



St. Columba's Catholic Primary School

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Headteacher: Miss. R. Quinn



Iona Star – 14th February 2025

St Columba's Families,

It's been an egg-citing week at St Columba's with the arrival of 10 baby chicks! The children have loved watching them hatch on our live stream – the roar of excitement when the final chick was born was like the winning goal of a football match! We've got one more week with the chicks before they go to their new home next Friday.



We were also lucky enough to have Bishop Stephen visit St Columba's on Thursday. He was visiting all three Catholic schools within the parish and will be in attendance at the weekend masses at St Columba's, St Aidan's and St Bernadette's. The children all got the chance to ask him questions and there were some great ones, including:

Do you like being the Bishop? What is your favourite part of your job?
Is it nerve wracking to be the Bishop? How did you feel when you got the job?
Can you do miracles, like Jesus did?

On Monday, KS2 also had a visit from BigFoot Arts who talked to us all about internet safety during their fun filled assembly! It made us think about words that we use online, how consent works, the dangers of online bullying and 'protecting your reputation'. This was all part of our work around Safer Internet Day.



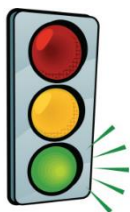
On Wednesday, a Y5/6 team visited St Thomas More to take part in a hockey family festival with other local Catholic primary schools. Well done to all of the team, you played brilliantly!

Below, you will find key information and dates for the rest of this term. New dates are added in yellow for ease. Also attached to the Iona Star is a guide for staff and parents, this week the focus is on 'Smartphone Safety Tips' for young people. This one is perfect to share with children at home!

If you have any questions about anything in the newsletter, or if there are is anything that we can help with, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Take care, Miss Quinn

Attendance and Punctuality



Our whole school attendance from Reception to Year 6 for this week has been **93 %**. We are in the **amber zone** and we are not quite meeting our targets set by the Department for Education (96%).

We are, however, delighted to announce that Year 5 are the winners of our attendance trophy with an attendance of 99.6% this week. Congratulations!

Stay and Play – Nursery and Reception

Thank you to family members from Nursery and Reception who stayed for the first lesson of the day this week! We hope you enjoyed seeing what your children get up to in our Early Years setting. Please could we ask for feedback using the link below:

<https://forms.office.com/e/5U7Hq9xwgX>



Wellbeing Hub



Through our partnerships with Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust, we are pleased to be able to offer all parents, staff and children aged +10 access to a wealth of information through The Wellbeing Hub.

Positive mental health is fundamental to young people's ability to thrive and make the most of the opportunities available to them while at school. By collaborating with The Wellbeing Hub, we aim to equip all our staff and parents with the knowledge, understanding, and strategies to support our pupils effectively.

To register, please use this link or QR code.

<https://club.teentips.co.uk/register/parents/?ca=1b5372e0e7384-337b68bf150a0f7c597>

Pharmacy First

Attached to the Iona Star is information from NHS which we have been asked to circulate about the changing role of pharmacies within our local area. If in doubt, please contact or visit your local pharmacy for support.



Bullying and Behaviour

At St Columba's, our ethos ensures that we promote a caring, loving and safe environment for all. We want our pupils to feel secure, valued and respected.

We encourage children and parents to report any suspected bullying immediately to school. Bullying is not tolerated, and we aim to deal with incidents of bullying quickly and efficiently.

Any reported incidents of bullying are formally investigated by a member of the senior management team. Usually, the first step is to monitor and record interactions for a minimum of two weeks. Parents of all children will be informed. We aim to work together with pupils, parents and carers to resolve and prevent future incidents of bullying.

Bullying is serious. It is not typical or unintended behaviour. We teach children the following definition of bullying, and would encourage parents to reinforce this at home:

Bullying is:

- a sustained or repeated action taken by one or more children, with deliberate intent to harm.

Bullying is not:

- one off, rude or mean behaviour. Whilst this is sometimes hurtful to an individual, it is not bullying if it is not repeated over time and deliberately intended to harm.

Further information can be found in our anti-bullying policies on the website: [Policies | St Columba's](#). We have a version of our policy for adults and a version of our policy for children.

Ten Ten Parent Newsletter

Ten:Ten
Resources

You can access the latest parental newsletter from Ten Ten which shares the key messages, prayers and opportunities for worship at home by clicking this link <https://www.tentenresources.co.uk/prayers-for-home/parent-newsletter/>

Diary Dates for Parents – Spring 2024

(new dates added in yellow)

Saturday 15th February – Fr David has requested that all children taking part in the Sacramental Preparation for their First Holy Communion attend Mass at St Columba's on this date.

Tuesday 18th February – North Tyneside Dance Festival. Year 1 parents should have their tickets by now. We hope you are looking forward to the event!

new Tuesday 18th February – Year 2 will be visiting Eotheon Homes to meet some of the residents and talk about their learning.

Friday 21st February – Reception class assembly at 9.15am. Family members are welcome to the school hall.

Friday 21st February – School closes for half term

Monday 3rd March – School reopens following half term

Thursday 6th March – World Book Day. More information to follow.

Thursday 13th March – Year 5 and Year 6 will be attending Whitley Bay Playhouse to see St Thomas More's production of 'High School Musical'

Thursday 13th March – Reception class are being visited by dental students to complete a 'Brush Up!' session about oral hygiene.

WB Monday 17th March – Assessment week. Year 2 – Year 6 will take part in internal assessments during this week within their classrooms.

Thursday 20th March – National Child Height and Weight Measurement Programme for Reception and Year 6

new Friday 21st March – Year 3 are visiting the Laing Art gallery

Wednesday 26th March – SEND parent review meetings with Mrs Harman. These appointments will be available to book via SchoolCloud two weeks before the date.

Monday 31st March and Wednesday 2nd April – Parents evening appointments will be available from 3.30pm – 6.00pm. These appointments will be available to book via SchoolCloud two weeks before the date.

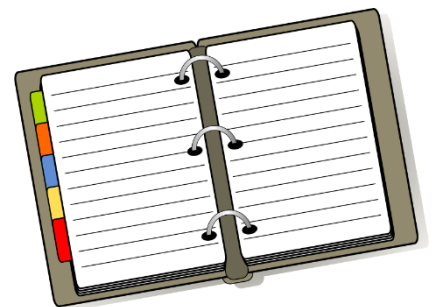
Thursday 3rd April – Children in Year 4 will attend Mass at St Columba's and then make their Sacrament of Reconciliation

new Friday 4th April – Mellors Catering 'Smoothie Bike' will be visiting school – children will have to pedal to create their own smoothie!

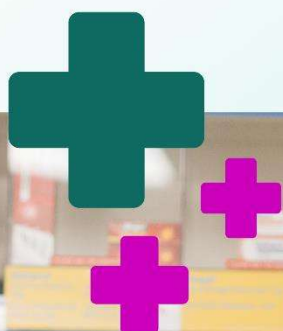
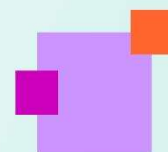
Wednesday 9th April – Whole school Mass at 2.15pm in the hall. Family members are welcome, please book a space with the school office

Thursday 10th April – school closes to pupils for the Easter holidays

Friday 11th April – Staff training day



At Wallsend Pharmacy, we can help you with seven common conditions



- **Sinusitis**
(adults and children aged 12 years and over)
- **Sore throat**
(adults and children aged 5 years and over)
- **Earache**
(Children aged 1 year to 17 years)
- **Infected insect bite**
(adults and children aged 1 year and over)
- **Impetigo**
(adults and children aged 1 year and over)
- **Shingles**
(adults aged 18 years and over)
- **Urinary tract infection**
(women, aged 16 to 64 years)



Ask us for more information about this free* NHS service

Visit your Pharmacy First!

*NHS prescription charge rules apply where a medicine is supplied



SMARTPHONE SAFETY TIPS

for young people

You may have been lucky enough to have unwrapped a smartphone at Christmas, or you might be eagerly anticipating getting a new one at some point during this year. Whether it'll be your first ever phone or an upgrade on your old model, it's always useful to have a refresher about how to set it up and adjust the settings to keep yourself – and your valuable personal info – safe and secure. We've collected some expert tips to help you enjoy your smartphone in the healthiest way possible.

NEVER SHARE YOUR PASSCODE

Alongside face or fingerprint recognition, your passcode is crucial to unlocking your phone and accessing your apps and personal information. You shouldn't give it out, even to close friends – after all, you wouldn't hand them a key to your house and let them go in for a nosy around! If a friend wants to use your phone, ask them why and make sure you can see what they're doing with it.

RESPECT PARENTAL CONTROLS

If you're allowed to have a smartphone, it's because your parents or carers feel that you're mature and responsible enough to use it safely. They might set controls and boundaries on your device – not to spoil your fun but to help you avoid hazards like too much screen time or costly in-app purchases. Following these rules means you can enjoy using your phone while respecting their wishes.

TALK TO A TRUSTED ADULT

Whether it's to listen to music, play games, create content or chat with friends, using a smartphone should be fun. If you're ever feeling anxious, worried or scared about going on your phone, then something isn't right. It's important not to ignore these feelings; instead, talk to a trusted adult about what's happening and how it's making you feel.

STAY ALERT

Two words: look up. It might sound obvious, but it's so easy to get immersed in what we're looking at or listening to on our phones that we can become unaware of our surroundings – or who might be around us. People often walk with their head down, focusing on their phone, and forget to check for obstacles in their path, cars or other pedestrians coming towards them, which is clearly dangerous.

DEVELOP HEALTHY HABITS

Phones offer a vast amount of content and the chance to chat with friends whenever we feel like it, which can make it difficult to take time away from the screen. If that's something you struggle with, you could try setting time limits on certain apps. Putting our phones down for a while gives us more time to interact with others or do something physical that helps keep us fit and healthy.

IGNORE UNKNOWN NUMBERS

There are some scammers who might call or text asking you to share personal data or to click on a link and provide your details. Some may claim to be from a genuine company, but trustworthy businesses don't spontaneously call or message to ask for your information. It's safest to ignore calls or texts from unknown numbers, and never give your personal details out over the phone.

ONLY USE AGE-APPROPRIATE APPS

Before downloading a new app or game, check what age rating it has. Don't feel pressured into getting a particular game or app just because your friends are using it. If it's intended for older people, there's a definite risk that it could include content (which is violent or frightening, for instance) or language which isn't suitable and may leave you feeling upset or disturbed.

REMOVE TEMPTATION

A good night's sleep is so important for concentration, mood and overall health. Unwinding properly before going to bed – which means not staring at a screen late at night – can often improve sleep quality. Put your phone on charge overnight, but not in your room. This means you'll have a lot less temptation to check any notifications, reply to messages or get caught up scrolling on social media.

THINK ABOUT OTHERS

Watching videos, listening to music or calling someone can all help to pass the time while we're on the bus, waiting in a queue or walking down the street. It's important to remain mindful of other people, though: they might not want to hear your tunes or your conversation. Likewise, if you're calling from a public place then don't forget that anyone could overhear something personal about you.

SWITCH OFF GEOLOCATION

In your phone's settings, you'll be able to disable geolocation for individual apps and photos: this means that people online (including strangers) can't see information about where you are when you share or post a pic. On the subject of images, it's also important to ask permission before taking or sharing a photo of someone – and don't share embarrassing images of your friends with others.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



The National College

NOS National Online Safety®
#WakeUpWednesday