



St. Columba's Catholic Primary School

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Iona Star – 17th January 2025

St Columba's Families,

We hope that you have had a good week!

This morning, Year 2 led their parents in a wonderful assembly which included the story of Martha and Mary inviting Jesus to their house. They acted and sang beautifully – thank you to all of the family members who came to support them.

It's been great to see some families trialling our new sports hoodies – keep an eye out and you might spot the staff in them too!

On Tuesday, we had a fire drill and all evacuated the building in record time. Well done to the children for being so sensible.

Below, you will find key information and dates for the upcoming 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 TikTok.

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

Take care and have a lovely weekend,

Miss Quinn



Attendance and Punctuality



Our whole school attendance from Reception to Year 6 for this week has been **96 %**. We are in the **green zone** and we are meeting our targets set by the Department for Education (96%). What a great start to the year!

We are, delighted to announce that Reception winners of our attendance trophy with an attendance of 99% this week. Congratulations!

Parent Coffee Morning

Parents and family members are welcome to come into the school hall after drop off at 9am on Friday 24th January. Members of the staff leadership team and our parent governor will be available to discuss school life including feedback, concerns, queries or ask any questions. There will be tea, coffee, cake and biscuits so feel free to pop in, even just to warm up before you head home!



Children's Online Safety

At the start of each half term, children in each class participate in online safety sessions through a scheme called ProjectEvolve.

Some staff have shared concerns around children chatting to strangers online via gaming platforms. There have also been discussion in some classrooms around ensuring that people online are who they say they are and how we never share our personal information, even if we think it might be someone that we know.



Please could we ask parents to talk to their children about the dangers of talking to others online. Could we also remind parents of the benefits of regularly checking parental permissions on gaming devices and mobiles.

If you ever need any support with this, we would be more than happy to help. Please just pop to see us at the school office – you are welcome to bring any devices with you.

Resources for families: Racism, Diversity and Promoting Equality

Following successful workshops, activities and discussions with pupils in Autumn Term 2024, and as a result of parent voice, we would like to encourage all parents to continue the conversation with their children at home around diversity, stereotypes and the promotion of equality. We know that sometimes this can be daunting, so we would like to provide the following links which offer helpful tips, starting points for discussion and how to tackle these issues with younger children:

Young Minds - <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/racism-and-mental-health/>

NSPCC - <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/children-race-racism-racial-bullying/>

Childline - <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/your-rights/understand-me/>

BBC (for use with younger children) - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/how-to-talk-to-young-child-about-race-racism/zrgcf82>





A Special Request from Nursery

Nursery love feeding the wildlife in our school grounds. They are asking for donations of food (seeds or fat balls) to put out for the birds and the squirrels.

Any donations would be gratefully received by the children in Nursery and handed to Miss O'Connor at the Nursery door. Thank you.

Ten Ten Parent Newsletter

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/>

Ten:Ten
Resources

Permissions, Data Collection and New Devices

We know that many children, or family members, may have received new devices for Christmas.

Please could we remind you to update any contact details for key family members via the school office so that you continue to receive key information, or emergency contact details remain up to date.

If any children in Y5 or Y6 have a mobile phone that they will now be bringing to school, we do ask that you carefully read our policy guidelines and give your permission by contacting the school office who will send you the appropriate links.

Please note that, unless there are exceptional circumstances, we do not allow pupils in Y4 or below to bring a mobile device to school. Thank you.

Diary Dates for Parents – Spring 2024

(new dates added in yellow)

Friday 24th January – Year 6 class visit to SafetyWorks Newcastle

Friday 24th January – Parent Coffee Morning. Parents are welcome to come into the school hall after drop off at 9am. Members of the staff leadership team and governors will be available to discuss school life including feedback, concerns, queries or ask any questions. There will be tea, coffee, cake and biscuits so feel free to pop in!

Friday 24th January – Year of Jubilee Launch for schools. A Jubilee Year is celebrated by the Church every 25 years. The theme is Pilgrims of Hope. Pope Francis has invited Catholics to renew our hope and discover a vision that can "restore access to the fruits of the earth to everyone".

Friday 31st January –Year 1 class assembly at 9.15am. Family members are welcome to the school hall.

Maths in Action Workshops. Family members are welcome to attend on the mornings listed below to take part in a Maths lesson with their child. Due to space, this is limited to one family member per child.

Y5/6 – **Monday 3rd February** at 9.15am

Y1/2 – **Tuesday 4th February** at 9.15am

Y3/4 – **Wednesday 5th February** at 9.15am

Wednesday 5th February – Northumbria Police will be visiting children in Y5/6 to deliver a session on 'County Lines'

Stay and Play. Family members are welcome to attend on the mornings listed below to take part in a morning session with their child. Due to space, this is limited to one family member per child.

Nursery – **Wednesday 12th February** at 9.15am

Reception – **Thursday 13th February** at 9.15am

Monday 10th February – Living Eggs experience will be visiting St Columba's. The school community will be able to watch eggs hatch into live baby chicks over the following two weeks.

Monday 10th February – Internet Safety Workshops will be delivered for all classes from BigFoot Arts. These sessions will remind children about staying safe online and using devices appropriately.

Tuesday 11th February – Reception class are being visited by dental students to complete a 'Brush Up!' session about oral hygiene.

Friday 14th February – Bishop Stephen is visiting St Columba's school, as well as the other two Catholic primaries of our parish family.

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 will be welcome attend. Further information to follow.

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.

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 Measurement Programme for Reception and Year 6

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

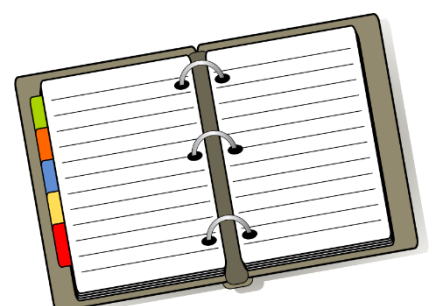
Monday 31st March and Wednesday 2nd April – Parents evening appointments will be available from 3.30pm – 6.00pm. These appointments will be available to book via SchoolCloud two weeks before the date.

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

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



What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

TIKTOK

AGE RESTRICTION

13+

(Certain features are restricted to over-18s only)

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Adults tend to associate online videos with YouTube – but among teens, TikTok is king. The app provides a stream of short clips tailored to users' interests, based on what they've already watched. Around half of British children use TikTok, and while much of the content is benign, Ofcom considers it the app where youngsters "were most likely to encounter a potential harm".

AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

While TikTok's Following feed only displays videos from familiar creators, For You is a collection based on a user's previously watched clips. Most of these videos will probably be inoffensive, but the app *could* potentially show something unsuitable. If children then engage with this content, more like it will follow. TikTok's guidelines prohibit the sharing of illegal or inappropriate content, but the huge number of uploads means that a small amount inevitably slips through.

BODY IMAGE AND DANGEROUS CHALLENGES

According to Ofcom, most online harms for teens are body image related for girls (promoting unhealthy eating, body shaming and so on) and dangerous stunts for boys. Both are prevalent on TikTok. One extreme example of the latter was the 'blackout' trend, which encouraged users to hold their breath until they passed out from a lack of oxygen. This led to two families filing lawsuits against TikTok over the tragic deaths of their children.

IN-APP SPENDING

TikTok is free, but users have the option to buy TikTok coins, which can be used to purchase gifts for content creators. Coin bundles range from £9.99 to an eye-watering £99; while that may not sound appealing, the app still generated £7.9 billion in user spending in 2023. TikTok's policy is that under-18s can't make in-app purchases, but it's possible to bypass this with a fake birth date.

CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

With more than 1.5 billion users globally, the potential for contact from strangers on TikTok is high – especially as accounts created by over-16s (or young people using a fake date of birth) are set to public by default. This means that not only is someone's profile visible to everyone else on the app, it also suggests their videos to others and enables *anyone* to download or comment on them.

MISINFORMATION AND RADICALISATION

Although the short videos on TikTok tend to be more frivolous than the longer ones on YouTube, clips can still influence impressionable minds in a negative way. Not only is there plenty of dangerous misinformation on TikTok, but Ofcom reports that nearly a third of 12 to 15-year-olds use TikTok as a news source – so you should be wary of misogynistic, racist or conspiracy-themed material shaping how they see the world.

ADDICTIVE DESIGN

With its constant stream of eye-catching videos, TikTok can be addictive to young brains. In 2024, UK children spent an average of 127 minutes per day on the app: that's twice as much as in 2020. Excessive use can interfere with young people's sleep patterns – often leading to irritability – and distract them from other, healthier activities. The instantly skippable nature of bite-size videos may also impact children's ability to maintain focus.

Advice for Parents & Educators

ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING

Family Pairing allows parents to link their TikTok account to their child's, and control settings remotely. Parents can then turn on Restricted Mode (reducing the chances of a child seeing inappropriate content), set screen-time limits, make accounts private and manage whether their child can send messages – and if they can, to whom. Children can't alter these settings without parental approval.

DISCUSS THE DANGERS

If a child wants to use TikTok and you're happy for them to do so, it's good practice to discuss the potential risks. Ensure that they don't share any identifying personal information, and that they know to talk to a trusted adult if they're worried by interactions on the app. With more teens using TikTok for news, it's also worth talking about misinformation and propaganda, and how to identify it.

BLOCK IN-APP SPENDING

If a child is using an iPhone or Android device to access TikTok, you can alter their settings to prevent them from making in-app purchases. We'd recommend enabling this feature, as it can be quite easy for a young person to spend a significant amount of real money buying TikTok coins to unlock more features of the app – sometimes without even realising.

READ THE SIGNS

If you're concerned that a child is spending too much time on TikTok, or that they've been emotionally affected by something they've seen, it's important to know how to spot the signs. Increased irritability and a lack of concentration are potential red flags, as is failing to complete homework or skipping meals. Remember, the parental controls are there for a reason, and it's never too late to introduce limits.

Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, TechRadar, Tom's Guide, The Evening Standard and The New Statesman.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College



2025

FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT

SATURDAY

9:30 – 10:30

STARTS JANUARY 11TH

FOOTBALL TRAINING SESSIONS FOR CHILDREN AGED 5, 6, AND 7 WITH SPECIFIC FOOTBALL SKILLS, SEEKING TO JOIN OUR TEAMS. PLEASE WEAR APPROPRIATE CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR FOR THE 3G PITCH. OUR COACHES ARE EXPERIENCED AND UEFA QUALIFIED.



**FOR
ALL**

