

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER



NEWSLETTER DATED FRIDAY 23RD MAY 2025

Dear Families,

As we draw this term to a close, I give thanks for the many blessings we have received as a school community. This has been a time of growth—spiritually, academically, and personally—for all of our pupils. I am continually inspired by their progress, kindness, and commitment to living out their faith.

This term we celebrated key moments in the liturgical year together during Celebration of the Word, Class Prayers, Chapel reflections, Benediction and The Living Rosary. The children have shown reverence and engagement during these times of prayer and reflection. A special thank you to our Chapel Champions, who have guided us in prayer, reflection, and service throughout the term.

As we approach the half term break, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on the significance of this special time—not only as a break from the usual routines but as a precious opportunity to connect more deeply with our children.

The school year is often busy and fast-paced, filled with lessons, activities, and responsibilities for both pupils and parents alike. The holidays offer us a rare chance to slow down and focus on what matters most: family, friendship, and the joy of simply being together.

Spending time with your child doesn't need to involve elaborate plans or expensive outings. Often, the most meaningful moments are found in the simplest activities—a board game played together, a shared story at bedtime, baking biscuits, or going for a walk and talking about the things you see and hear. These shared experiences help children feel valued, loved, and secure, and they play a vital role in their emotional development and wellbeing.

As educators, we often see the positive effects that quality family time has on a child's confidence, resilience, and sense of belonging. During the holidays, when school is paused and schedules are more flexible, we encourage you to make the most of this time—to listen, laugh, and create memories together.

On behalf of all the staff team here, I would like to thank you for your continued support and wish you and your family a joyful, restful, and peaceful holiday.

With every blessing,

Mrs O'Rourke

Headteacher

Dates For Your Diary 2025

Friday 23rd May—Last Day of Term 5

Monday 26th—Friday 30th May—End of Term Holidays

Monday 2nd June—First Day of Term 6

Tuesday 3rd June—EYFS Trip to Longleat

Wednesday 4th June—OPAL Afternoon For Parents 1.40 –3.15pm

Tuesday 10th June—KS1 Trip to Farleigh Hungerford Castle

Friday 13th June—Sports Day

Monday 16th June—Open Day

Tuesday 17th June—Class 8 Mass in Class at 9.05am

Wednesday 18th June—Leavers Mass at Clifton Cathedral

Thursday 19th June—Class and Year 6 Photos

Tuesday 24th June—Class 7 Mass in Class at 9.05am

Friday 27th June—Class 5 Faith Day

Monday 1st July—Moving Up Day/Transition Day to St. Augustines College

Thursday 3rd July—Class 6 Mass in Class at 9.05am

Friday 4th July—Sports Day if 13th June is Cancelled

Friday 11th July—Whole School Pilgrimage to Bradford on Avon

Friday 18th July—End of Academic Mass in St. John's Church at 9.15am

Sunday 20th July—Children's Mass at 10.30am in St. John's Church

Wednesday 23rd July—Year 6 Service of Celebration in School Hall at 2pm

Wednesday 23rd July—Last Day of Term 6

Thursday 24th July—T.D. Day. School is closed to all pupils

Monday 1st September—T.D. Day. School is closed to all pupils

Tuesday 2nd September—T.D. Day. School is closed to all pupils

Wednesday 3rd September—First Day of Term 1 School Year 2025/26

House Saints Afternoon on 6th June 2025—Smithy Cup!

To celebrate our dear friend and former colleague Adrian Smith, children will be taking part in orienteering activities during the afternoon.

Please can pupils come into school wearing their PE kits with their House Saints coloured T shirt.

Leaders in Faith Award.

Congratulations to the following pupils who have earned these awards:

Bronze Award: James S
Brianna B
Nikki O
Ella H
Leo R



Climbing Wall

This week, the children thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the climbing wall activity, which proved to be both exciting and enriching. It was wonderful to see them encouraging one another, showing perseverance and celebrating each other's achievements. At St John's, Catholic Social Teaching is the golden thread that runs through all we do. Before the activity, we shared possible ways in which the children could live these principles out during the experience. You can view the slides that were shared with the children in the attachment.

The climbing wall was a huge success and it was wonderful to see the children demonstrate respect, teamwork and support for their peers - reminding us all of the importance of working together and lifting one another up, both on and off the wall.



Year 5 and EYFS Buddy Morning

FS had a wonderful morning spending time with their year 5 buddy. The year 5's read stories, played games and even heard their FS child read. Lots of fun was had by all.



Living Rosary

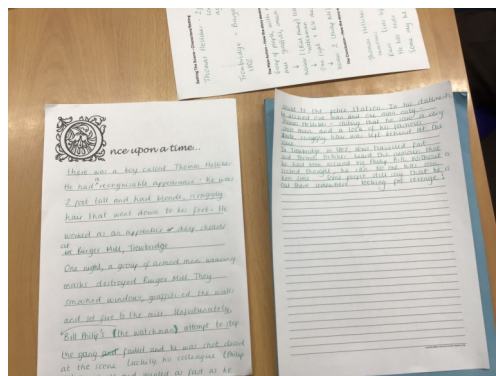
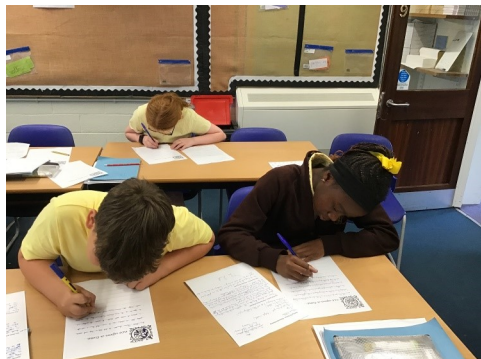
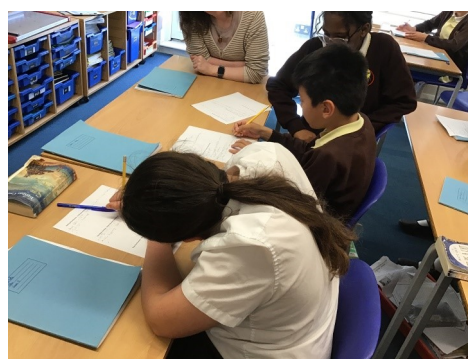
Being May, the month of Mary, children in Years 5 and 6 took part in a beautiful Living Rosary linked to the Jubilee Year of Hope. This special time of prayer was marked by incredible reverence, prayerfulness and a deep sense of reflection from all the children. It was deeply moving to witness their respectful participation as they honoured Mary through the rosary. Several of our Year 6 pupils stood out for their thoughtful leadership, guiding the prayers with confidence and supporting their peers with care. Their example helped to create a calm and spiritual atmosphere, making the Living Rosary a truly meaningful experience for everyone involved.



Class 9 Bring Folklore to Life with Trowbridge Museum!

On Friday 23rd May, Class 9 had the exciting opportunity to welcome Mr Birks from Trowbridge Museum as he trialled a brand new folklore workshop ahead of an upcoming exhibition in July. The session focused on the intriguing story of Thomas Helliker, an apprentice sheep shearer who was hanged after allegedly burning down Littleton Mill in Semington during the Industrial Revolution—a time when fear of machines replacing jobs was on the rise.

Pupils brought this historic tale to life by acting out the events and adding their own weird and wonderful twists to the story. Their creativity and enthusiasm shone through, and they were fantastic ambassadors for our school. We're proud to announce that all of their imaginative re-tellings will be displayed at Trowbridge Museum this summer. Well done, Class 9!



UKS2 Visit Trowbridge Library!

On Wednesday 21st May, UKS2 pupils enjoyed an exciting visit to Trowbridge Library. Welcomed by the friendly, Tracy, children learned about the joy of reading and the benefits of owning a FREE library card – allowing them to borrow up to 12 books at a time! Pupils explored the shelves with curiosity and enthusiasm, many choosing to borrow books right away. Several took the opportunity to read at the library itself, finding quiet corners to dive into their chosen stories. It was a brilliant trip that sparked a real buzz for books!



Taster Sessions for Year 5 Pupils at St. Augustine's Catholic College

If your child would like to attend one of the Year 5 Taster sessions at St Augustine's Catholic College, please complete the form below. They run in the mornings from 23rd—26th June.

<https://forms.office.com/e/U2KmUkfjKq>

After you have booked a place, please can you let the office know so we are aware of their absence on that day. Thank you. Your child will be expected back in school in the afternoon.

The College hope that you will be able to go and see what they have to offer at St Augustine's.

Skipping workshops

This week, all classes had an exciting and energetic time working with Skippy John, who brought skipping to life in the most engaging way! From learning new skipping techniques to building confidence and coordination, the children threw themselves into every session with enthusiasm and determination. It was wonderful to see them encouraging each other, celebrating their progress, and most importantly - having fun while keeping active.

Quad Kids

Ten talented athletes from Years 5 and 6 proudly represented our school at the Quad Kids athletics competition held at Bath University this week. Competing against ten other large schools from across Wiltshire, our team took part in four challenging events: the 75m sprint, vortex throw, standing long jump, and a demanding 600m run. Every child gave their all, showing incredible determination, sportsmanship, and team spirit. We are thrilled to share that their hard work paid off—we finished in second place and have now qualified for the finals day at Dauntsey School! A huge well done to our amazing athletes - you've done us proud!



In last Friday's whole school assembly, we learnt how to stay safe in and around water by looking at the Water Safety Code. The children were very knowledgeable and were acting out the Catholic Social Teaching of their rights and responsibilities, learning how to be safe and responsible near water and how we can look out for others.

With the weather getting hotter and the water calling our names, please watch the short video (linked below) with your families to recap this life saving message.

Thank you!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwzB7So7jSM>

OPAL Updates

It's been another incredible term for all things OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) and the children have risen to new challenges and additions to play with confidence, collaboration and joy.

This term we've enjoyed adding slack lines, a potions lab and tyres and cable drums – all of which are being played with wonderfully.

We believe in giving children of all ages a wide range of opportunities to continue developing their social, emotional and physical skills, which is why we're committed to making play times amazing for every child every day.

Please join us on Wednesday 4th June with a loose part or a donation towards sand to hear more about OPAL and to have a play with your child in our fantastic school grounds.

Golden Welly Award

Congratulations to Zofia and Maya for being last week's Golden Welly Award winners for showing stewardship of the Earth by conserving water very maturely!

Congratulations also to Reggie and Dougie in Class 6 for winning this week's Golden Welly Award! This was for using their playtime to support their peers by making a den to cheer up another person.



May Procession and Crowning 2025



On Sunday morning 32 of us, families and parishioners, gathered outside St John's Catholic Primary School and prayed the first Glorious Mystery, the Resurrection of Jesus. We prayed our second decade, the Ascension of Jesus into Heaven, on the green by the housing estate and

offered our prayers for all the people in our town. This was led by the Nash family. Jesus, for the staff, pupils and families of the St John's Community. The Oakes family led us in French and we responded in English, praying an Our Father, ten Hails Marys and a Glory Be. Our Children's Rosary banner led the procession as we sang Ave Maria

and the children scattered rose petals ahead of the statue of Our Lady as we walked and sang.



We prayed our third decade, the Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, in front of St Augustine's Catholic College as we asked our Blessed Mother to pray for all of the staff, students and families. The Micenic family led this decade of the rosary in Latin, the universal language of the Church. We then sang "As I kneel before you" as we processed down to the church. It felt really special to take our prayers and hymns out into the community and share our joy with whomever we passed.



The Marra family led our fourth decade, the Assumption of Our Lady into Heaven, outside St John the Baptist church, and we offered this decade for our country and the world. It was wonderful to be joined by parishioners gathering for Mass.



The children then processed so reverently into Mass, offering flowers at Our Lady's altar. Those parishioners sat inside the church joined us in singing Ave Maria. We

kneelt in front of the altar and placed Our Lady close to the Tabernacle. The Briddon family led our final decade, Our Lady is Crowned Queen of Heaven, in Polish. We offered this decade for our parish family. The children led us in singing



the Salve Regina (Hail Holy Queen—a prayer that concludes the rosary). I felt very emotional at this beautiful moment of prayer. The children gave an amazing witness to the parish of their faith and joy in honouring Our Holy Mother in Heaven and we felt enormous support from our parish community. The children were a credit to themselves and their families.



At the end of mass Father Richard offered prayers and incense to Our Lady and invited Angela, one of our youngest members, to place a crown of flowers on Our Lady.

After Mass the children enjoyed chocolate treats and special Our Lady lollipops, provided by the Turner family.



Birthdays

During Celebration Assembly or in the classrooms, we celebrated all children who have had birthdays and presented them with a St. John's birthday pencil..

Pupils

Douglas F	Lilly S	Mia S
Aurelia G	Filip S	Michelle I
Charlie N	Vrithiha VH N	Reggie C
Sophia E	Aidan J	Maisie H



Wednesday Word

Please find below the link to last week's copy of the **Wednesday Word** which can be copied and pasted into your browser. Last week's word was LOVE.

<https://www.paperturn-view.com/wednesday-word/good-news?pid=MTA101634&v=163.4>

Please find below the link to this week's copy of the **Wednesday Word** which can be copied and pasted into your browser. This is the holiday booklet.

<https://www.paperturn-view.com/wednesday-word/holiday-booklet?pid=MTA101634&v=167.5>

We hope you enjoy sharing the Bible Scripture together with your child.

Learning About Judaism

KS1 will be learning about Judaism next term. We would like to listen to the experiences of Jewish people and ask them some questions about their faith. If anyone has any local friends that could support us with our learning, please could they contact the school office?

Determined Admissions Policy

The new Determined Admissions Policy for 2026-27 is available to read on the school website. You can find it under [Parents >>> Prospective Parents](#)

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about MINECRAFT



WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Still the best-selling game of all time, Minecraft is a bastion of creativity and community, with hundreds of millions of players building and crafting in its almost endless world. The popularity of Minecraft among gamers of all ages means it's important to remain informed about the game, including how to play it safely and whether it's suitable for the children in your care. That's why we've created this guide explaining the risks associated with Minecraft and how to ensure a purely enjoyable gaming experience.

SCARY ELEMENTS

While Minecraft can be seen as a kind of 'digital LEGO', certain game modes include creatures accompanied by eerie sound effects. These can be a bit too frightening for some younger players, potentially leading to distressing in-game combat and other encounters – although the combat is quite basic and free from any real depiction of violence.

GRIEFING

Some players in Minecraft take pleasure in deliberately damaging or destroying another person's creations. This behaviour, known as 'griefing', is a form of bullying – it intentionally ruins someone else's experience by erasing hours of their work and forcing them to start over. Many public servers regard griefing as a serious offence and often ban those who engage in it.

ADDICTIVENESS

Minecraft's focus on creativity means that, as with any creative endeavour, it can be easy to get carried away. If your child is finding it difficult to manage their time because they're drawn in by Minecraft's gameplay loop of resource gathering and building elaborate projects, it could have a knock-on effect on their social interactions and schoolwork.

PUBLIC SERVERS AND COMMUNICATIONS

With public servers being so easily accessible in Minecraft, it's highly likely that children will end up chatting with strangers through the in-game text chat. Some servers even place an emphasis on social interaction, actively encouraging communication between players. While there's nothing inherently wrong with this, it does carry certain risks. In addition to the concerns around speaking with strangers online, players who host their own servers may have their IP addresses exposed, posing a further security concern.

ADDITIONAL PURCHASES

Minecraft is available as a free trial on a variety of devices; however, the full game requires a one-off purchase, which is typically around £15. After that, players have the option to buy additional cosmetic upgrades or subscribe to Minecraft Realms. Realms is an entirely optional subscription service that allows users to run their own private server to play with friends. Without proper supervision, younger players may end up making unintended or excessive purchases.

Advice for Parents & Educators

CHOOSE THE RIGHT MODE

Selecting Creative or Peaceful mode allows children to play Minecraft without having to contend with enemies. It's also a great way for you to get used to playing the game with them, since the difficulty level is far lower. This allows you to work together on a long-term project, creating something special without the threat of enemies and creatures hurting you or damaging your building.

HOST A PRIVATE SERVER

The easiest way to find a safe server for children to play on is to make one yourself. Hosting a server prevents strangers from finding it, unless they've been given its address and password. A private server also lets you control who's allowed to enter and – if necessary – ban anyone who shouldn't be there. This is the closest equivalent to parental controls in Minecraft. Hosting a private server, however, will cost a monthly fee.

TALK ABOUT STRANGERS

At some point in their lives, almost everyone will make contact with a stranger online. Talking to children about online safety, therefore, is essential – as is having a plan for dealing with any hostile or difficult people. It's important that a child knows never to tell a stranger about themselves online and that they should come to you straight away if they do encounter a problem.

RESEARCH CONTENT CREATORS

Much of Minecraft's early stages can be an exercise in frustration for players who don't know where to start. Thankfully, there's a wealth of material online and in video format to help you learn the basics. Just be mindful that some of this content may not be appropriate for children, so you should consider watching it yourself first.

PLAY MINECRAFT WITH YOUR CHILD

As a creative building tool, Minecraft makes it great fun for children to team up and construct vast buildings accompanied by imaginative landscapes, much like working with LEGO or model kits. Playing in a game mode that includes enemies can encourage critical thinking and teamwork; however, you should consider which game mode is appropriate for the child in your care.

Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is Gaming Editor at the Daily Star, and has worked in games media for more than 6 years. A long-time gaming enthusiast, he is also a parent and therefore a keen advocate of online safety for children of all ages.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about VIOLENT CONTENT ONLINE

Around 70% of teenagers say they've seen real-life violence on social media in the past year – often from as young as primary school age. Just 6% actively seek it out; most encounter it through group chats or social media algorithms. From fights and pranks to hate speech and graphic media, exposure to violent content online is more widespread – and more harmful – than many adults realise.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

MENTAL HEALTH AND TRAUMA

Children and young people report feelings of anxiety, guilt, shame or fear after seeing violent content. For some, these effects may be short term, but for those with existing vulnerabilities or past trauma, the impact can be more severe. Many also feel pressured to 'laugh off' violent content to fit in with friends, even when they find it distressing.

BEHAVIOUR CHANGES

Exposure to online violence can lead to fear and avoidance behaviours – such as skipping school or staying indoors. When children see weapons used in videos, it can heighten their perception that the world is unsafe and, in rare cases, increase the likelihood they'll consider carrying a weapon themselves, such as a knife for protection.

ESCALATION AND PARTICIPATION

Violent videos often go viral quickly. What begins as an online argument can spill into real-world fights – which are sometimes filmed and shared to gain views or status. Some children even admit to sharing or creating violent content themselves to gain attention or boost their reputation.

DESENSITISATION

Older teens may become numb to violent content after years of exposure, admitting they're unlikely to report it. Younger children also tend not to report it – usually because they don't believe anything will be done or because they're afraid of being labelled a 'snitch' by their peers.

HARMFUL IDEOLOGIES

Violent content online may overlap with racist, misogynistic or otherwise extremist ideas. These messages can dehumanise others or glorify violence as a way to gain power, popularity or notoriety. Over time, this can normalise dangerous behaviours and attitudes among impressionable viewers.

DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT

Not all children are affected equally. Those who are excluded from school, marginalised, disabled or neurodivergent are often more vulnerable to the effects of online violence. It's essential to consider wider context – including home life and access to safe spaces – when thinking about potential harm.

Advice for Parents & Educators

CREATE SUPPORTIVE SPACES

Many children feel adults are too busy or won't understand their experiences online. Take time to build trust through non-judgemental conversations about what they're seeing. If they don't want to speak to you directly, gently signpost towards trusted services they can turn to for support.

KNOW WHAT'S ILLEGAL

Some violent content is simply upsetting, while other examples may be criminal or a safeguarding matter that needs reporting. Help children understand the difference by staying informed about online laws and social media reporting procedures. A useful resource is reporttharmfulcontent.com.

AVOID HARSH RESTRICTIONS

Fear of punishment is a major reason young people stay silent about violent content. Try not to overreact or threaten to take away devices. Instead, reassure children that they can speak openly and that asking for help won't get them into trouble.

UNDERSTAND TECH AND TRAUMA

Older children may already know how to block accounts or avoid triggering content. Help younger or more vulnerable children learn these tools and encourage habits that reduce exposure. Just as importantly, teach techniques that help them process distress – building resilience and emotional literacy for both online and offline life.

Meet Our Expert

Dr. Holly Powell-Jones is the founder of Online Media Law UK and a leading UK expert in digital safety, media law, and young people. Her PhD investigates children's understandings of risk online. She works with schools, businesses, and universities to provide award-winning education on the criminal, legal, and ethical considerations for the digital age. Visit onlinemedialawuk.com for more.



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