



YEW TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL

# Yew Tree Times

Latest News

06.02.26

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## Ready for School...

Whilst I don't agree with sentiment of the headline, I saw an article (available [HERE](#)) online recently about the amount of time teachers spend in schools supporting children in ways beyond teaching. If you remove the sensationalist language used in the article, the research from [Kindred Squared](#) is staggering:

- 37% of children started reception without basic skills (33% in 2024)
- 26% of children starting school not toilet trained (taking approximately 1.4hrs of teachers' time supporting children use the toilet each day)
- 28% of children needing support to eat and drink independently
- 25% of children struggling using basic language skills

Beyond the article, at Yew Tree we do recognise the challenges of children not being ready for school. We actively encourage and support families to prepare children for this and would continue to do so even though we are nearly halfway through the academic year.

Whilst we do recognise that some children have additional needs, which therefore require an element of support with basic skills, we would encourage all families to take a look at the DfE's Ready for School 'checklist' (available [HERE](#)). Whatever age/stage of development your child is at, please do support their independence in these skills so that teachers can focus on teaching your child as much as possible.

*Mr Jamie Barry*



**Our attendance TARGET is 96%.**

*"Be in to win...!"*

At Parents' Evening, we shall be sharing information about your child's attendance so far this year.

However, please remember, you can check your child's current (live) attendance at any point via our Arbor app (click below).



## MUSIC PROVISION

We are very proud of our music provision at Yew Tree so were delighted to, once again, be nominated by SIPS Music to be a [Music Mark](#) School. This recognises our commitment to delivering high quality music provision.

At Yew Tree, our music provision extends beyond curriculum lessons. We start each day with music appreciation in class, we have singing assemblies, whole class instrumental teaching (Y3) and specialist instrumental music teaching.

As we have a number of well-established instrumental groups now, our music lead (Ms Capewell) has organised performances at different times in the year to ensure these are not rushed by doing them all at the same time. We are also hoping to pull together an ensemble group in the summer for an end of year performance so do keep an eye out for details.

## NON-UNIFORM DAY

Don't forget that children are invited to come dressed in their own clothes, as a non-uniform day, on:

**THURSDAY 12<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY**

In return, we ask for a donation of £1 per child which supports our school activities (e.g. the school farm & allotments, workshops etc).

## CLASS ASSEMBLIES

Well done to Y2 for their fabulous class assemblies this week. We were so proud of their efforts.

Our next class assemblies are for Y1 on **WEDNESDAY 4<sup>th</sup> MARCH** at:

**1A – 1.30pm, 1B – 2.00pm, 2C – 2.30pm**

### NATIONAL YEAR OF READING

As we have mentioned previously, 2026 is a National Year of Reading. This is a national campaign to help people rediscover the joy of reading as evidence shows a decline in those reading for pleasure.

At Yew Tree, we are supporting this campaign with monthly reading missions as you can see [HERE](#). Do keep an eye on Dojo for reminders each month.

### TERM DATES 26/27

We have recently been contacted by a number of families, who are planning holidays for next year, enquiring about term dates for 26/27.

We are grateful for families considering this when booking holidays. We shall send home postcard versions of these in the summer term but you can see a summary of next year's dates [HERE](#).

### RHE UPDATE

We recently shared information that the Relationships & Health Education (RHE) guidance has been updated ahead of September 2026.

We shall send further details closer to the time but, so you have advance notice, our consultation meeting will take place at 2.30pm on:

**WEDNESDAY 15<sup>th</sup> APRIL**



### PARENTS' EVENING

Parents/carers are reminded that school **closes at 1.00pm** on:

### WEDNESDAY 11<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY

Children should be collected promptly, in the same way as our end of day procedures, so that Parents' Evening can start at 1.30pm as planned. Children's books will be available to view while you wait your appointments.

Children will have lunch before they go home so, if your child is packed lunch, please send this in as normal. Children who have school meals will receive a snack bag.

### PLAY LEADERS

At Yew Tree, we recognise the importance of play and social development for our children. As well as investing in extensive facilities and high-quality resources for play and lunchtime, we have also supported children and staff with training so that play is positive.

We are delighted that, working in collaboration with Sandwell Public Health, we shall be introducing 'Play Leaders' to our school after half term.

Our lunchtime supervisors have their training next week and selected children (Y3 – Y5) will have their training after half term. Keep an eye out for details from Mr Whittington.

DATE	EVENT	DATE	EVENT
09.02.26	<b>NO CLUBS THIS WEEK</b>	25.02.26	Play Leader training – session 1
09.02.26	Y4 trip to Coombe Abbey	25.02.26	Brass group performance – 2.30pm
10.02.26	Safer Internet Day	26.02.26	Y5 trip to Lower Drayton Farm
10.02.26	Deadline for Y2 trip payments	27.02.26	Deadline to apply for Nursery places
11.02.26	School <b><u>CLOSING at 1.00pm</u></b>	27.02.26	YR INSPIRE session – 9.00am
11.02.26	Parents' Evening – 1.30pm – 6.30pm	02.03.26	National Secondary Offer Day
12.02.26	Attendance Shop – OPEN	03.03.26	Y1 trip payment deadline – 9.00am
12.02.26	Non-uniform day - £1 per child	04.03.26	Y1 class assemblies - PM
12.02.26	Break up for <b>HALF TERM</b>	04.03.26	Play Leader training – session 2
13.02.26	<b>INSET DAY</b> – School closed to pupils	05.03.26	World Book Day (inc. theme lunch)
23.02.26	Start of <b>SPRING 2</b>	05.03.26	Girls' football match – AWAY – 3.00pm