



Swineshead St. Mary's CE Primary School

Autumn term 1, 2026-27



www.enquiries@swineshead.laat.co.uk

Dear Parents & Carers,



Welcome back to a new academic year, an especially warm welcome to all of our new reception parents if you haven't had children with us before. I hope you all had a brilliant and restful summer and all of your little people are keen and eager to return to school to see their teachers and friends. It has been lovely walking around school and seeing them settle in over the last few days, with big smiles and an enthusiasm for the new year ahead. I know there are lots of exciting learning opportunities planned across the term and teachers have been busy ensuring that everything is ready for a successful start.

I was particularly proud to see just how fabulously our new reception children are settling already, learning their new routines, making friends and exploring their learning environment. We know just how daunting this can be, but they have taken it in their stride and are doing so well already.

As we embark on a new school year, we try to ensure that everything runs smoothly, but as always if you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to come and speak to us. Your child's class teacher is the first point of call and they are available each morning and afternoon. However, if there is something you need to speak to school leadership about or with a SEND focus please do contact me via MCAS with your message and I will get back to you as soon as possible. It is always better to talk through any worries with us so that we can help, even if this is just a reassurance that things are OK.

Kind regards,
Mrs Horton
(Head of School)

School improvements:

Over the summer we have worked hard with the LAAT central team, school site team and external contractors to begin significant improvements to the school. This will be an ongoing project over the academic year as we work through school in stages, however, work that has been completed includes:

- All new children's toilets throughout school, which has been a huge project over the summer but definitely one that has made a massive difference to all pupils.
- A new fire alarm system throughout school to ensure the highest safety for our pupils.
- Internal decorating – the team have started with the entrance, the KS1 corridor and the corridor past Farah and Attenborough classrooms – including those 2 classrooms. It is making such a difference and school feels fresher and calmer. Decorating will continue during October half term, February half term and Easter holidays to decorate other areas in school.

As part of our sustainability project, the school has been focusing on being more 'eco-aware'. As we shared last term, our Eco Warriors and Growing Acorns children teamed up to start to develop and improve our green spaces outdoors. They have been doing a brilliant job and the garden and pond area are beginning to take shape – this will continue over the next few terms – the children are really enjoying this.

Over the summer, teaching staff have been working hard to update all of the information boards and displays within school, changing from paper backing to hessian. This is for 2 reasons: to ensure that the display backing is calm and children can easily focus on learning resources, also as a more sustainable resource – the hessian will last more than the one academic year, whereas the paper was being continually changed due to not being as robust. A small change but making a big difference! The teams will continue to highlight priorities as we go through the year, including our solar project.

EYFS:

We have also had a revamp of the EYFS area, the team have really worked hard to ensure that provision areas for the children look their best, encouraging exploration, curiosity and teamwork. The children have enjoyed exploring this with their teachers this week and we can't wait to share these with you throughout the year.



If you have children starting school in September 2027, look out for our open day dates coming soon and come and see what exciting opportunities we offer our children. We can't wait to see you!

Safeguarding information:

You can report any concerns to the school or directly to Children and Young People's Services (Social Services).

During Office hours contact Children Services on 01522 782111 or email: lscb@lincolnshire.gov.uk.
Out of Office Hours (24-hours) contact the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) on 01522 782333.

Our Safeguarding Team is as follows:

The Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mrs Collett. (Mrs Horton will be taking on this role during Mrs Collett's absence)

Deputy Safeguarding Lead: Mrs Horton
Miss Ratcliff and Miss Parr will be joining the team this term.

If you are not sure who to contact, please ask at our reception – they will be happy to direct you, or check our safeguarding signs on external doors.

We are very passionate about supporting all of our families and do take safeguarding seriously. If you need to disclose an incident or are worried about anything, perhaps you need help yourselves as a family, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us. We are here to help, not judge and will do our best to support you.



Gates open at 8.35 and all lessons start promptly at 8:45 am, good attendance is essential for ensuring every child makes strong progress. We want every child in our school to be successful, happy and to thrive – giving them the very best life chances for their future. Education is one of the most important things we can offer our children, but they need to be in school for us to make this happen.

Attendance continues to be a government and local authority priority for schools and we want to work with you as transparently as possible, giving you the information you need. To support this we will continue to send half termly letters to keep you informed of your child's attendance – these are for all children in school. We will also continue to support our families in improving attendance where we can, through support meetings and in a variety of ways on an individual basis. Our goal is simple: to support every child and family so that school is a positive and consistent part of their lives. Thank you for working with us to make this happen!

If there are any barriers to your child being able to attend, please come and speak to us so that we can help.

Staffing update:

Unfortunately, a return to school this September has not seen a return for Mrs Collett, who is still unwell. Mrs Collett will be unable to join us back in school this half term, we will inform you of any further update as we know this ourselves. I know you will join me in wishing her well. We will be sending some flowers and get well wishes for a speedy recovery.

As prior to the holidays, the school remains well supported by the trust with any needs. Mrs Grooby will also be helping one day a week to support SEND provision in school over this half term, just to ensure that there is enough capacity to support the children and families who need it.

Diary dates for this term:

- Wednesday 9th September – PGL meeting for year 6 parents – 5pm in the school hall
- Friday 11th September – first celebration collective worship for parents to attend, this will be every Friday, 2.40pm start.
- Monday 14th September – clubs begin for children this week
- Thursday 17th September – voting for school council representatives
- Monday 21st - Wednesday 23rd September – year 6 PGL trip
- Thursday 1st October – Harvest festival in church 1.30pm – all parents are welcome to join us
- Tuesday 13th October – Wrates photographers in school
- Tuesday 20th October – parent/carers forum 9am
- Thursday 22nd October – flu vaccinations
- Friday 23rd October – last day of term 1
- Monday 2nd November – term 2 begins

Change to class assemblies as part of our collective worship:

Following a consultation with staff and exploring what other schools are doing, we are making a change to class assemblies. These will no longer be taking place on a Friday as part of celebration worship. We feel it is vitally important however for our families to be a part of learning and the life of the school, so instead we will be introducing Parent Share sessions, where parents can come into our classrooms and join in learning opportunities with their child – explore exciting curriculum provision and hear from the children about what they have been learning about. We are really excited to start these sessions, more information will follow when we have planned our first one.

MCAS:

My Child At School (MCAS) is the communication system that we use in school to share important messages, information and letters with our parents and carers. You will have received information about how to login to MCAS and should be receiving emails from us. If for any reason you are unable to view emails or feel you are missing information, then please do get in touch with us as soon as possible, as you may miss things that are important for you and your child.

Parents have asked why we moved from Class Dojo to MCAS as a trust a little while ago, there were 2 reasons for this. Firstly, there were concerns with regards to the security measures in place with Class Dojo and potential data protection risks associated with the storage and sharing of children's images and information. We take the safeguarding of your children very seriously and as such couldn't continue to use a service for this purpose knowing these potential risks. There were also concerns regarding staff wellbeing due to messaging being received outside working hours, including evenings and weekends and parents requesting immediate replies, as you can appreciate staff wellbeing is also very important to us.

With both of these things in mind, it was decided to move to MCAS as our communication tool. When messaging in to us, your messages are received by the office team and then sent to the relevant member of staff. General messages and enquiries can be seen by the office staff and actioned. If you have a more confidential matter you wish to share and not been seen by general office staff, then please send in a message requesting that the member of staff you need get in touch with you, either via phone or at the start or end of the day. You can title your message with FAO.....

If you are unsure of how to navigate the system, you can find a parent guide on our website.

School website:

As a school, we are busy updating our school website. Please bear with us over these next few weeks as all of the information is updated. As you are aware class names have changed this term and other policies and important information is being updated and made easier to find. We have listened to parent feedback and are eager to improve this for you.

Although the classes need to change, the curriculum information continues to be available on the current school website and this remains appropriate for the term ahead, so please do check in with your child's learning as we know you like to do.

Class newsletters are also available for you to know specific information related to your child's class and will be sent out this week.



Little FiSH:

Little FiSH (Faith in Small Hearts) is a Christian lunchtime club which runs every Thursday. It is open to all children. The club is organised by Mrs Jean Powell, our Bishop's Visitor and is a fun club with activities, games, stories and discussions which focus on life skills with links to Christian principles. If your child would like to join this club, please remind them to ask their class teacher how to access this and to come along.



Parent / carer forum:

Listening to you as parents and carers and what is important to you, over the course of this academic year, we are looking at ways to improve opportunities for parents to share feedback with us as a school. One of the ways we are looking at is to introduce a parent / carer forum.

This will be an opportunity where parents and carers of children in school can come along and share any questions, concerns and feedback that they have with a member of school leadership and work together to discuss ways of improving our school community. You may also have some exciting ideas to share with us that could add something to our community. We value your input.

This isn't an opportunity to discuss specific issues for individual children, for example your specific child's needs. If you need to discuss your child, please do contact the relevant member of staff who will be happy to help you. Discussions will be much wider with regard to school provision.

Our first meeting will take place on Tuesday 20th October at 9am. We would love for you to join us and share your views. There is no set agenda by us, just the opportunity for you to bring any questions you have or brilliant ideas and share these with us. This first meeting will be led by Mrs Horton.

We look forward to seeing you!



LAAT Updates:

How LAAT Supports Our Schools:

LAAT is a family of 24 wonderful schools, each with its own character, community and identity.

Our role is to support our schools and help them thrive. We bring together colleagues with expertise across education, finance, HR, estates, health and safety, data and operations, who work alongside school teams to provide advice, support and practical help. By sharing this expertise across LAAT, we can ease pressure on busy school leaders and give them more time to focus on what matters most: giving every child the best possible education.

What does LAAT do?

We provide specialist support in areas including:

- Education and school improvement – leadership development, curriculum, teaching and learning, assessment and inclusion.
- Finance – helping schools manage resources effectively and meet financial and regulatory requirements.
- People and HR – recruitment, employee relations, wellbeing, training and professional development.
- Payroll and pensions – providing accurate and reliable administration for school colleagues.
- Operations and administration – supporting the efficient day-to-day running of schools.
- Health and safety – helping schools maintain safe environments for pupils, staff and visitors.
- Data and insight – supporting informed decision-making and school improvement.
- Governance – working with school and Trust governance structures to ensure effective processes and compliance.

What doesn't LAAT do?

Being part of LAAT does not mean every school becomes the same. Schools retain their individual identity, character and connection to their communities.

LAAT does not:

- Decide how individual schools organise their classes or classrooms.
- Set day-to-day school routines.
- Choose class names, displays or decorations.
- Decide which trips, celebrations, events, clubs or enrichment activities take place.
- Interfere with PTAs or Friends groups.
- Decide which local traditions schools maintain.
- Replace the relationship between schools, parents and their communities.
- Dictate how schools engage with their local communities.
- Set each school's calendar and events programme.
- Control how schools communicate with families, provided they meet Trust standards.
- Make every spending decision for schools; school leaders manage their delegated budgets within the Trust's financial framework.

