

Dear Families,

Welcome to the first HT Round up of the 2025-26 academic year! Despite the heavy rain early on Wednesday morning our school was soon shining brightly with the arrival of our children and staff. It was so lovely to see our families returning, or 'officially' joining us over the last two mornings. As always, we look forward to working with all of you to help our school 'Improve as One'.

Assemblies

Yesterday we revisited our four Values at The Winchcombe School; **Kindness, Respect, Courage and Curiosity** and our focus value will be **Respect** this year. We discussed what **Respect** means and how we can demonstrate it with extra Winchcombe Wonders linked to those showing this value.

This morning, we held our first celebration Assembly and having been around the classes there is a real buzz of learning already. We have already had nominations for **Kindness & Respect** along with other a variety of other celebrations.

Later on in the year we will be resuming Class Assemblies (Thursdays) which families are invited in to watch. These normally last no longer than 15-20 minutes and begin at 9am. This gives all the children in the class the opportunity to speak in public, gain confidence and work on their Oracy skills. Please do try to join us if you can. Year 6 & Year 4 each do a joint one after their residentials. Dates will come out soon to help you plan.

Word of the Week

At The Winchcombe we firmly believe that Oracy (the ability to communicate clearly and concisely) is vitally important to the development of our children. Oracy also boosts confidence, social skills alongside many other areas of development. With a dedicated Speech and Language (SAL) unit on site we know how important developing these areas of communication are.

Each week in assembly we share a new word, sound it out, spell it and discuss the meaning. As such this will be a regular on my HT Round up so that you can help support us over the following week. Some ideas could be: put the word into a sentence, define the word, look it up, draw a picture of the word or ask them to explain how they have used it in class.

Next week's word is: **instant**

Find out more details about the importance of Oracy here: <https://www.esu.org/oracy/>

Trips

Next week Y3 will be visiting the local river to link with their Geography learning and Y6 will be walking to Shaw House to learn about local History – please make sure the children have appropriate waterproof jackets as the weather looks variable.

It will come as no surprise to you about the dire financial positions that all schools find themselves in currently. We are proud of the exceptional grounds/buildings that we have and our experienced staff. You may be aware that more and more schools nationally and locally are entering deficit budgets which means money will be even tighter.

The Winchcombe narrowly avoided a deficit budget last year but this has meant extremely difficult decisions and these will continue over the coming years. The school in consultation with the Governors continue to meet regularly to navigate these challenging times. Next year trips may not go ahead if we do not receive adequate payments which is an extremely tough decision to make as we know the benefit to our children. **Our big financial outlays occur in Y4 and Y6 for Residentials.** Whilst these trips provide educational outcomes which all children are entitled to, board and lodging at these does not come under educational aspects. If you are struggling financially, or in receipt of Pupil Premium please contact our Finance team to work out support/payment plans in advance. If your working

circumstance have changed you may be eligible for Free School Meals; check here if you think this might be the case: <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/article/36469/Apply-for-Free-School-Meals>

We are exploring ways that families may be able to 'pay it forward' if they are in a position to do so but are under no obligation to. We will continue with our Amazon wishlist (link below) which makes a measurable difference to the way school funds are allocated.

<https://amzn.eu/9DkD7q8>

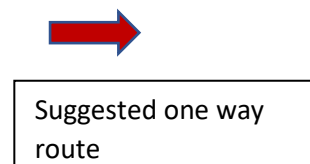
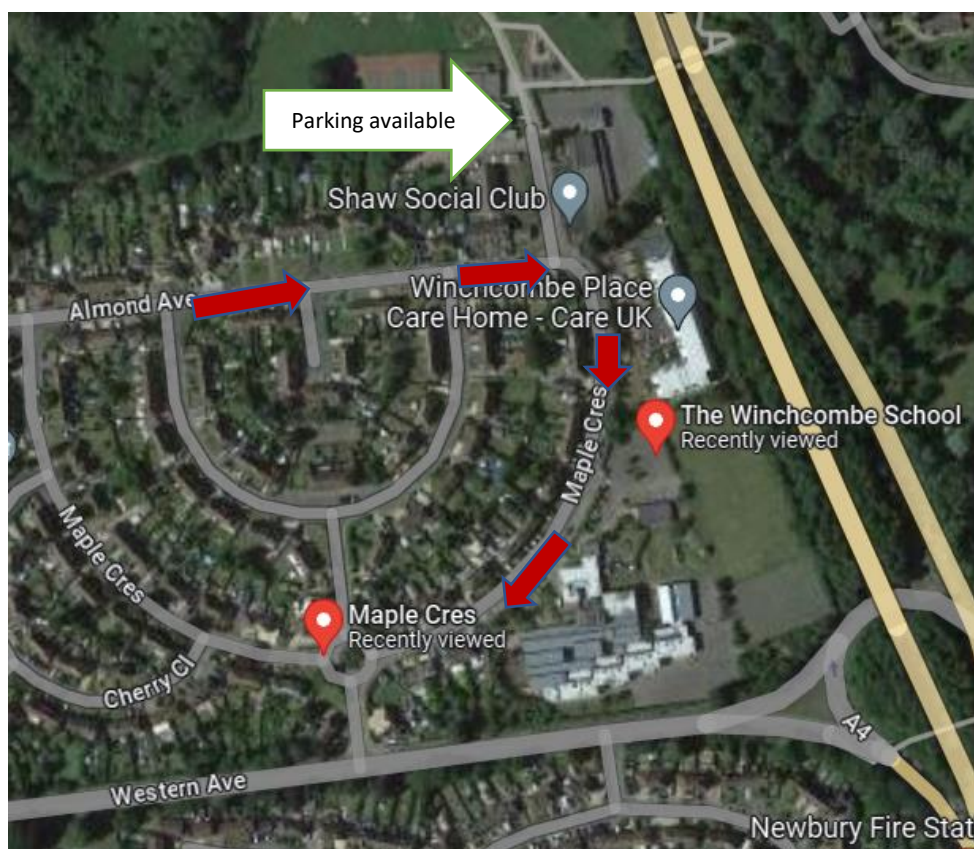
Additionally, your involvement in our school community through volunteering or fundraising initiatives with FOWS can make a significant difference in overcoming these challenges.

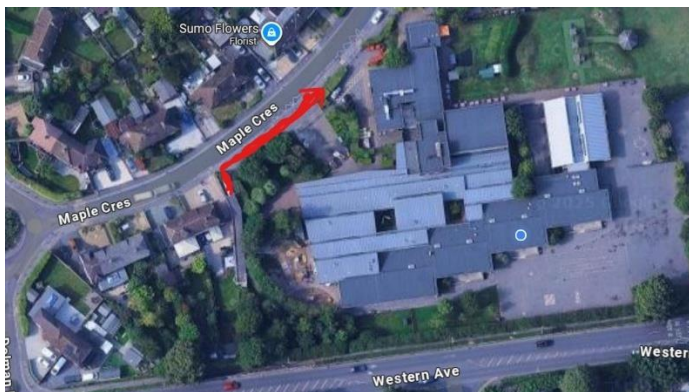
FOWS (Friends of Winchcombe School)

FOWS continue to be a major support for us here at The Winchcombe, raising much needed funds for equipment (Laptops, Phonic books, playgrounds, Arts program and much more) and your support in attending events or volunteering time brings much needed funds in. If you are able to spare some time over the academic year, even just volunteering at one event, they'd love to hear from you on winchcombefriends@gmail.com

Parking

A reminder for all, that our car park is for staff members **only**. We do have an agreement that parents can park at the Shaw Social club and walk up from there, which will reduce congestion on the roads around school. Our suggested one-way system to help traffic flow more easily (See map below) does keep the traffic moving around peak times. Please continue to show **Respect** for local residents by not blocking their driveways or parking on pavements – enforcement officers often visit. We also ask parents to queue past the main gates rather than the roundabout end so that people can pass safely – please see second photo/map.





Thank you for continuing to queue past the front gate away from the roundabout; this makes it safer for our community to pass by.

Vacancies

We are currently recruiting for a Learning Support Assistant (LSA) with Level 3 training and 4x Lunchtime staff vacancies. Please contact the office if you would like to know more on office@winchcombe.w-berks.sch.uk

If you are able to volunteer at school, whether reading with pupils, walking on trips, attending our careers fair (Summer) we'd also be delighted to hear from you.

Upcoming dates

Tuesday 9th Y3 River walk - Science

Thursday 18th Y6 Shaw House - History

Thursday 25th Individual/Family photos

We hope you all have a great weekend and are refreshed and recharged ahead of our first full week!

Your Headteacher,

Matt Percy