantomime - Cinderella at the Riverfront, Newport.
Monday December 7th: Nursery Christmas concerts.
Tuesday December 8th: Reception Christmas concerts.
Wednesday December 9th: Year 1 Christmas concerts.
Thursday December 10th: Year 2 Christmas Concerts
Thursday December 10th: Christmas Jumper Day: donations via ParentPay to 'Save the Children.'
Friday November 11th: Reception & Year 1 pupils to see 'Pinnochio' at The Sherman Theatre
Tuesday December 15th: Key Stage 2 Carol Concert at St German's church- 6pm.
Friday December 18th: break up for the Christmas holidays.
Tuesday January 5th: children back to school for the spring term. (INSET day on Monday 4th)

INSET days 2025-2026 - Staff training: school closed to pupils

Autumn Term:	Tuesday 1st September	Friday 23rd October	
Spring Term:	Monday 4th January		
Summer Term:	Thursday 6th May	Monday 19th July	Tuesday 20th July

School Trips

In order to enhance and enrich every child's learning experiences and bring their learning to life, we have a very strong culture of taking the children on school trips. With the increasing pressure on our school budget, we ask for voluntary contributions in order for these to go ahead. We are also aware of the financial pressures on some of our families. For those families in receipt of Free School Meals, we usually offer to pay half of the contribution.



I am also very sympathetic and approachable if any families wish to discuss challenging financial circumstances. The pantomime trips later this term are enjoyed very much by our children. Nothing beats the experience of live theatre and the PTA very kindly fund the transport for these trips. However, if there are not sufficient contributions to cover the bulk of the ticket costs, then these trips may have to be cancelled.

Year 3 had a fantastic time on their recent school trip to Caerleon. The children visited the Roman museum and saw lots of Roman artefacts. They attended a workshop where they learnt about medical treatment during Roman times, and they visited the Roman baths and the remains of the amphitheatre.







I hope that your children enjoy the rest of this half term and that you have an enjoyable and relaxing half term break.

