



Sally Banfield

Headteacher

6th February 2026

Dear Parents and Families,

Re-Designation – Earlier this week, I wrote to you confirming the Department for Education’s decision to approve the change of our school’s designation to Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC). This means that, from September 2026, the new year groups joining Combe Pafford will be ASC cohorts.

During the consultation process, many of you shared thoughtful and valuable comments. A common theme from families was concern around staff training time, specifically that the professional development we currently schedule on Fridays might need to be fully redirected towards preparing for our new cohort.

I am in complete agreement that we must continue with our existing staff training programme this year, while also ensuring that our wonderful team receives the guidance and support, they need as we prepare to welcome our new young people in September. It is also important to recognise that we already have a significant number of pupils with ASC, who will benefit from this further upskilling of staff.

To provide the additional training time required—without reducing our existing programme—I have decided to add **two extra training days** to this year’s school calendar, and **one extra training day** to next year’s. To minimise disruption for families, these days have been placed adjacent to existing school holidays. I fully appreciate that this change has an impact on you, but I hope you feel that it reflects the feedback shared by many families during the consultation process.

The additional training days will be:

- **Tuesday 21st April 2026** – added to the INSET day on Monday 20th April, at the start of the summer term
- **Friday 22nd May 2026** – leading into the May half-term break
- **Friday 23rd October 2026** – leading into the October half-term break

Meet the Headteacher – Our next meet the Headteacher events take place on Tuesday 10th February. The focus of this time is your views on our current homework process and structure and to gather thoughts on our current uniform. Do you like it, are there things you would like to change?

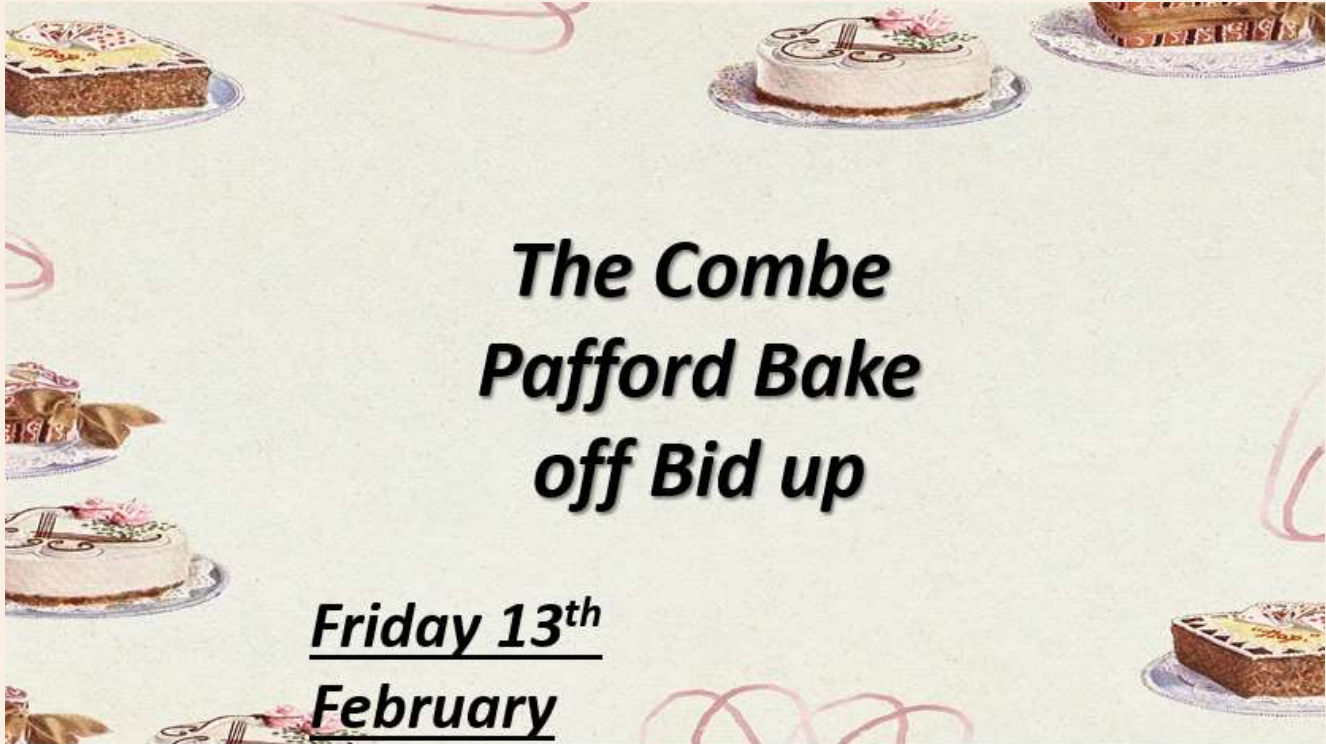
To ensure that as many of you can attend, I will run 2 sessions. The first at 9am in the Yellow Frog Cafe (please come in through the YFC entrance) and the 2nd will be in the evening online via Teams at 5.30pm. The link for this teams meeting is here:

<https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/34929628067268?p=3hQGeOkmO0WF1546H2>

Please do come along to either session for me to hear your thoughts and views.

Half Term Reminder– children break up on Friday 13th February at usual time of 2.20pm and are welcomed back on Monday 23rd February.

Bake Off Bid Up – Don't forget it's the "Bake Off Bud Up" on Friday 13th February. This is open to all staff, students, and parents. Bake your cake and bring it into the hall for 9am. You can bid on as many cakes as you like, as many times as you like. The bidding will close at 12pm, the winner will be the last bid!!! All the money raised will go to Operation Imprezza for money towards school windows.



Keeping your children safe online

The focus this week is how to spot fake news. If you would like a printed copy of this poster, please ask at reception.



How to spot FAKE NEWS

Free
item every
Wednesday

Issue: #WakeUpWednesday

WHAT IS 'FAKE NEWS'?

Fake news can be false information, photos or videos purposefully created to confuse or misinform. It can also be genuine information that has been manipulated to deceive. It is important that we learn how to distinguish between real news and fake news.

DOES IT SOUND REAL?

Many fake news stories are written with appealing headlines and have content designed to create 'shock value' in order to spread like wildfire. Typically, fake news will include topics such as the 'death' of a famous person, company giveaways, news relating to supernatural events, or terror related posts that provoke a reaction. Have a look at other news sources to see if a story has been widely reported before sharing unsubstantiated claims. You can also check facts at websites, including snopes.com and factcheck.org.

CHEK 4 SPELIN AND GRAMMATICAL MISTKS

Not always, but poor spelling, grammar and vocabulary on articles may indicate that an item is not from a reputable source. Be wary!



Check the comments!

Have a read through the comments on a news story - either at the bottom of the article or on a social media share. Reactions and comments can often show if other people don't believe the story is true, or whether someone has confirmed it is fake news. Of course, you can't always know if a comment is real!



Is it a joke?

While most fake stories are designed to make you believe them, it's important to know how to spot when the content has been written as a joke on purpose. Articles from joke news websites (such as 'The Onion' or 'The Daily Mash') are hugely popular on social media but some people may think their stories are real. Always read joke articles with a pinch of salt.

Who wrote it?

Make sure that the website that published the story is a credible source, i.e. a major news network or local paper which has the resources to fact-check published stories. If you get your news primarily via social media, always check the source and use caution if the story comes from a news organisation you have never heard of. If the article has a byline, you should be able to research to see if the writer is a genuine reporter by searching for them on Google.

Read more than just the headline!

Some news sites will post stories with 'click bait' headlines to grab your attention and make you click on them. These headlines might not even be relevant to the story. Studies show that almost 60% of links that people have shared on social media have never actually been clicked before sharing, so it's really important that you read the article first before you share it to make sure the news is real.

Have you checked the URL?

Does the website address at the very top of the page look real? One of the easier ways to spot suspect stories is if they're located on a news site with an odd domain name. So, check the URL. Some dodgy websites will try to incorporate a legitimate news source into its URL, such as www.therealbbc.co.uk, or will slightly misspell a popular website domain, e.g. www.bboc.com.

How long has the page existed?

Be wary if a story comes from a news organisation you have never heard of. Some hoaxers will set up a quick website to spread fake stories and so-called 'breaking news'. So, if a story with bold claims originates from a website that has only just launched, you would be wise to doubt its authenticity. There are online tools, such as the Internet Archive, that display the approximate age of a website on the internet and allow you to view how it looked before.



National Online Safety

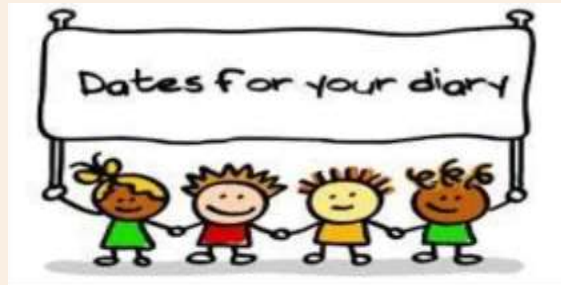
www.nationalonlinesafety.com Twitter - @natonlinesafety Facebook - /nationalonlinesafety Phone - 0800 368 8061

Can I wish you all a very relaxing and enjoyable weekend, with hopefully a little better weather for everyone.

Kindest regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Banfield', written in a cursive style.

Sally Banfield
Headteacher



FEBRUARY 2026

- 9th – 13th Year 11 GCSE Mocks Week
- 10th Parent Forum – Meet the Headteacher
- 10th KS2 Swimming
- 13th Year 7 Swimming
- 13th LAST DAY OF HALF TERM
- 23rd FIRST DAY OF SPRING TERM – CHILDREN WELCOMED BACK
- 24th KS2 Swimming
- 27th Year 7 Swimming

MARCH 2026

- 3rd KS2 Swimming
- 5th World Book Day
- 6th Year 7 Swimming
- 9th – 13th Science Week
- 10th KS2 Swimming
- 13th Year 7 Swimming
- 13th – 24th Residential to Kenya
- 16th Immunisations for Years 9, 10 & 11
- 17th KS2 Swimming
- 20th Year 7 Swimming
- 20th Red Nose Day
- 24th KS2 Swimming
- 27th Year 7 Swimming