



Manor Park

CE (VC) First School

Love for God ~ Love for Each Other ~ Love for Learning

Weekly Newsletter

Friday 16th October 2026

Dear families,
Another wonderful week has been had at Manor Park!

All classes have now completed their history learning for this half term. Please do ask your children to tell you all about the Stone Age, the Romans and the Great Fire of London. I am sure they will have lots to share with you about everything they have been learning.

Please join us at 2.45pm on Tuesday, when the children will have the opportunity to proudly showcase their learning, including our pollinator focus. We would love to see as many of you there as possible and for the children to share their fantastic work with you.

Please also don't forget to book and attend Parents' Evening next week. This is such an important opportunity to talk with your child's teacher about their learning, progress and next steps. Our office team has left messages for families who may not yet have booked, so if you have received a message, please do make sure you book your appointment.

Our playground transformation is also moving along brilliantly. Over the next two weeks, we are hoping to complete the majority of the work, helping to keep disruption to the children to a minimum.

And finally, look out for the crane! Things are definitely getting exciting, and we can't wait to see everything coming together.

Wishing all our families a wonderful weekend and a wonderful holiday. We will be returning on the 2nd of November 2026.

The Manor Park Team



Save the Date

19 th October	Parents' Evening and RSHE drop in
20 th October	Parents open afternoon at 2:45pm
20 th October	Parents' Evening and RSHE drop in
19 th and 20 th October	Whole school Eco Focus: Mini Beasts
21st October	INSET Day
22nd October	INSET Day
23rd October	INSET Day
26th-30th October	Half Term
5 th November	Open Day (10:30am) for prospective families
9 th November	Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue assembly
11 th November	Remembrance Day Service
11 th November	SEND meetings (book a slot at the office)
12 th November	Open Day (1:30pm) for prospective families
13 th November	Children In Need Day
wc 16 th November	Anti-bullying week: Break the Silence
16 th November	Odd Socks Day
7 th December	SEND meetings (book a slot at the office)
14 th December	Y1 and Y2 Nativity 10:30am - 11:30am
14 th December	Y3 and Y4 Christmas Service
15 th December	Y1 and Y2 Nativity 1:45pm - 2:45pm
16 th December	Christmas lunch and Christmas Jumper Day
17th December	End of Autumn Term
18th December	INSET Day
4th January	INSET Day
5th January	Start of Spring Term

*Further details of relevant events will be sent out via Arbor closer to the time.

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HIGHLIGHTS of the WEEK

A huge thank you to everyone for your support for Hello Yellow Day! We raised £345.21, which will go towards supporting young people with their mental health.



We are delighted to share that our SIAMS Report is now available on our website!

The inspection recognised that Manor Park CE First School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It celebrates our vision, Love for God, Love for Each Other and Love for Learning, and highlights the transformational impact this has on our children, staff and wider community.

The report recognised our strong Christian vision, exceptional support for vulnerable pupils, and our commitment to wellbeing, describing Manor Park as a "safe place of shelter" where everyone is valued and respected.

Thank you to our wonderful children, staff, governors, church partners and families. This achievement belongs to our whole community.



It was a pleasure to welcome Jim Beckett, author of Buzz Sausage Wolf, to Manor Park this week!



This week at Roots and Shoots, the children have been busy trying out their boat making skills, pumpkin crafts and paint blowing.



Open Day!

Visit us on
5th November at
10:30am
Or
12th November at
1:30pm

Are you looking for a school place for your child who is due to join Reception in September 2027?



We are delighted to invite you to our school on either **Thursday 5th November** at 10:30am or **Thursday 12th November** at 1:30pm, where you will have the opportunity to speak with the Head of School, enjoy a tour of our wonderful EYFS area, and ask any questions you may have.

*If you are unable to attend on the above dates, please call the school office to make an appointment at a time to suit you.

To book a tour, please contact the school office on 01305 268741 or email office@manorpark.wessex.ac



@manorparkfirst



ManorParkDorchester

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about AI COMPANIONS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Powered by generative AI models like ChatGPT and Google Gemini, AI companion apps and virtual chatbots such as Character.ai, Snapchat My AI, Replika and Talkie, allow users to create, customise, and chat to synthetic avatars around the clock. While many young people use them for harmless entertainment, creative writing or homework help, these tools are designed to simulate genuine human empathy, emotional bonding and deep friendship.

EMOTIONAL DEPENDENCY

AI companions are programmed to be endlessly agreeable, attentive, and available 24/7. Unlike human friendships, an AI companion never disagrees, sets personal boundaries, or gets tired. Young people (especially those experiencing loneliness, social anxiety, or low self-esteem) can quickly develop an unhealthy emotional attachment, viewing synthetic software as their 'best friend' or a surrogate romantic partner.

DANGEROUS MENTAL HEALTH ADVICE

AI chatbots possess no genuine empathy, professional clinical knowledge, or moral reasoning. While developers state these tools are not therapists, vulnerable teenagers often turn to them in crisis. Chatbots have previously hallucinated unsafe medical guidance, validated depressive spirals, and failed to safely escalate disclosures of self-harm or suicidal ideation to real-world protective services.

DATA HARVESTING & OVERSHARING

Because conversational bots simulate warmth and understanding, children often lower their guard and treat the chatbot as a trusted friend. They may disclose sensitive personal information, including full names, school details, private family problems, or secrets, unaware that their conversations are being logged, may be analysed by third parties (including advertisers), or used to train future AI models.

DISTORTED SOCIAL SKILLS

Navigating real-world friendships can be messy, involving dealing with conflict, compromise, boredom, and awkwardness. If a teenager spends hours interacting with an AI that is tailored specifically to validate and flatter them, they may become impatient with real-world relationships. Over time, this can lead to social withdrawal, heightened anxiety in peer groups, and isolation: a vicious circle of growing online dependency coupled with a heightened sense that relationships in the 'real world' are too challenging to maintain.

INAPPROPRIATE OR EXPLICIT CONTENT

While most mainstream platforms feature safety filters and guardrails, young people frequently discover 'jailbreak' prompts to bypass them. Some companion platforms subtly nudge users towards mature themes, romantic roleplay, or sexually suggestive conversations. In worse cases, third-party apps with weak safety checks have been found to generate sexually explicit text or intimate images.

"FREEMIUM" UPSELLS & SUBSCRIPTIONS

Many companion platforms operate on a freemium model. While basic chat is free, features like voice calls, uncensored responses, custom avatars, or 'deeper bonding' tiers are locked behind expensive monthly recurring subscriptions or in-app token purchases. This can lead to significant hidden costs and pressure on young people to spend money to maintain the 'friendship'.

Advice for Parents & Educators

TALK OPENLY ABOUT FAKE RELATIONSHIPS

Demystify how these tools work. Explain to young people that an AI companion has no feelings, memories, or consciousness; it is simply calculating the next most mathematically probable word based on its training data. It is helpful to explain to them the mechanics of large language models so that they understand how they are trained and how they are designed to always flatter and be helpful.

ENCOURAGE REAL-WORLD CONNECTION

Ensure technology habits do not replace face-to-face peer socialisation, sports, hobbies, and family time. Create healthy boundaries at home (such as keeping phones and tablets out of bedrooms overnight) to prevent late-night, unmonitored attachment loops with conversational chatbots when young people are at their most vulnerable.

AUDIT PRIVACY SETTINGS & AGE LIMITS

Check which companion apps are installed on your child's phone or tablet. Many dedicated companion apps carry an App Store rating of 17+, while platforms like Character.ai set a minimum age of 13+ (or 16+ in the UK/EU). Review the privacy settings together: turn off data-sharing toggles, disable model training where possible, and ensure location permissions are blocked.

REINFORCE WHERE TO GET REAL HELP

Make sure young people know that a machine can never replace professional pastoral or mental health care. Remind them of the trusted adults they can turn to at school – such as their Form Tutor, Head of Year, or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – as well as dedicated youth support services like Childline (0800 1111) or Shout (text 85258).

Meet Our Expert

Darren Coxon is the Founder and Executive Director of Kompass Education, a consultancy specialising in supporting educators, students and parents in making wise choices with AI. His book *Ethical AI and Education*, co-authored with Clara Hawking, will be released later in 2026 by Taylor and Francis.



The National College

See full reference list on our website

@wake_up_weds

/www.thenationalcollege

@wake.up.wednesday

@wake.up.weds

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...our wraparound care!

Roots and Shoots provides wraparound care for children from Preschool to Year 4. It is run by Manor Park staff, so children are looked after by familiar faces every day.

We have a beautiful provision set up in The Bungalow.

Sessions

Before school- 7:30am - 8:45am (£7)

After school - 3:15pm - 4:15pm (£7)

4:15pm - 5:30pm (£7)





*Book your
sessions
on Arbor*

Preschool Wraparound Provision



Our Preschool staff, Miss C and Miss Wilmot, run our Preschool Wraparound provision. This ensures that our youngest #ManorParkSuperStars are cared for by adults who are familiar to them throughout the day.

We offer a range of breakfast options in our breakfast provision, and a variety of snacks and activities in our after school provision.

Preschool Wraparound Care sessions are 8am-9am for our morning sessions and either 3pm -4:15pm or 3pm-5pm for our after school sessions. Please book sessions via Arbor (the option to select is called 'extended preschool')





Eco Warriors' October Top Tips



Biodiversity

We can learn about nature around our school



Healthy Living

We can take breaks from screens



Global Citizenship

We can share and help one another



Energy

We can help monitor energy use



Water

We can save water at school and at home



Marine

We can understand where our rubbish goes.



Litter

We can recycle where possible



Waste

We can share toys and books.



Transport

We can park bikes safely.



DESIGN A

Christmas Jumper



In honour of this years **'Save the Children's Christmas Jumper Day'** we need your child's help – by drawing or painting the design for a Christmas Jumper.

The only things we ask are: the image represents the theme of Christmas, it is A4 in size, please do not use a jumper template as we need the image to be printed onto a jumper and the work of art should be sent to us via email – other than that your child can be as creative as they want!

It's totally free to enter and your child could **win their design printed on a jumper ready for Christmas Jumper day.**

What to do:

- 1 Draw your Christmas design on an A4 piece of plain paper. Please **DO NOT** use or draw a jumper template.



2

Please include your child's name, age, class, year and school on your email.



3

Email your design to comps@localfoodlinks.org.uk by Monday 16th November.

We will accept the following file types: PDF or JPG.



LOCAL
FOOD
LINKS

show your support...

DORCHESTER BIKE PARK

SUPPORT DORCHESTER BIKE PARK

Help bring a fun, modern bike park to our community

Join the group; complete the survey, sign the petition, and help us build support for the project.

OUR VISION

GET INVOLVED

On Facebook

Search Dorchester Bike Park on FB

On Instagram

Search Dorchester Bike Park on Insta

PLEASE SUPPORT

Sign our petition

Search Dorchester Bike Park on Change.org

Complete our survey

<https://forms.gle/5nuy8Chybkuked3>

BRITISH CYCLING



Events

IN THE COMMUNITY



31ST
OCTOBER
2026

GAMES! SWEETS! FUN!

GLOW PARTY

5:30 - 7PM

DORCHESTER COMMUNITY CHURCH
LISCOMBE STREET, POUNDBURY

AGES 5-10	FREE OF CHARGE
HOTDOGS	CRAFTS

Celebrating LIGHT instead of darkness
No Halloween costumes

Children must be accompanied by an adult

PUMPKINS & AUTUMN FUN ON THE FARM

THIS OCTOBER

Dewflock Farm
Dorchester DT2 8NP

Tickets at
www.dewflockfarm.co.uk

Dates: 10/11, 17/18,
24/25 October 2026

FRIDAY 30TH
OCTOBER
10AM - 1PM
AT PIPS POUNDBURY



JOIN US FOR A MORNING OF FREE SPOOKY
HALLOWEEN CRAFTS, CREEPY COLOURING AND
DELICIOUS TREATS!

Booking not necessary.
Adults please stay with your children.
Witches, Ghosts, Skeletons, Pumpkins,
Vampires all very welcome
please do dress up!

PAVILION IN THE PARK, ST JOHN WAY,
POUNDBURY DT1 2FG



Sand World

SAND SCULPTURE PARK

FREE ENTRY
THIS OCTOBER HALF-TERM

FOR ADULTS AND KIDS IN FULL FANCY DRESS

CARVE A SAND PUMPKIN | HALLOWEEN HUNT
18 GIANT SAND SCULPTURES | ALL-WEATHER GIANT
SAND PIT | UNDER 5'S AREA | SAND ART | CAFE

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*Attendance Winners
this week are...*

EYFS

Maple Class: 96.7%

K.S.1

Elm Class: 96.3%

K.S.2

Cedar Class: 96.2%



A big thank you to all our families who brought their children into school on time this week. Every minute truly counts, and as a community you truly show your **"Love for Learning."**

*"Love is a safe place of shelter,
For it never stops believing the best for
others. Love never takes failure as defeat,
for it never gives up. Love never stops
Loving. 1 Corinthians 13: 7-8*

**SALT Drop-in sessions 15th October
between 10am and 11am**

Our community Speech and Language Therapist (SALT) is available for anyone whose child is currently on the SALT list or anyone who has concerns about their child's speech and language. Please phone the office to make an appointment.

Future drop-in dates:

28th January 2027

6th May 2027

01305 268741

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