



GOTHIC MEDE ACADEMY NEWSLETTER

FRIDAY 18TH
SEPTEMBER



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PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE

Dear Parents/ Carers,



Week two has been a busy one for us all at Gothic Mede! Our pupils have settled beautifully and there is a wonderful buzz around the school.

Our pupils in year 1 are thoroughly enjoying the learning opportunities open to them through our continuous provision, building on our learning in EYFS and parents were given the opportunity to learn a bit more about this at our meet the teacher session this week. Having the time and space to explore the curriculum through mission time supports our pupils in strengthening their communication and language skills and emotional regulation alongside their academic outcomes.

Reception have completed their first full week in school and we are so proud of them. They have lived our values of Pride, Respect, Responsibility and Compassion beautifully. Don't be surprised if they are tired this weekend - they have been incredibly busy learning so many new things! Enjoy the time with them and I'm sure they will enjoy telling you all about what has happened this week.

We do have exciting news! Our Trim Trail has been given the go ahead for children to play on. We have been eagerly awaiting the ground to settle and the grass to grow through and thanks to the recent rain this has sprung up almost overnight.

Have a wonderful weekend,

Mrs Smith



WE'RE ON INSTAGRAM!

Keep up to date with all the exciting things happening at Gothic Mede by following us on Instagram!
[@gothicmedeacademy](https://www.instagram.com/gothicmedeacademy)

DINOSAUR VISIT

Gothic Mede had an incredible visit from Giant Journeys this week! The children were absolutely fascinated as they learnt about dinosaurs and discovered what life was like millions of years ago.

During the assembly, the children learnt about how dinosaurs behaved and evolved, as well as what led to their eventual extinction. They then had the exciting opportunity to meet Trixie, a baby dinosaur, before the star of the show, Reggie, made his grand entrance into the hall!

It was a truly memorable experience for all of our pupils, bringing their learning to life in a fun and exciting way.

A huge thank you to Giant Journeys for visiting Gothic Mede and giving our children such a fantastic experience!



What Parents & Educators Need to Know about 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 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.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

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.

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.

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.

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 0808 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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Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 09.09.2026

ONLINE SAFETY - CHARACTER AI

Our children have access to technology, apps and online experiences that many of us did not have when we were growing up. While these technologies can provide exciting opportunities, they also bring new risks, and it is important that we, as parents and carers, are aware of what children may encounter online.

Following recent updates to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and our ongoing commitment to online safety, we wanted to share this information with you so that you are aware of the potential risks associated with Character AI and can make informed decisions about your child's online activity.

We encourage you to take a few minutes to read the information and, where appropriate, talk to your child about staying safe when using AI and other online platforms.

RECEPTION FOREST SCHOOL

Forest School will take place every Tuesday from next week, with our Reception classes alternating each week.

Next Tuesday, 22nd September, will be Oak Class's turn.

Please ensure your child comes to school dressed in clothing that is appropriate for the weather and that you don't mind getting muddy. Please also make sure they have wellies to wear during their Forest School session.

ELM CLASS - YEAR 1

Elm Class have been busy learning all about instructional writing in English. The children wrote their own instructions explaining how to make delicious chocolate Rice Krispie cakes. Once they had written their methods, they then followed their own instructions to make the cakes, putting their writing skills to the test!

Well Done Elm class!



PRINCIPAL'S AWARD

Children are nominated by their teachers for a Principal's Award in recognition of an exceptional achievement or for demonstrating one of our school values. Award recipients are presented with a certificate during our weekly Celebration Assembly which takes place every Monday. This is a wonderful opportunity to recognise and celebrate the hard work, positive attitudes and achievements of our pupils.



BEECH	Harper	for being a fantastic example of our school values right from the start of the school year. Modelling routines beautifully as we begin in year 1.
ELM	Ava	for consistently living by our school values during her first week in Elm. Ava has worked hard to follow the routines and challenge herself during provision time.
MAPLE	Kylie	for her excellent effort in phonics this week and for taking pride in all of her writing.
WILLOW	Kayla	for showing a good understanding of the school values in the first week back and being a great role model.
SYCAMORE	Toby	for making a superb start to year 3. Toby has engaged extremely well with his learning and shown great behaviour choices.
CHESTNUT	Oscar	for showing great resilience settling back into the routine of school and year 3.
ROWAN	Jackson	for his fantastic attitude to learning, especially in French, as he settles into Year Four.
HAZEL	Olive	for showing determination and resilience settling into a new school and making new friends.

Autumn Term Diary Dates	
21.09.2026	Meet the Teacher 3:35pm - Year 3
30.09.2026	Individual School Photos
01.10.2026	SEND Coffee Morning 9:00 - 10:00am
07.10.2026	School Open Evening 5:00 - 6:30pm
07.10.2026	Harvest Festival (staff and children only) - Children can bring in donations for the <u>Need Project</u>
19.10.2026	Acorn A Let's Read Together Parents session
22.10.2026	Acorn B Let's Read Together Parents session
23.10.2026	Parent coffee morning - all welcome
26.10.26 - 30.10.26 Half Term Break	
06.11.2026	Year 3 Swimming commences (6 weeks - last session 11 th Dec)
17.11.2026	Parent Consultations 4:30 - 7:00pm
18.11.2026	Reception - Year 4 Flu Vaccinations
19.11.2026	Parent Consultations 4:00 - 6:30pm
20.11.2026	Mastering Numbers Workshop for Reception parents 9:00 - 10:00am
25.11.2026	Acorn Parent Consultations 11:30 - 12:30pm & 4:00 - 6:00pm
25.11.2026	Supporting your child with reading (EYFS/KS1) parent session
03.12.2026	Flu Catch Up session
10.12.2026	Rock Steady Christmas Concert
18.11.26 End of Term	

Transfer to Starting School 2027

Central
Bedfordshire



Beaudesert Lower School, Lewis Turner, AGE 8



Scan here
to apply

Was your child born between
1 September 2022 and 31 August 2023?

They will start school in September 2027, so you need to apply
for a school place by 15 January 2027.

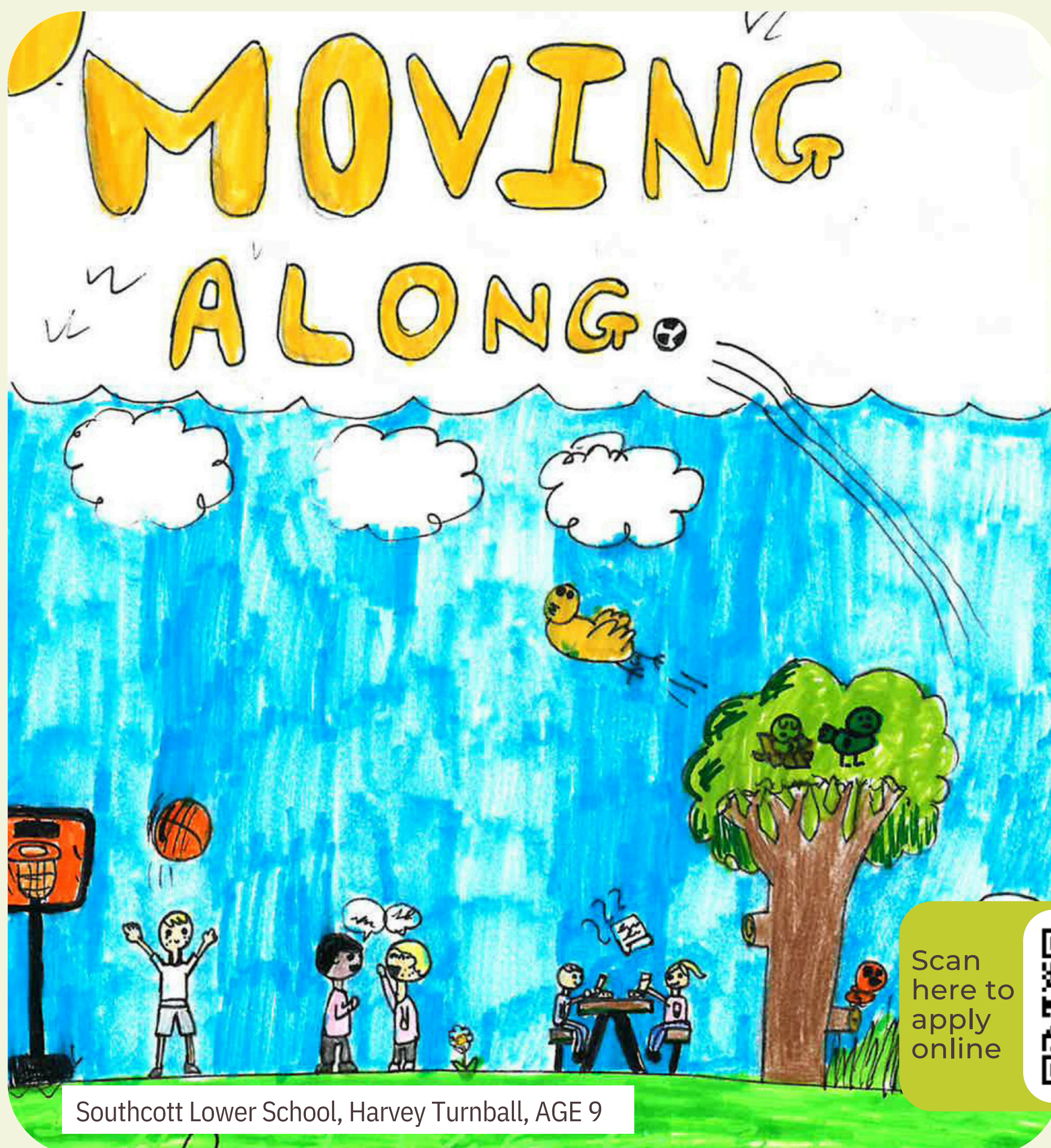
 **Apply online at** www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/admissions

You can also complete a paper application form by downloading it from our website or by contacting
School Admissions @ admissions@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk 0300 300 8000

A great place to live and work.

Transfer to Junior/ Middle 2027

Central
Bedfordshire



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apply
online



Is your child due to start Junior/Middle
School in September 2027?

Then you need to apply for a school place by 15 January 2027.

 **Apply online at** www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/admissions

You can also complete a paper application form by downloading it from our website or by contacting
School Admissions  admissions@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk  0300 300 8000

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