



Aston St. Mary's Newsletter

Our value this half term is **Respect**

www.astonmarys.herts.sch.uk

1st May 2026

Every child is a treasure - small in size, growing in God's love.

Diary Dates

Monday 11th May – Thursday 14th May –
Year Six SATs assessments

Friday 15th May – Sports Day (PM)

Thursday 21st May – Open Afternoon
(2:00pm-3:00pm)

Friday 22nd May – Non-uniform Day for
governors IT project (donations via cash
on the day or QR code)

Reserve Sports Day (PM)

Monday 25th May – Friday 29th May – Half
Term Week

Thursday 4th June – Shackadell Class to
Hertfordshire Zoo

Monday 15th June – Friday 19th June –
Year Six Bikeability

Monday 22nd June – Years Five and Six
visit to Hazard Alley Safety Centre
Music Evening (6pm)

Monday 29th June – Peartree Class to
Cuffley Camp

Thursday 25th June – Class Photos

Wednesday 1st July – Danes and
Puddlebridge Classes to Wicksteed Park

Monday 6th July – Haffydown Class to
Celtic Harmony

Tuesday 7th July – Intervillage Sports Event

Monday 13th July – Year Six Leavers' Trip
(PM)

Tuesday 14th July – Whole School
Production 1:30pm and 6pm

Wednesday 15th July – Whole School
Production 6pm

Friday 17th July – Last day of summer term
9:30am Leavers' Service
1:00pm School finishes

Since returning from the Easter break, it has been wonderful to see all the classes absorbed and engaged in their learning – this is evident throughout the school day, every day. So much has been achieved already, a taster of which is shared on our class pages.

This half term, our whole school value is **Respect** - this underpins everything we do. We encourage all pupils to show respect through their words and actions—listening carefully, being kind to others, and valuing everyone's ideas. By showing respect to one another, we create a positive and supportive environment where every child feels safe, happy, and ready to learn. There are some ideas towards the back of this newsletter about how you might explore the value of respect at home with your child.

We are delighted to welcome our new teacher, **Miss Smith**, to **Haffydown Class**. We are very pleased to have her join our school community; she is already a wonderful addition to the team. She brings with her so much enthusiasm, care, and experience; she certainly has made a great start to the term. Both children and parents alike, particularly those in her class, have certainly made her feel very welcome.

Last week, our pupils in Years Three, Four and Five began their **swimming lessons**, and we are excited to see their confidence grow in the water. Swimming is such an important life skill, and it's been wonderful to see the children approaching this with enthusiasm and determination. There are many exciting events planned for the term ahead, so please do keep an eye on the **diary dates** to make sure you don't miss anything. We look forward to sharing lots of memorable moments together over the coming weeks.

For our Year Six pupils, **SATs** are fast approaching. We are incredibly proud of their hard work and positive attitude, and we know they will do their very best. Thank you to families for your continued support at home during this important time.

As we approach the **Bank Holiday weekend**, we would like to wish all our families a happy and relaxing break. We hope you enjoy some quality time together and return refreshed for the busy weeks ahead.

ACADEMIC YEAR 2025/2026

SUMMER TERM

Tuesday 14th April 2026 to Friday 17th July 2026

Bank Holiday – Monday 4th May 2026 – School closed

Half term – Monday 25th May 2026 – Friday 29th May 2026

INSET DAYS (School closed)

Inset day – Monday 20th and Tuesday 21st July 2026

ACADEMIC YEAR 2026/2027

AUTUMN TERM

Wednesday 2nd September 2026 to Friday 18th December 2026

Half Term – Monday 26th October 2026-Friday 30th October 2026

Occasional Day Monday 30th November 2026 – School closed

SPRING TERM

Tuesday 5th January 2027 to Thursday 25th March 2027

Half Term – Monday 15th February 2027– Friday 19th

February 2027

SUMMER TERM

Tuesday 13th April 2027 to Tuesday 20th July 2027

Bank Holiday – Monday 3rd May 2027 – School closed

Half term – Monday 31st May 2027 – Friday 4th June 2027

INSET DAYS (School closed)

Inset day – Tuesday 1st September 2026

Occasional day – Monday 30th November 2026

Inset day – Monday 4th January 2027

Inset day – Monday 12th April 2027

Inset day – Wednesday 21st, Thursday 22nd July 2027

School Meals

To order school meals, please log onto your School Gateway account via the website or the app.

DINNER MONEY FEES £3.65 per meal



Please be reminded that you can use the closed email address should you need to contact us out of hours.

closed@astonmarys.herts.sch.uk

A Thought about Respect:

Respect is at the heart of a happy and safe school where everyone feels valued and included. The Bible reminds us in *Philippians 2:3*: “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves.” This encourages us to treat one another with kindness, listen carefully, and celebrate our differences. By showing respect in our words and actions, we help create a positive environment where everyone can learn and grow together.

Dear God,

Thank you for our school and the people in it. Help us to show respect to everyone we meet, through our words and our actions. Teach us to be kind, patient, and understanding, even when it is difficult. May we always remember to treat others the way we would like to be treated.

Amen.

“Respect is how to treat everyone, not just those you want to impress.” Richard Branson

“We don't need to share the same opinions to show respect.” Taylor Swift

“No one is better than anyone else - we all deserve respect.” Serena Williams

House Points

Canterbury



363

St. Paul's



362

St. Albans



279

Coventry



285



Notices

Welcome to Aston St. Mary's – Miss Smith



Hello, my name is Miss Jaydee Smith and I am delighted to have joined Aston St Mary's as the new teacher of Haffydown Class.

I graduated in 2023 with a degree in Primary Education, and teaching has always been a real passion of mine. From a young age, I knew I wanted to work with children and help create a positive, encouraging environment where they can grow in confidence and enjoy learning.

My previous teaching experience has been in faith schools, which I have always loved because of the strong sense of community, shared values and the warm, supportive atmosphere they create for both children and staff. This is one of the many reasons I am so happy to now be part of Aston St. Mary's.

Outside of school, my best friend in the whole world is my Pomeranian, BamBam! My whole life revolves around him, and anyone who knows me will tell you I am always talking about him.

I have absolutely loved my first few weeks with Haffydown Class already and I am so excited for the term ahead.

Attendance – Holidays during Term Time

We are concerned that recently, a significant number of children across the school have been absent from school due to holidays.

Taking holidays during term time can have a significant impact on children's learning. In school, lessons are carefully planned as part of a sequence, with each one building on the knowledge and skills developed in previous sessions. When a child is absent, even for a short period, they can miss key steps in this sequence, which may make it difficult for them to fully understand new concepts when they return. As a result, they may struggle to keep up and are less able to get the most out of their lessons.

In most cases, attendance at Aston St. Mary's is excellent; so far this year, 22 children have 100% attendance, and more than half of the children have in excess of 98%. We strongly encourage families to plan holidays during school breaks to help ensure their child can make the best possible progress.

Sun Safety

During the summer months, we would like to remind you of the importance of applying sun cream before school. Should this need to be reapplied in school, your child can do so themselves. Children are not allowed to share sun cream. Also, please ensure that your child has a sun hat for sunny days. Broad-brimmed, bucket style or legionnaire hats are recommended to adequately protect the face, neck, ears and cheeks. Please scan the QR code to view our sun safety policy.



Summer Music Concert - Monday 22nd June at 6pm



An opportunity for instrumentalists and vocalists to perform. If your child has music lessons at school or outside school and would like to perform, please save the date and look out for further details to follow.

Please be reminded that Aston St. Mary's is a NUT and SESAME FREE ZONE. Please ensure that packed lunches do not contain any products containing nuts or sesame (including products such as Nutella, humus, tahini and sesame seeds on bread/breadsticks)



NUT AND SESAME FREE ZONE

Notices

Congratulations!

At the weekend, Lottie was fortunate enough to take part in Stevenage Boro's junior take over. Her sister, Tilly, got chosen last year – they are very lucky to have both had such a wonderful opportunity. Tilly was the junior health and safety officer, and Lottie was the referee at last weekend's game against Lincoln. They had a great time and learnt loads. Lottie was keen to give her sister a red card!



Congratulations!



On Saturday, Darcie ran the TCS mini London marathon and raised over £400 for The Brompton Fountain.

Great work Darcie!

Should you wish for us to celebrate an achievement of your child's on our newsletter, please email details to: closed@astonmarys.herts.sch.uk



Times Table Rockstars



We are so impressed by the progress being made by many children in Year Two upwards in securing their recall of multiplication facts using Times Tables Rockstars. Children in Year Four will soon be taking their multiplication check – this is a government test for all pupils in Year Four. The expectation is that, by the end of Year Four, children are fluent up to 12×12 . We now have many children achieving this level of fluency by the end of Year Three or even Year Two – regular practise on TTRS really is the key to success.

Keep up the great work – securing fluency really does impact positively upon learning across the maths curriculum.

Congratulations!



Aria participated in the Corsham 2K run and won her category for under 9s female. She ran an incredible personal best time of 8:53 mins. Her sister, Ellie, competed in the under 7s run and achieved 4th place.

Amazing work girls!

Lost Property

Every week, a significant number of items of clothing make their way to lost property – very few of these ever get reunited with their owners.

Once again, please can we remind you to ensure **ALL ITEMS ARE CLEARLY NAMED** so that they can be easily returned to your child.

Name labels can be purchased quite cheaply and in bulk from suppliers such as Amazon. If you choose to write your child's name instead, then please check this is still clear after washing.



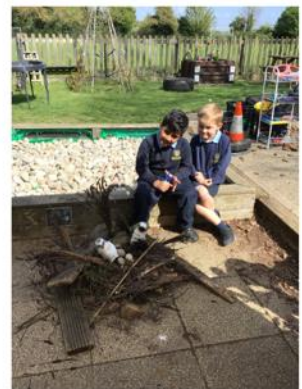
Class News

Shackadell Class

Shackadell Class are thrilled to tell you that the **Ospreys** that we have been watching for the past four years are back in their nests in Loch Arkaig in Scotland. Pupils over the last few years have enjoyed watching these ospreys on the nest webcams and this year we are very excited to see that Louis and Dorcha are back on nest two and Garry and Aurora are back on nest one. Please scan the QR code to have a look at these beautiful birds as they nest and prepare to lay eggs!



We have been learning all about ospreys and many other birds who are nesting at the moment. As part of forest school last week, we made our own nest.



We have also been learning about something that travels a little further into the sky – the **Artemis II space shuttle** trip around the moon! Emily, in Shackadell Class, was lucky enough to be in Florida during the time that the shuttle launched. She sent us a video to show the launch in the distance. We have been watching videos of the shuttle on take-off, what it is like in space and how the astronauts travelled back to Earth. As part of our STEM learning, the children worked together to make **parachutes** – just like that used by the pod returning to Earth. We tried different materials and dropped them from height to see how the parachutes worked.



Class News

Peartree Class

We are enjoying our music topic this half term. The song is called **'It's OK, (Please Just Say)'** and is all about what to do when we are feeling sad. We are making sock puppets to help us feel better and we had an art session drawing what we could see on the field. In an upcoming lesson, we will be writing about the different things that make us feel better and 'freestyling' to the music.

We are also learning **sign language** to go with the words to the song. Please scan the QR code to have a look at some of us signing the chorus.



*"It's OK if you're not feeling OK.
It's OK if you're not feeling your very best today.
It's OK if you're not feeling OK.
You don't have to keep those feelings locked away.
Please just say."*

In our geography topic this term, we will be looking at **India** and comparing it to the United Kingdom which we looked at last half term. Here is a look at a fact file.

Monday 27th April 2026 L.Q: Where in the world is India?

Can you colour in India on the map.

Circle the correct answer

The capital of India is: New Delhi Paris

The ocean that borders the coast of India is called: Indian Ocean Atlantic

The country south of India called: Sri Lanka China

India is in the continent: Europe Africa Asia South America

The Flag
Can you colour the Indian flag correctly?

National animals
The national animals of India are Tiger and peacock

Important landmark
This building is called the Taj Mahal

Monday 27th April 2026 L.Q: Where in the world is India?

Can you colour in India on the map.

The capital of India is New Delhi and is in the North of India.

The Indian Ocean borders the coast of India.

South of India is Sri Lanka

Circle the correct continent: Europe Africa Asia South America

The Flag
Can you colour the Indian flag correctly?

National animals
The national animals of India are Tiger and peacock

Important landmark
This building is called the Taj Mahal

We look forward to sharing much more of our learning throughout this term.

Class News

Haffydown Class

Haffydown Class have had a wonderful start to the summer term and, with a new teacher, we have really enjoyed getting to know each other. We already have lots to be proud of and the children have settled back brilliantly after Easter.



Year Three have begun an exciting science topic all about **plants**, investigating different questions about how plants grow. We started with a nature walk, observing leaves and different plants around school, and have planted sunflower seeds in different conditions to see how they grow.

In English, we have been developing our **narrative writing skills**, using description and exciting ideas to improve our stories. In PSHE, we have been exploring **families** and discussing how all families are different. This links closely to British Citizenship, helping us understand respect, diversity and how we live together in our community.

Year Two have been enjoying **Commonwealth Games** activities, showing great teamwork and determination. Year Three have also impressed everyone with their fantastic behaviour as they have started **swimming** with the older children in school.

We have been working hard to support each other in group activities. In Music, we have been learning **Three Little Birds**, which has been so much fun to sing together. We are also really enjoying our class reader, **The Nothing to See Here Hotel**, which has been very funny and has given us lots of exciting new vocabulary to use in our own writing.

It has been a fantastic start to the term, and we are looking forward to all the learning and adventures ahead!



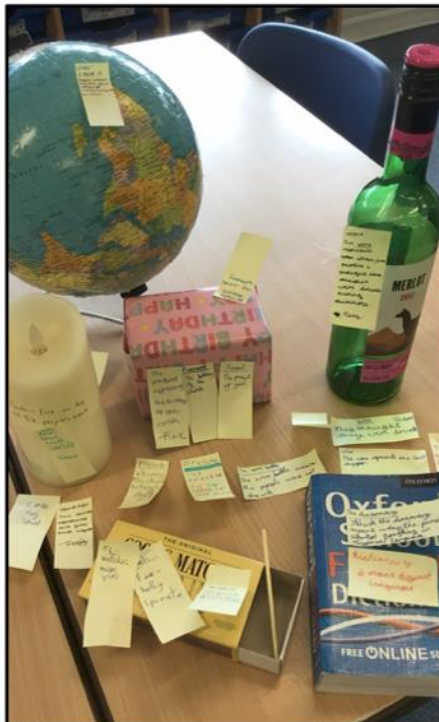
Class News

Puddlebridge Class

As part of Year 4's *Living Things and Their Habitats* unit in science, we explored the school grounds to collect information about the living things present, particularly invertebrates and plants within the habitat. During our exploration, we generated interesting questions about local habitats and discussed how we might go about finding answers to them.



In RE, we have been studying the key question: *When Jesus left, what was the impact of Pentecost?* To help us remember key parts of the story, we explored the idea of a 'Pentecost box' – a box containing different objects that symbolise parts of the story. For example, a candle represented fire that rested on the heads of the disciples, and a French dictionary symbolised how the disciples were able to speak in different languages. During the lesson, we recorded our ideas on post-it notes as we moved around the room, considering the significance of each object.



Class News

Danes Class

For the past few weeks, Danes Class have been exploring powerful and challenging historical learning about **Thomas Clarkson and the Transatlantic Slave Trade**. This topic has had a profound impact on the children, who have approached their learning with great maturity and sensitivity. Many have felt shocked and saddened as they uncovered the realities of this period in history; they have responded with empathy, respect, and a genuine desire to understand more.

Throughout our discussions, the children have asked thoughtful and insightful questions, showing a deep engagement with the topic and a willingness to reflect on difficult truths demonstrating a real desire to understand both the past and its impact on the world today. Their respect for those who suffered, as well as their admiration for individuals like Clarkson who worked to bring about change, has truly shone through. Danes should feel incredibly proud of the way they have handled such an important and emotional subject, demonstrating not only historical understanding but also compassion and integrity.

Tuesday 10th March 2026
I.Q. What is Slavery and who was Thomas Clarkson?

Enslaved people were forced to complete difficult manual labour for the people who owned them. They were treated as lesser people and as it says in one of the sources - people were actually branded. The other people who owned the enslaved people were relaxed and they weren't having to work for any other people.

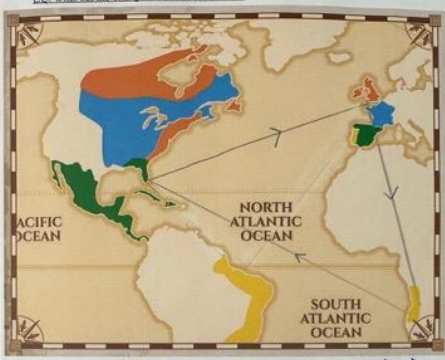
Slavery is something that was common from the 1500s to 1800s and Thomas Clarkson devoted his life to the abolishment of slavery. There is a historic monument of him in Wednesfield.

The United Nations have recently outlined human rights; a slavery would be a violation of this these rules.

Slavery is when you are forced to work for someone against your will. Servants are paid employees who are given fair wages.

A secure understanding of our key learning.

Tuesday 16th April 2026
I.Q. What was the Transatlantic Slave Trade?



The British Empire were the most powerful in the triangle. The goods in the triangle are Europe, Africa and America. They traded their goods for a good they want. It was like this: Europe wanted people to trade with for the richer and more powerful so they were willing to give away some manufactured goods and guns to get some. Africa had a large population of people who they put to work that can be traded for manufactured goods and goods. America want a workforce for work on crops, in order to get that they will give up some crops that can make them high amounts of money. The reason it became so big is because most of the continents would be more powerful than they were before and selling things they have less of can be sold for something they could sell for lots of money.

What a fantastic understanding you have of this period in history.

We will be finishing this learning over the next couple of weeks exploring what inspired Thomas Clarkson to fight for the abolition of slavery as well as modern-day slavery.

Thursday 16th April 2026
I.Q. What were conditions like for slaves on slave ships and plantations?

It was right time when it happened when they landed us. That was the last time I ever saw them my family - I am a slave now, on some rich man's farm, dreaming of freedom. All you have got here is the dirt place; why I can't see my family. After we had been taken from the only home we know they separated us into men, women and boys. Men were used for manual labour; women were used for producing more slaves.

During the journey, the slaves were provided with the necessities: food, drink and a place to sleep. The beds were small were small, compact things that could only fit half of your body. We were almost on our hands and knees on the ship deck to do any physical activity; little did we know it was just preparing us for what we are now. Many people tried to jump off the ship into the shark pool below them but the crew was on high alert to make sure no one did, and if someone attempted to then they would be beaten with a large piece of rope, or most likely killed.

Our meals consisted of a tiny slice of meat and cornmeal as well as 1 liter of water a day. Many people caught many diseases such as Dysentery, Ophthalmia and plenty more. After our 2-6 month journey we arrived in America we were sold for various amounts of money then branded with hot iron and genital.

Now I'm here. Waiting to purchase my freedom. Waiting to get free.

Tuesday 21st April 2026
I.Q. What factors led to the abolition of slavery in Britain?

Dear Parliament,

Please can you abolish the Transatlantic Slave Trade. It is really annoying me and making me feel sick. If you stop, there will generally be peace after 400 years. In fact, you're taking money over human lives.

Imagine if you, yes you, were an enslaved people son. You would want it to stop wouldn't you? So please can you stop. If you don't you'll never live it down. You'll carry that guilt with you forever. Like a bag of bricks on your back.

Slavery is a sin against Christianity and God. I'm working through the season through the warm, through the cold. Getting around to your master's activities in the year. Even being on a couple week boat trip, chained up to other people. Beds so small you can't even sit up or roll onto your side.

So just think if that was you. Please change the rules about our rules and make it end. More and more people are realizing what it means to those enslaved people.

Stop it now! And make it finish. You may choose to look the other way, but you can never say again that you did not know.

From Mr Thomas Clarkson.
You're welcome for my advice members of Parliament.

This term we will be focussing in school on the value RESPECT. We hope your family will find these ideas helpful as you explore the value and have fun together.

TALK TOGETHER about Respect

We are learning at school about the importance of treating others with **respect** even if we sometimes do not agree with the way they behave or the things they say. We have also been thinking about how we should treat the things that belong to us and to other people **respectfully**.

- Think of some practical ways that you show **respect** to each other in your family.
- Often we show **respect** to someone by the way we speak to them. What does this mean in practice?
- Do you treat one another's possessions with **respect**? What does this mean in practice?

THINK TOGETHER Words of Wisdom

"Respect - to get it you must give it"
Anon



READ TOGETHER...

Moses and the Burning Bush

Moses led the sheep across the dry and dusty desert to Sinai, God's holy mountain. But in the stillness of the wilderness, while the sheep were grazing, Moses' thoughts were never far from the plight of his people the Israelites, who were suffering at the hand of the cruel Egyptian king. Moses had left Egypt years ago. He felt guilty and wished he could help his people, but what could he do? He was not brave, he was not a **respected** leader. Who would listen to him?

And then in the distance Moses noticed something very strange. A desert bush was on fire. The flames licked hungrily around the branches and yet, strangely, the bush did not burn up. He drew closer and as he did so, he clearly heard a voice call to him from the bush, "Moses, Moses!" "Yes, here I am" stammered Moses. "Take off your shoes", said the voice, "for you are standing on holy ground." Reverently, Moses untied his sandals and fell to his knees. "I am the Lord God of your ancestors and I have seen how my people suffer under Pharaoh. I have heard them call out to me to rescue them and now Moses, I am sending you to lead them to freedom." "But I am nobody, I am nothing. How can I go to the king and expect him to **respect** a simple shepherd? How can I ask him to let the people go?" But God replied, "Do not be frightened, I will be with you." "But what if the people will not listen to me?" said Moses. "What do you have in your hand?" "A stick." Moses replied. "Throw it on the ground." Moses did as he was asked. To his astonishment the stick turned into a writhing, angry snake. "Now bend down and pick it up by the tail." Nervously, Moses did as he was asked. Immediately, the snake once more became a stick. "When you perform this miracle," said God, "the people will believe that I have sent you. Take the stick with you for with it you will perform great miracles. Now go and do as I have commanded."

And so it was that on that ordinary day an extraordinary adventure began for Moses and for the people of Israel. It was a story that the world would never forget.

bible story based on Exodus 3,4



QUIZ Tangled Strings

Which stick became the writhing snake?



Can you make a 'tangled string' puzzle?



An American Indian Tale

Adahy was a good father and as his young son, Kuruk, grew up he proudly taught him all that he knew. In time, Kuruk married and brought his new wife to live in Adahy's home.

Soon they had a baby son, Elan. As Elan grew older his grandfather, Adahy, began teaching the young boy all that he knew and Elan learned to **respect** the forest, its animals and all the different plants. As years passed by Elan's mother begrudged sharing her home more and more with the old man until in anger one day she told her husband that Adahy must leave.

Kuruk was horrified, "I can't make him go, this is his home and he built it for us." Angrily his wife replied "If you do not make the old man go then I will be off and I'll take our son, Elan, with me."

Kuruk knew he had been left with no choice, but he felt so guilty he couldn't bring himself to tell the old man himself. Instead he told Elan to take his grandfather far away, deep into the forest and leave him. "Give him this blanket to keep him warm", he said. Elan was horrified. "But I love and **respect** Grandpa. He has taught me all that I know. How can I do such a thing?" His father replied, "Elan, just do as I've asked."

So the next morning, thinking they must be going hunting, Adahy followed Elan deep into the forest. When the old man could walk no further and stopped to take a nap, the boy, with tears streaming down his face turned back and left Adahy sleeping. That evening as Elan returned, Kuruk and his wife saw the blanket. Elan explained, "I gave Grandpa half of the blanket. The other half, I will give to you some day."

His mother and father understood the message. They went straightaway and fetched Grandpa.



HOME-SCHOOL CHALLENGE

Who do you respect?

Draw or paint a picture of your chosen person and make a frame to surround it. On the reverse give 5 reasons why this person is worthy of special **respect**. The picture can then be hung in the school Challenge Gallery.



FAMILY FOCUS



Respect Detectives

It is important to show the same **respect** to other people that we would wish to be shown to us. It is also important to **respect** the built environment as well as the natural world.

Go on a family walk in your village or town. Look around for signs that people **respect** the places where they live by looking after property and public spaces.

- Can you see any graffiti?
- Do dog owners clean up after their dogs?
- Do you notice litter anywhere?
- Are public facilities left clean and tidy – ie benches, telephone kiosks, toilets?

Write to your local council to let them know the results of your survey.



FASCINATING FACTS

Religious communities often treat their holy books with great reverence and **respect**. They believe the holy book contains God's teaching.

- Christians believe that the Bible is God's word to his people. They show **respect** and reverence by treating the Bible carefully. In some churches the Bible has a special stand called a lectern, from which it is read during worship.



- Orthodox Jewish men wear a kippah to cover their heads, as a sign of humility and **respect** towards God. The Torah scrolls are kept in a closed cabinet called an Ark and when reading them a pointer, yad, is used to follow the script so that the scrolls are not touched by hands.



- Muslims keep their holy book, the Qu'ran, covered and in a clean place, not on the floor nor with anything placed on top. To show **respect** and reverence they only handle the book with clean or gloved hands.



- Sikhs cover their heads and remove their shoes before going into a room housing their holy book, the Guru Granth Sahib. To show **respect** and reverence nobody sits higher than the Guru Granth Sahib and no alcohol is ever taken into the room.



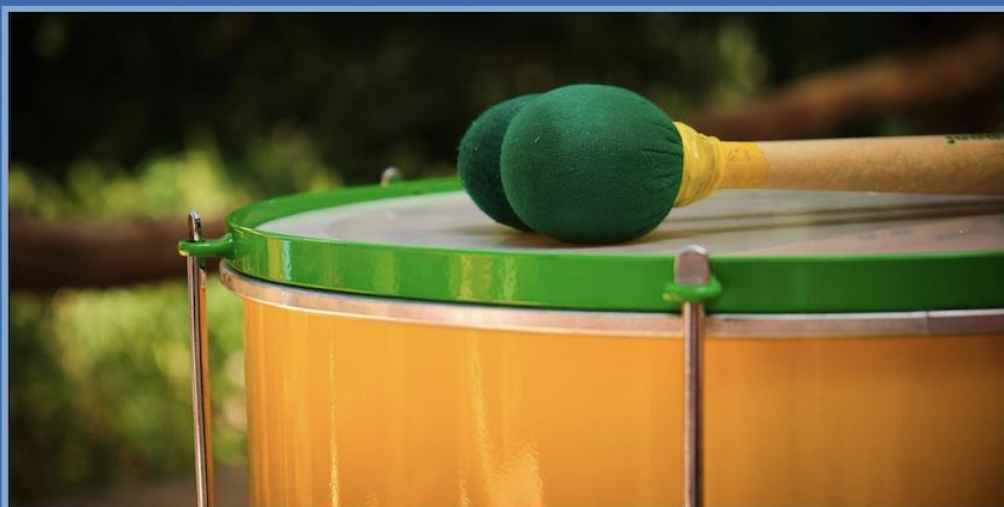
Family Samba Drumming Workshop

Join us for an uplifting session of music-making with family and friends

No previous musical experience necessary

All instruments provided

Suitable for ages 7 and upwards (all children must be accompanied by an adult)



Thursday 14th May 2026



5.30pm - 6.30pm // 6.30pm - 7.30pm

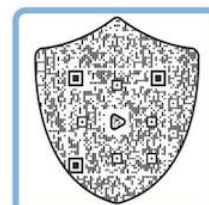


North Herts Music School



£6 per person

Scan the QR code to book your tickets



Scan me for more



01462 434052



www.hertsmusicservice.org.uk/HMS-NorthHerts



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