



21st November 2025

Dear parents / carers



Wonderful Choir and Tour Guides

A big thank you to our wonderful KS2 choir that has been brightening up assemblies recently. They have also been singing for families visiting our school on tours. These children come to choir every Monday, before school, and will soon be performing for parents at the Brighton Centre and outside Brighton Pavilion. Thank you also to our Year 6 tour guides who have been showing perspective parents around our school. 95 families have visited our school and feedback has been really positive. One family took the time to email in saying, 'Thank you so much for taking the time to show us around Cottesmore. We were really impressed by the school's offering and greatly appreciate the opportunity. We were particularly struck by the strong Catholic ethos that runs through the school. It was wonderful to see how faith and values are woven into daily life and learning.'



Safe and Well at School Survey (Years 4-6)

Children in Years 4 – 6 have completed the Local Authorities Safe and Well at School Survey. This is an online, anonymous city-wide survey for children and young people aged between 7 and 18. The survey asks a range of questions about school, health and wellbeing and about experiences of bullying and racism. It is explained to all children that this is a confidential survey and they cannot be identified by the information that is collected. They are also asked to speak to a member of school staff or other trusted adult if participating in the survey makes them feel worried or concerned. This survey does not require parental permission to participate, but all children have the right not to participate. We ask all children and young people at the beginning of the survey to confirm they have had the survey explained to them and are happy to answer the questions. We also remind them that they can stop answering the survey at any point. We run this survey to help our school further improve our whole-school approach to health and wellbeing, anti-bullying and equality. Data from all schools in Brighton and Hove is also collated to provide city-wide information about bullying, racism and health and wellbeing. This is then used to improve services

and support for children and young people. We will feed back on the survey results in April 2026 (when we receive ours). If you have any questions about the survey please contact our RSHE Lead, Erin Brady-Smith

erinbrady@cottesmore.brighton-hove.sch.uk

The privacy notice relating to data collection for the survey is available on the Public Health Schools' Programme website page, available here: <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/privacy-notice-safe-and-well-school-survey-sawss>

Good to be Me

Children have taken part in a series of RSHE lessons based on the topic, 'Good To be Me'. These lessons have been created by Anti-Racist lead teachers in Brighton and Hove, along with the PSHE team and are informed by the Brighton and Hove City Council's Primary Racial Literacy Curriculum Framework. The topic explores five key themes:

- Physical features (skin colour, hair texture and other physical characteristics)
- Identity, community, culture, ethnic heritage & religion
- Stereotypes, stereotyping and assumptions
- Prejudice and discrimination
- Historical context and structural issues.

Anti-racist education, like all our equalities education, is always appropriate to pupils' ages and stages of development and is an essential part of safeguarding.

All teachers at Cottesmore St Mary have been trained in Racial Literacy themselves and have had further training on how to deal with questions around race and racism.

If you have any other questions or queries, would like some more information or feel there is something you would like to inform your child's class teacher about, please do not hesitate to contact your class teacher or the RSHE Lead, Erin Brady-Smith (erinbrady@cottesmore.brighton-hove.sch.uk)

Year 5 Swimming

Over the Autumn Term, Year 5 have attended swimming lessons at King Alfred Leisure Centre. During these sessions, children developed their ability to use a range of different swimming strokes. They also focused on swimming confidently and competently for at least 25 metres as well as ensuring that all were able to enter the water safely. Children have made great progress. The staff at King Alfred also praised the children for showing great perseverance each week. Well done Year 5.

Christmas Jumpers

Please donate any outgrown Christmas jumpers to the school. These will be given to families who may need additional support. If we receive lots, our ECO committee will hold a seconds sale which will help with sustainability. Many thanks.

Have an enjoyable weekend. Rachel Breen, Headteacher.

Christmas at Cottesmore – Nativity Liturgies

- Year 6 Monday 15th December at 2.30 pm
- Year 2 Tuesday 16th December at 9.15 am
- Year 5 Tuesday 16th December at 2.30 pm
- Reception Wednesday 17th December at 9.15 am
- Year 4 Wednesday 17th December at 2.30 pm
- Year 1 Thursday 18th December at 9.15 am
- Year 3 Thursday 18th December at 2.30 pm

Please can all children dress in school uniform unless directed otherwise by their class teacher (no PE kits). Some children will dress up and the school will provide these costumes. If your child has a nativity play at 9.15am, once you have dropped your child off with the class teachers as per usual start time, you may head straight to the hall. Alternatively, we will reopen Radinden Manor gates, at 9.05am but they will close promptly at 9.15am. If your child has a nativity play at 2.30pm, Radinden Manor gates will open at 2.20pm and they will close promptly at 2.30pm. At both of these times of day, the office won't have capacity to escort latecomers through the building. We look forward to celebrating with you all.

Advent Fair Donation Week To help make the event a great success, we will be holding a rolling drop-off week for donations from Monday, 1st December to Friday, 5th December. This year, instead of a weekly rotation of items, we kindly invite families to drop off any of the following at the KS2 shelter at your convenience throughout that week: teddies in good condition; bottles of wine or similar and boxed chocolates. Thank you for your generous support. We look forward to celebrating the Advent season together. The PTA Team.

Christmas Dinner

KS1 Christmas Dinner (children in Years Reception, 1 and 2) will be on Thursday 18th December.

All KS1 children will automatically be offered a FREE Christmas lunch on this day. On Wednesday 17th December, there will be no school dinners available for KS1 children. We therefore ask that you provide a packed lunch, for KS1 children, from home on Wednesday 17th December.

KS2 Christmas Dinner (children in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6) will be on Wednesday 17th December.

If your child chooses to have lunch on their Christmas dinner day, you will be debited the usual amount of £2.65 from your Parent Pay account. Children can, of course, still bring in a packed lunch if they do not want a Christmas lunch and you will not be charged.

On Thursday 18th December, children in Reception, Years 1 and 2 will have their Christmas Dinner, and due to the popularity of this, there will be no school dinners available on this day for your KS2 child. We therefore ask that you provide a packed lunch from home on Thursday 18th December.

On the day of their Christmas dinners, children are invited to wear colourful party clothes / Christmas jumpers to help with the festivities.

On the day that any child is asked to bring a packed lunch, if they are registered for free school meals (Pupil Premium) and you will require a school packed lunch to be provided for them, please email the office by 10th December.



Governor vacancy

School governors play a vital role in education. By volunteering as a governor for a school, you can make a difference by shaping the future of children and young people. We are in need of a Foundation (Catholic) Governor at Cottesmore. If you are Catholic and feel that you have some time to give in helping further develop our school, please do get in touch with our joint Chairs of Governors, Katie Raymond and Thomas Medveczky

katieraymond@cottesmore.brighton-hove.sch.uk

thomasmedveczky@cottesmore.brighton-hove.sch.uk

What is Governance?

The Governor's role is to both support and challenge the school leadership team. In their latest Governance Handbook, the Department for Education (DfE) is encouraging governors to focus on three core functions:

- Strategic Direction: ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Critical Friend: holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils;
- Ensure Accountability: overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

How do I start?

- Our Chair would contact you for an informal chat to discuss the role, hours taken to fulfil it, how you would be supported etc. Following that, if still interested, as part of our school's commitment to Safer Recruiting practices, our Chair would contact you for interview. This will also be an opportunity to plan specific roles that will suit you as a member of our body.
- You will be given a Diocesan Application Form. This includes a declaration that must be signed by a Parish Priest.
- As you would be working around young people, you would be asked to fill the forms for a standard DBS background check. Please do consider offering your time in this very worthwhile voluntary position.

For more information about Governance, you may wish to follow these links: <https://www.nga.org.uk/about/become-a-governor-trustee/>

<https://www.abdiocese.org.uk/education/governance>



Governors' Building Fund and Gift Aid

As an Aided school, we are required to provide 10% of any money received for capital on maintenance works.

All parents are asked to make a minimum voluntary contribution of £10 per term, or £30 a year, PER Pupil (not family) into a ring-fenced fund so that we are able to meet these financial commitments. Some families are in a position to pay more, for which we are extremely grateful.

The 10% is required because Cottesmore St Mary is a Catholic Aided school. A Catholic Aided school is owned by the Diocese. However, an Aided school is funded by the Local Authority for day to day running costs. For example, the salaries of the staff, utilities and resources. Annually, Aided schools are able to bid for maintenance money, via the Diocese, who in turn are provided with money by the Department of Education. If bids are successful, an Aided school has to then fund 10% of the overall amount offered. Aided schools generate this 10% via annual or termly parental Gift Aid donations.

As an Aided school, if we are unable to provide 10% towards successful bids, the money is lost and any essential capital or maintenance spend has to come out of money that is provided by the Local Authority for the children. This year we were able to have brand new heating throughout the whole school as, thanks to the donations, we could pay the 10% needed to win the bid.

We ask that families create an annual or termly standing order for their contributions for each child that attends Cottesmore. Please don't forget to set an end date, for all standing orders, to be the summer that your child leaves Year 6 as we can't offer refunds once your child has left the school. Payments can be arranged either via online banking or your mobile banking app for ease. It is also helpful if you complete the Gift Aid declaration form if you are a UK tax payer. Gift Aid is a Government backed scheme that allows the school to reclaim an additional 25p of tax for every £1.00 that you donate at no additional cost to you. This also goes towards releasing more money for our building fund. This extra money is also vital so please do contact the office if you need the form to be resent. Thank you so much.

Supporting Maths at home

A reminder that on our website, we have a range of different resources that can be used to help further Maths progression. This is in the Curriculum section / Maths.

www.cottesmore.brighton-hove.sch.uk/page/mathematics/
You will find links to each year group's scheme of learning which can help you to track the areas that are being taught in class. Alternatively, your child's year group's half termly overview, that is sent via Ping each half term, will give a rundown of the content taught in class over that half term. Towards the bottom of the website page, you will also find videos that demonstrate the way children are taught to calculate in our school. Watching these can help aid consistency in the approaches practised at home and at school. Further down, you will find a link to a range of White Rose booklets that provide age-appropriate questions for each area of the Maths curriculum for your child's year group. These can be used at home to further support and practise the key skills. If you have any questions, please get in touch with your class teacher.

MONDAY 24th	
TUESDAY 25th	
WEDNESDAY 26th	- Year 2 St Patrick Forest School am - Year 1 St Teresa Forest School pm - Years 3 – 6 Red Riding Hood pantomime at school at 9.30pm
THURSDAY 27th	
FRIDAY 28th	Year 5 swimming
DECEMBER	
MONDAY 1st	- Advent begins - PTA collection week. Please donate teddies in good condition, bottles of wine or similar and boxed chocolates. Please leave in the KS2 shelter.
TUESDAY 2nd	Choir to Brighton Centre for One Voice Singing Festival (rehearsal during the day and show in evening)
WEDNESDAY 3rd	Year 1 St George Forest School pm
THURSDAY 4th	
FRIDAY 5th	- Reception and Year 1 parent / carers Phonics workshop. School hall. 8.50am - PTA Advent Fair, school hall and outside, 3.15pm – 4.30pm. School uniform day (or PE kit is usual PE day). Please bring donataions of cakes and sweet treats
MONDAY 8th	
TUESDAY 9th	
WEDNESDAY 10th	Year 1 St Teresa Forest School pm
THURSDAY 11th	Interactive Fairy Tale Show for Reception - Year 2. Fairytale costumes or party clothes for children in Reception only
FRIDAY 12th	
MONDAY 15th	Year 6 Nativity - 2.30pm
TUESDAY 16th	- Year 2 Nativity - 9.15am - Year 5 Nativity - 2.30pm
WEDNESDAY 17th	- Reception Nativity - 9.15am - Year 4 Nativity - 2.30pm - Christmas Dinners: KS2 (these year groups wear Christmas jumper / colourful clothes). All children in KS1 to bring a packed lunch this day. - Honeypot celebration
THURSDAY 18th	- Year 1 Nativity - 9.15am - Christmas Dinners: KS1 (these year groups wear Christmas jumpers / colourful clothes). All children in KS2 to bring a packed lunch this day. - Y3 Nativity - 2.30pm - PTA uniform sale after school – items between £1 and £2
FRIDAY 19th	- Class parties for all school and Father Christmas to visit Reception – Year 3. - School finishes for Christmas holidays
CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY Monday 22nd December – Friday 2nd January	

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JANUARY 2026	
MONDAY 5th	Pupils return to school
TUESDAY 6th	
WEDNESDAY 7th	
THURSDAY 8th	
FRIDAY 9th	
MONDAY 12th	
TUESDAY 13th	
WEDNESDAY 14th	- Year 6 St Maximillian Forest School am - Year 1 St George Forest School pm
THURSDAY 15th	Closing Date for Local Authorities applications 2025/2026
FRIDAY 16th	
MONDAY 19th	
TUESDAY 20th	
WEDNESDAY 21st	- Year 5 St Josephine Forest School am - Year 1 St Teresa Forest School pm - Year 6 school trip to Downs Junior Air Raid Shelter
THURSDAY 22nd	Reception and Year 6 Buddy Mass at Cardinal Newman School Chapel – parents welcome
FRIDAY 23rd	Year 2 school trip to the Sealife Centre
MONDAY 26th	
TUESDAY 27th	Holocaust Memorial Day
WEDNESDAY 28th	- Year 6 St Benedict Forest School am - Year 1 St George Forest School pm
THURSDAY 29th	
FRIDAY 30th	
FEBRUARY	
MONDAY 2nd	
TUESDAY 3rd	
WEDNESDAY 4th	- Year 5 St Oscar Forest School am - Year 1 St Teresa Forest School pm - Year 3 school trip to Brighton Museum
THURSDAY 5th	Year 1 and Year 5 Buddy Mass at Cardinal Newman School Chapel – parents welcome
FRIDAY 6th	
MONDAY 9th	
TUESDAY 10th	Safer Internet Day – extra online safety lessons in school
WEDNESDAY 11th	International day of women in science
THURSDAY 12th	- Year 5 school trip to Brighton Pavilion TBC - Year 4 Viking workshop - PTA uniform sale after school – items between £1 and £2
FRIDAY 13th	PTA Valentines cake sale after school

HALF TERM
Monday 16th February – Friday 20th February
Outdoors Project Holiday Club on school field

Tuesday 17th February - Shrove Tuesday and Chinese New Year
Lent - 18th February to Thursday 2nd April

Saturday 21st February - International Mother Language Day