Newsflash Friday 6th November 2026

Herstmonceux
Church of England Primary School
Learning, Loving, Living



Dear Families,

It has been wonderful to welcome all of the children back to school this week following the half-term break. The school is once again full of energy, and the children have settled back into their routines brilliantly.

Our staff kicked off the new term on Monday with an inspiring INSET day focused on Philosophy for Children (P4C). It was a fantastic opportunity for our team to revisit the core principles of P4C and explore how critical, creative, collaborative, and caring thinking benefits our pupils. Teachers are already planning engaging inquiry sessions for the term ahead to get the children debating, questioning, and sharing big ideas. Keep an eye out for more information on how P4C will be shaping classroom discussions in the coming weeks.

It has also been a very busy week welcoming prospective families to our Reception 2027 open morning and evening tours. Today's morning tour was particularly special, as our Year 6 children joined us to lead the visitors around. They did an outstanding job showcasing our school and sharing first-hand what makes our community so special. We couldn't have been prouder of how confidently and warmly they represented us.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. I wish you all a restful and enjoyable weekend.

Miss Emmett
Head of School

Celebration Assembly

All the children work hard to follow our Golden Rules and to use their Learning Powers, and in the last two weeks we especially congratulate …

Oak Class Reception – Winter & Chloe
Maple Class Y1 – Mylah & Olivia
Willow Class Y2 – Harlow & Jack
Chestnut Class Y3 – Talia & Reggie
Spindle Class Y4 – Grace & Cash
Ash Class Y5 – Adam & Emily
Sycamore Class Y6 – Riley-James & Poppy

Prayer from Celebration Worship

Dear God,

Thank you for all the times you have helped me in hard times in my life.
Thank you for food, water everything you have given to us.
Thank you for joy, hope and love.
Thank you for everything.

Amen
Written and read by Frankie'j - Sycamore Class Y6

Attendance



Good attendance is key to your child's success, learning, and happiness at school. Arriving on time every day ensures they never miss out on vital lessons, exciting activities, or time with friends.

Congratulations to our winning class this week…

Oak Class with 97.3% attendance

Oak Class – Reception	97.3%
Maple Class – Year 1	95%
Willow Class – Year 2	96.55%
Chestnut Class – Year 3	97.12%
Spindle Class – Year 4	89.04%
Ash Class – Year 5	92.58%
Sycamore Class – Year 6	90.52%



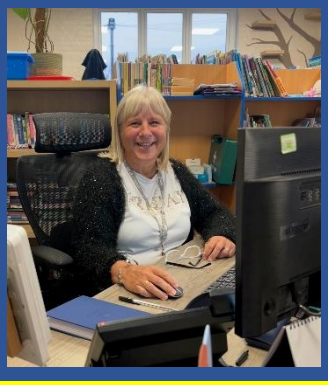
Thank you for your continued support in helping our pupils achieve their very best by prioritising regular attendance!

Calendar dates

Please visit our website to keep up to date with all school events. This is the easiest way to keep an eye on everything school life.

https://www.herstmonceux.e-sussex.sch.uk/Calendar/

Welcome to Mrs Mullery!



We are delighted to welcome Tracy Mullery to our school family as our new School Secretary! Joining us with a strong background in education, she brings a wealth of knowledge, experience, and energy to our busy office team.

Tracy is looking forward to settling into her new role and getting to know all our pupils and families. Next time you drop by the office, please join us in giving her a warm welcome!

NumBots Update: Supporting Healthy Screen Habits

We are big fans of NumBots at our school! It is an exciting digital platform designed to help children learn, develop, and apply their mathematical calculations, boost recall speed, and foster a genuine enjoyment of maths.

However, alongside the benefits of technology comes our shared responsibility to ensure children maintain a healthy balance and avoid spending too much time on devices. To support this, NumBots has recently introduced a few updates.

Children will now only be able to access the platform between 7:00 AM and 8:00 PM, helping to protect family time and bedtime routines. Additionally, NumBots is removing the leaderboard feature. While leaderboards can be fun for some children, they can prove distracting for others; this change ensures the focus remains entirely on celebrating every child's individual progress and confidence in maths.

Thank you for your continued support in helping our pupils build positive, healthy habits both in school and at home!

Parent Evening Reminder

Don't forget to book your appointment for our upcoming Parents' Evenings on Tuesday 17th and Thursday 19th November! This is a great opportunity to discuss your child's progress and celebrate their achievements with their teacher.

Bookings are open on the Arbor App. Please log in to reserve your preferred time slot. We look forward to seeing you there!

PTA Events

We have plenty of exciting events coming up over the next few months! Please take a look at the dates below and make a note in your diaries.

- Friday 20th November – Non-Uniform Day (Chocolate Donation)



  - Children can come to school in non-uniform in exchange for a donation of **chocolates** for our Christmas Fayre tombola.

- Friday 4th December – Non-Uniform Day (Bottle Donation)



  - Children can come to school in non-uniform in exchange for a donation of a **bottle** (e.g., wine, spirits, soft drinks, or toiletries) for the Christmas Fayre bottle tombola.

- Saturday 5th December – Christmas Fayre (12:00pm – 2:30pm)
  - Join us for festive stalls, games, and holiday treats!



- Tuesday 15th December – Elfridges School Christmas Shop
  - Children can visit the secret gift shop during the school day to purchase and wrap presents for family members.



- Thursday 17th December – Christmas School Disco & Non-Uniform Day
  - **KS1:** 3:15pm – 4:15pm
  - **KS2:** 4:15pm – 5:15pm
  - *Children may wear non-uniform to school today.*



Herstmonceux School Choir Present…



Harvest Festival Update

Before the half-term break, we delivered all of your incredibly generous Harvest Festival donations to the Hailsham Foodbank—and they were absolutely delighted!



We recently received a certificate of thanks confirming that together, our school community collected an astonishing 131kg of food and essential items. To put that into perspective, that is equivalent to the weight of a lioness!

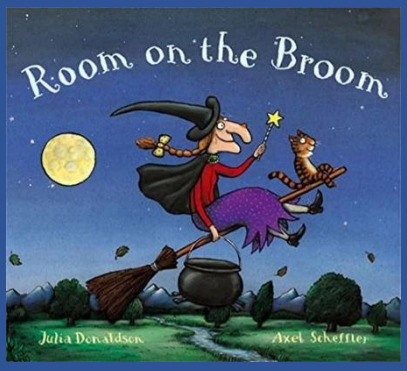
Thank you so much to everyone who contributed. Your kindness and support make a huge difference to local families in our community. Amazing job, everyone!



Oak Class

Welcome back! It has been an absolute pleasure to welcome the children back after half term and hear all about your exciting adventures together. They have settled back into our daily routines and expectations seamlessly, jumping right into another busy week of learning with enthusiasm.

In English, we have been recapping our phonics sounds from last term, applying them as we practice blending for reading and segmenting for spelling, alongside focusing on correct letter formation. The children have also absolutely loved exploring *Room on the Broom*, which brought plenty of magical witchy role-play into the classroom. We've even been hammering golf tees into pumpkins to build up those vital hand muscles for writing, and whipping up some fantastic "pumpkin gut" concoctions out in the outdoor kitchen!







In Maths, our focus has turned to measurement as we explored the language of height by ordering and comparing ourselves in different groups. We also introduced the concept of weight, having lots of hands-on fun investigating how things balance using our balance scales.





Newsflash Friday 6th November 2026

Throughout the week, we have also enjoyed plenty of Bonfire Night celebrations too! The children got creative using chalks, pastels, and paint to craft vibrant fireworks art, have made delicious edible sparklers, and learned key safety rules around bonfire celebrations, along with a little introduction to the story of Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot.





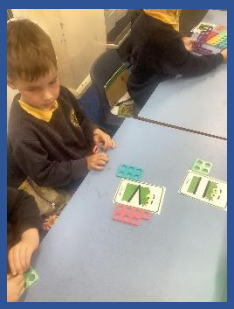
We can't wait for so much more fun and excitement this term! 😊

Miss Prior & Mrs Climpson

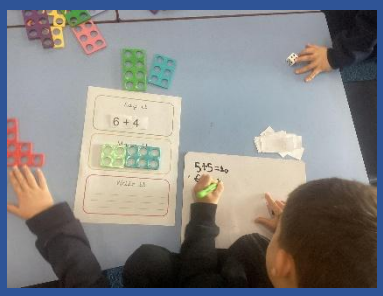
Maple Class

We hope that everyone enjoyed Half Term, and how lovely it has been to see so many happy, smiling faces in the class.

Before the break we were writing our own pages about dinosaurs to go into a non-fiction book. We researched facts, and wrote great sentences about our dinosaurs, before drawing them, and creating font covers. This week, we have been looking at poems about fireworks, and constructing our own firework inspired short poems, before next week, starting our new class text.



In maths we have started to explore parts and wholes. We will be exploring part whole models next week using objects, which will then translate into written additions. We finished our work on Statistics and this week began measuring things. We picked objects from around the room and measured how many unifix cubes long/tall they were.



In History this term, we are going to be learning about toys from the past. We started this week by exploring what we mean by the word 'past'. There was a whole class consensus that the past means '200 years ago'! The children were amazed to find out the past is anything that has already happened, even things that happened a few seconds before! We will be sending children home with a short questionnaire about toys their parents or grandparents used to play with, so we can explore some of the similarities and differences between then and now. We look forward to the responses and a trip down memory lane!

This term we are learning to paint on the laptops, and yesterday we discovered some different tools we can use to paint. By the end of this unit we are hoping to have a fully finished painting. We're excited to see the results.

There is the small matter of the (dare I say it?) Nativity this term! As teachers we are already underway, and the preparations will be starting soon! Before we know it the performances will be upon us!



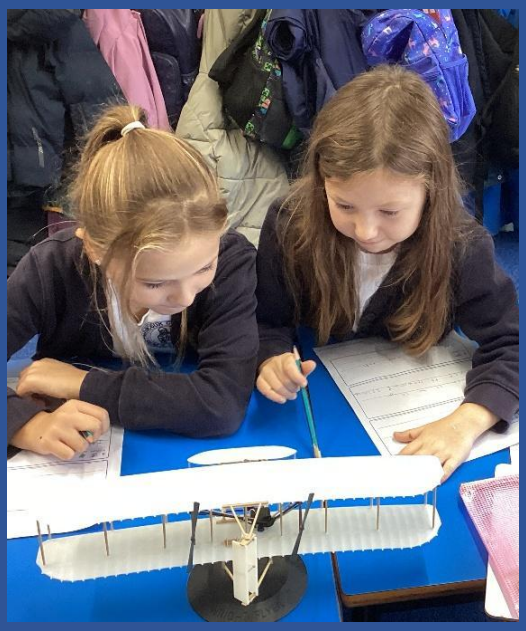
Miss Hunnisett, Mr Toms & Miss Roberts

Willow Class

We have had a fantastic and busy start to our new term! Here is a look at what we've been up to in class.

We have launched our new topic, *The History of Flight*, by stepping into the shoes of history detectives! The children investigated a collection of mysteries and artefacts to uncover clues about a famous female aviator—examining historical photos, trying on pilot costumes, and inspecting model airplanes. Building on this inspiration, we are now learning all about diamond poems and writing our own to capture what life as an early pilot was like.





In maths, we are continuing to build our confidence with addition and subtraction. The children have done a brilliant job working with numbers up to 20!

This week, we have also explored the history and significance of Bonfire Night, talking about why and how we celebrate it. The children then put their creative skills to work crafting their own colourful paper fireworks!





Mrs Wake & Mrs Charrett

Chestnut Class

In **English** recently, the children have been working on deconstructing newspapers to understand what makes a good piece of journalism. Soon, the children will be using this knowledge to create their own article documenting the tragic events of Pompeii.

In **Maths**, we have been working hard at understanding how to use the 'written method' to aid us when adding or subtracting larger numbers. The children have shown a great grasp of place value within their work by explaining brilliantly how and why digits need to go in which columns.

In **Art**, we have finished our topic on the artist Andy Warhol by creating our own sculptures of a volcano based on his work. The children used some of the sketching and texturing skills we learnt in drawing and replicated them using clay and tools. The volcanoes look amazing and the children can't wait to bring them home! In our current topic we are looking at the fabulous geometric art of Canadian born artist Elyse Dodge!

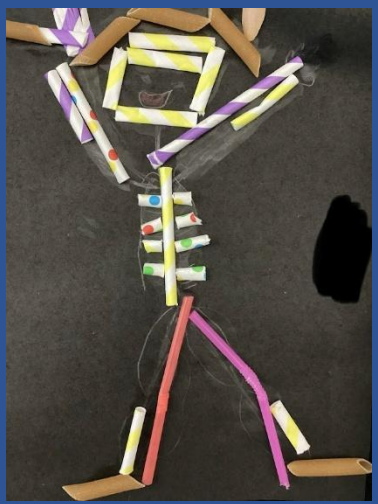


In **French** we have continued to practice everyday words and phrases. The children are now able to say their name, ask someone else for theirs and ask them how they are feeling. We are going to be moving onto saying numbers and seasons in the coming weeks. Tr̀ès bien!

In **Computing** we have finished our topic learning about how computers work together in systems to efficiently send and receive messages. This term we will be starting work on one of my favourite areas of learning: **Stop motion!** The children will be exploring and experiencing how a moving picture or image can be used to create full blown videos. In preparation for this, maybe the children could watch a film such as Wallace and Gromit and try to spot how they make the characters move!

To finish our topic in **Science**, the children had a go at creating the human skeleton using straws and pasta! They tried to remember all the parts humans have which may not be seen in all of the animals of the world.





Mr Allery & Miss Hodgson

Spindle Class

It has been a busy and exciting couple of weeks in Year 4, with the final week before half term and our first week back full of wonderful learning opportunities. The children have returned refreshed, settled back into routines brilliantly and shown great enthusiasm for their learning. Here is a little look at what we have been up to!

One of the highlights of the last two weeks was our trip to Cuckmere Haven**,** where the children had the opportunity to bring their geography learning about rivers to life! During our visit, the children explored the river and its surrounding landscape, identifying key features such as meanders and the river mouth**.** They also looked at the effects **of** erosion and considered how rivers shape the land over time. It was fantastic to see them applying their classroom knowledge to a real-life environment and spotting geographical features for themselves. The visit also provided inspiration for our art work. The children used the beautiful landscape and natural features of Cuckmere Haven as a stimulus for their own creative pieces, combining their observations with their artistic skills.

The children have now finished presenting their poems inspired by *Jabberwocky* by Lewis Carroll. They have worked hard to present their poems. We have been so impressed with their efforts and have proudly created an anthology of their work. You can read the children's poems by scanning the QR code included with this newsletter. We hope you enjoy seeing all their hard work!

It has been lovely to welcome everyone back after half term, and the children have made a really positive start to the new term. Our new class text is *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C. S. Lewis. We are excited to explore this classic story together, discover the magical world of Narnia and see where the children's reading, writing and imagination take us. There will be plenty of opportunities to explore characters, settings and themes as we journey through the book.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. We are looking forward to another fantastic half term of learning and discovery in Year 4!

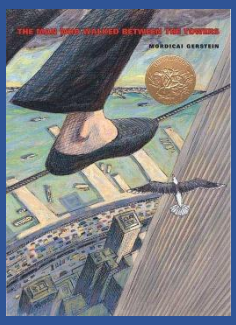
Scan Me



Mrs Peirson, Mrs Piercy & Miss Smith

Ash Class

Aaaaaaand, they're off! Year 5 has hit the ground running in term 2, as we've started out new topic *Above and Beyond*, which will see us discover the wonders of the Solar System and space more generally (because when this lot get started asking question, their curiosity knows no bounds!).



We have begun our first book of the term, The Man Who Walked Between The Towers, which tells the incredible true story of Philippe Petit, who walked above the birds and among the clouds, when he orchestrated an incredible act of bravery or craziness, (depending on your opinion - the children loved discussing which!). Philippe Petit's tightrope wall between the two towers of New York's World Trade Centre will provide the basis of our first piece of writing this term; a biography on the man himself.

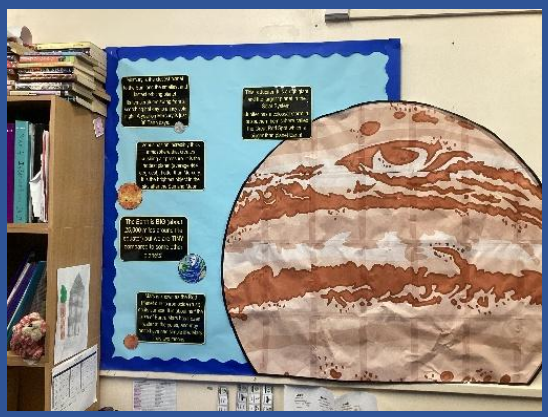
Our PE has kicked off with gymnastics indoors and pickleball outdoors. Our French has seen us continue to learn about the season, and how to describe them. The class love making connections between languages, and one that they especially enjoyed, was how the French work to shine is directly related to the English word 'brilliant'. Very cool!





In maths we've started looking at addition and subtraction, using our skills to add and subtract even larger numbers. Exciting times! (Although multiplication comes later.) In art we've met Picasso, and are starting to learn how and why he used analogous colours in his work.

But it's science that has stolen the show so far this term. We have begun learning about our Solar System, making sure we know the order of the planets, what a planet actually is, how a planet is different to other celestial bodies, and the relative distances between the eight (sorry, Pluto) in our system. The class's eyes have been wide open as we've had tangents on black holes, white holes, light years, how the moon got there, and life on other worlds. While our learning will be centred on the Solar System, there is a whole universe out there, so don't be surprised if you start receiving some BIG questions about life, the universe and everything!

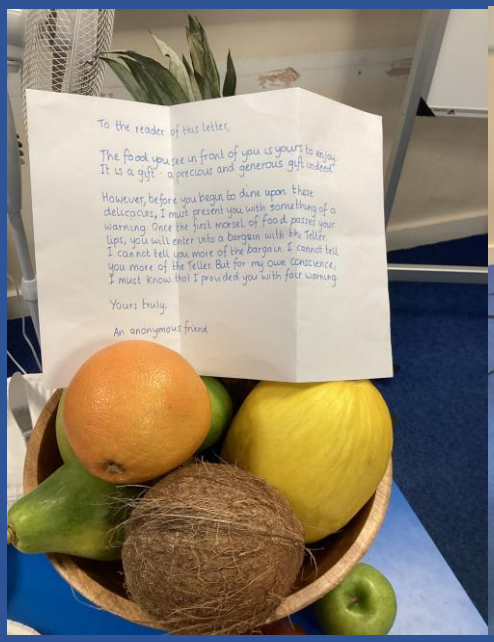


Mr Valder & Ms Pavit

Sycamore Class

The children have hit the ground running with an exemplary work ethic, and we couldn't be prouder of the positive, dedicated attitude they've shown towards every single lesson.

This term, we are diving into two fantastic books: The Last Wild and Paradise Sands. We kicked off our English unit with plenty of intrigue when a mysterious gift and a letter from an "anonymous friend" arrived in our classroom! The children have been thoroughly hooked, using this hook to practice intentionally choosing powerful vocabulary and crafting sentences for maximum impact on their readers.





In Maths, the class celebrated brilliant success as we rounded out our Place Value unit. The children worked on mastering rounding, securing their confidence in handling large numbers and cementing a rock-solid foundation for the rest of the term's maths concepts.

Alongside our core subjects, we have also begun our work on Remembrance. The children are approaching this delicate and important topic with immense maturity, respect, and thoughtful reflection as we explore the history and significance behind this season.

Thank you for your ongoing support at home—it's shaping up to be another wonderful term already!

Miss Mortland, Mrs Hibbert and Miss Fisher

Online Safety

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

AI COMPANIONS

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.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

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.

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.

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.

INAPPROPRIATE OR EXPLICIT CONTENT

CENSORED

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.

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.

"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

18 CENSORED

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 1111) or Shout (text 85258).

Meet Our Expert

Darren Coxon 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.



#WakeUpWednesday®

The National College®

See full reference list on our website

@wake_up_weds /wuw.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

Safeguarding at Herstmonceux CE Primary School

Our school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and expects staff, including volunteers and visitors,
to share this commitment.

No worry is too small.
If you see or hear something that concerns you, speak to one of our safeguarding team.
We are always here to listen and help.

If you have safeguarding concerns or would like to discuss any issues that arise, please contact us in person, via the school office or by using the email address safeguarding@herstmonceux.e-sussex.sch.uk

		
Helen Emmett Head of School Safeguarding Lead	Catherine Cottingham Executive Headteacher Deputy Safeguarding Lead	Kally Livingston SENCO Deputy Safeguarding lead

You can also get advice if you have a concern about a child from the following helplines:

East Sussex Single point of Advice :01323 464222

NSPCC Safeguarding advice line: 0808 800 5000

Chair of Governors: Liz Ford
Safeguarding Governors Nina Jabang and Emma Robinson

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/ ChildLine: https://www.childline.org.uk/