



NEWSLETTER: 3rd November 2023

Dear Families

It's certainly been a wet and windy return to school after half term. We will not, however, let it dampen our spirits as there is much to look forward to.

Staffing update

As we explained in our newsletter at the start of the new academic year, we initiated a recruitment process to employ two full-time, permanent teachers to replace staff who left in the summer term.

We have now completed this process and we are delighted to share with you that Mrs Helen Shiels will be joining Year 4 and Mrs Laura McCormack will be joining us as class teacher in Nursery. These positions will start in January (due to necessary notice periods when teachers move schools). Both Mrs Shiels and Mrs McCormack are very experienced practitioners. They will be spending time in school beforehand to ensure a smooth transition.

Mrs Spinks will be returning from her maternity leave in December. Time certainly flies! Mrs Spinks will work in Y3 in a part-time arrangement with Mrs Ashby. She has been spending time in school ahead of her return date.

This means, from January 2024, all teaching staff will be in permanent positions.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Mrs Readshaw, Miss Tate and Miss Walton for their hard work and on-going commitment to St Joseph's during their time with us. They have been a delight to work with I am sure this will continue to be the case for the duration of their service.

All Saints Mass

Thank you, to Fr Shaun, pupils, staff, family and parishioners for making the Mass on Wednesday such a special occasion. It was lovely to hear the positive feedback of those present who praised our pupils for their excellent behaviour. We received a lovely email to this effect.

I just want to congratulate all the children for the wonderful school Mass they celebrated in church today.

The children were all very well behaved, sang beautifully and all the readers spoke very clearly.

It was a real pleasure to be part of the celebration.

Fr Shaun's Induction Mass will take place this evening **Friday 3rd November at 7pm, at St Joseph's**. There will be a gathering in school afterwards with light refreshments. All are welcome.

General Information

Parent/teacher meetings – Monday 13th November

To book a 5-minute face to face appointment with your child's class teacher, please copy the attached link into your browser. If your child has a SEN plan, a separate appointment has already been sent to you so please do not book an appoint via this system.

stjosephsprimaryschool.schoolcloud.co.uk

Reception class intake 2024/25

If your child is due to start Reception class in September 2024, you need to apply for a school place via Durham County Council School Admissions, even if your child currently attends our nursery unit. The closing dates for applications is Monday 15th January 2024.

<https://www.durham.gov.uk/schooladmissions>

Wake up Wednesday

We believe that all parents, carers and trusted adults should be empowered with all the information needed to have age-appropriate conversations about online safety with children. For this reason, we will be taking part in National Online Safety's 'Wake Up Wednesday' campaign. We will share information as it becomes available on our weekly newsletter.

Foundation Governors

If you are a practising Catholic, and are interested in being part of our local governing committee as a foundation governor, please contact school. I would be very happy to talk you through what this role entails and whether you feel you are able to share your skills set with us.

General rules reminder

Please follow the school expectations regarding hairstyles. Hair should not be dyed or excessively shaved with any form of pattern. Please work with us, respect this request and explain this expectation with your child as appropriate. This ensures fairness and consistency for every child and it avoids any unnecessary conversations with pupils or parents/carers. If necessary, however we will contact you if there any concerns.

Earrings should not be worn (including any transparent stud type earring).

Nail varnish should not be worn.

Poppy Appeal

We will be supporting the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal by selling Poppies

- Poppies (Suggested donation 50p)
- Zip Pulls (Suggested donation 50p)
- Reflectors (Suggested donation 50p)
- Silicon Wristbands (Suggested donation £1.00)
- Snap Bands (Suggested donation £1.50)

Year 6 pupils will be selling these to the pupils in school throughout the school day and children can bring money into school from Monday 6th.

Changes to Start & Finish Times

Thank you, for your ongoing patience regarding changes to drop-off and collection arrangements after the school flood. We have had a further update, this week, that there may be a delay to remedial work starting. With this in mind, we have taken the decision to revert to previous, and usual, arrangements. To make entrance to school easier, school will open from **8.40am** and registration will take place at **8.45am**.

I fully appreciate this term has seen much toing and froing regarding the start and end to the school day. Unfortunately, further changes may occur once work is underway. We will ensure, however, that you are kept fully updated.

From Monday 6th November, please follow these times.

Class	Start time	Finish time
Nursery	Morning session 8.45 Afternoon session 12noon All day starting time 9.00	Morning session 11:45 Afternoon session Finish 3pm All day finishing time 3pm
Reception	School starts at 8.45 with immediate registration	3:15 pm Reception yard
Year 1	School start at 8.45 with immediate registration	3:20 pm Main school yard
Year 2	School starts at 8.45 with immediate registration	3:20 pm Main school yard
Year 3	School starts at 8.45 with immediate registration	3:20 pm Main school yard
Year 4	School opens at 8.45 with immediate registration	3:20 pm Main school yard
Year 5	School opens at 8.45 with immediate registration	3:20 pm Main school yard
Year 6	School opens at 8.45 with immediate registration	3:20 pm Main school yard

PE Timetable

Please find below a list of the days that the children will be participating in PE sessions. On PE days, children should come to school in their PE uniform. This also applies when swimming.

Class	PE Day
Y1	Tuesday & Friday
Y2	Monday & Friday
Y3	Tuesday & Thursday
Y4	Tuesday & Friday
Y5	Monday & Thursday
Y6	Monday & Thursday (swimming)

Star of the Week

The following children have received a Star of the Week certificate this Week:



Nursery	Romee	For being a super shape spotter!
Reception	Leon	For amazing effort with all of his jobs this week and being super sensible at church.
Year 1	Emelia	For settling into her new phonics group and challenging herself to improve her reading.
Year 2	Izzy R	For trying her best to be independent in her work.
Year 3	Kamran	For having a great attitude to learning and fully engaging in all lessons. Keep it up!
Year 4	Natalia	For fantastic writing.
Year 5	Willow	For excellent answers in maths this week.
Year 6	Ava	For some excellent research on forests in our geography lesson this week.

Times Table Rockstar of the week is:

This week's 'Rockstar of the Week' is Oliver! Well done, for your amazing multiplication and fantastic studio speed!

Well done to **Year 3**, who beat Year 6, and **Year 5**, who beat Year 4, in their times tables battles last week! This week there will be a four-way battle between Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 to see who can be crowned the champions of KS2!

St Joseph's are currently 16th on the leader board of our local schools. We have dropped two places since last week 😞 so we all need to work together to get ourselves into the top ten! Come on KS2, we are all rooting for you. Let's see a sprint up that leader board!

Attendance & Punctuality

Our key priority in school is to promote good attendance and punctuality. This is because we want our pupils, in school, learning alongside classmates.

A figure of 90% means a child has missed an equivalent of 1 morning session of school every week.

A figure closer to 80% means a child has missed an equivalent to a day of school every week.

We understand, of course, there may be unavoidable and genuine reasons for absence. We do, however, want to work closely with families to ensure children are in school every day.

As a general reminder:

- Please make medical appointments outside of the school day or aim to minimise the amount of time your child will miss to attend the appointment;
- Only allow your child to stay at home in response to genuine illness;
- Do not take holidays during term time;
- Ensure your child arrives on time as lateness is recorded and will impact attendance figures.

If you have had an issue on a morning getting your child to school, we would always encourage you to contact us. We will help and it is always better to arrive later than not at all.

If your child seems unwell in the morning but appears much better by the afternoon, we encourage you to bring them in for the afternoon session.

We continue to stress, however, that pupils need to remain home for 48 hours after any incidents of vomiting or diarrhoea.

If there are any issues or concerns that are impacting school attendance, or punctuality, please contact the school office and an appointment will be made with one of the senior lead members of staff as advice and support can be given.

Our intention will always be to work with you, and support you, to ensure your child is able to attend.

This week's attendance is 92.53%

Our target is 97%

Nursery	Reception	Year1	Year2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
100%	93.79%	91.33%	91.92%	91.07%	86.79%	95.17%	93.23%



House Points

Children can earn house points from all staff during the week. The house points for this week are:

St Aidan – 750

St Oswald – 701

St Cuthbert – 658

St Bede – 726

Congratulations to St Cuthbert team and well done to everyone who has earned points this week.

As we approach Bonfire Weekend, we would advise you to attend a local organised fireworks display, where you get to have great fun, safe in the knowledge that all the right measures have been put in place for everyone.

Have a relaxing, and safe, weekend!

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

X

AGE RESTRICTION
13+

In October 2022, the enormously popular social media network Twitter was purchased by tech tycoon Elon Musk. That sparked a host of changes to the platform – not all which have been received positively by its fans. The alterations have continued with each passing month, many of them raising online safety concerns among the 530 million users of Twitter (now rebranded as simply X). With further adjustments reportedly in the pipeline, X has attracted more than its usual share of controversy and caution in recent times.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

A BLOCK ON BLOCKING

X has announced plans to remove its blocking feature. Previously, this stopped other users from viewing your profile or sending you direct messages, while also hiding their posts from your feed. Only this latter function will now remain. The decision has been criticised by some members, who feel that blocking (in its current form) protects them from X users who promote denial and hatred.

AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Many of X's less age-appropriate posts can feature anything from extreme political views to pornography. While accounts marked as 13+ are restricted from non-members, it's still fairly easy to stumble across this material accidentally. X's new 'For You' page also shows content from accounts that a user doesn't already follow – meaning that almost anything could end up on a child's feed.

LIMITED REPORTING FEATURES

X offers a premium membership, with some functionality (such as controlling who can view and reply to your posts) increasingly being made exclusive to those who pay the subscription fee. Several commentators have speculated that X could one day become an exclusively paid-for service, with access to accounts being revoked for anyone unwilling or unable to take out a subscription.

VERIFICATION FOR SALE

Historically, Twitter's moderators granted account verification, certifying someone as authentic by placing a blue tick next to their username. One of X's earliest changes was to place verification behind a paywall: this caused the number of celebrity impersonators to rise and left no way to distinguish, say, a legitimate influencer from a copycat fake account seeking to exploit other users.

BLUE TICK SALE

Advice for Parents & Carers

PROTECT PRIVACY

Malicious characters may try to gain access to your child's account. X provides a guide to help you protect your child's account.

DON'T RISE TO THE BAIT

To gain more views and followers, some X users may deliberately try to provoke or offend.

STAY ALERT FOR IMPOSTERS

Make sure your child understands that X's blue ticks do not confirm the identity of anyone on the platform.