

Roots to grow, Wings to fly'
They will soar on wings like Eagles
Isaiah 40:31

The **Roots** of our school community nurture, support and challenge us to **Grow** to be the best version of ourselves.

The **Wings** of faith, strength and resilience allow us to **Soar** freely and flourish, now and in the future.

Dates for your diary

28th & 29th October Half term – Leap Active holiday camp at St Andrew's

Weds 5th Nov Reception & KS1 Parents' reading workshop – see below

Tuesday 11th Nov Remembrance Service 10.50am

Tuesday 11th Nov Flu immunisations

Sat 15th November Cross Country 2 at Dursley RFC

Thurs 20th November Parent forums 8.45am & 6pm (note change of times)

Mon 24th November School photographer

Fri 5th December Christingle service 2.30pm

Sat 6th December Cross Country 3 at Dursley RFC

Fri 12th December Pantomime trip for whole school

Tues 16th December KS1 Nativity 9.30am

Weds 17th December Christmas lunch

Weds 17th December KS2 Carol Service 6pm

Thursday 18th December Christmas jumper day & parties

Friday 19th December Last day of term 2

Monday 5th January **INSET DAY**

Reception 2026

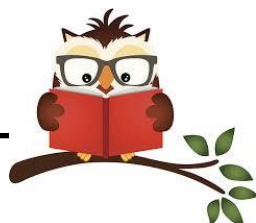
If you have friends with young children who will be starting school in September 2026, please encourage them to come and have a look around our school.

Instead of open days we are offering personalised tours with the Headteacher this autumn. The available dates are on our website & parents need to book an appointment via the office.

Reading and Phonics Meeting for Owls and Hawks

We are pleased to invite you to a reading and phonics meeting on Wednesday 5th November at 2.45-3.15. We would like to share with you how the children at St Andrew's learn to read through our FFT phonics scheme and how this is implemented in the classroom, so that you can confidently support your children at home with their reading. We look forward to seeing you.

Mrs West and Mrs Milverton



Last week we had a **Be safe, Be seen** assembly to discuss what to wear as the nights draw in when we are walking, cycling or scootering.

This week we welcomed staff from Thornbury leisure centre who led an assembly all about water safety. The pupils responded well and we able to explain how to keep safe and what to do if they or someone else was in trouble. I am sure they will share their knowledge with you!

Here is a link to a site that you might want to explore with your child(ren).

[The Water Safety Code | Royal Life Saving Society UK \(RLSS UK \)](#)

And a video clip: <https://youtu.be/zwzB7So7jSM>

Over the last couple of weeks, we have been busy with sports events against other schools. The Y5/6 dodgeball team played in a Yate Academy Festival in Bradley Stoke. The team played a series of 4 matches and won all four. One teacher from another school commented on how fairly our team played and how they showed great sporting values.

A squad of KS2 girls went to Lockleaze sports centre to play in a Bristol Bears Red Roses Girls Festival. The girls played a series of matches against other schools and had a great time. Thanks to Mrs Imrie for coming along and supporting the team.



Last Saturday the cross-country squad ran the first race of the season (out of four) at Dursley RFC. It is impressive that almost 1/3 of our KS2 pupils belong to the squad. All of the runners pushed themselves and ran well, supported by parents and siblings. We look forward to the rest of the races, which will be more challenging as the course gets muddier over the winter months. Thank you to Mark and Sarah Betty for continuing to run the lunchtime cross-country club for the squad.

Parent Forum meetings

The next parent forum meetings with the Chair of Governors and Headteacher will be on **Thursday 20th November at 8.45am and repeated at 6pm** – Please note the change of times.

Just a reminder of the holiday club running in school next week:



Leap Active: Leap Active are running a holiday club on Tuesday & Wednesday next week at St. Andrew's school. You can sign your child up for either/both of these days via the link below.

[Leap Active | Pebble](#)

Message from the SENDCo

As we approach the end of Term 1, all parents of children on the SEN register should have been invited for a meeting to discuss your child's My Plan and current targets. If you have not yet had this, please contact your child's teacher directly. If you have a concern regarding your child, please speak to the class teacher but also feel free to contact me

Jacqueline.west2@sgmail.org.uk

Mrs West

Remembrance Day

Our Remembrance Day service is on Tuesday 11th November at 10.45am in the spiritual garden (weather permitting). Everyone is welcome to join us for the service.

As always, poppies and the usual RBL merchandise are for sale in school.



Governor vacancy

A vacancy will be arising on the governing Body of St. Andrew's for a parent governor. If you are interested in finding out more about the role, please contact Tony Parker (our Chair of Governors) through the school office for an informal chat. Otherwise, speak to Anna O'Brien, Jemma Donnelly or Sarah Betty, who are our current parent governors.

Bonfire night

Please find overleaf some helpful information for those children that find bonfire night challenging.

And finally, we hope you have a wonderful half term break – see you on Monday 3rd November.

Preparing for An Autism-friendly fireworks Night

October 2025

Every autistic person is different and some may love celebrating Fireworks Night, whilst for others it may be more of a challenge. The key to a successful Fireworks Night will be a little planning and preparation to support autistic young people through an event that has the potential to be unsettling.

Autistic young people may experience sensory processing differences that can make Fireworks Night particularly challenging.

Reasons Fireworks Night May Be Overwhelming:

- Loud, unpredictable noises
- Bright, flashing lights
- Crowds and social demands
- Changes to routine
- Unfamiliar smells



Preparation Strategies

Before the Event

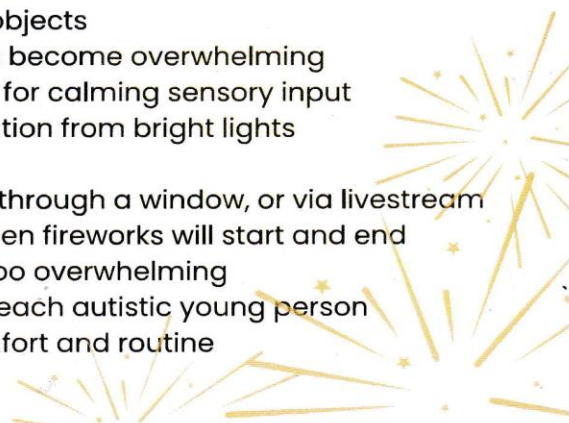
- Create a visual schedule: Use pictures to show what will happen during Fireworks Night
- Watch videos: Show short clips of fireworks with sound to familiarize young people with what to expect - see some suggested viewing at the end of this article.
- Practice coping techniques: Teach deep breathing and counting exercises
- Social stories: Create personalized stories explaining what Fireworks Night is and what will happen
- Visit locations in advance: If possible, visit viewing locations during daylight hours

Sensory Support

- Noise reduction: Provide noise-cancelling headphones or ear defenders
- Comfort items: Encourage bringing favorite comfort objects
- Safe spaces: Identify quiet areas to retreat to if things become overwhelming
- Weighted items: Consider weighted blankets or vests for calming sensory input
- Sunglasses: Offer sunglasses to reduce visual stimulation from bright lights

On the Night

- Viewing options: Consider watching from a distance, through a window, or via livestream
- Timing awareness: Let young people know exactly when fireworks will start and end
- Exit plan: Have a clear plan for leaving if it becomes too overwhelming
- Support person: Assign a dedicated adult to support each autistic young person
- Familiar foods: Bring preferred snacks to provide comfort and routine



Alternative Celebrations

If attending fireworks displays is too challenging, consider these alternatives:

- Daytime celebrations: Focus on other Bonfire Night activities during daylight hours
- Indoor viewing: Watch fireworks displays from your windows, or on the television with controlled volume
- Create a sensory-friendly display: Use glow sticks, sparklers (with supervision), or light projectors
- Craft activities: Make firework-themed art using paint splatter techniques or coloured tissue paper

Supporting Families

Families can prepare by:

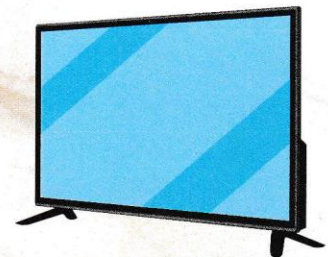
- Discussing plans well in advance
- Creating a personalized "Fireworks Night toolkit" with comfort items
- Practicing coping strategies at home
- Being flexible and having backup plans
- Celebrating their child's achievements, however small

Remember

Every autistic young person is different. What works for one may not work for another. The key is to prepare thoroughly, remain flexible, and prioritize the young person's wellbeing over participation in traditional celebrations.

Additional Information and Resources

Programmes which may be appropriate to share to help prepare young people for what fireworks night may be like:



- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pmH4FxQlBxw> CBeebies programme Bing – Fireworks – Bing eagerly anticipates watching the fireworks with his friend Sula. She comes prepared with ear muffs but Bing doesn't have any. Flop makes him some so he can enjoy the remaining fireworks and he learns that whilst he can't stop the bangs, he can quieten them so he enjoys it still.
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x3fLgs79dxQ> – Woolly and Tig – Bonfire Night episode – Tig goes to a friend's house and does lots of fun fireworks activities like painting before watching fireworks in the evening in the park at the back of their house. Tig likes the activities but is scared of fireworks. She hides to avoid them, but then, once she shares her fear, everyone reassures her that they can still enjoy them from inside the house. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x3fLgs79dxQ> – Newsround article including a 2 minute video.
- Bonfire Night: How to enjoy fireworks with autism**
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m001189h/my-first-festivals-series-2-7-bonfire-night> – A CBeebies programme – **My First Festival** follows 7 year-old Connie attending her first fireworks display with her parents. There is some preparation with her before they go which may be helpful to apply with your own children.



Further online reading and support:

- <https://family-action.org.uk/self-help/supporting-neurodivergent-children-on-bonfire-night/>
- <https://www.autism.org.uk/what-we-do/news/our-top-tips-use-your-senses-for-an-autism-friend/>
- <https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/understanding-autism/health-and-wellbeing/everyday-life/fireworks-events>



Autumn activities at Tortworth Arboretum

Autumn at Tortworth Forest Centre

25th October - Autumn visitor day

Enjoy a self-guided walk around the arboretum. Children go free!



26th October - Mushroom walks (10.30am and 2pm)

Join Collection Manager, Jake, for a few hours of happy rambling, learning about the mushrooms that grow right on your doorstep.

9th November - Women's bushcraft day

Fire-building, natural kindling, working with tools, cooking by an open fire and more! Come and discover this whole day workshop designed for women, by women.



NEW 22nd November - Writing the Woodland workshop

Join Meg Avon, a Woodland Wellbeing Facilitator and performance poet, experimenting with words in a safe and inclusive woodland environment.



FOR FULL DETAILS & BOOKING VISIT

tortwortharboretum.org/events

Join our Event Volunteers

We're looking for friendly and reliable people to help out at bushcraft events and visitor days.

You'll play a hands-on role in supporting a wide range of activities, meet new people, build confidence, and be part of something special in a beautiful ancient woodland.

Email a little about you to events@tortwortharboretum.org to find out more and apply.

