

Headteacher's Newsletter

Important Dates:

- **2nd September** – Coloured groups staggered starts Y1 (see Y1 booklet)
- **2nd September** – Reception 'Pizza and Play'
- **3-4th September** – Reception staggered starts
- **24th September** – Reading and phonics meetings
- **21st October** – Individual school photos
- **14th November** – 9-11am Open morning for prospective families
- **4th and 5th November** – Parents evening
- **(See Y6 newsletter) Y6 SATs/SRE/High school choices meeting**

Welcome back to a brand-new school year! I hope you all enjoyed a restful and relaxing summer break. It has been lovely seeing so many of you at the gate this week and feeling that familiar, joyful energy return as the school comes back to life after our time off.

Your child's year group team will share their termly newsletters shortly, alongside their timetables for this term and their upcoming 'Sticky Knowledge Mats'. These mats outline the key information and vocabulary your children will explore across the wider curriculum. Taking a look at these together at home is a brilliant way to stay up-to-date with what they are learning so please do take some time to look at these over the term with your children.

Our Reception children have settled in brilliantly and our Year 1 pupils have transitioned seamlessly, ready to hit the ground running as a full cohort of 60 next week. We look forward to welcoming our new Nursery children over the coming weeks - we know they will have a fantastic start at Manor Wood and can't wait to see them flourish!

Uniform and PE kits for 2026-27

Please see below for a reminder of our school uniform policy:

School Uniform

- Mid-grey plain trousers, shorts, pinafore dress or skirt
- White shirt, blouse OR white polo shirt (with collar)
- Manor Wood official school sweatshirt or cardigan
 - White, grey or black tights, leggings or socks
 - Green gingham summer dresses
- Sensible, dark coloured outdoor shoes
- A pair of black pumps for indoor use

PE Kit

Indoor kit - white t-shirt and plain dark (black or navy) coloured shorts

Outdoor kit - white t-shirt, plain dark (black or navy) coloured tracksuit with full length trousers and jumper/hoody and trainers

On days when your children have extra-curricular activities, they are very welcome to bring a small, suitable bag of your choice - this does not need to be a Manor Wood branded bag. Please remember that each week your child only needs to bring their reading book and journal on their designated reading days.

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Labelling and Lost Property

Please can we remind all families to clearly label all belongings. The lost property bench is often overflowing with items that cannot be returned to their owner as these have no name attached. The lost property bench is located outside the main school office for any items that do go missing.

School gates and timings of the school day

A reminder of our school day:

- In the morning, our gates open at 8:30am and close at 9am
- Our school doors open at 8:40am and close promptly at 8:50am
- In the afternoon, our gates re-open at 3pm and close at 3:30pm
- School finishes at 3:15pm

Please can we ask all parents collecting from the KS1 and KS2 playgrounds to leave adequate space as the children leave the school building – this helps the adults bringing our their classes to easily identify parents and carers collecting their children.

Families with siblings, please collect your youngest child first.

Healthy Snacks

We are a healthy school. Please remember that snacks for playtime should not be crisps or chocolate. Items such as fresh, dried or prepared fruit or veg sticks, breadsticks and rice cakes are all suitable and appropriate snacks. Fizzy drinks and energy drinks are not allowed.

Communication – Arbor and Email

As you are aware, starting this academic year, we have streamlined our communication to ensure it is clearer and more consistent. In years 1-6, we have transitioned away from the Seesaw App and are using only Arbor and email as our primary communication channels. [Please ensure you have downloaded and set up the Arbor App to stay connected. Seesaw is no longer operational.](#)

Our Baby Nest, two-year-old and Foundation Stage Unit continue to use Family App for documentation and direct communication.

If you need to contact us at any time, or if your communication regarding your child is urgent, please send an email to office@manorwood.owlcotesmat.org where a member of the office team will respond to your email or send it to the most suitable person in school. Your child's class teacher is unable to guarantee that they will be able to see or respond to emails during the school day.

[Face-to-face conversation remains our preferred method of communication.](#) While drop-off and pick-up times are great opportunities for quick, easily resolved messages, we kindly request that longer, more detailed conversations are requested as a meeting via email to the school office or your child's year group team. This ensures we can give your concerns the attention they deserve.

We will continue to share learning and school life updates through our newsletters, invitations to school events and via other key channels. Thank you for your continued support as we work to make our communications more effective for all.

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Contact Information

Contact us:

yearone@manorwood.owlcotesmat.org
yeartwo@manorwood.owlcotesmat.org
yearthree@manorwood.owlcotesmat.org
yearfour@manorwood.owlcotesmat.org
yearfive@manorwood.owlcotesmat.org
yearsix@manorwood.owlcotesmat.org

All teachers in each year group will have access to this email address, as well as the Phase Leader. If you wish for your email to be read by a specific person, please address it with FAO (for attention of) followed by the teacher's name.

If you have a specific question regarding SEND and inclusion provision please contact the SEND and Inclusion Team:

Email: sendteam@manorwood.owlcotesmat.org

Arbor App

Arbor remains our system for payments, bookings and some whole school communication.

Free School Meals (FSM)

From September 2026, eligibility has expanded so that [all](#) households receiving Universal Credit qualify for Free School Meals. This change removes the current £7,400 income cap and is expected to benefit over half a million additional pupils nationwide.

- The new eligibility criteria applies from this September, meaning families receiving Universal Credit are able to access Free School Meals from the 2026/27 school year.
- Eligibility will be automatically available to all families receiving Universal Credit but parents and carers still need to apply.

If you think the new criteria applies to your household and either parent/carer are in receipt of Universal Credit, please:

- Provide the school office with your full name, address, date of birth, National Insurance number and the name and date of birth of the child/children you are enquiring about, in order for us to check eligibility. This will act as consent for these details to be passed to the Welfare and Benefits Service. They will then be able check eligibility and if confirmed, put your child's free school meal in place.

Forest School - Update

Please check the schedule below to find out when your children will be taking part in Forest School sessions. For these, your children will need:

- A fleece
- Waterproof trousers
- Waterproof jacket/coat
- Warm hat and gloves.
- Thick socks are also highly recommended to keep toes warm inside their boots!

During the warmer months, children will still need to bring their waterproofs and boots as even when the sun is out, parts of the Forest School site can still be muddy! For the most part outdoor clothing will stay at school and will be sent home only when it needs a good wash, this has always been practised in our Foundation Stage unit. We will also be launching a Swap Shop, if you have any outgrown waterproofs or boots please donate them.

Forest School sessions will take place on Mondays, Tuesdays, or Wednesdays. Children will attend in small groups of 16, participating once a week for a 6-week block. To ensure everyone gets to experience the outdoors at different times of the year, each year group will complete two blocks across different seasons.

Headteacher's Newsletter

Term	Year groups attending
Autumn 1	Year 1 and Year 2
Autumn 2	Year 3 and Year 6
Spring 1	Year 4 and year 5
Spring 2	Year 1 and Year 2
Summer 1	Year 3 and Year 4
Summer 2	Year 5 and Year 6

Exact days will be shared by class teachers in their termly newsletters.

I'd like to again, warmly welcome to Miss Barnes, who joins Year 1 and Mrs Rogers, who joins Year 6. They have settled quickly into the Manor Wood community and we are glad to have them on board!

Finally, thank you to my wonderful staff team and to you, our families for your support in making the first week back so successful. The positive energy around school has been wonderful to see and we are all really looking forward to a fantastic term. We truly value our partnership with you and are excited to work together to make it a year for your children.

Have a lovely weekend.

Kate Humphries - Headteacher