

Handford Hall Primary School

57, Gatacre Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 2LQ

Headteacher: Mrs K Blake BA (Hons)

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Newsletter – April 2026



For your diary in April

Monday 13th April – school starts

Year 6 Morning classes at 8.00 am every day

Week beginning 13th April – KS2 Science week

Tuesday 14th April – ‘Earth and Space Wonder Dome’ arrives at HH – workshops for Years 3, 4, 5 and 6

Wednesday 15th April – Fab Science workshops for Years 4 and 6

Thursday 16th April – Years 3 and 4 trip to School Farm and Country Fair at Trinity Park

Wednesday 22nd April – New Wolsey Theatre production of ‘Grandad Anasi’ at HH

Monday 4th May – Bank Holiday (school closed)

Headteacher update

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to the summer term! I hope you enjoyed a lovely Easter break with your families and are looking forward to the next six weeks of fantastic learning opportunities for your children.

This half term will be an especially busy one for our Year 6 pupils, who will be taking part in the statutory SATs in May 2026. They have all been working incredibly hard, attending daily morning sessions as well as Easter Masterclasses over the break. Thank you to all parents for your continued support with these additional sessions.

Mrs K Blake

Headteacher

March 2026 attendance

RB - 88%	RC - 81%	1M - 95%
1L - 95%	2B - 96%	2SM - 95%
3B - 95%	3S - 96%	4S - 95%
4W - 95%	5B - 96%	5G - 97%
6H - 97%	6P - 98%	Target 97%

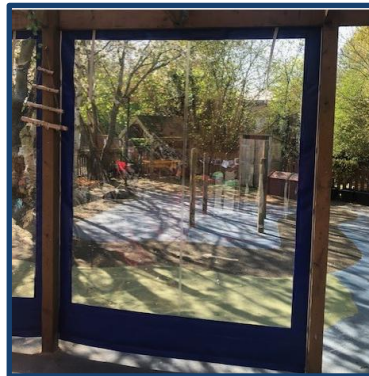
Following government attendance guidelines, **term time holidays, visiting relatives abroad during term time, seeking medical support in home countries, renewing passports abroad during term time** will not be authorised and may result in a fine by Suffolk County Council. Unauthorised absences may also result in legal intervention.

School maintenance during Easter break

As is customary, the Easter break provided an opportunity for further school maintenance and site improvements.

We are pleased to share that the Reception outdoor classrooms have been enhanced with the installation of new covers, ensuring that pupils have access to outdoor learning environments regardless of weather conditions.

Our EYFS outdoor classrooms with new covers




Additionally, extensive work was completed on our outdoor facilities. Contractors have cleared and re-sanded the Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) surface, while the school field has been mown and professionally marked with sports lines in preparation for the summer term of athletics and other outdoor sports. We have also installed a new outdoor table tennis table on the Key Stage 2 playground, alongside several new football and basketball goals on the field. These additions are part of our ongoing commitment to enhancing the school's sporting facilities.

Our Dome and all school windows have been professionally cleaned in preparation for the summer term.

Our Year 6 students also benefited from four days of Easter Masterclasses. Led by Mrs Pearl and Mr Harraway, the pupils engaged in a range of academic and sporting activities, enjoying exclusive use of the school buildings and our field.

We are now fully prepared for thirteen weeks of fantastic learning at Handford Hall.



NEW ADVICE FOR PARENTS ON SCREEN TIME FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Why does screen time matter for children under five?

90% of children's development happens before the age of five. Large amounts of unmanaged screen use can crowd out the activities that matter most at this stage — things like sleep, physical play, creative activities and time spent talking with parents and carers.

Research by early years charity Kindred Squared found that 28% of children starting reception are unable to use a book properly, with some trying to swipe or tap physical pages like a tablet screen. Giving children time away from screens in their early years helps build the social, emotional and language skills they need to start school.

New DfE guidance (March 2026) urges parents of children under 5 to limit screen time, encouraging active play and interaction. Recommendations include avoiding screen time for under-2s (except for video chatting) and capping screen time at one hour daily for 2–5-year-olds, avoiding mealtimes and the hour before bed.

Key DfE Guidance for Under-5s (Best Start in Life)

- **Under 2s:** Avoid screen time, focusing on in-person, responsive interactions to support development.
- **2 to 5-Year-Olds:** Limit screen time to a maximum of one hour a day.
- **Quality & Interaction:** Prioritize slow-paced, age-appropriate content.
- **Co-viewing:** Watch with children to turn screen time into a conversational, learning activity.
- **Boundaries:** Implement "screen-free zones," especially during meals and in bedrooms.
- **Sleep Priority:** Avoid screens for at least one hour before bed, as this can affect sleep quality.

Are there simple things families can do to cut down on screen time?

Yes. The guidance suggests straightforward swaps to help build healthier habits — like reading a bedtime story instead of watching a programme before sleep or playing a simple game at mealtimes rather than using a device. These aren't about perfection or judgement, but about giving parents the confidence to make small changes that can have a real impact.



Primary school offer day 2026

Parents of four-year-olds will soon find out which primary school has offered their child a place for the September 2026.

When is primary school offer day?

Parents will find out which primary school has offered their child a place for September 2026 on Thursday 16th April.

The decision will be sent by the local council by either letter or email. Some councils allow parents to view their results through the admissions portal or system.

School dinners from April 2026

From 13th April 2026 the price of our school dinners will be £2.70.
The new menu is available on our school website.



Handford Hall PS

@HandfordHallPS

Achieve - Believe - Celebrate

Want to stay updated with what's happening at our school each week?

Follow us on X for regular updates about our school life.

<https://x.com/HandfordHallPS>

Playground Cleanliness – we need your support

Dear Parents,

RE: Important: Keeping Our School Playground Safe and Clean

I am writing to you regarding the increasing amount of litter being left in the school playground after school hours.

While we encourage families to enjoy the playground, we have noticed a significant amount of rubbish—including food wrappers and drinks cartons—left behind on the ground. This is not only unsightly, but it poses serious safety risks to students, and it is attracting pests.

We respectfully ask for your support in the following ways:

- **Use the bins:** Please ensure that all rubbish is placed inside the bins provided before you leave the premises.
- **Take it home:** If the bins are full, we kindly ask that you take your rubbish home with you.
- **Supervise children:** Please ensure your children understand the importance of respecting our school environment and cleaning up after themselves.

We pride ourselves on providing a safe, clean environment for our children to play. With your help, we can ensure the playground remains a pleasant, hygienic place for everyone.

Thank you for your cooperation and community spirit.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Blake
Headteacher

[Taking control of your area - Report Issues Online](#)

You can report street cleaning problems directly to the council, including:

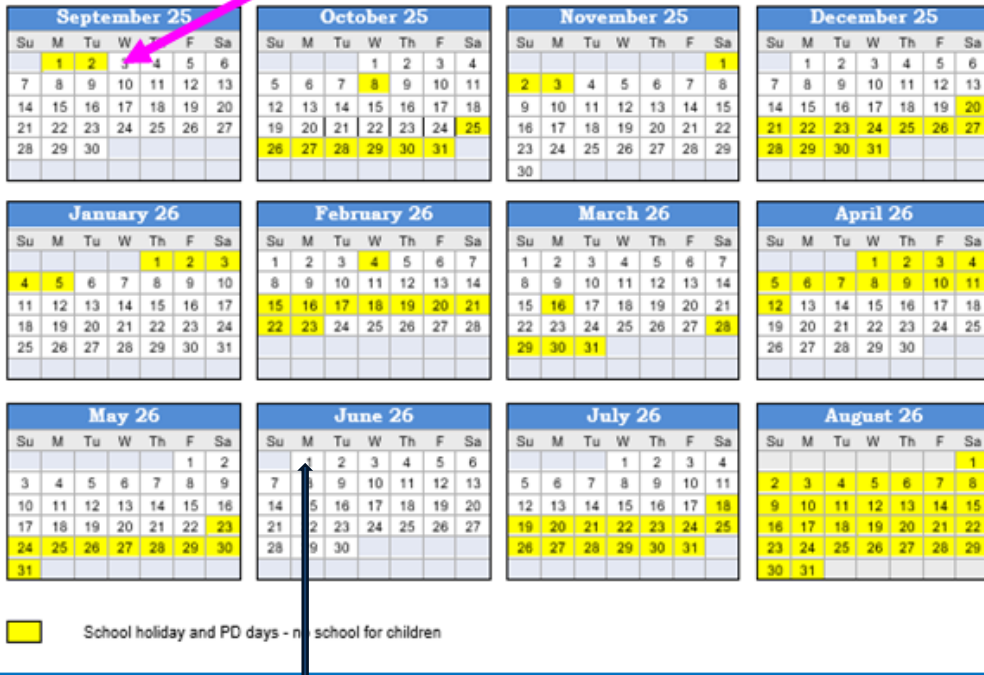
- **Fly-tipping/Illegal dumping:** Report via the "My Ipswich" portal or by emailing environmental.health@ipswich.gov.uk.
- **Graffiti:** The council has a dedicated team for rapid removal.
- **Dog fouling & Litter:** Report overflowing bins or areas needing attention.
- **Abandoned items:** Such as needles, syringes, or shopping trolleys.

2025/26 academic year - calendar

September 2025	April 2026
<p>1.09 - PD day – no school for children 2.09 - PD day – no school for children 3.09- school starts 15.09 – KS2 science week TBC – individual photos</p>	<p>13.04 – school starts 13.04 – Science week</p>
October 2025	May 2026
<p>8.10 – no school for children - Parent Consultation Day (9.00-6.00) 8.10 – Flu vaccinations for children will be available at HH 9.00-6.00 HALF TERM (27.10 – 31.10.2025)</p>	<p>4.05 – Bank Holiday 5.05 – school starts Week beginning 11.05 – Year 6 SATs HALF TERM (25.05 – 29.05.2026)</p>
November 2025	June 2026
<p>3.11 - PD day – no school for children 4.11 – Science week 5.11 - 9.15am Reception open mornings (new intake 2026) 14.11 - 9.15am Reception open morning (new intake 2026)</p>	<p>1.06 – Science week Year 6 Crucial crew – date tbc Year 6 transition days to high schools – date tbc 17.06 – SPORTS DAY</p>
December 2025	July 2026
<p>Trips to Theatre to see Panto</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wednesday 10th Dec at 10am Wednesday 10th Dec at 1.30pm Thursday 11th Dec at 10am Thursday 11th Dec at 1.30pm Friday 12th Dec at 10am <p>15.12 – Reception Share Morning and Christmas production 2.30 for Y2 parents 16.12 – Christmas production 2.30 for Year 1 parents 18.12 – Christmas dinner 19.12 – 9.15 KS1 Celebration assembly, 11.00 – KS2 assembly CHRISTMAS BREAK (22.12– 5.01.2026)</p>	<p>1.07 – New Reception Induction meeting for Parents (6.00pm) 14.07 – Year 6 Production 15.07 – ‘Meet your new class teacher’ transitions sessions 16.07.2026 – Leavers’ Assembly – 10.00am – for year 6 parents only 17.07. – Celebration assembly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9.15 for Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 11.00 for Years 3, 4 5 and 6 <p>17.07 – the last day of term</p>
January 2026	
<p>5.01 – PD day – no school for children 6.01 – school starts 6.01 – Science week</p>	
February 2026	
<p>4.02 – no school for children- Parent Consultations Day (9.00-6.00) HALF TERM (16-02 - 20.02.2026) 23.02 – PD day – no school for children 24.02 – Science week</p>	
March 2026	
<p>5.03 - World Book Day Easter break – 30.03 – 10.04.2026</p>	

School starts

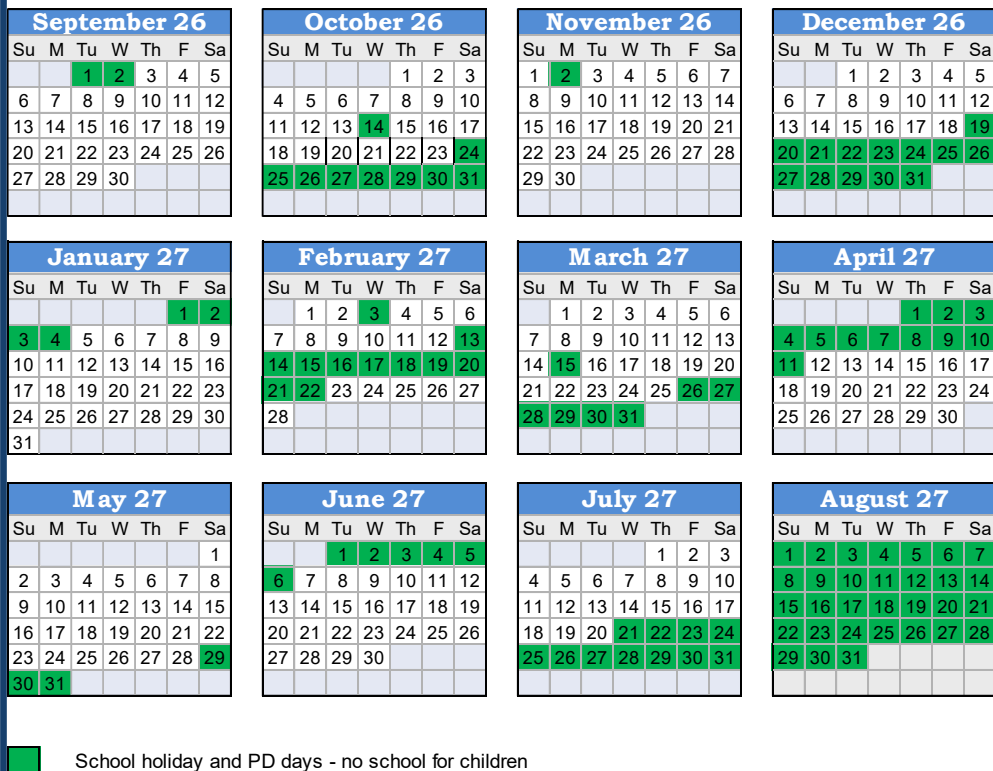
TERM DATES 2025-2026














Rescheduled PD Day - Mon 1st June (no school for children)

Next academic year

2026-2027



2025/26	HH protocols
NEW - Free Early Drop Off for working parents	8.00-8.30 Pedestrian gate opens between 8.00-8.10. <i>Late arrivals will not be permitted on school premises.</i>
Start time	School gates open 8.30 School gates close 8.40
End time	School gates open 3.30 (Mon– Thurs) School gates close 3.45 (Mon– Thurs) School gates open 1.00 (Fri) School gates close 1.15 (Fri)
School office opening hours for parents	8.30-9.30 (Mon—Fri) 3.00-4.00 (Mon—Thurs) 1.00-2.00 (Fri)
Lunches for Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 (Universal Free School Meals)	From September 2023 pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 will have school dinners or school packed lunches. No home packed lunches.
Pupils' mobile phones	Pupils' mobile phones will not be allowed on school premises.
Bringing/collecting pupils to/from school	Only parents and identified by the family adults (18 years +) will be allowed to bring and collect children to and from school. No under-age siblings/under-age family members are permitted to bring/collect pupils to/from school.
Pupils walking to school/walking home on their own	Year 6 pupils can apply for permission to walk to school/home on their own. Please request forms at the school office, thank you.

What to bring to school 	What not to bring to school 
HH School book bag	No rucksacks if possible please 
Bottle of water 	No fizzy drinks or sweets please  
HH PE kit in PE bag 	No bikes/scooters /home toys please   
Packed lunch if required (KS2 only) 	No pencils cases please 