



Fir Tree Junior School

New Term FAQs

I noticed some fencing/building activity on the school site. What is happening?

It is planned that in September 2026 Fir Tree will convert from a Junior school to a Primary school. In preparation for this, the two current Y5 classrooms (Sycamore and Chestnut) will be converted to an Early Years unit. While preparatory work has begun, the major work will commence during the first week of November. From the start of term 2 (Tuesday 4th November) Y5 pupils will be based in temporary classrooms which are currently being installed. We will regularly remind the children to not play with or touch the fencing. It is anticipated that this work will be completed by the end of June 2026.

I or someone I know might be interested in securing a Reception class place for my child to start at Fir Tree in September 2026. How can I find out more about this?

There are four open mornings scheduled for before Christmas. Though the work to convert space into an Early Years unit will not be complete by then, prospective families will be able to visit the school, meet some staff and ask any questions. These sessions, which run from 9.30-11 will take place on the following dates:

Thursday 18th September/Thursday 2nd October/Thursday 16th October/Thursday 13th November.
Please contact the school office to book a place.

Applications for school places are made via the Oxfordshire County Council website ([click here](#)) and the deadline for making an application has not yet been confirmed but will be in mid-January 2026.

How will I get to find out how my child is doing?

On Friday 26th September, you will receive a short (one side of a4) 'settling in report'. This report will make no reference to academic attainment, since it will be too early in the academic year to do so. It will, though, refer to how your child has settled into life in their new class.

During the week commencing Monday 29th September, parents of children identified as having special educational needs can, if they choose to, have a short conversation (10-15 minutes) with their child's teacher about how they have settled into their new class, as well as discussing targets for the year.

This year, parents' evening meetings (lasting 10 minutes) will take place before the October half term break as follows:

Tuesday 7th October (3.30-6pm)

Thursday 9th October (4-6.30pm)

We will be in touch nearer the time with information on how you can arrange a meeting.

Parents' evenings will also take place in the spring term as follows:

Tuesday 17th March (3.30-6pm)

Thursday 19th March (4-6.30pm)

Formal written reports will be sent to families on Monday 13th July.

I have a question or query about an aspect of my child's education. What should I do?

In the first instance, you will speak to your child's class teacher. This is because they spend 5 or more hours each day with your child and are therefore best placed to answer your question or query. If you have been unable to catch the teacher before or after school, you are welcome to contact the school office to request a telephone call from the teacher: 01491 836341 or office.2578@fir-tree.oxon.sch.uk. Please be aware that a large number of emails come into school each week and a reply could take up to 72 hours.

Mr Knight and Mrs Stockley (Home School Link Worker) are at the school gate each morning and we encourage you to approach them to raise any queries.

What are the morning/afternoon routines?

Parking close to the school is limited. We ask that you respect our neighbours by not blocking driveways

The school gates are opened at 8.30.

This year, the expectation is that children wait outside their classroom until the bell is rung at 8.45.

Please ensure that your child is not running around as this helps set the tone for effective learning when they enter the classroom.

Please ensure that your child does not use the playground equipment when they arrive at or leave the school site

Children who cycle or scoot to school should wear a cycle helmet and should push not ride their scooter or bike into school.

At the end of the school day, the gate is opened at 3.10. Please encourage younger siblings to wait quietly for the gates to open as Fir Tree children are in lessons until 3:15. We ask that children leave the site calmly and safely, without them or any younger siblings using any of the playground equipment.

How will I find out information about PE days, curriculum etc?

Over the next week or so you will receive a letter from your child's teacher which will set out information about PE days, timetabling and other important information. We encourage you to visit the school website which contains lots of useful information.

Once the term gets going, each Friday you will receive an email which very briefly sets out what your child will be learning during the following week.

My child is unwell. How should I let the school know?

You MUST telephone or email the school to let us know so that we can mark our registers accordingly. The school office is staffed from 8:30am each day. You can leave a message on the absence line before this time. If your child is absent for more than one day you must inform us each morning they are off school. For safeguarding purposes, if a child is absent and we have not been informed why, we may choose to visit the child's home to establish a reason for their absence.

If a child arrives after morning registration takes place (9am) they are recorded as missing the morning session which will impact on their overall attendance. When a child arrives late, it is often difficult for them to pick up the thread of the learning which has already taken place.

As an aside, we attach a document put together by the UK Health Security Agency, which sets out guidance on whether your child should be in school if, for example, they have a particular virus or illness.

If my child's teacher is not in school, what will happen?

As in all lines of work, teachers are sometimes unwell and are not in work. Occasionally, teachers attend training or meetings during the school day. In either of these scenarios the school usually tries to cover the absence internally. If a teacher is off for a more sustained period of time we will be in touch with updates and plans on how this will be covered.

Who are the members of staff with roles associated with safeguarding?

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Mr Knight. The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs) are Mrs Stockley, Mrs Yener, Mr Wilcox, Mrs Ash, Mrs Jackson and Mrs Johansen.

Please contact any of these colleagues if you have any concerns over the wellbeing of a child.

Will the school authorise a term time holiday request?

Only in **exceptional circumstances** will the school authorise a request for your child to miss school. If you choose to take your child out of school, they will be marked down as absent and you could potentially receive a penalty notice.

On the surface, attendance of 90% seems good. Indeed, many of us would be happy to score 90% in a test, for example. However, attendance of 90% equates to missing one half day of school each week.

We record and monitor attendance closely. When a child's attendance is below 90% they are said to be 'persistently absent' – when this is the case we will take steps to work in partnership with the family to bring about a rapid improvement.

There has been extensive media coverage of school attendance during the early part of this term. It is worth noting that evidence collected by the Department for Education points to pupils who are absent during the first week or so of term being much more likely to be persistently absent. Setting routines and adjusting to being back in school are both crucial aspects of supporting excellent attendance.

Which year groups are involved in statutory national tests?

Some year groups are required to take part in national statutory tests.

Y4 children will take times tables checks. These will be carried out during a three-week window in June 2026. The test is completed online and Mrs Durman/Miss Hutchings will share your child's outcome at the end of the process.

Y6 children will sit tests (often referred to as SATs) during the week commencing 11th May 2026. The tests will be in reading, maths, spelling, grammar and punctuation. These tests are more formal and are not marked by our staff. They are collected and marked externally. The school will receive results during early July when they will be shared with families.

When will after school extracurricular clubs be starting?

These will start in week 3 of this half term (week commencing Monday 15th September). Clubs which are run by any of our class teachers will not take place during the week commencing Monday 29th September and Monday 6th October.

How will the school keep me updated on important events and dates?

Each half term a newsletter is sent (via email) to all of our families. Important updates are also sent out via email.

On that note, if your child has accomplished something outside of school, please let us know and we will celebrate the good news in our newsletter!

Last year a consultation on school values took place. Is there an update on this?

A number of stakeholders contributed to a process whereby the following school values were selected: *kindness, respect, resilience, fairness, curiosity, aspiration and sustainability*. Each half term a different value will be 'under the microscope' which means it will be unpicked during assemblies and discussions in class. We took the decision that sustainability will be an overarching value which will be unpicked throughout the year.

If the school is required to close, how will I find out?

In the case of heavy snow or other dangerous weather conditions, such a decision is taken reluctantly, but with the safety of everyone in our school community at heart.

Any closure will be communicated via email, text message, and the school website. We will also inform the local authority who will update their website (www.oxfordshire.gov.uk) as will local media outlets such as The Oxford Mail and BBC Oxford.

Is there anything else I need to know about?

We have pupils in school with an allergy to nuts and seeds and it is very important that we share key messages with you. You must not send your child into school with nuts, nut-based foods or anything with peanuts in the ingredients.

Sometimes, when it is a child's birthday, families send them in to school with cakes to celebrate with their classmates. Again, we are very clear that these cakes must not contain nuts or seeds.

Periodically, we hold cake sales in school in order to raise much needed funds for our school. We must insist that no cakes provided to the school contain any traces of nuts. We insist that the same protocol is followed when children bring a snack to our after-school club. We thank you in advance for supporting the school's approach.

We strive to promote healthy lifestyles so with that in mind you must ensure that your child has a water bottle in school each day. Children must not bring juice or fizzy drinks into school.

The weather seems to be 'turning' so we ask that your child comes prepared for wet weather with a waterproof coat or jacket.

Are there dates for any other school events?

We anticipate Christmas dinner taking place during the week commencing Monday 8th December.

We plan on holding Christmas concerts Y3/4 and Y5/6 during the morning of Monday 15th December. Timings will be confirmed in due course.

This academic year, sports day will take place on Friday 22nd May 2026. We hope for good weather, but should this not be the case, we will reschedule for early June.

Our Y6 end of year performance(s) will take place during the week commencing Monday 30th June 2026. We are mindful, though, that the world cup is taking place next summer, and so we will be doing our best to ensure the shows do not clash with any big games!