

Contents

Join us for Playtime.....	2
WOW Walk to School.....	2
Changes to Reports.....	3
Healthy Eating.....	3
New Starters 2026.....	3
School Priorities 2025/26.....	3
PTFA Update.....	4
Staff News.....	4
Diary Dates	4
Other News and Reminders.....	5
Sports Report.....	5



Message from Miss Talbot

Welcome Back!

Welcome back to the start of the new school year. I hope that you all had an amazing summer and enjoyed brilliant weather wherever you spent the break.

It has been lovely to welcome all our new starters to Godinton over the past couple of weeks; we are very much enjoying getting to know the children and our new families. Our new Reception children have impressed us so much with how confidently they are settling into school life.

There is always so much for the children to get used to at the start of a new year: new adults to work with, new classrooms and new routines and timetables. For some, it does take a little while to find their feet. Our school 'Guiding Stars' which you can find out more about on the website, highlight key skills that we want our children to develop during their time at Godinton. As we start our 2025–26 adventure, it might be useful to make reference to these skills at home—celebrating times when your child has been well motivated or independent for example or helping them to understand how to persevere or to strive for personal best. By helping our children to develop these skills they will be well equipped to face the exciting challenges that lie ahead for them this year and as such, I hope they will all have much success.



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Join us for Playtime



We have very much enjoyed developing our playtimes over the past year, providing so many exciting activities for our children to enjoy. From mud kitchens, to scooter runs, den building to dressing up—we have tried to include something for everyone and are always on the look out for other resources or activities we can introduce to further enhance playtimes. The impact of the changes we have made, has been significant. We have seen our children being more imaginative and creative, they have developed problem solving skills and have demonstrated really good abilities to share and take turns. There is a very positive vibe outside at lunchtimes which has been great to see.

In order to give Upper School and Lower School children the opportunity to play together, every week, each Upper School year group will have an earlier lunch, joining Lower School at 11.30 for lunch in the hall, followed by playtime outside: Tuesday–Year 5, Wednesday–Year 6 and Thursday–Year 4. We are also looking forward to parents and relatives joining in with a lunch play in the next few weeks. This term, Years 2 to 6 will have the opportunity to involve their parents in the activities they enjoy doing at playtime and later in the year, it will be the turn of years R and 1.

We start with Year 2 and 5 parents who join us on the 24th and 25th September– we look forward to seeing you then.

Our New Play Charter

If you pop into school for a play session, you will see our lovely new play charter in place. This has been drawn up by our Mini Management Team and outlines the expectations for happy playtimes at Godinton.



WOW–Walk to School

We were delighted to have been awarded funding to enable us to participate in the Living Streets WOW Walk to School initiative again this academic year. This scheme is designed to encourage children to walk, cycle, scooter or park and stride to school and to reduce the number of car runs. If the children use one of these methods to travel to school at least once a week each month, then they will be rewarded with a special WOW badge. This year, there are new badges for the children to collect each month. The children record their journeys on a special online tracker which is completed in class each morning.

We have also been awarded a grant of £5,000 to develop our cycle storage at Godinton. Our cycle shed is in desperate need of a make over so that we can safely accommodate more bikes and scooters. We hope to make a start on the work in October Half Term and with Bikeability cycle training starting for Year 4 and 6 in November, we hope they will soon be put to good use.

Changes to Reports and Parent Consultations

I have sent out to parents, details of the changes we are making this academic year with regards to reports and Parent Consultations. Thank you again to all those parents who responded to our questionnaire—this has really helped us to gauge parental views and to shape a more informative way forward.

Our parent consultation appointment evenings are Tuesday 14th October between 3.40 and 7.00 p.m. and Thursday 16th October between 3.40 and 5.30 p.m. We also hope to see you on Book Viewing evening on Thursday 9th October between 3.30 and 6.30 p.m.

Further details will be sent out shortly.

Priorities for this Academic Year

Our School Improvement Plan for the year ahead has been finalised and identifies key areas for the school to focus on in 2025–2026.

Academic priorities this year, include developing children's enjoyment of reading and their opportunities for reading for pleasure both at home and at school. Encouraging your child to read at home, or to share books with you everyday is essential in developing their reading ability which in turn impacts on their writing—both sentence structure and vocabulary. Across the school, but particularly in Lower and Middle School, we are also focusing on extending children's writing abilities and from Year 3 upwards, consolidating children's recall of times tables.

Outside of the curriculum, we will be implementing our Climate Action Plan which identifies ways in which we can support and develop environmental priorities at Godinton. I am looking forward to working with our Climate Action Crew who will be helping with a number of initiatives over the year.

Healthy Eating

Just a reminder that the children are only able to bring a piece of fruit or vegetables to school for their morning snack. This could be a whole pieces of fruit e.g. apple, banana or pear or pieces of fruit or vegetables in a small pot e.g. grapes and strawberries or pieces of carrot and cucumber. No other snacks are permitted unless your child has a particular dietary need and this has been discussed with either myself or Mrs Stein.

The children are only allowed to bring water to school in their water bottle. The children have access to their bottles throughout the day and regular drinking is encouraged.

Our cook, Jo, and her team from Independent Catering, provide excellent school dinners each day. Remember that a school meal is provided free of charge for every child in Years R, 1 and 2. This includes a hot or cold meal, dessert and access to the salad bar. Menus are on the school website so that you can help your child to choose their lunch each day. If you would rather your child brings a packed lunch to school please ensure that this is a healthy balanced lunch. Sweets and chocolate bars are not allowed and we would encourage fruit or vegetables to be included.

On Thursday 2nd October we have our special superhero lunch as it is school census day. The amount of children in Years R, 1 and 2 who have a school lunch on that day impacts on our school funding so we would encourage as many children as possible to have a lunch on this day. Full details of menu choices this day are on the school website.

New Starters 2026

Although we have only just welcomed this year's new starters to Godinton, we are already starting to think about our 2026–27 cohort. Our Information Evening for Prospective Parents will be held on Wednesday 5th November between 5.30 and 7.00 p.m. Parents can also book to come on a tour of the school on various dates in November and December—please see the Admissions page on the school website for further information about the dates available.

Staff News

We are pleased to welcome three new members of staff to the team this year. Mrs Rea joins our teaching team as the class teacher of Otters class and Mrs Kolsteren and Miss Swift join our Outdoor Play Team.

We are in the process of looking for a new manager for Night Owls. This is an exciting opportunity for someone to lead our amazing After School Club team in providing wrap around care for our children. Full details can be found on the Kent Teach website or by popping into the school office. The advert runs until Friday 19th September.

Diary Dates and Holiday Absence

Diary dates for the year ahead can now be found on the school website. This includes all the dates for upcoming events at the school as well as a reminder of the term dates for this academic year.

We are in the process of finalising term dates for the academic year 2026-2027 and these will be confirmed in the next few weeks as I know some of you will be thinking ahead to future holiday planning. Please remember that holiday in term time will not be authorised and that harsher penalties are now implemented for unauthorised absence. Holiday absence not only includes family vacations but also times visiting relatives for example. Please see the attendance pages on the school website for further details.

PTFA Update

Our PTFA kick off this year's activities with our Mini Olympics event this Friday. Come and join in the fun and take part in a range of different fun 'sporting' activities between 5 and 7 p.m. and the chance to take home medals and stickers for taking part. It has been over 7 years since we first ran this event at Godinton which was always lots of fun. With the forecast looking good for Friday evening we hope that you will come and join in the fun!

Now we are back in the school hall, we have the first disco of the year to look forward to on Friday 10th October. Further details will be sent out shortly.

I am so grateful to our PTFA for the immense support they provide to the school and for the fantastic opportunities they give our children and families. Much of our Opal resourcing has been funded by the PTFA as was our World Music Day last year. Our PTFA team work hard but are in need of some extra help. Mrs Gandon has been part of the committee for the past 4 years as secretary and more recently taking on some of the treasurer responsibilities. However she would now like to step down from the role and give someone else the opportunity.

We are therefore looking to fill the role of secretary and treasurer at our PTFA AGM on Tuesday 23rd September at 6 p.m.. If you are interested in volunteering for one of these positions please come and have a chat with me or with Mrs Prior, our Chair, who can be contacted on ptfa@godinton.kent.sch.uk

Even if you are not interested in a committee position, it would be lovely to see you at the AGM when you can find out more about the work of our PTFA and their plans for the year ahead.

Other News and Reminders...

- As we start this academic year, please take time to check through your child's information on Arbor. It is important that medical information is up to date, that you have completed consents and have assigned at least three emergency contacts for your child. Amendments can be made on Arbor at any time. Please note that you are able to alert us to your child's absence from school using Arbor and that messages sent via Arbor will come through to your email rather than the Arbor app. We are grateful for your cooperation in keeping this information up to date.
- Our Coffee Hub, run by our Family Liaison Officer, Jacqui McGibney, takes place on a Wednesday morning between 9.00 and 10.00 a.m. and is a lovely opportunity to meet other parents. Everyone is welcome—just wait at the front of school and Mrs McGibney will come and collect everyone.
- We still have a few children who don't have wellies in school. On yellow welly days all children need to have a pair of wellies to wear at playtimes. If anyone has any old wellies that no longer fit anyone at home, we would very much welcome them to use as spares.

Caught on camera this month...



Sports Report

Clothing for PE



It's too early in the academic year for any updates on sporting events at Godinton. So instead, just a further reminder to everyone about ensuring that the children come to school suitably dressed and ready to participate in all physical activities. I have sent out a reminder to parents regarding clothing for PE and the expectations of the school regarding jewellery, particularly earrings. Only small stud earrings are allowed and children should not wear hoops or anything that dangles to school. Further information can be found on the school website by [clicking here](#). Thank you for helping to support our enforcement of this policy.