



St. Patrick's Catholic Primary School Newsletter - Issue 14 – 13th December 2024

Executive Headteacher: Mr D Miller

Cluster Headteacher: Mr S Keys

Head of School: Mrs K Simpson

Chair of Governors: Mrs C Bainbridge

Telephone: 0191 378 0552

E-mail: stpl@stpl.bwcet.com

Dear Parents, Carers & Parishioners,

Christmas has certainly landed in school this week. I am sure you will all agree that the children were all brilliant in their Christmas performances—wonderful reading, fantastic singing, smiling faces and an appearance from Mr Grinch himself! We appreciate the many lovely comments left in the parent comment book too. Thank you, also, to the parents/carers who came into school for Christmas dinner on Thursday—I hope you enjoyed the day. We really understand the importance of working together here and are already looking forward to welcoming you into the classrooms in the Spring Term. Next week is our final week before the Christmas break and it is another busy one, so do read on to see what is coming up.

Best wishes,

Sam Keys

Christmas Party Day—Monday 16th December

All classes will be having their Christmas party day on Monday. This is a non-uniform day. Your child can come into school in their party clothes.



Pantomime—Tuesday 17th December

The whole school will be going to watch the Pantomime in Consett next Tuesday. Please can you make sure you give consent on Arbor. The bus will leave straight away on Tuesday morning—so please make sure your child is in school on time.

Christmas Fair—Wednesday 18th December—2pm

Our Christmas Fair takes place on Wednesday and we are really looking forward to welcoming you all. As with last year, children will be dismissed to you when you arrive so that you can enjoy the experience together. You will be able to take children home from 3:15pm if you wish. If you are not able to attend, your child will be supervised by a member of staff until the end of the day and can be collected as usual. If you would like to send money in with your child, you are more than welcome to do so.



Christmas Carol Service—Thursday 19th—9:30am

We will hold our Christmas Carol Service **in the school hall** at 9:30am on Thursday. The rehearsals have sounded wonderful so far and we look forward to as many parents/carers and parishioners as possible joining us.

Use well the gifts that God has given you

Travelling Crib

Our travelling crib sets have started to make their way into homes this week. If your child is particularly excited about having the crib, do let us know!



School Admissions Reminder

Is your child due to start Primary School in September 2025? You can now apply for their school place. The deadline for applications is

- **Wednesday 15th January 2025** for primary school places.

Apply now: <http://www.durham.gov.uk/schooladmissions>



Use well the gifts that God has given you

Attendance

Procedure 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.**

Holidays in term time

It is Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust policy that we as a school must refer to the local authority when a child takes holiday during term time. You can see Durham's procedures here: [Holidays in term time - Durham County Council](#)

"Where leave of absence has not been granted, but the pupil does not attend, the headteacher will refer the case to the local authority in line with the National Framework. This may lead to the local authority issuing a fixed penalty notice." - BWCET Attendance Policy





Year	Attendance this week:
R	98.6%
1 / 2	96.1%
3 / 4	97.4%
5 / 6	96.7%
Weekly Overall Attendance: 97.3%	
Yearly Attendance to date: 95.6%	

Standards at St. Patrick'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.



Use well the gifts that God has given you

HOUSE POINTS				
Feast Days:	St. Bede	St. Cuthbert	St. Hilda	St. Aidan
25th May				
20th March				
17th November				
31st August				
Weekly total	541	674	594	535
Running total	5197	5008	5062	5970

You will see your child's house points add up throughout the week via Class Dojo. This will only be used for house points this year and not school to home communication.

Stars of the week

- Julia Year R For being kind and helpful.
- Aurora Year 1 / 2 For reading her lines very well at the nativity.
- Oscar Year 3 / 4 For brilliant work with his descriptive writing.
- Finn Year 5 / 6 For being a fantastic member of the class.

<u>Rainbow Rewards</u>		
Red	Is for the blood he gave (Be Kind)	Isobel, Ava and Mrs Simpson
Green	Is for the world he made (Be a steward)	Oscar G, Dylan and Mrs Griffiths
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 (Never give up or take the easy option)	

The rainbow is a sign of God's promise,
 He will guide us through any storm.
 When you feel battered by life's storms,
 Just remember God's rainbow is coming -
 It's only a prayer away.

Use well the gifts that God has given you

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 have been learning that week in school. Try it tonight.

Reception (Class 1)	What happened to Stick Man?
Class 2	Who was Rosa Parks and why was she important?
Class 3	What was the Robin's wish?
Class 4	What is a visual narrative?
General	Which new candle on the advent wreath will be lit this week?


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

When the crowds asked John the Baptist, "What must we do?" He answered, "If anyone has two coats they should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same." There were tax collectors too who came for baptism, and they said to him, "Master, what must we do?" He said to them, "Don't collect any more than you should." Then he said to some soldiers, "Don't force people to pay money to make you leave them alone, but be satisfied with your pay." By now, a feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John the Baptist might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, "I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not good enough even to untie his sandal strap."



From the Gospel of Sunday 15th December 2024 Luke 3:10-18 (the 3rd Sunday of Advent, Year C)

Which words stood out for you in this Gospel, and why? What does the picture make you think about? Now enjoy exploring this Wednesday's word, which is **MERCY**.



Use well the gifts that God has given you

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators SAFETY OVER THE FESTIVE SEASON.

The holiday season, marked by Christmas and New Year, brings joy and togetherness but also presents unique safety challenges for children, families and educators. From busy holiday shopping, traveling and family gatherings to managing digital activity during school breaks, staying safe during this period requires heightened awareness. This guide offers practical tips to help families and educators maintain a more secure and fulfilling festive period.

1 MONITOR DIGITAL ACTIVITY

Children spend more time online during school holidays, increasing exposure to potential dangers such as cyberbullying, inappropriate content and online predators. Balancing screen time, avoiding harmful websites and ensuring children engage positively online can be difficult without proper monitoring tools. Set clear boundaries, encourage open discussions about online safety and use parental controls to manage content exposure and screen time effectively. Regular check-ins and positive reinforcement around digital habits encourage safe online behaviour.

2 PRACTICE FIRE SAFETY PROTOCOLS

The incidence of house fires increases during Christmas due to greater use of candles, cookers and electrical decorations. Open flames, electrical overloads and the need for quick response plans can make fire safety challenging. Ensure smoke detectors are operational, keep fire extinguishers on hand and teach children how to respond in case of a fire emergency. Avoid leaving cooking unattended and use fire-safe candles to prevent mishaps.

3 CREATE TRAVEL SAFETY PLANS

More families tend to travel during the holidays, resulting in busier roads, increased traffic accidents and weather-related hazards. Weather conditions, road rage, fatigue and busy airports can all compromise travel safety. Pack emergency kits and adhere to seatbelt laws. Plan routes in advance and allow extra travel time to avoid rushing and mitigate risks on busy roads.

4 BEWARE OF ALLERGIES

Holiday meals often involve many foods that may contain allergens. Cross contamination, unclear labelling and lack of allergy-friendly options can lead to severe reactions. Communicate any allergy needs to hosts, provide safe food alternatives and carry necessary medications like antihistamines or EpiPens. Teaching children how to advocate for themselves and recognise dangerous foods also contributes to safer celebrations.

5 PREVENT THE SPREAD OF ILLNESS

Cold weather and seasonal socialising can increase the spread of viruses like flu and COVID-19. Crowded gatherings, schools out of session and frequent travel can lead to higher infection risks. Emphasise hygiene, encourage vaccination, disinfect surfaces and isolate symptomatic individuals. Communication with children about proper hygiene practices is essential to reduce the spread of illness.

6 STAY VIGILANT ON THE ROAD

Increased holiday traffic heightens the risk of accidents for both drivers and pedestrians. Distracted driving, pedestrian safety and inclement weather can complicate road safety. Encourage pedestrian safety practices, avoid distracted driving and never drive under the influence.

7 MAINTAIN SAFE DECORATIONS

Festive decorations such as Christmas lights and candles can pose electrical, fire and choking hazards if mishandled. Frayed wires, toppling Christmas trees, small ornaments and open flames can be difficult to control, especially in busy households with children. Inspect and maintain decorations, secure Christmas trees, place fragile or small items out of reach and ensure candles are never left unattended. Testing smoke alarms and using flame-retardant decorations can significantly reduce risks.

8 SET BOUNDARIES FOR GIFTS

Some toys and gadgets can present choking, sharp-edge or safety risks, particularly for young children. Ensuring that gifts meet safety standards and are age appropriate can be complex with so many options available. Inspect all toys carefully and ensure any tech devices have parental controls. Setting expectations around safe gift use and discarding packaging that poses a risk also helps to prevent accidents.

9 ADDRESS STRESS & FATIGUE

Holiday pressures can lead to burnout, which affects both physical and mental health. Overpacked schedules and a lack of downtime can cause stress and fatigue, leading to accidents or poor decision making. Incorporate rest, maintain regular routines and seek support to reduce stress. Encourage activities that promote relaxation to create a healthier, happier holiday experience for everyone.

10 DRINK RESPONSIBLY

Alcohol is commonly present at holiday events, raising concerns about safety and supervision. Excessive alcohol consumption can lead to accidents, impaired judgment and lack of supervision for children. Designate responsible adults, limit consumption and provide transportation alternatives for guests. Teaching moderation and modelling responsible behaviour in front of children ensures that celebrations remain positive and secure.

Meet Our Expert

James Whelan is a chartered health and safety consultant with 10 years of experience in promoting family and community safety. Specialising in risk assessment and preventative strategies, he has worked with educational institutions, public health agencies and community groups to deliver safety education and training.



The National College

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/safety-over-the-festive-season>

@wake_up_weds

/www.thenationalcollege

@wake.up.wednesday

@wake.up.weds

Use well the gifts that God has given you



New or changed dates in **blue**.

Date	Event	Time	Parents Invited
Monday 16.12.24	Christmas Party Day	All Day	No
Tuesday 17.12.24	Pantomime	Morning	No
Wednesday 18.12.24	Christmas Fair	2pm	Yes
Thursday 19.12.24	Carols— <u>In School</u> (Apologies for any confusion here)	9:30am	Yes
Friday 20.12.24	End of Term	3:25pm	-

Spring Diary Dates on the next page!

Use well the gifts that God has given you

Date	Event	Time	Parents Invited
Tuesday 7.1.25	Return to school for Spring 1st Half Term	8:55am	-
Thursday 23.1.25	Coffee Morning - Focus on SEND	9:15am	Yes
Thursday 30.1.25	Year 4 Parent Tables Check Meeting	4pm	Yes
w/b Monday 3.2.25	Children's Mental Health Week	All Week	No
Tuesday 11.2.25	Safer Internet Day	All Day	No
Tuesday 11.2.25	Year 6 Parent SATS Meeting	4pm	Yes
Tuesday 11.2.25	Year 1 Parent Phonics Meeting	3:30pm	Yes
Wednesday 19.2.25	Class 2 RE Topic Liturgy	9:15am	Yes
Friday 21.2.25	Break up for half-term holiday	3:25pm	-
Monday 3.3.25	Return to school for Spring 2nd Half Term	8:55am	-
Thursday 6.3.25	World Book Day: - Non-Uniform and 'Breakfast with a book'	All Day	Yes (8:30—8:55)
w/c Monday 10.3.25	Science Week	All Week	-
Monday 10.3.25	Reception Stay and Discover (Parent and Pupil sessions)	8:55am—10:30am	Yes
Tuesday 11.3.25	Class 4—Learn with me (Parent and Pupil sessions)	1:15pm – 3:25pm	Yes
Wednesday 12.3.25	Class 2—Learn with me (Parent and Pupil sessions)	1:15pm – 3:25pm	Yes
Thursday 13.3.25	Class 3—Learn with me (Parent and Pupil sessions)	1:15pm – 3:25pm	Yes
Friday 14.3.25	CAFOD Family Fast Day	TBC	TBC
Monday 17.3.25	St. Patrick's Day Celebrations: Non-uniform—wear something green	All Day	No
Friday 21.3.25	Interim Reports go out	3:30pm	-
Friday 21.3.25	Comic Relief: non-uniform day	All Day	No
w/c Monday 24.3.25	Parents Evenings	3:40pm - 6:00pm	Yes
Friday 28.3.25	Someone Special Celebration	2:30pm	Yes
Thursday 3.4.25	Easter Choir Concert TBC	4pm	Yes
Friday 11.4.25	Break up for Easter holiday	3:25pm	Yes
Monday 28.4.25	Return to school for Summer Term	8:55am	Yes