



Newsletter



Issue No.22

Headteacher: Mr J Emery

Friday 17 April



	w/b 13.04.26
Year 3	98.4%
Year 4	99.4%
Year 5	98.9%
Year 6	96.2%
TRJS Overall	98.2%

A great week of attendance. Y3,4,5 have all smashed the TRJS target and achieved over 98% attendance. A super start to the term. Keep going, you HEROES!

HOT CHOCOLATE WITH MR EMERY

Congratulations to everyone who has received the **TRJS Weekly Values Award** and shared hot chocolate and biscuits with Mr Emery. We heard all about your talents and hobbies outside of school and shared some cracking jokes, such as:

“What is the difference between ignorance and apathy? I don’t know and I don’t care!”

Year 3	Fabian C, Leo S
Year 4	Leo J, Oscar S
Year 5	Otis E
Year 6	Joe N, Evelyn G

KEEPING SAFE

App stores offer millions of apps, but not all are safe for children. From malware and copycat apps to in-app purchases and inappropriate content, risks can be easy to miss. Please see the poster at the end of the newsletter or use this link for a guide on apps from the National College:

<https://nationalcollege.com/guides/app-play-store>

Year 5 and 6 Swimming

A message from Mrs Owen. Year 5 and 6, please remember to bring your clothes to swimming as we will be doing life-saving skills this half term.

Sports Day

FAQ Information for Parents

When is Sports Day?

TUESDAY 19TH May 2026.

Where will it be happening?

On the school field, near to the new mobile.

What do I need to send my child into school with?

Children need to come into school wearing their PE kit (black shorts, House colour t-shirt, trainers and joggers/jumper if the forecast is cold).

Sun hat

A small bag with suncream, water bottle and a snack.

A cushion to sit on, ideally within a plastic bag so it doesn't get damp.

What are the timings?

9:30am: Gates will open for families.

9:45am: Children will parade onto the school field.

10am: Events start.

12pm: Morning session finishes.

Parents are asked to leave school whilst the children have their lunch.

1:15pm: Gates will re-open for families.

1:25pm: Children parade onto the school field.

1:30pm: Events start

3pm: Final scores announced

3:05pm: Children parade back into school.

3:30pm: Children dismissed from school.

Please note, all timings are approximate based on previous years events. We do our best to adhere to these timings but cannot guarantee them.

How many events will my child be in?

We have a number of events throughout the day. All children will compete in the heats for each event. The top three finishers from each heat will compete in a final to earn points for their House. For the field events (javelin, shot put, long jump) and the obstacle race heats will be completed during school time leading up to the event with the finals being held on Sports Day.

What do I need to bring with me?

Something comfortable to sit on!

Am I able to sit with my child?

We ask that all parents stay on the side of the track next to the new mobile.

Am I able to take photographs of my child?

We respectfully ask that if you wish to take photographs, that they contain only your child(ren) and request that photos are not shared to social media platforms.

Will refreshments be available?

A selection of drinks and cakes will be available to purchase from the new mobile. Please bring cash (ideally in change).

Can I help?

Yes please! If you are able to volunteer to run the refreshment stand for part of the day please speak to Mrs Patrick in the office. We will also welcome donations of cakes (homemade or shop bought) to be sold on the day.

Can I take my child home after the last event?

No, children will need to return to the school building. All children will be dismissed from their usual classrooms at 3:30pm.

Am I able to attend for part of the day?

Absolutely. The gates will be open for the duration of the event so please join us when you can.

When will my child be competing?

Check the Sports Day Programme for approximate timings. Events involving heats will include all of the children in that year group. Where the event states finals only (javelin, shot put, long jump and obstacle course) the children have completed the heats during lesson times. Your child will be able to tell you if they are in the final of those events.

Can I bring younger siblings?

Of course. Please make sure that they are supervised at all times to ensure their safety. The Adventure Playground will not be available on this day.

We aim for all children to have fun while doing athletics and enjoy being physically active. While we ensure that all children are included and are able to participate at their level, we also promote a healthy competitive spirit. Therefore, we celebrate winners and show a positive sporting attitude to everyone involved. Success can be measured in many ways; the main aim is for everyone to do their best and have fun.

If you have any further questions, please contact Mrs Vardy (lvardy@thomasrussell-junior.staffs.sch.uk) or the school office (office@thomasrussell-junior.staffs.sch.uk).

Holland Sports

As many of you will know, building work is starting at Holland Sports Club on Monday 20 April. From that date there will be no parking at the site for at least 4-6 weeks. This is during the demolition and steels phase of the build when the car parks will be required by the builders; it will be unsafe to have public accessing the site.

The public pathway between the two schools will remain open and deliveries will be restricted during drop off and pick up times to ensure that parents and children are safe.

As soon as we know when the car park will be reopening, we will let you know. The club apologises for any inconvenience caused. They are aware that this could be disruptive for parents but also for local residents. If you have any questions regarding the building work, please contact Jodie (07796 683284).

As there will be increased congestion around the school in the next few weeks, may we ask all parents to drive and park responsibly, showing respect to each other and our neighbours, so we keep all the children safe.

Friends of TRJS

Miss Branson will be sending out a message to parents to invite you all to a meeting to discuss how parents can work with the school to organise community and fund-raising events. The meeting is on Monday 27 April at 2pm. Everyone is welcome!!

Wishing everyone a pleasant weekend. 😊

J Emery

New dates are in red.

Summer Term 2026

Term Starts:	Monday 13 April
Y4 online author visit:	Monday 27 April
Friends of TRJS Meeting:	Monday 27 April 2pm
May Day Bank Holiday:	Monday 4 May
Y6 SATS Week:	Monday 11-Thursday 14 May
Y6 Trip to the Staffordshire Regiment	Friday 15 May
Meeting for Parents of Y3 (September 2026)	Monday 18 May
Sports Day:	Tuesday 19 May
Half Term:	Monday 25 May – Friday 29 May
Volunteer Day:	Saturday 6 June (Save the date, more info to follow)
Inset Day (School closed for pupils):	Friday 3 July
Term Ends for Pupils:	Friday 17 July
Inset Day (School closed for pupils):	Monday 20 July
Holiday:	Tuesday 21 July – Monday 31 August



Thomas Russell Junior School

Term Dates 2026-2027



Autumn Term 2026

Inset day (School closed for pupils):	<i>Tuesday 1 September</i>
Term Starts for pupils:	Wednesday 2 September
Half Term:	Monday 26 October – Friday 30 October

<i>Inset Day</i> (School closed for pupils):	Monday 2 November
Term Ends:	Friday 18 December
Holiday:	Monday 21 December – Friday 1 January

Spring Term 2027

<i>Inset Day</i> (School closed for pupils):	Monday 4 January
Term Starts for pupils:	Tuesday 5 January
<i>Inset Day</i> (School closed for pupils):	Friday 12 February
Half Term:	Monday 15 February – Friday 19 February
Term Ends:	Thursday 25 March
Holiday:	Monday 29 March – Friday 9 April
Easter Sunday:	Sunday 28 March

Summer Term 2027

Term Starts:	Monday 12 April
May Day:	Monday 3 May
Half Term:	Monday 31 May – Friday 4 June
<i>Inset Day</i> (School closed for pupils):	Friday 2 July
Term Ends:	Wednesday 21 July
Holiday:	Thursday 22 July – Wednesday 1 September

(Thursday 2 September 2027 and Friday 3 September 2027 will be INSET Days, so the Autumn Term 2027 will start for pupils on Monday 6 September 2027.)

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about APP & PLAY STORES

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Since the introduction of Apple's App Store and Google's Play Store, an estimated two million apps have been made available on each. Ofcom's 2025 media use and attitudes report states that more than half of children aged between 5 and 7 use apps or sites to communicate with each other, and, by the ages of 10 to 12, 45% of children are playing games on their mobile phones. This guide will help you ensure that children use the app stores and their content safely.

MALICIOUS APPS WITH MALWARE

Although Google and Apple must approve the apps on their official stores, inappropriate content sometimes slips through the net. For example, in 2023, the security company Kaspersky found that multiple iOS and Android apps contained spyware-stealing software, primed to look for passwords and steal crypto-wallet recovery phrases captured in screenshots.

UNOFFICIAL COPYCAT APPS

Both official app stores contain copies of apps – often games – designed to look like popular ones, mimicking their branding, layout and logos. While these will usually just offer a poor experience packed with ads or a quick money-making exercise, they're also more likely to be vessels for malware than the products they're counterfeiting.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

As the App Store and Play Store are for all ages, there's a lot of content available that's inappropriate for children. Examples include apps that have references to alcohol, drugs, sex, violence or gambling. In general, these are sexually age-rated, but social media sites such as YouTube and TikTok, which both have an App Store age rating of 12+, can be gateways to adult material.

PREDATORY IN-APP PURCHASES

App-making is a business, and most creators have found that "freemium" software is the way to make money. That means the app will be free initially but will either require the user to watch ads or rely on them making in-app purchases. Some free apps can be predatory, and there are plenty of examples reported where parents have racked up huge bills on behalf of their children's app activity.

ADDICTIVE BY DESIGN

Phone addiction is fast becoming recognized as a real concern, and apps are a big part of this. Freemium apps have a real need to keep children checking in every day in order to generate more ad views or secure extra in-app purchases. This can interfere with schoolwork and other offline hobbies.

SIDeloaded BANNED APPS

"Sideloading" – the more complicated practice of installing applications on a device from sources other than the official app stores – bypasses Google's and Apple's security procedures. However, it is possible for tech-savvy users. This opens up huge risks – not just apps that would be forbidden by Apple and Google, but phone sites packed with malware too.

Advice for Parents & Educators

ACTIVATE PARENTAL CONTROLS FOR APPS

Both Google and Apple have apps that can give adults greater control over children's phone activity. Screen Time (iPhone) and Family Link (Android) have a range of features, such as letting you set age-related restrictions on the app stores, require permission to download an app, set daily time limits on specific apps, and control real-world spending.

DO YOUR RESEARCH

If children ask permission to download an app, do your due diligence and research it. Read the app summary and search the internet for reviews and discussions to establish its legitimacy, safety and appropriateness – if it doesn't seem to be appropriate, look for safer alternatives instead.

LOOK BEYOND THE REVIEWS

App store reviews are helpful, but they are widely gamed, and some unscrupulous developers will pay for quick reviews to give their work perceived legitimacy. Take more than a cursory glance at ratings by digging out the one- and two-star reviews and looking closely at the developer – for example, if they've published a lot of unrelated apps, that's a red flag.

TALK TO YOUR CHILD

Talk to children and make sure they're aware that apps can be risky. As part of a wider talk about internet safety, advise they don't download apps outside of the official channels, nor grant app permission to access their camera, microphone, or photos without a good reason. Make sure they understand that in-game currency costs real-world money.

Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, Tech Radar, the Telegraph, the Evening Standard, the Guardian and the New Statesman.

