

Headstart

November 2025

Wandsworth schools and families





Dolly Parton is giving
all Wandsworth
children aged
under 5
a free book
every month



Inspire a love of reading
and sign up today



Scan the QR code to register
your child or learn more at
wandsworth.gov.uk/imagination-library





Free books from Dolly

More than 5,000 children are already benefitting from Dolly Parton's free book gifting programme

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library provides children in Wandsworth with an age-appropriate book every month from birth until their fifth birthday.

The project is supported by funds raised by players of People's Postcode Lottery and delivered by Dolly Parton's charity, The Dollywood Foundation.

Judi Gasser, Cabinet Member for Children, said: "The incredible sign-up rate so far shows just how much enthusiasm there is amongst local families for building a culture of reading."

Families with children under 5 were invited to a Dolly Parton-themed event in Roehampton Library – complete with a Dolly impersonator – to celebrate the launch of the Imagination Library in Wandsworth.



A helping hand for families

There's loads of ways families can get help to make ends meet, with different support schemes from the council.

Hundreds of additional secondary school children who are eligible for Wandsworth's Access for All offer will now receive a **free school meal** every day, and the council is using new data-matching processes to identify children entitled to free school meals who were previously missed.

Our partnership with Magic Breakfast continues, with more than 5,000 children getting a **free breakfast every day**. This year, secondary schools have joined the scheme.

The **Uniform Support Scheme**, the most generous in the country, has been extended to all Access for All children entering Reception and Year 7. Eligible families get vouchers of up to £170.

And the new **Access for All School Trip Service** covers transport costs to make it easier for schools to organise trips.

Find out what other support you might be entitled to, at [wandsworth.gov.uk/hub](https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/hub)







It's Our Year of Play!

Wandsworth's Year of Play is all about making the borough the best place for children and young people to grow, explore and thrive through play.

With £15 million being invested to improve and create playgrounds, plus a packed programme of fun, free and affordable events, there's something for everyone. From family fun days and leisure centre activities to library clubs and creative projects, this is your chance to get active, connect and have fun.

Discover what's happening near you, from play streets to our 10x10 and 10xTeen guides, by scanning the QR code or visit: [wandsworthplay.commonplace.is](https://www.wandsworthplay.commonplace.is)





Kwasi – Wandsworth's Youth Mayor

"We want to help create an even happier, safer Wandsworth, where everyone feels they can be seen and heard." That's the message from Kwasi Agyekum-Koranchie, Wandsworth's Youth Mayor for 2025/2026.

A 15-year-old student at Ernest Bevin Academy, Kwasi aims to be a "beacon" for young voices, focusing on mental health, career opportunities, and equality. Alongside

Deputy Youth Mayor Sophia Dyson, he works with the Youth Council and community leaders to ensure young people's views shape local decisions.

Kwasi says: "It's up to young people to come together, embrace our differences, and create real change."

Find out more about the Youth Council and how you can get involved here:
wandsworth.gov.uk/the-council/councillors/youth-council/



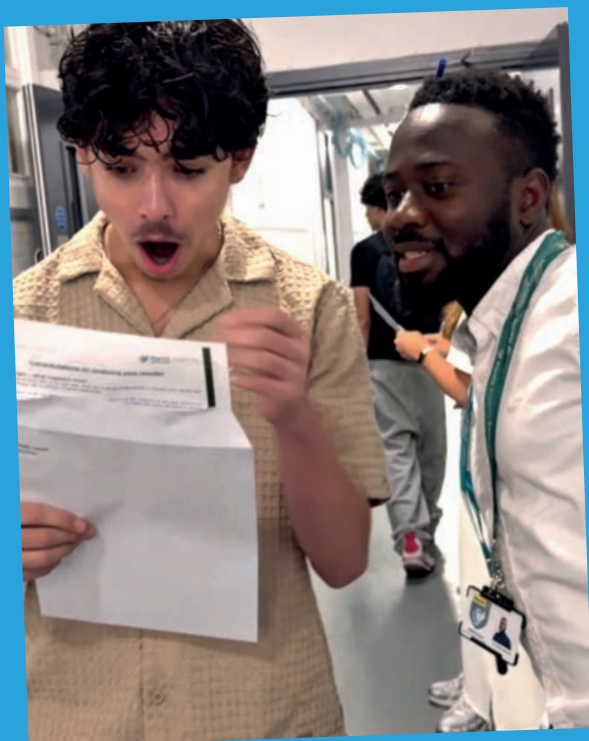
Star students succeed

It was another bumper crop of exam results this year, with strong performances across the board at GCSE and an increase in top A-level grades from 22.1 per cent to 25 per cent. Well done to everyone.

Ark Academy recorded recording-breaking GCSE results in English and Maths. Joe Pain has cerebral palsy and completed all his exams verbally. He received an 8, two 6s, and four 5s and will join Ark Putney 6th Form to study social sciences. He said: "Inclusion is so important, and I can't wait to be at the heart of 6th Form community."



Young people at **Burntwood School** celebrate their A-Level results.



Lohis Hatton will be staying at **Harris Academy Battersea** to study for A-levels. He said: “The teachers are actually very supportive and helped me a lot.”



Happy A-Level students at **Southfields Academy**



New era for Paddock

Pupils moved into the new Paddock Secondary and Sixth Form school building this term. The purpose-built facility at the Tooting school is designed to be net-zero, inclusive and accessible.

The expansion of Paddock School is part of the council's long-term investment in specialist SEND education, focused on providing high-quality local school places so that children

and young people can access the right support closer to home. This approach reduces the need for families to travel outside the borough and reflects the council's commitment to inclusive, community-based education for all.

Sarah Santos, Executive Headteacher of Paddock School, said: "I've seen many changes at Paddock, but this is the most transformational. The new building reflects our deep commitment to our young people and will make a huge difference to their school experience."



The expansion was announced at the Apple Primary Schools Expo and Showcase at Battersea Arts Centre.

More schools join digital partnership

The partnership between the council and Apple is to expand.

Since the launch of the Apple Schools programme in 2022, twenty Wandsworth primary schools have benefitted from world-class technology, professional development for teachers, and innovative teaching tools such as Apple's Everyone Can Create and Everyone Can Code.

The 2025–26 programme will see six new schools added to the programme, plus strengthened support for children with special educational needs by integrating Apple's accessibility tools into Special Educational Needs (SEN) resource bases.



Ravenstone is School of Sanctuary

Ravenstone has signed a pledge to become the first Wandsworth School of Sanctuary.

The council's Deputy Cabinet Member for Communities, Sarmila Varatharaj, attended the signing of the pledge and learned about the school's efforts to teach pupils the importance of empathy and kindness, engage with the wider community, and work in partnership to welcome families in need.





Clean up the air

Our new Clean Air School accreditation programme will help encourage teachers, pupils and parents to tackle air pollution in their communities.

It will give accreditation to those schools that demonstrate a strong commitment to improving air quality in their areas. Around 11 Wandsworth schools are on track to receive a

'Gold' accreditation in the initial phase of the programme.

St Boniface RC Primary School in Tooting was part of a pilot stage of the programme and was awarded its gold accreditation at a special ceremony in September.

The school takes part in active travel events like Walk to School Week and the Sustrans Big Walk and Wheel, became part of the council's School Streets scheme and young eco prefects took part in workshops, made posters and shared their knowledge with the rest of the school's pupils.

St Boniface also hosted an anti-idling event with the council's air quality team, engaging with local drivers to turn off their engines when parked.



Inspirational Family Hubs

Family Hubs bring together health, education, and community services under one roof to provide families with the right support at the right time.

The Roehampton Family Hub received a recent visit from the Honourable Datuk Hajah Rosey binti Haji Yunus, Malaysia's Deputy Minister for Women and Early Childhood Development,



who was there to get ideas for strengthening support for families back home.

The Deputy Minister and her delegation toured the Roehampton Family Hub, meeting families, staff, and partners including health visitors, Places to Be, Rackets Cubed, Family Nurse Partnership, and children's centre staff.

To find out more about Family Hubs in Wandsworth, including services available in your area, scan the code.



IS SOMEONE ELSE'S CHILD LIVING WITH YOU?

or... IS SOMEONE ELSE CARING FOR YOUR CHILD?



**Private
Fostering**



For further information about Private fostering visit: [wandsworth.gov.uk/fis](https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/fis)
or contact the council MASH team – call: **020 8871 6622**
or email: mash@wandsworth.gov.uk

Get in touch... we are here to help
understanding • recognising • reporting





Healthy Schools win awards

More than a dozen Wandsworth schools won awards at the 2025 Healthy Schools Award Ceremony.

The event celebrated schools that achieved bronze, silver, or gold Healthy Schools status.

The programme supports schools to make health and wellbeing a key part of everyday school life, focusing on areas such as healthy eating, physical activity and emotional wellbeing.

Several Wandsworth “Gold Award” schools talked about their journeys to achieving top-level accreditation. One primary school received their gold award after making significant progress in improving healthy eating and food provision, including introducing an inclusive, sustainable breakfast and plans to expand cooking activities.





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Security
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Why did we get vaccinated?

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Gideon and his
sons from
LONDON



**To find out more about vaccinations
for you, your family and friends**



SCAN ME

Pictures clockwise: Battersea Park in Concert schools outreach; Urban Flow; Our Beautiful Neighbourhood; Schools art workshops



We're six months into our year as London Borough of Culture, and we're making sure young people are at the heart of it.

You played a key role in some of our biggest events, like Urban Flow in Roehampton and Strictly Wandsworth in Battersea Park, and dedicated events include a series of School Showcases working with more than 450 pupils from 19 schools, and the Our Beautiful Neighbourhood art project starting this term leading to an exhibition and art trail next year.

Grants for schools have led to projects like a literary festival at Graveney and Immersive Alice in Wonderland at Beatrix Potter. We're also running a borough-wide poetry project, with a big celebration event happening in November, and workshops from former Children's Laureates Chris Riddell, Joseph Coelho and Cressida Cowell.

Find out more at welcometowandsworth.com





Let's talk PANTS

The NSPCC's friendly dinosaur mascot Pantosaurus has visited schools and nurseries to share the Talk PANTS message.

Talk PANTS helps young children build confidence and understand that their body belongs to them, and that they should always speak to a trusted adult if anything makes them feel worried or upset.

The PANTS rule stands for:

Privates are private

Always remember your body belongs to you

No means no

Talk about secrets that upset you

Speak up, someone can help

One of the highlights of the week was Pantosaurus's visit to Holy Ghost Catholic Primary School on 16 October. Children there joined in fun activities that helped them learn the PANTS rule in a memorable and engaging way.



If you are worried about a child, you can contact the Wandsworth Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub on 020 8871 6622, or out of hours on 020 8871 6000 or email mash@wandsworth.gov.uk

WANDSWORTH COUNCIL'S

PINOCCHIO

13-14 DECEMBER & 20-23 DECEMBER
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for children
aged 3-11



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Winter listings

This is just a taste of what's going on
For more activities visit
wandsworth.gov.uk/fis

A Merry Misrule

November 29–December 24

Award winning immersive arts creators Wild Rumpus return with a new family adventure. Wander through enchanted lands and meet characters intent on disrupting the most wonderful time of the year. Suitable for children age 3 and above.

Battersea Arts Centre

Pay what you can on Nov 29 and 30.

bac.org.uk/whats-on

The Railway Children

December 4–6

The classic tale performed by the G64 Youth Theatre members.

Putney Arts Theatre

putneyartstheatre.org.uk

Pinocchio

December 13–14 and December 20–23

Follow the mischievous wooden puppet as he learns the importance of honesty, courage and friendship. 540 discounted tickets will be available via our Access for All scheme.

wandsworthpanto.com

Mondays at the ROSE

Mondays 3 Nov – 15 December

Free art workshops, after-school art and craft club and free evening meals.

ROSE Clubroom, Ascalon Street, Battersea
wandsworth.gov.uk/rose-clubroom

Mix and Munch

15, 16 and 22 December

Children aged 5–10 can cook, together, play games, listen to music and make new friends.

St Cecelia's, Southfields

mixandmunch.com

Wandsworth Connected Winter Fun

December 22–January 4

Activities and healthy food for children in school years reception to Year 11 who either live in or go to school in Wandsworth and are in receipt of benefits-related free school meals. Young people may also be eligible if they are looked-after, a young carer, a refugee or asylum seeker or have special educational needs and disabilities.

Find out more and book by searching for Wandsworth Connected on the Family Information Service
fis.wandsworth.gov.uk

Art Club

Weekly on Saturdays, 2pm–3pm

Unleash your creative spirit at this free club suitable for children aged 5+

Tooting Library

better.org.uk/library/london/wandsworth/events-and-activities

Art and Design Courses

Drawing, pottery and painting courses for young people aged 13–17 and pottery and art clubs for children aged 8–12. Access for All discounts are available.

Putney School of Art and Design

psad.org.uk



How to be listed Send details to: press@wandsworth.gov.uk

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Sight tests for children are **FREE!**

Short-sightedness is increasing, globally and in the UK. It is now twice as common as in the 1950s and children are becoming short-sighted at an earlier age.

- Over 20% of parents have never taken their child for an eye test
- It is also more common in children whose parents are short-sighted.



School Vision Screening Service

Wandsworth schools offer Vision Screening in Reception Year. This ensures reduced vision can be identified and treated before vision is fully developed. Children found to have reduced vision are referred to either a local optician or hospital for further assessment.

If your child missed out on this service, please take them for an eye check up with your local optician.



Find out more, scan the QR or visit:
gov.uk/government/publications/child-vision-screening-information-for-parents

Listening to you

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and a member of staff
will pick up in **7 rings***

7 days

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street sign or a
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we will fix it within
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[wandsworth.gov.uk/listening](https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/listening)



*Phone line open 9am–5pm, Monday to Friday, except bank holidays