



St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School



NEWSLETTER: 17th May 2024

Dear Families,

Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust (BWCET) has begun the recruitment process for a full-time headteacher for St Joseph's, which will be advertised on their website this week.

As you know, my position to support St Joseph's was temporary, initially for a year, before extending into a second year.

The time has flown and it has been an absolute privilege to be part of this wonderful school community, getting to know pupils, staff, governors and families. Working between St Joseph's and St Patrick's has allowed both schools to benefit from collaborative working and sharing good practice.

St Joseph's is a vibrant, ambitious and caring school community which I am sure will continue to go from strength to strength.

The current arrangement will remain in place for the rest of this academic year.

Year 6 SATS assessments

Well done, to all our Year 6 pupils who have completed their SATs assessments this week.

We are extremely proud of you all. SATs are only one aspect of school life and, as ever, Y6 have taken these challenges in their stride.

Thank you, to all staff for helping out in many different ways (including those who welcomed, and catered for, a significantly larger number of children at breakfast club).

Food bank donations

A reminder that our Community Club led by Mrs Ashby, has decided to collect food items (packets, tins, pasta etc) which will be shared between Stanley Food bank and PACT House. There is a box in the main entrance to school for your donations. Whatever you are able to give, would be greatly appreciated. Thank you, in advance, for your generosity.

May Procession

We will be holding a May procession on the afternoon of Monday 20th May at 2pm.

This will be informal and there will be a short celebration of the word afterwards in the school yard (weather permitting). All welcome. Children will return to their classes afterwards, and will be dismissed at normal time.

Prayer Garden

We are hoping to develop a prayer garden in a section of our big yard. We are in the very early stages of this and we want to put out an appeal. If you are able to donate any time or expertise, large plant pots, plants or compost, we would be most grateful. Please contact the school office.

Huge thanks to Mrs Messer, who responded to our call and has been busy making some fabulous bunting to get us underway!

World Children's Day

Gentle reminder...

Following the information about our art competition for World Children's Day, our Ethos Ambassadors have decided that on Thursday 23rd May everyone can come to school dressed as what they would like to be when they grow up. We do not wish for this to come at an expense for our families, but think this is a lovely way to celebrate this day. There is no need to purchase any costumes.

A voluntary donation of 50p will be collected on the day and all donations will be given to Fr Dermott's charity SIGNIFICANCE.

Scholastic Book Fair

We will be holding a Scholastic Book Fair in school from Thursday 6th June to Tuesday 11th June. More information to follow.

Family Hubs

There is a new CAMHS drop ins at Family hubs. For more information visit their website.

www.durham.gov.uk/helpforfamilies

Staff training day

Reminder that **school will close for half term on Thursday 23rd May** as there is a staff training day on Friday 24th May.

Star of the Week

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



Nursery	Arabella	For being an amazing role model in Nursery and a good friend to others.
Reception	Cobey	For absolutely amazing efforts with his reading and writing!
Year 1	Ruby	For always trying her best in all aspects of her learning.
Year 2	Isobel	For a lovely, thoughtful prayer in her RE work.
Year 3	Emily R	For an excellent story based on the myth of Pandora's Box
Year 4	Teeannah	For working hard in all subjects.
Year 5	Heidi	For her excellent answers in RE this week.
Year 6	Marco	For his fantastic attitude and work ethic this week.

Attendance

This week's attendance is 95.07%.

Our target is 97%.

Nursery	Reception	Year1	Year2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
99.7%	90.3%	96.7%	94.4%	93.4%	95.2%	95.2%	96.8%

House Points

Children can earn house points from all staff during the week. Congratulations to St Oswald's who have earned the most house points this week.

Times Table Rock Star

This week's 'Rockstars of the Week' is **Lase**! Well done for your amazing multiplication and fantastic studio speed! Children can see all our TTRS winners on our 'Times Table Rockstars' display board in school.

Year 3 are still ahead in the KS2 tournament but Year 6 have made up some ground this week! Well done!

Current Standings:

Year 3- 1504

Year 6- 537

Year 5- 272

Year 4- 188

St Joseph's are still 12th on the leader board for schools in our area with an average studio speed of 3.80 seconds per question. Let's make a big effort this week to get back into the top 10!

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about SCHOOL AVOIDANCE

Emotionally Based School Avoidance is a term used to refer to reduced attendance or non-attendance at school by a child or young person. It's often rooted in emotional, mental health or wellbeing issues. The rate of children who miss school more than 10% of the time in England has more than doubled since before the pandemic: rising from 10.9% in 2018-19, to 22.3% in 2022-23.

UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL AVOIDANCE

REASONS FOR ABSENCE

School avoidance is sometimes underpinned by several factors rather than one single cause. This could include something going on for the child or young person within the family or at school. A child may have caring responsibilities at home, for instance, or a change in family dynamics, bullying and friendship difficulties at school, pressure to achieve in schoolwork and exams, or moving from primary school to secondary school.

PATTERNS OF ABSENCE

You may notice patterns in regular absences or children regularly expressing that they don't want to attend school (particularly being reluctant to leave home on school days). If a child or young person is neurodiverse, there is some evidence to suggest there are more aspects of school life which can cause distress – such as changes in the environment, changes of routine and sensory stimuli.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

There may be an increase in a child or young person's complaints about physical symptoms, particularly on school days or the evening before school. These could include complaining of a tummy ache, headache, or saying they feel ill when there doesn't appear to be a medical cause. Always check with the GP first to rule out medical causes or illness.

IMPACT OF SCHOOL AVOIDANCE

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

School refusal can negatively impact a young person's learning and development. Attending school on a regular basis not only supports academic attainment but is also important for the development of key life skills and the growth of children and young people as citizens.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

The difficulties associated with school non-attendance can be far reaching and may have a negative impact on long-term outcomes. It may, for example, lead to reduced future aspirations, poor emotional regulation, mental health difficulties, limited academic progress and restricted employment opportunities.

CYCLE OF ABSENCE

Consistent absences may contribute to sustained school avoidance over time. Further to this, the longer a pupil is out of education, the more likely it is that there is a rise in their ongoing need to avoid the activity which is making them anxious – increasing their desire to stay at home.

Advice for Parents & Educators

WORK TOGETHER

If there's a concern about a child's absence and emotional wellbeing, it's important that there is clear communication and a consistent approach between the child's parents and the school, so you can take a child-centred approach together towards a plan of support or reintegration. This ensures a consistency of approach from both home and school, creating better outcomes for the child.

MANAGING OVERWHELMING FEELINGS

While there may be times you feel frustrated or angry, try to stay calm; acknowledge the child's worries, listen and discuss a range of coping strategies together to help them face the discomfort and overwhelming feelings. These could include mindfulness, deep breathing or going for a walk and practice the strategies in less overwhelming situations first.

FOLLOW REGULAR ROUTINES

Children can benefit from a regular and consistent routine. This could be a morning routine, from waking up and having breakfast through to getting dressed, picking their bag and leaving the house. A consistent evening routine which is calm and limited time on screens can also give children much needed predictability and familiarity. Schools can help create a timetable routine for the child's school day, if required.

REDUCE STIMULATING ACTIVITIES AT HOME

If a child is avoiding school, reduce their access to more stimulating activities (such as watching television, playing games and spending time with friends) during school hours, where possible. This reduces the potential for the child having rewarding experiences at home, which could be interpreted as a positive aspect of avoiding school.

Meet Our Expert

With 30 years' experience as a teacher, trainer, consultant and interim executive board member, Anna Solomon has a superb understanding of what works in pedagogy, school improvement and leadership. She has also advised the Department for Education on their mental health green paper.



Source: See full reference list on guide page at nationalcollege.com/guides/school-avoidance



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