



St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School



NEWSLETTER: 23rd May 2024

Dear Families,

What a busy end to the half term it has been!

Equalities Workshops for Pupils

Pupils from Reception to Year 6 participated in workshops, this week, to explore, equalities, respect, consent, similarities and differences. Kate, from Clennell Educational Services, who led the sessions, was extremely complimentary about how sensible and responsive our pupils were during the sessions.

CAFOD

Pupils also enjoyed a presentation and discussion on Catholic Social Care Teaching led by Trisha from CAFOD. Sessions focused on how we can support each other to ensure justice and fairness in our world.

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 held a beautiful May procession on Monday. It was lovely to follow this with an outdoor celebration of the word in the school yard. Thank you, to all those who were able to join us.

Prayer Garden

We are hoping to develop a prayer garden in a section of our big yard. We are at the very early stages of this, and we want to continue with our appeal. If you can donate any time or expertise, large plant pots, plants or compost, we would be most grateful. Please contact the school office. Thank you, to those of you who have already left donations.

World Children's Day

Thank you, to all, for your great response to World Children's Day. It was fantastic to see everyone dressed to show what they would like to be when they grow up. We had doctors, teachers, sports represented, builders and designers - to name but a few! All donations will be given to Fr Dermott's charity SIGNIFICANCE.

Three of our pupils were highly commended for their artwork submitted as part of the World Children's Day competition led by Youth Ministry Team and the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.

Well done, to Thea-Rose, Freddie S and Esmae.

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.

**Reminder – we close tonight for half-term and will re-open on Monday 3rd June.
Have a lovely holiday.**

Star of the Week

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



Nursery	Frankie	For trying hard and showing a keen interest in all of our activities this week.
Reception	Seb	For lovely listening on the carpet, sharing his amazing ideas about our learning!
Year 1	AJ	For working hard to improve his reading!
Year 2	Harvey	For working very hard to improve his handwriting. Keep up the good work!
Year 3	John	For excellent questions and knowledge during our science workshop at the Discovery Museum.
Year 4	Grace	For working extremely hard to improve her times table recall.
Year 5	Gracie-Mae	For excellent work with co-ordinates in Maths.
Year 6	Jack	Some excellent work in science this week.

Attendance

This week's attendance is 93.5%.

Our target is 97%.

Nursery	Reception	Year1	Year2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
93.6%	95.4%	89.2%	96.8%	96.3%	96.5%	95.2%	93.1%

House Points

Children can earn house points from all staff during the week.

Congratulations to **St Cuthbert's** who have earned the most house points this week.

Times Table Rock Star

This week's 'Rockstars of the Week' is **Harriet!** 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.

Congratulations to **Year 3** on their victory in the KS2 Times Tables Battle! Well done! Over the course of this half term, they amassed an amazing 1578 points! They will receive their reward during the first week back to school after half term. The final battle of the year will start on Monday 3rd June.

St Joseph's are currently 13th on the leaderboard for schools in our area. Let's all try over the half term holiday to get back into the top 10 in our area!

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formally delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about HELLDIVERS 2

AGE RESTRICTION
PEGI 18+

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Within weeks of release, *HELLDIVERS 2* had become one of 2024's biggest gaming success stories. The sequel to a top-down shooter from 2015 has smashed sales expectations, owing to its frantic gameplay and tongue-in-cheek humour. However, the game comes with several risks to younger players, as indicated by its 18+ rating.

PEGI 18 RATING

Due to its intense violence and the presence of in-game purchases, *HELLDIVERS 2* carries a PEGI 18 rating. While players are generally fighting fantastical enemies like giant bugs and robots, their characters can be killed in various gruesome ways, up to and including disembowelment. It's certainly worth considering whether such a game is appropriate for younger players.

FRUSTRATION TRIGGER

The thrill of barely scraping through a dangerous mission in one piece is integral to *HELLDIVERS 2*'s appeal. To accentuate this feeling of achievement, the game includes some very difficult levels that could prove to be too hard for some players – even those who are legitimately old enough to play. Losing streaks can be incredibly annoying, so repeatedly failing in missions could easily provoke frustration or anger in younger players.

IN-GAME PURCHASES

In *HELLDIVERS 2*, players can use real money to buy in-game currency, with which they can unlock cosmetics and new weapons. At the time of writing, all the in-game items can be acquired without spending so much as a penny – but excited young players wanting to keep up with their friends may still feel the temptation to purchase new weapons more quickly, rather than labouriously earning the in-game currency through play.

LACK OF ACCESS

The game is available on PC and PS5, but not (as yet) on other consoles. Some people will naturally be disappointed they can't get involved and might look for similar alternatives to play on their own console – alternatives which may contain similar levels of violence and gore but lack the same balanced approach to user misconduct and in-game purchases as *HELLDIVERS 2*.

VOICE CHAT AND MESSAGING

HELLDIVERS 2 is always played online with others, who often use voice chat or in-game texts to coordinate, strategise or just joke around. This does mean that children who play without their friends will be put in contact with strangers. Unfortunately, this represents a roll of the dice, as the game can't control how people treat each other online. However, you can easily report other players for abusive behaviour via the game's 'social' tab.

PREMIUM EDITION

Advice for Parents & Educators

GIVE IT A GO FIRST

HELLDIVERS 2 is a third-person shooter with intentionally humorous elements, but much of its comedy is rooted in satire which may go over the heads of some players. Consider playing the game first yourself – while shooting bugs and robots feels too unrealistic to be upsetting, seeing your character get torn to pieces may be too much for young players.

SET EXPECTATIONS

At the time of writing, *HELLDIVERS 2* costs £34.99. It could turn out to be an expensive and wasteful purchase if a player gets irritated and gives up shortly after receiving the game. If a young person tends to become frustrated easily, it's worth considering whether *HELLDIVERS 2* is really the game for them.

CONSIDER ALTERNATIVES

If playing on Xbox – where *HELLDIVERS 2* isn't available – consider something like *Halo: The Master Chief Collection* as an alternative. One of its game modes – *Firefight* – replicates *HELLDIVERS 2*'s mechanics to some degree. Alternatively, younger players may be better suited to the more light-hearted *Deep Rock Galactic*, which sees them play as fantasy dwarves in space, involving far less gruesome violence.

KEEP AN EYE ON PAYMENTS

Many titles offer in-game purchases, but *HELLDIVERS 2*'s are comparatively cheap. You'll still need to monitor your payment information (or use a prepaid card on the account) in case your child buys the in-game currency in bulk, on the whole, however, the game's selling methods are far less egregious than most similar titles on the market.

MONITOR COMMUNICATION & ADJUST SETTINGS

Thanks to an in-game "Ping" system (allowing players to highlight important details without speaking), communication isn't as integral to *HELLDIVERS 2* as it is in other games. You can turn off the chat options in-game on PC, or on the PS5's own settings, and feel more secure in the knowledge that your child won't be speaking to people they don't know.

Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is the Editor in Chief of GRecon, and has been working in the games media industry for five years. As well as being an avid long-time gamer, he is also a parent and therefore understands the importance of online safety. Writing mainly about tech and fitness, his work has been published on sites including IGN, TechRadar and many more.

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