



Feb. 2025

Shaping Futures Together

From the Principal's Desk

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to February! Now that we are experiencing some colder weather and have had a bit of snow, it really feels like winter has arrived! Please be sure to send your children to school prepared for a variety of weather. We plan to have outdoor recess every day unless the temperatures and/or wind chill bring the outside temperature below 20 degrees or it is too wet to be out. At times, the indoor temperatures can fluctuate as well, so being prepared with layers also helps to keep kids comfortable.

When there is inclement weather overnight or early morning, the Superintendent consults with area Superintendents and the Eastford Public Works Department to determine if conditions are safe for students and staff to travel to school. Typically, we issue a two-hour delay or announce that school will be closed if conditions are unsafe. In rare circumstances, it may be more appropriate to issue a three-hour delay rather than a full school closure. If area schools and The Woodstock Academy issue a two or three-hour delay, we would be forced to follow suit to accommodate busing to area high schools. If this were to happen, it would be announced in the same manner that our delays and closings are typically announced – via our website, emergency notification system, and on stations WFSB, WVIT (NBC CT), and WINY radio. Everything would shift two or three hours, respectively. **We do not hold half-day preschool if there is a two- or three-hour delay.** The chart below shows the starting times for each scenario:

	Regular School Day	2-Hour Delay	3-Hour Delay
BASP Program	Opens at 7:00	Opens at 9:00	Opens at 10:00
Students Arrive	8:25-8:40	10:25-10:40	11:25-11:40
Instruction Begins	8:42	10:42	11:42

Again, a three-hour delay **is not typical**, and it will only be used if necessary in rare circumstances. If you have not received alerts, emails, and text messages from our alert notification system when we have had weather-related changes, please let me know so that I can be sure to add your contact information to our database. Our goal

Eastford Elementary School Newsletter February 2025

is to be able to quickly reach at least one household member with these important notifications.

February is shaping up to be a busy month full of activities and special events! **Global School Play Day** for all students will be celebrated on Wednesday, February 5 and the **100th day of school celebration** will take place on Thursday, February 6 for our students in the younger grades. And of course, Valentine's Day is February 14! Please carefully read information from your child's teachers regarding any celebration plans. **Students may share Valentine cards and other small tokens as appropriate for the grade level, but due to the number of allergies across our grade levels, we no longer celebrate with food, candy, and special treats.** As we turn the corner into March, staff and students at EES plan to celebrate **Read Across America Day** (March 2) with special Literacy activities throughout the **week of March 3-7**. We will have guest readers, literacy-themed spirit days, and other reading-related activities throughout the week. Stay tuned for more information.

Keep in mind that there will be an **early dismissal** for students on **Friday, February 14** for staff professional development, and **two scheduled days off in February** for Presidents' Day: Monday, February 17, and Tuesday, February 18. This provides for an extra-long weekend!

Registration for Preschool and Kindergarten is now open. Registration forms are available on the school website (www.eastfordct.org) and in the school office. School Readiness Needs Assessment Surveys and registration information has also been mailed to families with children ages birth to four years old. Please share this information with any Eastford families that have young children and encourage them to register or call the school if they have questions. The Eastford Readiness Council meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 5:30 pm. The Readiness Council oversees our preschool program and **assures compliance** with National Association for the Education of Young Children (**NAEYC**) **standards** and the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (**OEC**).

To be eligible for preschool and kindergarten, students must turn **3 and 5 years old by September 1** of the fall that they plan to attend. The Eastford Board of Education and the State of Connecticut allow for families to request a waiver of this law if they believe their child is ready to enter kindergarten early. Please contact the school office at 860-974-1130 if you have specific questions regarding the kindergarten entrance age or the waiver process.

Our winter concert that was postponed in December has been rescheduled for **March 19**. Our singers and instrumental players are busy practicing new material to share with families and the student body. We will share more details about the spring concert as the date approaches.

Looking ahead, all students in grades three through eight will participate in **Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC)** testing this spring. Students in grades five and eight will also take the **Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)**

Assessment for Science during the same time period. We will provide more specific dates as they become available. Eastford typically begins testing in April and will conclude by the deadline of May 30.

Our calendar of after-school enrichment offerings is included in this Newsletter for your reference. New activities are added each month. If you have signed your child up for an activity, please be courteous to others and let us know if they will not be able to attend on the day of the program so that another child can benefit and join the program. If you or someone you know has a skill or activity they would like to share with students, please let us know so we can see how we might fit you into our calendar!

I would like to remind everyone that our parent groups continue to meet each month. The Readiness Council meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 5:30 pm via Zoom, and the PTO meets each month on the second Tuesday at 6:00 pm. Anyone interested in joining these meetings can contact me, or email the PTO, pto@eastfordct.org for more information.

We are looking forward to a fun and productive month! Please reach out if you have questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
Carole McCombe
Principal



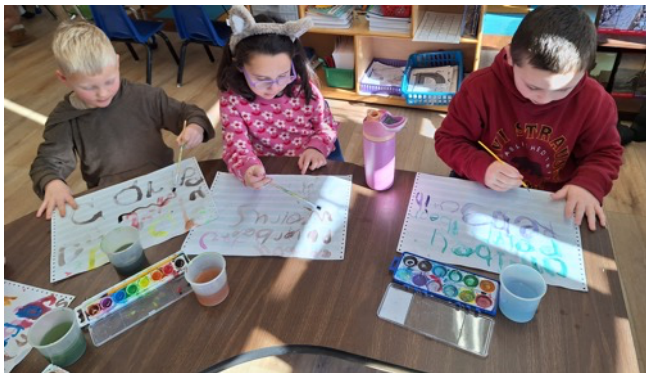
Kindergarten News – Ms. Garvie

Lately, the children have really been excelling in their reading! While reading with your children at home please remind them to point to the first letter of each word as they read, say each sound and blend it, and don't forget to think about what makes sense. During writing workshop, children have been writing sentences with subjects and predicates mostly by copying. Moving forward, we will be focusing on writing more conventionally and encouraging emerging writing.

In math, we have been identifying, describing, analyzing, and comparing two dimensional shapes and will begin our unit on addition and subtraction this month. For science, we wrapped up our unit about weather and now we are learning about polar animals. Social studies time was spent learning all about Martin Luther King Jr. and how he was a hero who helped make laws that said that everyone should be treated equal. Ask your child what they know about MLK...they may surprise you!

Since we filled the pom-pom jar, we earned a special ARTS AND CRAFTS DAY! The children had so much fun exploring art materials and doing crafts. We also had a special visit from the grade four Spanish students who taught us how to say different emotions in Spanish!





Grade 1 News – Mrs. Rhynhart

February brings many special activities in first grade! We will enjoy Groundhog Day, Global School Play Day, the 100th Day of School, Valentine’s Day, and Presidents Day! Along with these fun activities, the first graders will also learn about place value (tens and ones), the symbols to compare numbers ($>$, $<$, $=$), and the properties of light, sound, and communication.

We will enjoy an online author talk with Duncan Tonatiuh, author of The Princess and the Warrior, A Tale of Two Volcanoes. This month our social skills curriculum focuses on developing empathy by helping the kids understand things that happen “by accident” and “on purpose” as well as exploring ways to show care and concern toward others. February is looking to be a “sweet” month for first grade!

Grade 2 News – Mrs. Crocker-Lincoln

Getting Ready for Groundhog Day

Second graders are very much looking forward to our Groundhog Day celebration of learning. This year grade 2 students will begin their learning of this unique creature with some non-fiction reading, an opinion writing piece, and a vocabulary-packed word search. We will also be enjoying my collection of read-alouds sure to delight and entertain my amazing students.

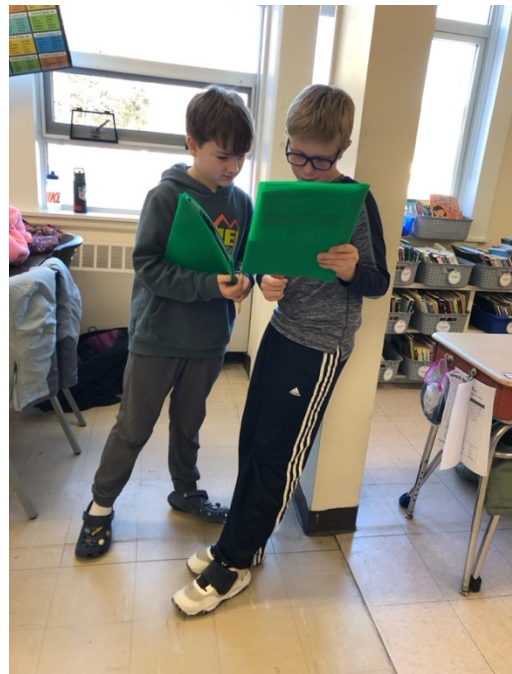
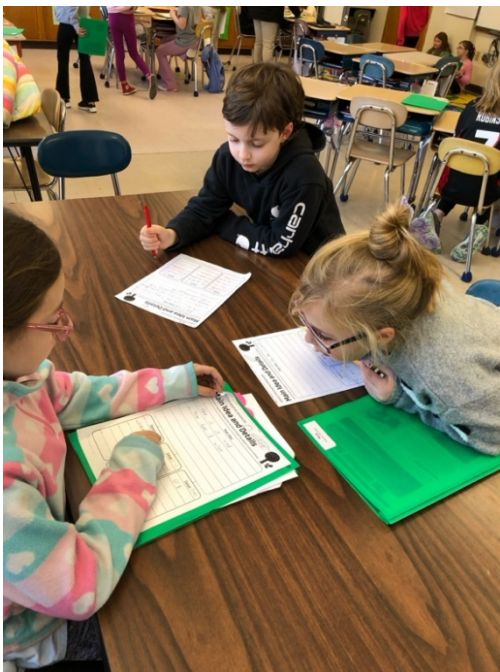
There will also be a few surprises thrown in, but they are top-secret! Students will be making some fantastic headbands boasting, “SPRING IS ON THE WAY or, “SIX MORE WEEKS OF WINTER.” Which are you hoping for?



Grade 4 News – Ms. Dill



Eastford's Portrait of a Learner focuses on six attributes that promote essential skills vital for future success. This month grade 4 students focused on effective collaboration – demonstrating the ability to appropriately interact within a group to set and achieve a common goal. They actively listened to and reflected on ideas shared by others to complete a mini-research project about renewable and nonrenewable resources used around the world.



ELA – Mr. Salsich

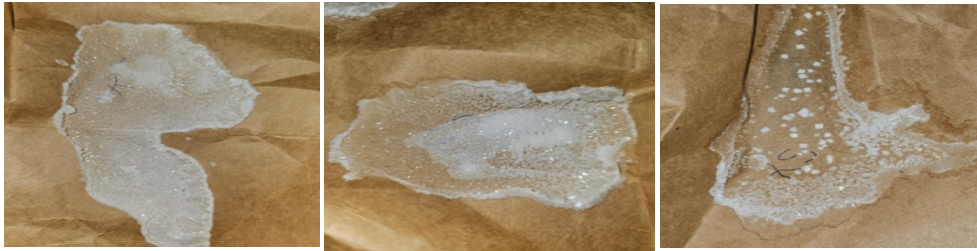
In fifth grade, we've had a great time diving into the elements of narrative writing. We've worked on everything from showing character motivations to using advanced dialogue tags, and students have been applying these skills in their fantasy narratives. The project has been a lot of hard work, but also a lot of fun, and it's been amazing to see everyone's creativity shine through in their stories. They share parts of their work regularly, and there is a feeling of being in a community of writers!

Coming up, students will be turning their narratives into short books, complete with their own illustrations. I'm excited to see their stories come to life in this creative format!

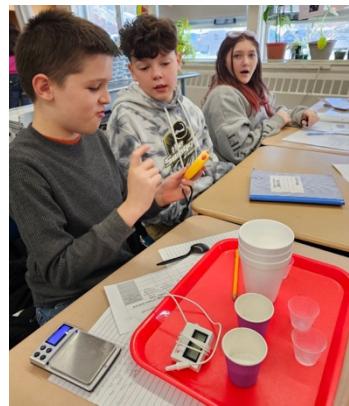
The sixth and seventh graders have been busy sharpening their summarizing skills with nonfiction articles, which they've then used to fuel their debate abilities. We had our first debates on three thought-provoking questions that the students came up with: 1. Should students be able to listen to music while working? 2. Is less homework better? 3. Is hands-on learning the best way to learn? Both sides of these debates represented their position well, even if it wasn't their personal belief. Everyone jumped in with enthusiasm, stayed organized, and were super respectful, making it a great experience for all. Looking ahead, the students will be preparing for their final debate of the year, where they'll get to showcase everything they've learned about crafting strong arguments and presenting them with confidence.

The eighth graders just wrapped up a poetry unit that was all about creativity and expression. They had fun with a "March Madness" bracket of poems, created and illustrated their own poems, and worked hard on perfecting their rhyme schemes and selecting just the right figurative language. It was exciting to see them push their creative boundaries and express their ideas so thoughtfully. Coming up, the eighth grade will focus on mastering the essential middle school skill of reading and summarizing nonfiction texts, where they'll refine their ability to identify key ideas, analyze supporting details, and summarize the information clearly. This will be a valuable skill as they move forward in their academic journey.

Science News – Mrs. Mead



Grade 5 science students have been studying water on Earth in Mystery Science. In this activity, students worked with saltwater solutions and created salt flats in a model landscape from “ocean water”.



Grade 6 students are exploring exothermic chemical reactions, looking for different temperature changes as they experiment with various amounts of reactants in each trial.



Grade 7 students are learning about the features of Earth that supply energy. Here, they are testing the permeability of different kinds of sedimentary rock to discover how oil reserves travel and settle underground.



Grade 8 students have been investigating climate change. In this activity, students are investigating how the curvature of the planet affects the thermal energy we receive. They have angled black paper respective to a light source to model Earth receiving sunlight.

Social Studies News – Mr. Kernan

Grade 5

Our grade five students have been diving into the American Revolution, uncovering the key events and turning points that shaped our nation's history. Recently, they explored the significance of the **Battle of Saratoga**, often called the war's turning point, where the American victory convinced France to join the fight. They also learned about the **Battle of Yorktown**, the final major conflict where General Washington's army, with French support, forced the British surrender, securing American independence.

Through engaging activities, map studies, and discussions, students are gaining a deeper understanding of the courage, strategy, and alliances that led to victory. Be sure to ask them what surprised them most about the Revolution!

Grade 6 and Grade 7

This month, our grade six and seven students embarked on an exciting journey along the Silk Road! Through interactive lessons, engaging discussions, and hands-on activities, students explored how this vast trade network connected cultures across Asia, the Middle East, and Europe.

They discovered the exchange of goods like silk, spices, and precious metals, but more importantly, they learned how ideas, religions, and technologies spread along the route, shaping civilizations. From examining ancient trade maps to simulating barter exchanges, students gained a deeper understanding of the Silk Road's lasting impact on the world.

Ask your child about their favorite discovery—whether it was the legendary travels of Marco Polo, the bustling markets of Baghdad, or the role of the Silk Road in shaping modern globalization!

Grade 8

Our grade eight students have been learning about the creation of the U.S. Constitution and exploring how the Founding Fathers debated and shaped the framework of our government. They've examined the challenges faced at the Constitutional Convention, from balancing state and federal power to ensuring individual rights.

Through interactive discussions and document analysis, students are gaining insight into the compromises that led to the Constitution's final draft, including the Great Compromise and the Three-Fifths Compromise. Ask your student about the key debates that shaped our nation and why the Constitution remains a living document today!

Health Office News – Mrs. Roto



Hello everyone. Below is information sent from the Connecticut State Department of Education to help in decision making when sending your student to school.

If your child develops symptoms of illness at school, they will be dismissed according to criteria outlined in the handbook. I will contact you for dismissal.

When is sick too sick for school?

→ School is better with you, even if you're a little under the weather!

Send me to school if:

- I have a runny nose or just a little cough, but no other symptoms.
- I haven't taken any fever reducing medicine for 24 hours, and I haven't had a fever during that time.
- I haven't thrown up or had any diarrhea for 24 hours.

Keep me at home if:

- I have a temperature higher than 100 degrees even after taking medicine; keep me home until I am fever-free for 24 hours without medicine.
- I'm throwing up or have diarrhea.
- My eyes are pink and crusty.

Call the doctor if:

- I have a temperature higher than 100 degrees for more than two days.
- I've been throwing up or have diarrhea for more than two days.
- I've had the sniffles for more than a week, and I'm not getting better.
- I still have asthma symptoms after using my asthma medicine (and call 911 if I'm having trouble breathing after using an inhaler).

REMINDER! If you think your child may have COVID-19, please test them prior to sending them to school.

CSDE thanks New London Public Schools in the development of this flier.

Another thing you should consider when sending your student to school is to have them dress appropriately for the weather. Recess will be conducted outside as long as weather permits. Having your student dressed for the weather not only

protects them from the elements but also aids in keeping their immune system strong and resilient.

Please notify me if your student will be out of school either by email or call the office directly. As always, feel free to reach out to me if you have anything you need to discuss.

Cassie Roto R.N., B.S.N





Art News – Ms. Weinland

Art Club

Beginning in February, the Art Club will be held after school through the month of May; specifically on Feb. 6 and 20, March 6 and 20, April 3 and 24, and May 8 and 22. Projects will delve into diverse art, offering participants the chance to both learn new techniques and refine their existing artistic abilities.

Connecticut Association of Schools Celebration of the Arts

Congratulations to Brooke Perry and Holly Dubina for being recognized as outstanding visual arts students by Ms. Weinland and the Eastford Elementary staff. Selected for their artistic talent, citizenship, and teamwork, they have been invited to the CAS 26th Annual Elementary Celebration of the Arts on February 3, 2025, at the Aqua Turf Club in Southington, where they will receive certificates honoring their achievements.

Mini Pinatas and Perspective

Fifth graders explored 3D art by creating mini piñatas with hand-cut tissue paper fringe and construction paper details. They also learned perspective drawing, discovering how line manipulation and the placement of warm and cool colors affect depth and dimension.





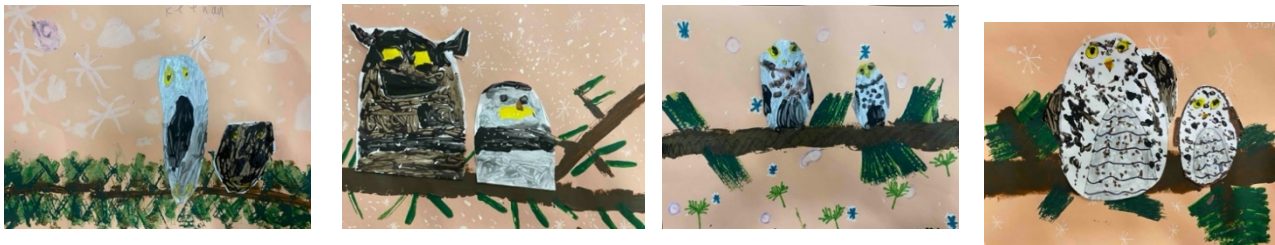
Snowmen Silhouette Paintings

Second graders explored painting by using templates to create silhouettes, placing them on paper and painting around them to form a winter background. After removing the templates, they added details to their snowmen, finishing with a touch of glitter for extra sparkle.



Winter Owl Collages

Third graders created winter owl collages using painted paper. They first painted textures to resemble owl feathers, then cut out their owl shapes. Meanwhile, they painted a snowy background with an evergreen branch for the owl to perch on, combining painting and collage techniques in their artwork.



Eighth Grade Murals and Student Art on Display at the Eastford Public Library

Eighth grade students are making their mark through mural painting projects in both the gym and art room. In addition, students have the opportunity to participate in the Paint-a-Brick Legacy Program, a special project taking place in the lower-level hallway. This yearly project allows each eighth grader to select a brick, design it, and paint it as a lasting tribute to their creativity. Along with these projects, a variety of student artwork is currently on display at the Eastford Public Library. Visitors are encouraged to stop by and see the incredible talent and hard work of Eastford School's amazing artists!



P. E. & Health – Mr. Cody



P.E:

Grades K-2 have been working on listening and cooperative play through exciting parachute games. When not using the parachute, they have been staying active with chase-and-flee tag games, which help improve agility, spatial awareness, and decision-making skills.



This month in P.E., students in **grades 3-8** have been developing their **badminton** skills, learning the rules, and practicing key techniques. As we wrap up our badminton unit, we will transition into **volleyball**, where students will work on passing, setting, serving, and teamwork.

Encourage your child to stay active and practice their skills outside of class! Looking forward to another great month of movement and fun.

As always, please make sure your child is dressed to move so they can participate safely and comfortably.

Health:

This month in **Grade 5 Health**, students will be learning about character, decision-making, and the circle of control—important topics that help them build self-awareness and responsible decision-making skills.

Additionally, we are excited to welcome Trooper White, who will be leading DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) sessions during health class on Fridays. These lessons will provide students with valuable knowledge and strategies to make safe and healthy choices.

We look forward to a great month of learning and growth!



Students in **grades 6 - 8** will be learning essential first aid and CPR skills. We are excited to welcome Ms. Spink from the Eastford Fire Department, who will be leading these important lessons. This hands-on training will help students build confidence in responding to emergency situations.

Grade 8 students who successfully complete the course will be certified with the American Heart Association for first aid and CPR.

We encourage students to ask questions and engage fully in these sessions, as these are valuable life skills that can make a difference in critical moments.

Stay active and stay safe!

Library & Media Center – Mrs. Bibeault

Create-a-Bookmark Contest!

Do you like books? Do you like drawing? If so, this is a contest for **YOU!** Show off your creativity by designing your own bookmark! Each participant can submit **up to TWO original designs**. Your bookmark should be inspired by our school library or the exciting adventures of reading.

There will be one winner from grades PK-2 and one winner from grades 4-8! The two winners will have their designs copied in full color and available for distribution in the library.

Deadline: Friday, February 21, 2025

Please submit your designs to Mrs. Bibeault in the library by the deadline. Winners will be announced on **February 28, 2025**.

Name: _____ Teacher: _____ Grade: ____

Please check one option below:

- I would be interested in having a poster of my design hanging in the library if selected.
- I am only interested in my design(s) to be considered for the bookmark contest.

January 24, 2025



Dear Parents/Guardians,

On Wednesday, February 5, 2025, our school will be participating in Global School Play Day (GSPD.) GSPD has been promoted by Psychology Today and is being celebrated at schools around the world. You can learn more about the benefits of unstructured play by visiting the official GSPD website: www.globalschoolplayday.com. I am inviting all of our students to bring in things to play with on this very special day. Here are some examples of things your child may bring in (be sure your child's name is clearly marked on all items):

- Non-Violent Toys (no weapons)
 - Legos, blocks, cardboard boxes, etc.
 - Dress-Up
 - Puppets
 - Stuffed Animals
 - Board Games
 - Puzzles
 - Sports equipment
- *no electronic devices*

Though our play day will be unstructured, it will still be supervised by teachers. It is my hope that this one day of play will inspire families to plan for more unstructured playtime during non-school hours.

We are excited about this great learning opportunity for students to practice social skills, innovation and creativity through play in a fun atmosphere.

Although the play day will be less structured than a typical school day, students will be supervised by teachers the same as on a typical school day. Maybe this one day of play will inspire families to plan more (electronic free) play time at home.

Thank you for your support!


"Play is the highest form of research."

-Albert Einstein

My child, _____, has my permission to bring in the following item(s) to school on Global School Play Day (name on all items):

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

FEBRUARY AFTER SCHOOL CALENDAR OF EVENTS



February 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday						
ALL ACTIVITIES ARE 3:45 TO 4:45 UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED												
						1						
2	Mystic Seaport Monday Gr 1-3 Chorus Gr 3 - 8	3	Acad Supp Gr 2-8 Ragged Hill Woods Gr 2	4	Acad Supp Gr 2-8 Cupcakes Gr 3-4 Group 1	5	Acad Supp Gr 2-8 Art Club 4 - 8	6	RWP Zoo Gr K-2	7	8	
9	Valentines Cards Gr 1 & 2 Chorus Gr 3 - 8	10	Acad Supp Gr 2-8 Board Games 1	11	Acad Supp Gr 2-8 Hydroponics Cupcakes Gr 3-4 Group 2	12	Acad Supp Gr 2-8 Valentines Cards Gr 3 & 4	13	Early Release for Students 12:30 Dismissal Long Weekend	14	15	
16	NO SCHOOL	17	NO SCHOOL	18	Acad Supp Gr 2-8 Cupcakes Gr 5-8	19	Acad Supp Gr 2-8 Ragged Hill Gr 3 - 8 Volleyball Gr 5 - 8 Art Club 4 - 8	20	Crochet Gr 6	21	22	
23	Mystic Seaport Monday Gr 1 - 3 Chorus Gr 3 - 8	24	Acad Supp Gr 2-8 Board Games 2-3 Volleyball Gr 5 - 8	25	Acad Supp Gr 2-8 Crochet Gr 6 Board Games K	26	Acad Supp Gr 2-8 Bingo Gr 3 - 6 Volleyball Gr 5 - 8	27	Acad Supp Gr 2-8 Bingo Gr 3 - 6 Volleyball Gr 5 - 8	28	Movie K-7 We're Back: Dinosaurs p/u 4:45	28



Cupcake Wars!

Saturday

February 15, 2025

2 - 4 pm

Eastford Elementary School Gym

Vote for best recipe and display
for our People's Choice Awards!

To compete, sign up online
www.cceastford.org/events/



**OUTDOOR
ACTIVITIES**

RAGGED HILL WOODS

Grades
Pre-K - 8



Sign up for all sessions or single sessions
\$20 per child per session
Sign up for All Sessions \$100 per child

ALL PROGRAMS HAPPEN OUTSIDE AT
WINDHAM-TOLLAND 4-H CAMP
326 TAFT POND RD POMFRET CENTER

**Animal Tracks
and Scat**
January 15



January 22
**Natural
Insulators**



**Wednesdays at
4:30pm**

January 29
Parachutes



February 5
How Trees Grow



February 12
Catapults



February 19
**Fur, Feathers,
Scales & Skin**
How it keeps animals in

RAIN OR SHINE
ALL PAYMENTS ARE NOT REFUNDABLE/ MUST PRE-PAY

To register email
raggedhillwoods@gmail.com
or call 860-974-1122



OPEN HOUSE



WINDHAM-TOLLAND 4-H

CAMP

**February 16
1-3pm**

**Register for Camp
Meet the Staff
Take a Tour**



LICENSED BY THE STATE OF CT

**326 Taft Pond Rd
Pomfret Ctr, CT 02659**

 www.4hcampct.org

 860-974-3379

Windham-Tolland 4-H Camp

326 Taft Pond Rd Pomfret, CT 06259

Ages 6-12

CAMPER GAME DAY



Use QR Code to Register

Join us for a day filled with games, friends
and food. Lunch and Snack Provided
Only \$25

FEBRUARY
15TH

RSVP by Feb. 10

WE WILL SPEND TIME OUTSIDE—SEND CLOTHES TO DO SO

GO THE DISTANCE

2 TIMOTHY 4: 7-8

Register by June 30th
to receive a T-Shirt!

Limited scholarships available
Email cceastford@gmail.com before
registering if you have a financial need.

SPORTS CAMP

July 21 - 25, 2025
8:30 am - 12:15 pm
Ages 4 - 12
\$60 per camper



Brought to you by:
UW Sports Ministry
Congregational
Church of Eastford
Living Proof Church

Held at Eastford Elementary School
12 Westford Road, Eastford, CT
Online signup and payment!
cceastford.org/sports-camp/