



Our Lady & St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School Newsletter - Issue 27 – 8th May 2026

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Dear parents, carers and parishioners,

Another brilliant week at Our Lady & St Joseph's! It has been a joy to welcome the children at the gate each morning and see how happy and excited they are to come into school. There is a real buzz around the school at the moment – our children are amazing!

Best wishes,

David, Joanne and Steph

Spotlight Success



Daisy and Phoebe are two of our sporting superstars at school - they are brilliant footballers. Last week they joined their team and attended a football tournament at Flamingo Land. We're very pleased to announce that they finished third. Girls we are all exceptionally proud of you—well done.

An added bonus of the trip was that both got to meet their favourite player, Mr Sunderland himself, Luke O'Nien.

Girls, no talk of the recent derby history, please!

Early Help and Other Useful Links



We have spoken to some parents who have talked to us and explained that their child's behaviour can present differently at home compared to what is reported at school. There is only so much that school staff can become involved with regarding behavioural challenges at home. However, we also believe you when you say that despite children being 'model pupils' in school, things can be very different at home.

The following link will direct all parents and carers to the Early Help Local Offer Site <https://www.durham.gov.uk/helpforfamilies> which provides some very useful information about services available.

School staff, particularly Steph Hughes, Cluster SENDCo, is always happy to talk to parents and explain the help on offer.

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Next week our amazing Year 6 pupils take part in their end of Key Stage 2 SATs. We couldn't be more proud of how hard they have worked in preparation. Each and every one of them has shown so much grit and determination and they have all had such wonderfully positive attitudes. The progress they have made, regardless of what happens next week, has been exceptional. A huge good luck to everyone, however, remember this is just one week in the learning journey so far and all we can ask is that they try their best.

Have a lovely, restful weekend, enjoy the sunshine and we look forward to welcoming our Year 6's to SATs Breakfast on Monday.

We think this poem sums it up perfectly!

**SATs don't measure sports,
SATs don't measure art,
SATs don't measure music,
Or the kindness of your heart.**

**SATs don't see your beauty,
SATs don't know your worth,
SATs don't see the reasons,
You were put upon this Earth.**

**SATs don't see your magic,
How you make others smile,
SATs don't time how quickly,
You can run a mile.**

**SATs don't hear your laughter,
Or see you've come this far,
SATs are just a tiny glimpse,
Of who you really are.**

**So sitting at your table,
With a pencil and your test,
Remember SATs aren't who you are,
Remember YOU'RE THE BEST!**



Online Safety Tips

Article 19: The right to be protected from all forms of harm

FreezeNova (Unblocked games)



FreezeNova unblocked is a website that is free to access and contains a wide variety of games, including shooting, multiplayer and racing games. This site may bypass usual filters, making it easier for your child to access games that you may not want them to play. As there are a variety of games, not all games may be suitable for your child.

There is also FreezeNova Chat, allowing users to chat to their friends and meet new ones. Clearly there are concerns with any online chat facility as there is the potential to view inappropriate content, risk of bullying as well as grooming.

We could not locate any age ratings on this site and there are constant adverts. Childnet have a webpage providing advice on gaming and chat features [here](#).

Screen time guidance for under 5s



The Government now advise limiting screen time for young children. They advise avoiding screen time for under 2 years and to try to keep it to less than 1 hour a day for 2-5 years. Best Start for Life have published an article outlining what content is better, how your own screentime affects your child and how screentime can affect your child's development. Find out more [here](#).

Fake or Real? Know the Deal

Essex Police have launched a ground breaking AI safety Campaign in partnership with BT and EE to tackle the growing risks posed by artificial intelligence (AI) misuse and deepfake technology. This is the first time a UK police force is working directly with a global technology firm to provide practical advice to parents, guardians and young people.

AI technology offers incredible opportunities, but it also introduces serious risks when misused. Deepfake content – highly convincing, fabricated images or videos – can be used to exploit young people, sometimes without their knowledge. Artificially generated Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) is one of the fastest-emerging crimes Essex Police is actively investigating.

The campaign is designed to help you understand:

- What deep fakes are and why they matter
- How to protect children from online harm
- What to do if an image is misused

Find out more [here](#), including advice on how to protect your child.



attendance MATTERS

Procedures for appointments during school hours

If you have to take your child out of school for any reason, including a medical, dental, school visit appointment, please could you inform the school office prior to the appointment along with any supporting evidence of the appointment. This is so that we can authorise the absence where we can and your child is not marked as unauthorised in our register.

Please see below guidance from the government regarding school attendance. <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

Children should aim to arrive in school by 8:55 am at the latest. **Persistent lateness causes disruption to your child's education.**

Year	Attendance this week:
Reception	100%
Year 1/2	97.32%
Year 3	100%
Year 4	94.85%
Year 5	95.11%
Year 6	99%
Lighthouse	95.83%
Weekly overall attendance: 97.3%	
Year to date attendance: 95.1%	

Late arrivals

We understand that mornings can be hectic and that, on occasion events beyond parents' control can cause delays on the journey to school. However, we have noticed that the number of children arriving at school after the gates have closed at **8:55am** has increased in recent weeks.

Class registers are taken at **9:00am** prompt as we don't want to miss any learning opportunities. **All children should be in class and sat down by 9:00am.**

Standards at Our Lady & St. Joseph's

Our expectations on attendance must remain strong and, as the parent community know, we take this part of our job very seriously indeed. We will be contacting parents/carers of those children who are persistently absent, this means any child with an attendance percentage of 90% or less. Please understand that this is a supportive measure and that we are working hard to leave no stone unturned to help your child achieve the very best possible outcomes.







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Stars of the week

Elizabeth H	Year R	For amazing play and tidying up afterwards - a super role model!
Keisha-Rose O Jessica W	Year 1/2	For having a fantastic attitude towards her learning this week! For brilliant reading and work in Phonics this week!
Isla B Isaac A	Year 3	For fantastic determination and always trying your hardest. For writing an amazing setting description.
Isabella D H Kendra A	Year 4	For excellent descriptive sentences in English—well done. For excellent focus on ordering decimals this week.
Michael C Ella B	Year 5	For wonderful progress in English this week. For wonderful progress in Maths this week.
Daisy D Caitlin B	Year 6	For brilliant mental maths in your arithmetic work. super application to all areas and super answers in class discussions.
Oliver B	Lighthouse	For excellent work in maths.

HOUSE POINTS

Feast Days:	St. Bede	St. Cuthbert	St. Hilda	St. Aidan
25th May 20th March 17th November 31st August				
Weekly total	151	175	167	168
Running total	4062	3502	3467	4007

Rainbow Rewards

Red	Is for the blood he gave (Be Kind)	
Green	Is for the world he made (Be a steward)	Joel - For always being a kind and caring friend to others.
Yellow	Is for the light so bright (Be humble)	
Orange	Is strong and full of might (Be courageous)	
Purple	Is for his hour of sorrow (Be compassionate and say sorry)	
Pink	Is for a new tomorrow (Be just and fair)	
Blue	Is for the sky he made so we can aim high.	Megan C: For not giving up in long distant running. Henry T: For not giving up to achieve full marks in his arithmetic. Gabo - For showing great determination in Phonics.

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Ask your child



We're sure you all ask your children what they have learned at school every day. We're also sure that the depth of answers that you receive will also vary, with some children saying, 'nothing'. To help aid your discussions, each week in the newsletter we will include a starter question that will help your child to talk about what they what they have been learning that week in school. Try it tonight

Reception	What is the smallest and biggest number on our number line?
Year 1/2	How do we keep our school environment clean and tidy? (Geography) If you were as flat as Flat Stanley, where would you travel to? (English)
Year 3	What are some non-contact forces?
Year 4	How did Peter and John show their courage?
Year 5	History: What can fragments and finds tell us about life in Jorvik? Geography - What makes the Amazon such a rich ecosystem?
Year 6	What is Cameron's difficult choice in Pig Heart Boy?

Article 14: The right of freedom of thought, belief and religion

In this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus tells the disciples that, when he returns to heaven, he will ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit to be their helper.

This is not just a historical event. The Holy Spirit is God's loving gift to every believer, helping us understand Jesus' words and reminding us that God is always close to us.

The Holy Spirit is our helper, who guides us to live more like Jesus – to grow in faith and to be filled with the peace and goodness that come from God.

The Gospel in Church - Sunday 10th May 2026



Jesus said to the disciples, "If you love me you will keep my commandments. I shall ask the Father, and he will give you a Helper to be with you forever. He will give you the Spirit of Truth. The world neither sees nor knows the Spirit, but you know the Spirit, because the Spirit is with you, and lives in you. I will not leave you orphaned: I will come back to you. In a short time the world will no longer see me but you will still see me. Then you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Those who receive my commandments and keep them are those who love me. Those who love me will be loved by my Father. I will love them, and they will see me as I truly am."

ly am."

Adapted from John 14:15-21

Getting to know Jesus makes life joyful. Learn more about this Sunday's Gospel in Church: all are very *Living, Loving and learning together with our eyes focused on Jesus*

SUMMER Diary Dates

Date	Event	Time	Parents Invited
w/b 11th May	KS2 SATs Week	All week	No
Thursday 14th May	Year 5 Mass (St. Joseph's Church)	9.30am	Yes
Monday 18th May	World Day for Cultural Diversity	All Day	No
Tuesday 19th May	Show Racism the Red Card Y5/6	AM	No
Wednesday 19th May	Year 4 Mass (St. Joseph's Church)	10:30am	Yes
Tuesday 19th May	New Reception Parent Welcome Meeting	4:00pm	Yes
Wednesday 20th May	Year 1/2 and Year 3 Visit to Centre of Life	All day	No
Wednesday 20th May	Parental Meeting - Y5 Visit to London	3:30pm	Yes
Friday 22nd May	Non-Uniform Day (Toys and Books)	All day	No
Friday 22nd May	Break up for half-term holiday	3:30pm	—
Monday 1st June	Return to school for Summer Term 2	8:45am	—
w/b Monday 1st June	Year 4 Multiplication Tables Check	—	No
Wednesday 3rd June	Year Mass 1/2 (St. Joseph's Church)	10:30am	Yes
Thursday 4th & 11th June	Year 3 Road Safety	PM	No
Friday 5th June	Ushaw Pilgrimage Day	All Day	No
w/b 8th June	Phonics Screening Check	All day	No
Friday 12th June	Non-Uniform Day (Chocolates)	All day	No
Thursday 4th June	New to Reception - Stay and Play	1:30pm	Yes
Thursday 11th June	New to Reception - Stay and Play	1:30pm	Yes
Wednesday 17th June	Year 6 Transition Event STMB	All day	No
Thursday 18th June	Fathers Day / Someone Special Breakfast	8:30am - 9:00am	Yes
Friday 19th June	Year 5 Visit to London (Parliament)	All day	No
Monday 22nd June	School Photograph Day	All day	—
Tuesday 23rd June	'New to Year 1' - Transition Meeting	3:35pm	Yes
Wednesday 24th June	Sports Day	PM	Yes
Thursday 25th June	Year 6 Youth Ministry Festival	All day	No
Friday 26th June	Non-Uniform Day (Bottles)	All day	No
w/b 29th June	Art Week	All Week	No
Wednesday 1st July	Year 3 Mass (St. Joseph's Church)	10:30am	Yes
Friday 3rd July	St. Leonard's and Durham Academy Year 6 (Transition Day)	All Day	No
Friday 3rd July	Transition Day in School	All Day	No
6th—8th July	Year 6 Robinwood Residential	3 Days	No
Wednesday 8th July	Reception Graduation Mass (In school)	10:30am	Yes
Monday 13th July	Year 6 Leavers Production	2:00pm	Yes
Monday 13th July	Annual Reports sent out to parents	3:30pm	—
Tuesday 14th July	Summer Fayre	1:30pm	Yes
Wednesday 15th July	Year 6 Leavers Mass (St. Joseph's Church)	10:30pm	Yes
Thursday 16th July	END of TERM	3:30pm	—

Friday 17th July has been allocated as the school's final teacher training day. The school will be closed to all pupils.

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What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

GROUP CHATS

Occurring through messaging apps, on social media and in online games, group chats are among the most popular ways that young people engage with their peers online. Involving, by definition, three or more individuals, these groups allow users to send messages, images and videos to everyone in one place. While they are useful for helping friends, people with shared interests or members of a club to communicate and coordinate activities, they can also leave young people feeling excluded and bullied – as well as providing opportunities for inappropriate content to be shared and viewed.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

BULLYING

Unkind comments or images which are purposely aimed at an individual can be shared freely in a group chat – allowing and often encouraging others to join in the bullying behaviour. If this content is shared in a group of their peers (especially a larger group), it serves to amplify the hurt, embarrassment, anxiety and isolation that the victim feels.

EXCLUSION AND ISOLATION

This common issue with group chats can happen in several ways: starting a new group, for instance, but deliberately excluding a certain child. Likewise, the chat may take place on an app which one child doesn't have access to, meaning they can't be involved. A child can also feel isolated when a group chat is used to discuss or share images from an event that everyone else but them attended.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some discussions in group chats may include inappropriate words, swearing and unsuitable images or videos. These could be viewed by your child if they are part of that group, whether they actively engage in it or not. Some chat apps have a disappearing message function, so your child may be unable to report something they've seen because it can only be viewed once or for a short time.

SHARING GROUP CONTENT

It's important to remember that – while the content of the chat is private between those in the group – individual users can easily share a message, photo or video with others outside of the group or screenshot what's been posted. The risk of something your child intended as private becoming public (and potentially going viral) is higher if there are people they don't know well in the group.

UNKNOWN MEMBERS

Within larger group chats, it's more likely your child will be communicating with people they don't really know. These strangers may be friends of the host, but not necessarily friendly toward your child. It's wise for young people not to share personal details and stay aware that they have no control over the messages and images they share after they've put them online.

NOTIFICATIONS AND FOMO

A drawback of large group chats is the sheer number of notifications. Every time someone in the group messages, your child's device will be 'pinged' with an alert; potentially, this could mean hundreds of notifications a day. Not only is this highly distracting, but young people's fear of missing out on the latest conversation results in increased screen time as they try to keep up with the chat.

Advice for Parents & Carers

CONSIDER OTHERS' FEELINGS

Group chats are often an arena for young people to gain social status. This could cause them to do or say things on impulse, which could upset others in the group. Encourage your child to consider how other people might feel if they engaged in this behaviour. If your child does upset a member of their group chat, support them to reach out, show empathy and apologise for their mistake.

GIVE SUPPORT, NOT JUDGEMENT

Remind your child that they can confide in you if they feel bullied or excluded in a group chat, instead of responding to the person who's upset them. Validate their hurt feelings and help to put them back in control by discussing how they'd like to handle the situation. On a related note, you could also empower your child to speak up if they're in a chat where others are being picked on.

BLOCK, REPORT AND LEAVE

If your child is in a chat where inappropriate content is being shared, advise them to block the users sending the material, report them to the host app or platform and exit the group. If any of this content could be putting a minor at risk, contact the police. Emphasise to your child that it's OK for them to simply leave any group chat that they don't feel comfortable being a part of.

PRACTISE SAFE SHARING

In any online communication, it's vital for young people to be aware of what they're sharing and who might potentially see it. Discuss the importance of not revealing identifiable details like their address, their school or photos that they wouldn't like to be seen widely. Remind them that once something is shared in a group, they lose control of where it may end up and how it might be used.

AVOID INVITING STRANGERS

Sadly, many individuals online hide their true identity to gain a child's trust – for example, to gather information on them, to exchange inappropriate content or to coax them into doing things they aren't comfortable with. Ensure your child understands why they shouldn't add people they don't know to a group chat – and, especially, to never accept a group chat invitation from a stranger.

SILENCE NOTIFICATIONS

Having a phone or tablet bombarded with notifications from a group chat can be a massive irritation and distraction – especially if it's happening late in the evening. Explain to your child that they can still be part of the group chat, but that it would be healthier for them to turn off or mute the notifications and catch up with the conversation at a time which better suits them.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.

