



— The Cooper School —

# Parent Bulletin

No 14 - Friday 19th December 2025

## Key Dates and Upcoming Events

Monday 5 <sup>th</sup> January 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Year 13 Mock Exams (all week)</li><li>• Yr 7 &amp; 9 Assessments</li><li>• Yr 13 Study Leave (all week)</li></ul>
Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> January 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Yr 11 information evening 4-6pm</li><li>• Yr 11 P16 Taster Day;</li><li>• Yr 12/ 13 study day</li></ul>

## Back to school on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2026 - Week B



Dear Parents and Carers,

As we wrap up the final week of term, I want to thank you for your ongoing support and cooperation. It has been a busy but rewarding term, and it's wonderful to see how much the students have achieved.

Thank you for being such an integral part of our school community. We hope you have a wonderful break filled with relaxation and happy memories with your loved ones.

Have a safe and happy holiday!

We look forward to seeing all our students back in school on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2026.

Warmly,

Dr Whannel and all at  
The Cooper School



**DREAM BIG.WORK HARD.BE KIND.**

A huge thank you to everyone who participated in our Christmas Jumper Day! It was wonderful to see the school filled with so much festive cheer and such a fantastic array of knitwear. Thanks to your incredible generosity, we are delighted to announce that we raised a total of £252. These funds will go a long way in supporting Save The Children and we truly appreciate your contribution to making a difference. You can still donate via the [link](#)



At The Cooper School, we know that the loss of a loved one is one of the most difficult challenges a family can face. Grief can affect children in many different ways—sometimes through their behaviour, their schoolwork, or their physical health.

We want to remind you that you are not alone. Whether your family is experiencing a recent loss or processing an older one, there are incredible organisations dedicated to helping children and young people understand and manage their grief.

[SeeSaw](#) | [Grief support for children and young people in Oxfordshire](#)  
[Child Bereavement UK](#)

[Winston's Wish - Bereavement Support for Children](#)

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## A Very "Maths-y" Christmas for Year 7!

This week 30 of our Year 7 students traded their calculators for Christmas cheer as they participated in "Merry Mathsmas" by ThinkMaths. It was a brilliant session that explored the hidden geometry and patterns behind our favorite festive traditions.

### Puzzles, Presents, and Patterns

The session kicked off with a deep dive into the Twelve Days of Christmas. Students used logic and sequences to solve a surprising statistical puzzle: Which gift does the singer actually receive the most of over the twelve days? (Hint: It's not the partridges or the drummers!)

### The Magic of Geometry

The holiday fun continued with:

- **Christmas Cracker Magic:** Students performed a "mind-reading" trick based on binary logic and mathematical probability.
- **The Fold and Cut Theorem:** Using a famous geometric principle, students learned how to fold a piece of paper so that any straight-edged shape—from a Christmas tree to a five-pointed star—can be created with one single, straight cut.

It was wonderful to see the students so engaged, proving that behind every cracker and carol, there is a world of fascinating mathematics to discover.

Try it at home: If you'd like to try the "Fold and Cut" challenge yourself, you can find the templates at [ThinkMaths Festive Resources](#).



## Upcoming Assessments: Years 7 & 9

Dear Families,

This is a friendly reminder that the next assessment week for Year 7 and Year 9 students will take place during the week beginning Monday, 12th January 2026.

These assessments serve as important checkpoints to help us understand your child's progress and identify how we can best support their continued learning. To help them feel confident and prepared, we have put together revision advice documents for each year group. Please take some time to review these guides with your child to help them structure their preparation:

[Year 7 Assessment Week 2 Preparation advice - Jan 2026](#)

[Year 9 Assessment Week 2 Preparation advice - January 2026](#)

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## ***OLIVER! The Musical***

We are getting incredibly close to opening night, and the excitement in the corridors is palpable! Our talented students have been working tirelessly—rehearsing their lines, perfecting those iconic songs, and polishing the choreography—to bring the streets of Victorian London to life right here at The Cooper School.

If you haven't secured your seats yet, there is still time! We still have a limited number of tickets available for our upcoming performances.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-cooper-school-presents-oliver-the-musical-registration-1964083096413>

### **Summer 2026 Exam Timetable YR 11- 13**

The exam timetable is now available  
**Summer 2026 Students Timetable**

Please be aware that this schedule is provisional and may be subject to change. We recommend checking back regularly for any updates. If any changes occur, we will send out a follow-up notification right away.

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## 🌲 A Green Christmas with the Eco-Bees! 🐝

As we head into the festive season, our student Eco-Bees have been busy thinking about how we can celebrate while still looking after our planet. They have come up with a wonderful "12 Days of Eco-Christmas" guide to help our school community reduce waste and stay sustainable!

We would love for you to join us in trying a few of these at home:

### 🌲 The 12 Days of Eco-Christmas 🐝

- On the 1st day: Use a reusable advent calendar instead of single-use ones.
- On the 2nd day: Opt for LED Christmas lights to save energy.
- On the 3rd day: Swap plastic tape for recyclable paper tape or string.
- On the 4th day: Make your own DIY decorations from salt dough or dried oranges.
- On the 5th day: Switch to reusable fabric gift wrap
- On the 6th day: Choose plastic-free crackers with wooden or metal toys.
- On the 7th day: Ensure all cardboard delivery boxes are flattened and recycled.
- On the 8th day: Try a meat-free side dish or a plant-based roast option.
- On the 9th day: Send e-cards instead of paper ones to save trees.
- On the 10th day: Use leftovers to create new delicious meals and reduce food waste.
- On the 11th day: Buy from local small businesses to reduce your carbon footprint.
- On the 12th day: Properly recycle your real tree.



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At The National College, our **WakeUpWednesday** guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit [nationalcollege.com](https://www.nationalcollege.com).

## What Parents & Educators Need to Know about AI TOYS

This festive season, the newest toys on the shelves do not just blink or make noise; they listen. Many now come with artificial intelligence (AI), allowing them to talk, learn, and even respond to a child's emotions. These toys can be educational and engaging, but they also collect, store, and process information. This guide explains what that means for families and why it matters.

### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

#### TOYS THAT LISTEN AND LEARN

When a toy uses AI, it collects data such as voice recordings, interactions, and background sounds. This information is sent to remote servers, where it is analysed to improve responses. Your child's voice becomes training data, which may be stored indefinitely or shared with third parties.

#### WEAK SECURITY PROTECTIONS

Some AI toys have poor password protection or open network connections. Others may have microphones or cameras that stay on, even when the toy appears to be off. This can lead to recordings being made without your knowledge, including conversations unrelated to play.

#### ARTIFICIAL VOICES, REAL INFLUENCE

For very young children, an AI companion may become one of the first voices they interact with regularly. How that voice shows humour, empathy, or authority can shape how a child learns to communicate. If the model is artificial, then part of what is learned is artificial as well.

#### PRESSURE TO KEEP ENGAGING

Some toys reward repeated use or track engagement, encouraging children to interact more. When children compare how their toys perform, it creates pressure to play more often. This increases the amount of data collected and can make learning feel like competition.

#### MARKETING THROUGH PLAY

Toys that learn a child's preferences may feed that data into future advertising. A toy that knows a child's favourite colour or hobby could help a company design more targeted marketing to that child and their family.

#### PLAYTIME AS DATA TRAINING

The information collected from children helps train AI systems. Their voice, emotional responses, and behaviour shape how machines 'understand' people. Play becomes part of a much larger system that influences how future technologies behave.

### Advice for Parents & Educators

#### START WITH A CONVERSATION

Talk to young people. Explain that some toys learn from what they say and do. Help them understand that even friendly technology should have boundaries, and to ask questions about it. Curiosity is healthy, blind trust is not.

#### SET LIMITS ON USE

Turn off Wi-Fi or Bluetooth when the toy is not in use. Check for updates regularly, as they can change privacy or safety settings. Treat connected toys like any smart device; they should be monitored, updated, and switched off when not in use.

#### MODEL DIGITAL AWARENESS

Children learn from adults. If they see you checking privacy settings, reading terms, and talking openly about online safety, they are more likely to do the same. Show them how to question technology in a healthy way.

#### RESEARCH BEFORE YOU BUY

Look for toys that work offline or store data locally. Check for a free or demo version so you can test how it behaves. Read privacy policies to understand what data is collected, where it goes, and whether it's shared with others.

#### REVIEW PRIVACY SETTINGS

Find out where the data is stored and who has access to it. Some companies sell or share data with advertisers. If the toy connects through an app, check what it requests access to and limit those permissions whenever possible.

#### BALANCE AI WITH REAL PLAY

AI toys can be fun and creative, but they are not a replacement for real human interaction. Encourage time away from technology with activities that foster emotional and social development. Use AI toys to support learning, not define it.

#### Meet Our Expert

Clara Hawking is Executive Director of Kompass Education. She advises governments, school trusts, and global organisations on AI governance and safeguarding, helping schools and families understand how technology shapes learning, wellbeing, and the digital future of children.

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## REMINDER

To ensure you receive important school updates, emergency alerts, and student progress reports, please take a moment to verify that we have your most current contact information on file.

If you have recently changed your phone number, email address, or home address, please email the Office or update them on My Child At School.

Thank you for helping us keep our communication lines open!

### Contact Details:

Telephone Number: 01869 242121

Office/Reception Email: [office@thecooperschool.co.uk](mailto:office@thecooperschool.co.uk)

Absence/Appointments Email: [absence@thecooperschool.co.uk](mailto:absence@thecooperschool.co.uk)

<https://www.thecooperschool.co.uk/>

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