

Welcome back, especially to our new families. It has been wonderful to have all the children back this week and see their smiling faces in and around school.

Welcome to Mr Clark, our new class 5C teacher. We hope that he feels welcomed to the team and is enjoying life at Willand.

A Big Thank You!



Thank you so much to Kate Roach, the chair of the PTFA, and her colleague, Joe who work for Tilbury Douglas as they used their Community Day to sand, varnish and paint pallets which we are now using in the Reception Outdoor Area. We are very grateful to them for giving up their time to enrich our environment.

Could You Spare Some Time to Help Our School Community?

We are always grateful for the support of our wonderful parent and local community volunteers. If you have a little time to spare, we would love to hear from you.

Volunteers can make a real difference, helping children by listening to them read or by supporting staff on school trips and educational visits.

Whether you can help regularly or just occasionally, your time and enthusiasm are greatly appreciated and help enrich our pupils' experiences.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the school office for more information and details about the application process. We would be delighted to welcome you to our team of volunteers.



Introducing Our School Chaplain - Claire Nichols

We are very fortunate to have been assigned a school chaplain this year as part of the REACH Project. Claire Nichols, who is already a familiar face to the children through the work she has been doing with the school over the last few years, will be with us once a week and will be looking to build strong relationships with children, parents, staff and governors through the delivery of a range of Christian-based teaching such as collective worship, supporting the RE curriculum and small group pastoral work. We are very excited to further strengthen our relationship with Claire.

Invitation For Reception Parents

Parent meeting **Wednesday 23rd September 9.10 am** - teaching your child to read.



Reading is the most important thing your child will learn at our school. Everything else depends on it, so we do all we can to make sure every child learns to read quickly. We want

your child to love reading - and to want to read for themselves. You can help. Throughout the year we will run a series of meetings for parents in Reception to learn how we are teaching your children to read and to learn how you can help at home. We are holding our first meeting on Wednesday 23rd September at 9.10 in the school hall. The session will focus on how we teach the children their first 16 sounds, known as Set 1 sounds. If you are able to attend, you will need to sign in at the school office beforehand and then you will be directed to the hall. PLEASE DO NOT WORRY if you cannot attend all the meetings throughout the year in person as we will endeavour to share all presentations and information via Tapestry too.

School Uniform Naming



Please can we remind parents/ carers to name all coats, uniform etc

to enable us to get belongings back to the rightful owner and help prevent the piles of lost property we have growing into 'small mountains'.

*Thank you for your
continued support
Naomi Tottle
Headteacher*

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Online Payments: <https://login.schoolgateway.com> **PTFA:** willandschoolptfa@gmail.com



Online Safety 'Wake Up Wednesday'

For those of you new to the school, I am our online safety lead and will share information and guidance through the Willand Word regularly. If you have any questions or queries or need help with navigating the online world with your child, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Mrs Maynard (Online Safety Lead)

You will find the the latest top tips from the National College at the end of this newsletter. This week's theme is

'Character.AI'

Character.AI is an entertainment platform where users create and chat with AI-powered characters. These chatbots can act like existing favourite characters from movies or books, or like friends, mentors, or even romantic partners, responding in an emotional, personally engaging.



Devon Libraries Summer Reading Challenge

Please can all children who have completed the summer reading challenge bring their certificates in on Monday so Miss Shapcott can take a photo of you all.

Healthy Snacks at Breaktime

Please encourage your child to bring a healthy snack to school for break time. Below is a list of examples:

- Fruit
- Dried fruit (eg raisins)
- Vegetables (eg carrot sticks)
- Rice cakes
- Yogurt pouch/tube

There will of course be many other examples of healthy snacks not listed here that you may provide your child with and so this should serve as a general guide. The school staff will use their discretion at break-time but will certainly be asking pupils to save crisps, chocolate bars, biscuits and cakes etc for lunchtime!

We would like to remind families, that children in Reception and KS1 have free fruit provided each day for them at breaktime.

We hope this provides some clarification for everyone. Thank you for working with us to ensure all our children receive a healthy start to life.

Please remember we are a NUT FREE school as we have children with potentially fatal allergies.



Emails

If you need to contact your child's teacher, please use the year group email addresses below:

yearr@willand.devon.sch.uk
year1@willand.devon.sch.uk
year2@willand.devon.sch.uk
year3@willand.devon.sch.uk
year4@willand.devon.sch.uk
year5@willand.devon.sch.uk
year6@willand.devon.sch.uk

Please avoid sending emails from 7 pm on Fridays to 7am on Mondays, use a schedule send if the weekend is your only opportunity to write the email.

For reporting absences:

Please use our **dedicated absences email address** absences@willand.devon.sch.uk to notify us if your child will be absent from school

For requesting lunches:

Please use our dedicated lunches email address lunches@willand.devon.sch.uk

Using these correct channels helps us ensure that important information doesn't get missed and that we can respond to you as quickly as possible.

If you're unsure which email address to use, please contact the school office office@willand.devon.sch.uk and we'll be happy to direct you.

Thank you for your cooperation in helping us maintain clear and effective communication.

Reminder: School Drop-off & Pick-up

Please find information below regarding arrangements for the start of the new school year.

Drop off – Reception children, with their older siblings, will drop off at the park gate by the Jubilee playground at 8:50am. However, children from Years 1 to 6 will be able to be dropped off at any of the other school gates between 8:50 and 8:55am. Staff will be present at each of these entrances and children will be directed to make their way to their classrooms.

Pick up – collection will continue to be organised as it was last year, with specific year groups being released through set gates at set times. If you have more than one child attending school, they will continue to **leave through your youngest child's pick-up gate** at the designated time for their own year group.

Time	Silver St	Park	Drive	Somerlea
3.25pm		Reception	Year1	Year 2
3.30pm	Year 5 & Year 6	Year 4	Year 3	

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Safeguarding - From time to time the school may need to make referrals to Children and Young People's Services

Celebrating Children and their achievements 2026/27

Miss Shapcott has shared the following information with the children during assembly this week:

- **House Points**- we will be continuing to issue house points with a reward for the winning house at the end of each half-term.

- **Achievement Assembly** - we are going to introduce a termly achievement assembly. Each phase (Rec&KS1, LKS2 and UKS2) will decide on the winner of a number of awards (to be decided but to include things like reading, writing, maths, creative arts, sportsperson etc.) Parents will be invited (without your child) knowing. The first one of these will be on Friday, 18th December.

- **Birthdays** - children are encouraged to wear their own clothes on their birthday. If their birthday falls on the weekend or during a school holiday, they can wear it on the final school day before their birthday or the first school day after. Please be mindful of days when children will be expected to wear school uniform on school trip days and when the school photographer and change the birthday non-uniform day accordingly. We look forward to celebrating their birthdays with them! Just a reminder that we do not bring gifts/treats in to share with the class on these days due to allergies.

Please note: This is voluntary and birthday children can wear their uniform if they wish.

- **Willand Wonder** - Willand Wonder assemblies will continue on Fridays. During these assemblies we love to share children's achievements out of school, no matter what they are. Please encourage children to bring any trophies, medals, certificates or photos in to share with the school on this day.

SEND Information



We have recently been made aware of the website Autism Central <https://www.autismcentral.org.uk/>

Autism Central offer online events for

families of autistic people to reflect and work together, sharing knowledge and skills, including drop-ins, education family guide sessions and reflective sessions.

All sessions are free NHS England commissioned sessions delivered by Anna Freud and are peer-led and co-produced, grounded in lived experience and research.

They also have an extensive resources section, signposting to information on a wide range of topics such as diagnosis, sleep, eating, toileting, healthcare and Christmas.

DEVON FAMILY HUBS

FREE Family Advice & Guidance

For Parents/Carers of children aged 0-19 and Young People aged 13-19 (25 with SEND or Care Leaver)

Single Session Appointments available in person, via phone or online

CALL: Advice & Guidance Line **0800 5385458** Mon-Fri 10am-4pm

SCAN Request for Contact

Devon County Council **BEST START IN LIFE**

Mealtime Assistant Vacancy

We are looking for friendly, reliable and caring Mealtime Assistants to join our school team. You will play a vital role in supporting pupils during the lunchtime period, ensuring a safe, positive and enjoyable mealtime experience.

About the Role

Your main focus will be to help supervise children during lunch and support the smooth running of the dining environment.

Key responsibilities include:

- Setting up and clearing the dining room before and after service
- Supervising pupils to ensure safe, positive behaviour
- Encouraging good table manners and cleanliness
- Assisting children with cutlery where needed

Hours 11:45 to 1:15 5 days a week Term time only. (7.5 hours a week)

Pay: £13.28 an hour

Deadline for applications: Monday 14th September 9am.

If you are interested in this role please collect an application form from the school office or email admin@willand.devon.sch.uk.

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**Willand School Lunch Menu for week commencing
Monday, 14th September**

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Butchers oven baked Westcountry beef burger in a plain bap <i>GF/DF</i>	Chicken Fajitas <i>GF/DF</i>	Toad in the hole <i>GF/DF</i>	Homemade Chicken curry Naan bread and wholegrain rice <i>GF/DF</i>	Harry Ramsden's Fish <i>GF/DF</i>
Oven baked Vegetarian burger in a plain bap <i>DF</i>	Quorn Fajitas <i>DF</i>	Vegetarian Toad in the hole <i>DF</i>	Macaroni cheese in homemade sauce	Homemade Cheese Wheel
Potato wedges/ pasta Baked Beans/Peas Salad Bar	Rice/pasta Mixed vegetables Salad Bar	Roast/mashed Potatoes Yorkshire pudding Fresh Carrots Gravy Salad Bar	Green Beans Salad Bar Crisps	Chips / Pasta Seasonal vegetables Tomato Sauce Salad Bar
Ice cream and peaches Fresh Fruit Yoghurt	Apple and oat muffin tray bake Fresh Fruit Yoghurt	American Pancake and cream Fresh Fruit Yoghurt	Strawberry jelly and fruit cocktail Fresh Fruit Yoghurt	Iced sponge Fresh Fruit Yoghurt
PASTA POTS with Italian tomato sauce or cheese JACKET POTATO with cheese, beans or tuna WRAPSWITH FILLINGS: Ham, Chicken or Cheese Autumn 2026 Menu Allergen List				



KIDS HOLIDAY HEROES
Run by teachers

Ofsted Registered

We provide WRAPAROUND CARE at your school

Our term time Breakfast and After School Clubs include breakfast or a snack alongside a variety of engaging activities including arts & crafts, board games, card games, sports, outside breaks, puzzles, and much more.

Run by experienced teachers!

Check dates and times online:
www.kidsholidayheroes.co.uk

BOOK ONLINE

FOLLOW US Email us: bookings@kidsholidayheroes.co.uk

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Diary to remember...	
Friday 23 rd October	Non-Pupil Day
Mon 26 th – Fri 30 th October	Half Term
Friday 18 th December	Last Day of Autumn Term
Monday 4 th January	Non-Pupil Day
Tuesday 5 th January	Start of Spring Term
Mon 15 th - Fri 19 th February	Half Term
Thurs 25 th March	Last Day of Spring Term
Fri 26 th & Mon 29 th March	Easter Bank Holidays
Tuesday 30 th March	Start of Easter Holiday
Monday 12 th April	Start of Summer Term
Monday 3 rd May	May Bank Holiday
Mon 31 st May – Fri 4 th June	Half Term
Thursday 22 nd July	Last Day of Summer Term

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What Parents & Educators Need to Know about CHARACTER.AI

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Character.AI is an entertainment platform where users create and chat with AI-powered characters. These chatbots can act like existing favourite characters from movies or books, or like friends, mentors, or even romantic partners, responding in an emotional, personally engaging way. Although this can encourage creativity, it can also make a generated conversation feel like a genuine relationship, which is concerning if it takes the place of human relationships.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

AI replies are generated in real time rather than chosen from a fully checked script. Even with safety filters on, conversations can still move into sexual, violent, discriminatory, or self-harm material. These AI characters are often made by users, so a familiar name or child-friendly description does not guarantee that every response from the character will be suitable for a young person.

BLURRED BOUNDARIES

Characters on Character.AI can use the language of friendship, love, and empathy without ever feeling anything. Vulnerable young people may struggle to separate this simulation from genuine understanding. Romantic role-play or a character that demands attention, loyalty, or secrecy could also risk distorting young people's expectations around consent, disagreement, and the give-and-take involved in healthy human relationships.

UNRELIABLE ADVICE

Characters, like other chatbot platforms, are at risk of inventing facts or giving inappropriate advice while sounding completely confident. Characters may also echo a young person's assumptions instead of questioning them. This can become particularly risky when users rely on a character for guidance about health, mental wellbeing, relationships, money, or personal safety instead of checking with a credible source or trusted adult.

EMOTIONAL DEPENDENCY

Character.AI chatbots can appear endlessly attentive, supportive, and affectionate, which is one of the hallmarks of the generative AI models that such companions are built on. A young person may start turning to a character chatbot whenever they feel lonely or upset and believe that it understands them better than the humans in their life. This can become more concerning when chatting starts to replace sleep, schoolwork, hobbies and friendships.

PRIVACY CONCERNS

Character.AI chats may feel private, especially when a bot sounds personal and caring, but they take place on a company's online systems. Users could intentionally or unintentionally reveal their name, school, location, routines, images, or intimate concerns. Character.AI says some data may be retained to improve its services and AI models, so young people should never treat a chatbot like a confidential diary.

UNHEALTHY ENGAGEMENT

Be aware of warning signs such as secret accounts, bypassing age restrictions, hiding phone use from adults, chatting late at night, distress when access to the platform or character stops, withdrawal from other people, falling interest in school, or believing the character is conscious. Increased use may also signal that the young person is already lonely, anxious, or seeking help.

Advice for Parents & Educators

KEEP CONVERSATIONS OPEN

Ask what the young person enjoys about Character.AI and invite them to show you how the platform and their favourite characters work. Useful questions include: "Has it ever said something that felt wrong?" and "How can you tell it doesn't have feelings?" Avoid shaming them for using platforms like Character.AI or making them feel there is something wrong with them for doing so.

PAUSE, CHECK AND ASK

Teach young people to pause before accepting an answer from characters on Character.AI. Encourage them to check important claims against a trustworthy source and ask a safe adult when the issue matters. Never use a character as the sole source of medical, mental health, legal, financial, or safeguarding advice. Remind them not to share passwords, contact details, school information, live locations, or private images.

CHECK AGE, SETTINGS & LIMITS

Character.AI's minimum age is 16 in the UK, but open-ended companion chat is restricted to adults aged 18 or over. Users aged 16 to 17 receive a different experience built around guided 'stories' and other creative or social features. Check their current settings, never help or encourage a young person to give a false age, and apply the same safety rules to other chatbot apps.

NOTICE AND RESPOND

Take action if chats involve sexual content, threats, coercion, abuse, self-harm or danger. Save relevant evidence, report the character and follow the setting's safeguarding process; educators should involve the designated safeguarding lead. If anyone is in immediate danger, contact emergency services. Childline is available on 0800 1111 and the NSPCC Helpline on 0800 800 5000.

Meet Our Expert

Darren Coxon is an educator with almost 30 years' experience across teaching, school leadership and governance. He works internationally supporting schools and colleges with AI leadership and governance and [insert NC courses I have written].



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

See full reference list on our website

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