



Weekly Bulletin - 16th October 2026

Click the link for each item to head straight to the relevant information.

Upcoming dates for diaries

Please see the full list of important dates for this academic year, including Christmas Performances, [here](#) (class assembly dates to follow)

- wb 19th Parental Consultation meetings

Information about school events

- Information about our Black History Month competition for children in school ([click here](#))
- Find out more about ShowKids' new morning club ([click here](#))

Information from outside agencies and organisations

- What parents and carers need to know about AI Companions from The National College ([click here](#))
- A complete guide to all the free Parent/Carer Support available from Waltham Forest ([click here](#))
- Information about family learning courses from Waltham Forest Adult Learning Service ([click here](#))
- The updated NHS Dental Practice List ([click here](#))
- Information about the SEND Youth Forum ([click here](#))
- Information about the Waltham Forest Educational Psychologist Service's parent/carers drop in sessions ([click here](#))
- Waltham Forest Parent SEND Forum - Autumn Update ([click here](#))
- Information about this year's Woodford Panto at Sir James Hawkey Hall, Beauty and the Beast ([click here](#))
- Information about Waltham Forest's Holiday Activity and Food Programme for October half term week ([click here](#))

Calendar Dates Academic Year 2026-27

Please note, these dates are subject to change.

October 2026

Black History Month

16th – ASC finish

wb 19th – Parental Consultation meetings (late close Thursday)

Y6 Careers Fair (postponed)

26th-30th – Half Term Holiday

November 2026

2nd – INSET Day (staff only)

6th – Diwali celebration

9th – ASC start

10th – Individual and sibling photos

16th-20th - Anti Bullying week

December 2026

5th – FOTW Winter Fair (TBC)

2nd -11th – Christmas Concerts (see below for all Christmas dates)

11th – ASC finish

18th – Last day of Autumn term

January 2027

4th – Inset Day (staff only)

11th – ASC start

wb 11th – Spring Meet the Teacher Online Meetings

February 2027

5th – NSPCC Dress Up for Digits Day

9th – Safer Internet Day

12th – Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day

15th-19th – Half Term Holiday

22nd – INSET Day (staff only)

March 2027

2nd – CJ Storyteller in (World Book Week)

3rd – Book Fair (3rd March – 10th March)

4th – World Book Day dressing up

5th – 14th – British Science Week

12th– Eid Celebration

19th – ASC finish

wb 22nd – Parental Consultation meeting (late close Wednesday)

25th – Last day of Spring term

April 2027

12th – First day of Summer term (staff & children, no INSET day)

19th – ASC start

wb 19th – Summer Meet the Teacher Online Meetings

22nd – Earth Day

May 2027

3rd – Bank Holiday (school closed)

wb 10th – KS2 SATs (Y6)

21st – ASC finish

wb 31st – Half Term Holiday

June 2027

Pride Month

7th – INSET Day (staff only)

wb 7th – No ASC

wb 7th & 14th – Multiplication Tables Check (Y4)

wb 14th – Phonics Screening Check (Y1)

wb 14th – Y6 Treginnis week 1

wb 14th & 21st – Creativity Weeks (art work displayed at Summer Fair)

14th – ASC start

22nd – Y1, 2, 3 Sports Day

23rd – Y4, 5, 6 Sports Day

wb 28th – Y6 Treginnis week 2

July 2027

4th – FOTW Summer Fair (TBC)

6th – Young Enterprise

7th – 9th – Y5 Residential to The Hive

16th – End of year reports sent home

16th – ASC finish

19th – Y6 Leavers' Production (after school)

20th – Leavers' BBQ

22nd – Leavers' Assembly

22nd – Final day of the Summer term

Class Assemblies (all 9:10am - dates subject to change)

Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
			Thurs 22 nd April 1MS	
Thurs 12 th Nov 6PB	Thurs 14 th Jan 6ES	Thurs 4 th Mar 5ED	Thurs 29 th April 5BB	Thurs 17 th June 4PH
Thurs 26 th Nov 3CS	Thurs 21 st Jan 3NM	Thurs 11 th Mar 2AS	Thurs 6 th May 4EB	Thurs 24 th June Elm
	Thurs 28 th Jan 4KB	Thurs 18 th Mar 5CF	Thurs 13 th May 1BH	Thurs 1 st July 1GB
	Thurs 4 th Feb 6AM	Thurs 25 th Mar 2CP	Thurs 20 th May Pine	Thurs 8 th July 2EC
	Thurs 11 th Feb Cedar		Thurs 27 th May 3AF	Thurs 15 th July Nursery

Christmas Performances 2026

	Tues 1 st Dec	Wed 2 nd Dec	Thurs 3 rd Dec	Fri 4 th Dec	Tues 8 th Dec	Wed 9 th Dec	Thurs 10 th Dec	Fri 11 th Dec
9:10am	Nursery	Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6

All performances will take place in Green Hall

All concerts will last around 30 minutes.

Class Christmas Parties – further details to follow

Tuesday 15th December – Years R, 1, 3 & 5

Thursday 17th December – Years N, 2, 4 & 6

Christmas Lunch

Wednesday 16th December

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 111) or Shout (text 85258).

Meet Our Expert

Darren Cowan 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.



See full references list on our website



@wake_up_weds



/www.thenationalcollege



@wake.up.wednesday



@wake.up.weds

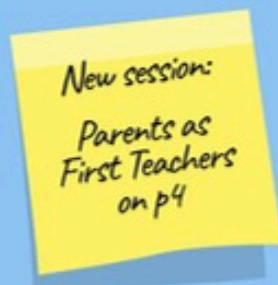
Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 09.10.2026

Parent/Carer Support

September – December 2026

A complete guide to free parenting support available in Waltham Forest

- ✓ Increase knowledge and understanding of children's development and needs
- ✓ Build positive relationships
- ✓ Improve behaviour and communication
- ✓ Meet other parents
- ✓ Reduce parenting stress



For full list of available support, please [click here](#)

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Family Learning

Helping children grow and thrive.

September Courses and Workshops for Families and Parents



Parenting Courses

Calm Parents Calm Children

Queens Road Family HUB
23/09/2026 until 21/10/2026
Wednesday
10:00am - 12:00pm



Supporting children and young people with school avoidance

Online
23/09/2026 until 30/09/2026
Wednesday
7:00pm - 9:00pm



WALTHAM
FOREST
ADULT
LEARNING
SERVICE



Click on
QR code to
sign up today !



Family workshops

Let's Get Creative with books Craft Activities for Early years

Walthamstow Library
22/09/2026-20/10/2026
Tuesday 10:00am-12:00pm

Art Club for SEND families

Queens Road Learning Centre,
Queens Road E17 8QR
26/09/2026
Saturday 10:00am - 12:00pm

Contact Info

Email: adult.learning@walthamforest.gov.uk

Phone: 020 8496 2974

Waltham Forest Adult Learning Service

[Click here to follow the link in the QR code](#)

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NHS Dentists in Waltham Forest



This is an up-to-date list of NHS dentists currently offering routine appointments and accepting new patients. At the time of writing there may be a waiting period before your first appointment



Walthamstow

The Dental Design Studio
127 High Street, E17 7DB
02085214333
Children Only

Chingford Road Dental Surgery
31 Chingford Road, E17 4PW
02085279062
Children And Adults

Inspire Dental
67 Palmerston road, E17 6PU
02085216656
Children and Adults

Forest Dental Care
73 Hoe Street, E17 4SA
02085213777
Children and Adults

Abbey Dental Practice
25 St James Street, E17 7JP
02085212816
Children and Adults

Church Hill Dental Practice
18 Church Hill, E17 3AG
02085212816
Children and Adults



List up to date as of 14th September 2026



Chingford

Woodford Green Dental Care
80 Snakes Lane East, IG8 7QQ
02085029966
Children and Adults

Woodford House Dental Practice
162 High Road, IG8 9EF
02085042704
Children Only

Chingford Smile Club
252a Chingford Mount road, E4 8JL
02085291587
Children Only



Leyton

Lea Bridge Dental Practice
433 Lea Bridge Road, E10 7EA
02085396152
Children and Adults

Smile In London
399 High Road Leyton, E10 5NA
02085581122
Children (above 3) and Adults

Cedars Dental Practice
775 High Road Leyton, E10 5AB
02085581122
Adults Only



Leytonstone

L Fong F Wong Dental Practice
845 High Road Leytonstone, E11 1HH
02085394720
Children and Adults

Woodgrange Dental Practice
80 Woodgrange Road, E7 0EW
02085553336
Children and Adults

020 8496 5223



wfsupport@henry.org.uk

Please note that we do not endorse or recommend any particular practice.

This list is up-to-date as of the 14th September 2026.

**Best Start
in Life**



Waltham Forest

SEND YOUTH FORUM

Do you want your voice heard?

What would you like to see/hear for you in
Waltham Forest?



Come along to our group.
Make friends, have fun
and have your voices
heard



For ages 8 - 18 years old

For more information about the group and booking in for
attendance please contact Mehrdad Razmjoo at
sendiasswalthamf@centre404.org.uk or on

07494 280073

Dates

24 September 2026

26 November 2026

4pm - 5.30pm

22 December 2026 (joint
event) time tbc

Waltham Forest resource hub
1 Russel Road, E10 7ES



educational psychology



PARENT/CARER DROP-IN

We offer Parents and Carers who live in Waltham Forest a **free 30-minute consultation with an Educational Psychologist** to discuss their child. Available by phone call or Microsoft Teams.

Our diverse educational psychology team is passionate about working with families and schools to support children and young people aged 0–25 years with their development, learning and wellbeing.



All sessions take place on
Wednesdays between
12:30–2 pm or 3:30–5 pm

- > 16th September 2026
- > 14th October 2026
- > 11th November 2026
- > 9th December 2026
- > 6th January 2027
- > 3rd February 2027
- > 10th March 2027
- > 21st April 2027
- > 19th May 2027
- > 23rd June 2027
- > 7th July 2027

HOW TO BOOK?

Call, text or email us using the
contact details below



07776589597

educationalpsychologyservice@walthamforest.gov.uk



BHM Competition 2026

Honouring Our Communities



This Black History Month, we invite our school community to recognise and celebrate the communities that shape, support and strengthen Britain.

This year, we are excited to mark the occasion with a **whole-school competition!**

This year's theme, "**Honouring Our Communities,**" reminds us that Black history is not only shaped by landmark events or famous individuals. It is also created through everyday acts of **leadership, care, service, creativity, courage and commitment.**

We would love for parents and carers to support their children in taking part in an **independent research project.** Children could choose to:

- 🧠 Create an art piece
- 🖼️ Design a poster
- 📁 Make a fact file
- 🚩 Design a Black History Month 40th Anniversary flag for the upcoming year
- ★ Create a profile of someone who inspires them

We encourage children to be creative, curious and thoughtful in celebrating the people, stories and communities that have made a difference.

Thank you for supporting your child and helping us make Black History Month 2026 a meaningful celebration for our whole school community.

Exciting prizes!

Participants will receive a **certificate** and be entered into a final prize draw. The winner of the final prize draw will win a mystery book (**1 winner per year group**).

SUBMISSION

All projects to be returned to Ms Dodge please!

FINAL DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES

Friday 6th November 2026

**BLACK
HISTORY
MONTH**

Multi Noda Award Winning Pantomime
WOODFORD PANTOMIME PRESENTS

Beauty and the Beast

*Written by
Clarke &
Clarke*

*1st-17th
January
2027*



Sponsored by
THE STOW BROTHERS

NODA
For every stage

This amateur
production is by
arrangement with
NODA Limited



Sir James Hawkey Hall Woodford Green IG8 0BG

07391 222464

www.woodfordpantomime.co.uk



WALTHAM FOREST HOLIDAY ACTIVITY AND FOOD PROGRAMME MONDAY 26 – FRIDAY 30 OCTOBER 2026

AUTUMN 2026

**ARE YOU AGED BETWEEN 5-16
AND IN RECEIPT OF TARGETED
FREE SCHOOL MEALS?**

Funded by the Department for Education, the Holiday Activity and Food Programme (HAF) offers you the opportunity to try a wide range of free activities, have fun, make friends and enjoy a free meal everyday across the borough.



To book your place and find out more scan here



or visit

WALTHAMFOREST.GOV.UK/HOLIDAYS

Booking is essential on all activities so book early to avoid disappointment

For queries please contact the Waltham Forest Holiday Activity Programme team on:

WFHOLIDAYACTIVITYPROGRAMME@WALTHAMFOREST.GOV.UK

You can apply for targeted free school meals at

WALTHAMFOREST.GOV.UK/FREE-SCHOOL-MEALS



Funded by
UK Government





Visit [🌐 Drama Classes for Kids in East London | ShowKids](#) to book your place.

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