Petherton Park School Newsletter

October 2026

School Leadership Message

Dear Parents/Carers

WOW what a fabulous month October was at Petherton Park, the Pupils have all settled back into their school stride and engaging in their topic of World War 2. On 11th November we will be holding a special memorial day at the school, where children will engage in reading poems, listening to music and enjoying World War food.

Curriculum Development
This term we have introduced a brand NEW GCSE at Petherton Park. The Pupils on this pathway are working towards GCSE Religious Education with Sociology & History waiting in the wings. This will mean that children at Petherton Park will be able to achieve a 5 GCSE's or equivalents at the school.

SeeSaw Implementation
We are excited to launch our new communication app, which will show case all of the work the pupils do on a daily basis, celebrating their achievements and reporting on their academic and therapeutic success. Please complete the consent form so that this important app can be launched!

Family Help
Please do contact us if things are tricky at home, the school offers a none judgemental, supportive approach integrated therapeutic practice to support the entire family – just drop us an email to see how we can help!

Kind regards
Zoey Shelley, Executive Head Teacher

November - Key Dates

2	Start of Term
11	Remembrance Day
13	Children in Need
13	World Kindness Day
18-22	Anti-Bullying Week

Safeguarding

~ Is everyone's responsibility ~

If you have any safeguarding concerns about any child (not just a child within our setting), please contact our Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL):

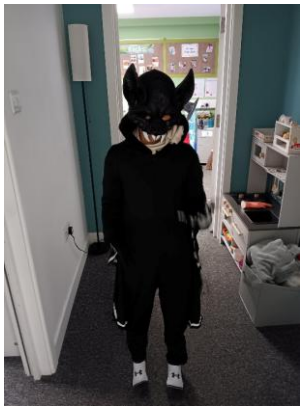
Zoey Shelley 07725 406993
zshelley@phoenixschools.org.uk
or
Victoria Person 0330 1358 200
victoria.person@phoenixschools.org.uk

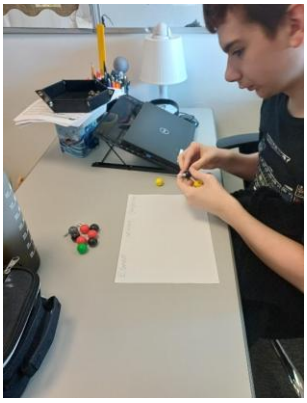
Alternatively, contact our Operations Director responsible for Safeguarding Governance:
Darren Jackson
djackson@plcl.org.uk

Pupils' Gallery

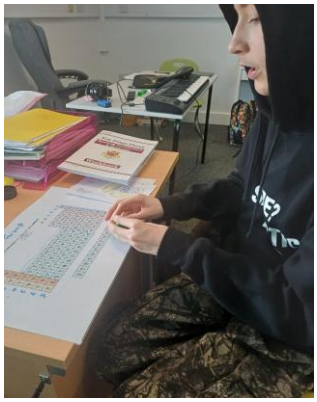


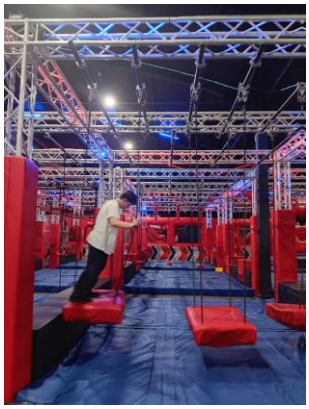



A lovely end of term for our pupils celebrating all things spooky! Learning in school and out of school was also enjoyed by all from in class chemistry to boxing classes and beach visits.







Therapies Team

Using 'Playfulness' in the PACE Approach

What is Playfulness?

The purpose of playfulness is to enjoy being together in an unconditional way. This gives the message that the relationship is stronger than things that go wrong. The child is less likely to respond with anger.

Why is playfulness important?

A Playful stance can:

- Allow closeness but without the scary parts.
- Reassure children and young people that conflict and separations are temporary and will never harm the strength of their relationship.
- Adds element of fun and enjoyment.
- Diffuses a difficult or tense situation

Use playfulness with care to ensure that:

- The child does not feel laughed at.
- The child does not feel minimised by the lightness of the interaction.
- The adult does not use playfulness to avoid the important conversations that open with the child.
- If the child is sharing about how they feel, the adult is to suspend the playfulness and respond to the child appropriately.
- The adult understands that the child can enter into shame faster if the playfulness is not pitched correctly.
- The adult understands that sarcasm can be playful but is not appropriate for children with developmental trauma.
- Adults avoid giving messages and instructions in playful ways as the child is unlikely to take them seriously.
- The adult understands that they can rescue misjudged playfulness easily by being open and honest and apologising, which reinforces that you are safe and aware of the child's needs, even if they are not.

Strategies for being playful:

- Using playful tone.
- Maintaining playful tone when giving reminders.
- Using facial expressions to show interest in what they are saying.
- Using soft facial expressions.
- Using body language at their level.
- Making games out of mundane tasks such as tidying and getting organised.
- Trying role-playing games.
- Enjoying a shared game or shared activity.
- Using arts and crafts.
- Playing reciprocal games like connect 4, snap and guess who.
- Playing a game of their choice.
- Establishing a fun and consistent greeting every morning - it's important that this is agreed with the child so that it is a comfortable experience.
- Vary the tone and pace of your speech and match the child's excitement and pride when they talk about their accomplishments or interests.
- Being silly is disarming for a child whose amygdala is doing its job a little too well.
- Talk as if you're a storyteller from a TV show – emphasise key words, change your tone of voice throughout and create dramatic pauses as if the story is unfolding in front of both of you.
- Incorporate slapstick during teaching – this can be as simple as a funny voice, a silly hat or speaking to a puppet.
- The use of games such as peek-a-boo or hide-and-seek can teach fundamental concepts of permanency and constancy. They can also help the child to tolerate a brief period of not knowing what will happen in a situation or a loss of direct contact with an adult.
- Ready-Steady-Go games using bubbles or wind-up cars can develop the ability to focus through consistent anticipation of an action.
- Tasks which incorporate movement can be very soothing and free up the higher levels of the brain for learning.
- Make a treat and share it
- Go for a walk together
- Have a dance party, or shared music listening sessions. Sing!
- Take silly selfies
- Build a fort
- Play dress up

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents and carers with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with their children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. For further guides, hints and tips please visit nationalcollege.com.

10 Top Tips on Supporting Children with SELF-REGULATION

Children need to learn to understand and recognise their emotions, while finding healthy ways to process them. Emotional self-regulation, however, depends heavily on age and development. While very young ones or children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) may find it particularly challenging to self-regulate, nurturing these important skills can be hugely beneficial. Here are ten top tips for supporting children with their self-regulation.

1. DESIGNATE A TRUSTED ADULT

It's vital that children feel safe and know that there's someone they can always go to for help if they need it. Schedule consistent times for the child to develop a relationship with this person – ideally through play and games – allowing trust to grow and ensuring that the child is more likely to come forward if anything is wrong, rather than hiding their emotions.

2. MEET CHILDREN HALFWAY

Unless you know where a child is developmentally and tailor your approach to their needs, you're less likely to have an impact. In particular, younger ones and children with SEND can struggle to self-regulate and instead rely on others to help them. We call this 'co- regulation'. Rather than offering strategies for self-regulation, it could be better to start co-regulating with a trusted adult first.

3. FACTOR IN THEIR THEIR BASIC NEEDS

Remember that for a child to develop emotional regulation skills, their basic needs must be met first. Children who are hungry, tired, cold and so on – as well as those who have experienced adverse childhood experiences – may struggle to self-regulate. Before you develop strategies with any child, make sure they feel safe, secure and comfortable in themselves.

4. REMAIN PATIENT

If a child is struggling with their emotions, it can often become difficult to stay calm. Remember that dysregulation is beyond their control, so a display of frustration or anger could negatively impact the situation. Instead, children need to be met with comfort and understanding to help them manage these problematic feelings.

5. BE 'A DYSREGULATION DETECTIVE'

While some children can tell you why they become dysregulated, many others can't. You could investigate potential triggers by observing the child and talking to their family. When the child becomes dysregulated, note down details like the time, what they're doing and who they're with – the trigger may be someone they sit near, an unmet sensory need or something else entirely. Once we identify some triggers, we can help to avoid or overcome them.

6. USE SUITABLE LITERATURE

There are some wonderful books that can help you teach self-regulation to children. Reading these with a child can be especially powerful. Take time to discuss the content: ask questions about what feelings the characters had, why they felt that way and what strategies helped them. It can also be useful to refer back to snippets of these books at appropriate moments.

7. TRY SENSORY RESOURCES

An overlap between sensory needs and emotional regulation is possible. Children may struggle to self-regulate if they're experiencing sensory overload (a noisy classroom, for example). Positive sensory input can help calm them down. Use resources such as weighted blankets and fibre-optic lights. Of course, what works for one child might not work for another – so it's important to offer a choice of resources to discover which they prefer.

8. NURTURE INDEPENDENCE

If you feel it's appropriate, let children try out these strategies alone. Always offer them a choice: they could listen to music when they're feeling stressed, for example, or they could write down their worries or draw something to represent how they feel. This may take time for the child to get used to, so be patient. Encourage them to share any helpful strategies with a trusted adult.

9. MODEL GENUINE FEELINGS

Children learn a lot just from watching grown-ups. Don't be afraid to show your own emotions and self-regulation strategies. While you'll obviously want to avoid sharing anything *too* personal with children, they should still see us experiencing and handling our own feelings. Tell them how you are feeling, then show them how to respond in a healthy manner.

10. FORMULATE A PLAN

As much as we try to prevent children from experiencing dysregulation, it's always wise to have an appropriate plan for when it *does* happen. Discuss this strategy with the child (if appropriate) and their family. The best approach for an individual child is often a bespoke one; it's hugely important to know in advance what might help and what could worsen the situation.

Meet Our Expert

Georgina Durrant is an author, former teacher, Special Educational Needs Coordinator and the founder of the award-winning SEN Resources Blog, where she shares activities, advice and recommendations for parents and teachers of children with SEND.



#WakeUpWednesday®

The National College®

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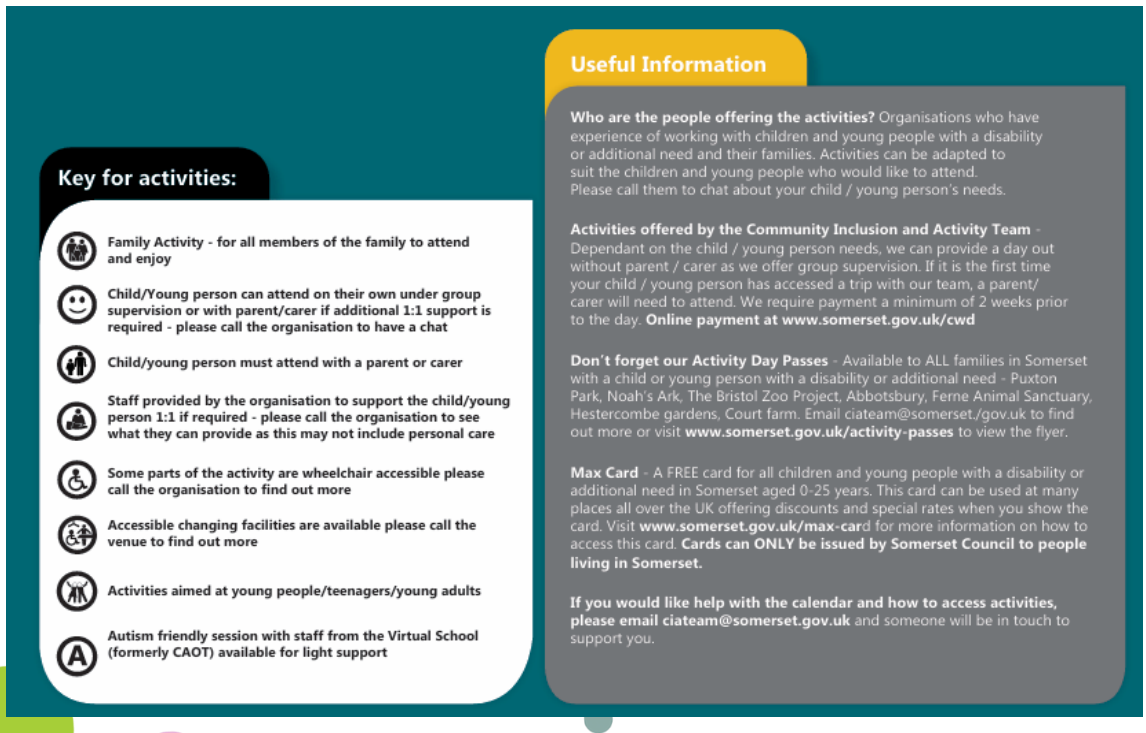
Inclusive Activities Calendar for the Autumn Half Term from the Somerset CIA Team

Here is the CIA team's inclusive activities calendar for October Half Term attached, which is full of fun activities for children and young people who have a disability and/or additional need. Activities include Halloween storytelling, tabletop games, pumpkin carving, sensory bouldering and many more! The Community Inclusion Activity team are going to deliver a trip to Flip Out & Crealy – please see the calendar for more information. The calendar, and more information about the Community Inclusion Activity Team, can be found under the Local Offer at [Activities for families (somerset.gov.uk).]





Monday 26

Brookside Academy KS1
Brooks Road, Street, BA16 0PR
A variety of indoor and outdoor activities, arts & crafts, cooking, messy and sensory play, sports & more. Different activities each day. 9am-3pm with wraparound available 4-11yrs £27 per person

To book, email Tom Ball Extendedschool@brookside academy.co.uk 01458 443340



Rainbow Roots
Dove Barn, Manor Farm, Silver St, Barton St David, TA11 6DB
The Colour of Leaves: Notice & Explore. Notice autumn colours and textures, enjoy a colour hunt, create nature-inspired art using natural materials. 9.30am-12pm. 8-12yrs £7.50 per child.

To book, email events@rainbowroots.uk or call Lou Stockley 07432 384287

Activity Packs

Step4ward-in2growth
October themed activity packs tailor made to each child's interests. All ages £4 per pack

TO ORDER email step4ward-in2growth@mail.com or call 07737 331174

Tuesday 27

Nova Sports
Harry's Hydro, Nunney Road, Frome, BA11 4LB
Family swim sessions in warm water during the holidays. Free play with toys and floats provided, or bring your own! 10am-1pm. All ages £5 per person.

To book, email bookings@novasports.org.uk or call 07958 010417

Brookside Academy KS1
Brooks Road, Street, BA16 0PR
A variety of indoor and outdoor activities, arts & crafts, cooking, messy and sensory play, sports & more. Different activities each day. 9am-3pm with wraparound available 4-11yrs £27 per person

To book, email Tom Ball Extendedschool@brookside academy.co.uk 01458 443340



CIAT
Flip Out, Castle Road, Chelston Business Park, Wellington, TA21 9JQ
2 hour jump session at Flip Out Somerset. Socks, drink token and 3 pizza slices included (cheese & tomato or peperoni). 4-6pm. Parents carers to arrive at 3:30pm for registration. 8-18th birthday. £10pp

To book, call 07977 412199 on 6 Oct from 10am. From 7 Oct, email ciateam@somerset.gov.uk

Wednesday 28

Brookside Academy KS1
Brooks Road, Street, BA16 0PR
A variety of indoor and outdoor activities, arts & crafts, cooking, messy and sensory play, sports & more. Different activities each day. 9am-3pm with wraparound available 4-11yrs £27 per person

To book, email Tom Ball Extendedschool@brookside academy.co.uk 01458 443340

Emma Bettridge Projects
Chocolate Books, 9 High Street, Wiveliscombe. TA4 2JX
Spooky Story Club: Share spooky ghost stories, invent your own, read favourites aloud, and enjoy delicious spooky hot chocolate together 10.30-11.30am, 5-12yrs, £3 per child

To book, email elbettridge@outlook.com

Nova Sports
Frome Boulder Rooms, BA11 3EN
Try out the climbing walls at Frome Boulder Rooms. Supported by Nova Sports staff. 10-11am 8-18yrs £10pp.

To book, email bookings@novasports.org.uk or call 07958 010417

Nova Sports
Frome Boulder Rooms, BA11 3EN
Sensory Bouldering: Climb, explore and build confidence in a safe, exclusive environment. Particularly suitable for children with complex needs. 9-10am. 4-11yrs. £10pp

To book, email bookings@novasports.org.uk or call 07958 010417

Thursday 29

Brookside Academy KS1
Brooks Road, Street, BA16 0PR
A variety of indoor and outdoor activities, arts & crafts, cooking, messy and sensory play, sports & more. Different activities each day. 9am-3pm with wraparound available 4-11yrs £27 per person

To book, email Tom Ball Extendedschool@brookside academy.co.uk 01458 443340

The Mendip School
The Mendip School, Prestleigh, Shepton Mallet, BA4 4FZ
Join us for a magical morning of magic tricks, balloon making and plenty of smiles with Malcolm the Magician. 10am-12pm. 6-12yrs £5 per adult & one child. £3 per person thereafter.

To book, email Joanne Teare jteare@themendpschool.com

CIAT
Crealy Theme Park, Sidmouth Rd, Clyst St Mary, Exeter EX5 1DR
Family adventure park with over 60 rides and attractions, including live shows and animals. Park open from 10am-5pm. Staff on site for support from 10am-3pm. All ages. £10 per person.

To book, call 07977 412199 on 6 Oct from 10am. From 7 Oct, email ciateam@somerset.gov.uk

Rainbow Roots
Dove Barn, Manor Farm, Silver St, Barton St David, TA11 6DB
Around the Table: Experiment & Create. Explore beautiful materials and techniques, including mixed media, textiles, printing and collage. 9.30am-12pm. 8-12yrs. £7.50 per child

To book, email events@rainbowroots.uk or call Lou Stockley 07432 384287

Friday 30

Emma Bettridge Projects
Chocolate Books, 9 High Street, Wiveliscombe. TA4 2JX
Spooky Stories in the Wilds: Join author Emma and dog Nell for Halloween storytelling in a local graveyard, recorded in notebooks and dictaphones. 10-11.30am & 1-2.30pm. 5-12yr, £3 per child

To book, email elbettridge@outlook.com

Brookside Academy KS1
Brooks Road, Street, BA16 0PR
A variety of indoor and outdoor activities, arts & crafts, cooking, messy and sensory play, sports & more. Different activities each day. 9am-3pm with wraparound available 4-11yrs £27 per person

To book, email Tom Ball Extendedschool@brookside academy.co.uk 01458 443340

Green Goblins
Riverside Church, The Exchange, Hamilton Road, Taunton, TA1 2EQ
Tabletop games every Friday, including Pokemon Trading Card Game, Board Games and D&D Roleplay Games. No booking required. 6-10.30pm, For 10yrs + Attend with parent carer if under 10 or if 1:1 support is needed, £4 entry (first time free, parent carers free)

To book, email email@greengoblinsgamesclub.co.uk

Purple Elephant
Football Club, Berkley Road, Frome, BA11 2EH
Family holiday fun, with a healthy meal: Explore all kinds of animals, mammals, amphibians and reptiles! 10am-1pm. 0-18yrs £3 suggested donation. Free to those on free school meals.

To book, email rebeccaharrison@purpleelephant.org.uk

Monday 26

Emma Bettridge Projects
Chocolate Books, 9 High Street, Wiveliscombe. TA4 2JX
Spooky Story Club: Share spooky ghost stories, invent your own, read favourites aloud, and enjoy delicious spooky hot chocolate together 10.30-11.30am, 5-12yrs, £3 per child

To book, email elbettridge@outlook.com





Tuesday 27

Ark
Ark at Egwood, Merriott, TA16 5QN
Halloween Experience! Meet animals, enjoy accessible games, sports, pumpkin carving and toast marshmallows around the campfire. 10am-2pm. Over 5s. £4 per person

To book, email Office@ark@egwood.com or call 01460 391974

Emma Bettridge Projects
Chocolate Books, 9 High Street, Wiveliscombe. TA4 2JX
Spooky Story Club: Share spooky ghost stories, invent your own, read favourites aloud, and enjoy delicious spooky hot chocolate together 10.30-11.30am, 5-12yrs, £3 per child

To book, email elbettridge@outlook.com



Wednesday 28

Purple Elephant
The Key Centre, Feltham Lane, Frome, BA11 5AJ
Family holiday fun, with a healthy meal: Spooky arts & crafts. 2.30-5.30pm. 0-18yrs £3 suggested donation. Free to those on free school meals.

To book, email rebeccaharrison@purpleelephant.org.uk

Shared Earth
Vallis Veg BA113JQ
Nature based activities and play incorporating nature-studies, crafts, gardening, games, shelter-building & simple campfire cooking. 10am-2.30pm. 8-18yrs £15pp

To book, email sharedearthbookings@gmail.com

The Balsam Centre
The Balsam Centre, Wincanton, BA9 9HB. (Parking BA9 9PA)
Together in nature: Arts & crafts using natural material and things we find around us. Campfire cooking, depending on the weather!
10am-1pm. 0-16yrs. £4 per child

To book, email info@balsamcentre.org.uk

Thursday 29

Purple Elephant
Trinity Church Hall, Trinity Street, Frome BA11 3DE
Family holiday fun, with a healthy meal: Spooky family cookery 10am-1pm. 0-18yrs £3 suggested donation. Free to those on free school meals.

To book, email rebeccaharrison@purpleelephant.org.uk

Wilderwoods
Drayton Woods, Langport, TA10 0JZ
Halloween Walk. Create a character and den for a scary trail through the woods. Parents can join at dusk, if they dare! Hot chocolate & hot dogs provided. 2-7pm. 8-18yrs. £18 per child (includes food), £12 siblings

To book, email joe@wilderwoods or call 07552 230302



Friday 30

Minehead Eye CIC
1A Mart Road, Minehead, TA24 5BJ
Enjoy the Pod, bouldering, skatepark, music, sensory games, lego, team challenges and arts & crafts. Café available. 2.30-4.30pm, 0-19yrs £2 per child.

To book, email reception@minehead-eye.co.uk

Rainbow Roots
Dove Barn, Manor Farm, Silver St, Barton St David, TA11 6DB
The Last Leaf: Pumpkins & Play. Creativity, games, sensory activities. Costums welcome! 9.30am-12pm. 8-12yrs. £7.50 per child

To book, email events@rainbowroots.uk or call Lou Stockley 07432 384287

Saturday 31

Emma Bettridge Projects
Chocolate Books, 9 High Street, Wiveliscombe. TA4 2JX
Spooky Story Club: Share spooky ghost stories, invent your own, read favourites aloud, and enjoy delicious spooky hot chocolate together 10.30-11.30am, 5-12yrs, £3 per child

To book, email elbettridge@outlook.com

Rainbow Roots
Dove Barn, Manor Farm, Silver St, Barton St David, TA11 6DB
Halloween: Inclusive Family Celebration. Enjoy creative activities, costumes, games, seasonal fun and a gentle woodland experience. 12-3pm. All ages £7.50 per child

To book, email events@rainbowroots.uk or call Lou Stockley 07432 384287

Saturday 24

Moor Outdoor CIC
North Hill Tank Tracks, TA24 5LB
Intermediate Mountain Biking: For confident off-road riders. Build trail skills through games and guided rides. Equipment provided. 10am-12pm. 8-18yrs £7.50 per person.

To book, email Alicia Hockin hello@mooroutdoor.org

Rainbow Roots
Dove Barn, Manor Farm, Silver St, Barton St David, TA11 6DB
The Woodland Knows: Explore & Discover. Look for seasonal changes, investigate habitats and tracks, and find your own special place in Rainbow Wood. 9.30am-12pm. 8-12yrs. £7.50 per child

To book, email events@rainbowroots.uk or call Lou Stockley 07432 384287

Rainbow Roots
Dove Barn, Manor Farm, Silver St, Barton St David, TA11 6DB
Tiny Worlds: Discover the small, use magnifying glasses to explore the woodland floor, discover tiny patterns, textures, plants & habitats. Use natural, recycled matierial to design miniature worlds. 9.30am-12pm. 8-12yrs. £7.50 per child

To book, email events@rainbowroots.uk or call Lou Stockley 07432 384287

2026-2027

Petherton Park School

Key
School Holidays
Inset Days
Bank Holidays
Occasional days

September '26

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
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28	29	30				

October '26

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November '26

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December '26

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January '27

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February '27

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March '27

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April '27

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May '27

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June '27

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July '27

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August '27

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