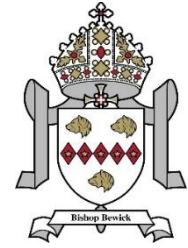


St. Columba's Catholic Primary School

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Headteacher: Miss. R. Quinn



Iona Star – 24th January 2025

St Columba's Families,

We hope that you have had a good week and have been able to stay safe in the winds!

This week, we welcomed a new member of staff, Mrs Feehan, who has joined us as a lunchtime supervisor. The children have enjoyed introducing themselves to her and we look forward to working with her!

This morning, Year 6 enjoyed a visit to SafetyWorks where they participated safely in realistic situations illustrating every day hazards and how to prevent them.

This afternoon, we have met as a whole school to share 'good work' certificates and take part in the Year of Jubilee launch – more information can be found later on in the newsletter.

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 Justalk for Kids.

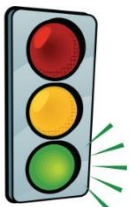
If you have any questions about anything in the newsletter, or if there are is anything that we can help with, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Take care and have a lovely weekend,

Miss Quinn



Attendance and Punctuality



Our whole school attendance from Reception to Year 6 for this week has been 95 %. 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 winners of our attendance trophy with an attendance of 99% this week. Congratulations!

Parent Coffee Morning

A huge thank you to the parents who stayed this morning after drop off to discuss school life, any potential concerns and raise questions which we were able to, hopefully, answer or action.



It was extremely useful to sit and listen to a cross section of parents discuss their views and offer feedback. Please see the next few notices below for issues which we discussed, which was felt might be helpful to share with the whole school community:

1. New School Building

School have a meeting with the DfE next week to discuss details of the project. We hope to be able to share more information with you then. However, to clarify, the old building will be demolished alongside the construction of the new building so that the project is sustainable. It also ensures that children have access to a greater amount of outdoor space for as long as possible, until the project is underway. When the project is underway, the construction and demolition sites will be secured so that pupils are able to remain on school grounds safely.

2. Communication with Parents

As a result of parent voice, staff at St Columba's are going to, whenever possible, inform parents of incidents which occur at school before 3.30pm. We appreciate that, at times, it is challenging for parents when children leave school upset and that it would be helpful if parents had the full facts/context of a situation before picking their children up from school.

As you can appreciate, at times, the class teacher may not be the one able to make this call before 3.30pm as they may be teaching – this may come from a member of office staff. Therefore, we would always encourage parents who wish to seek further clarity, raise an issue or discuss a concern to come to the main office or telephone us. We are always more than happy to meet with parents or discuss incidents further to give parents greater confidence in the outcome, steps taken or context of a specific incident.

3. Playtimes and Lunchtimes

As a result of pupil voice, the School Council have been given a budget to purchase some new playground items to enhance experiences at break and lunchtimes. The children were delighted with this and School Council representatives are currently canvassing pupil opinion before placing an order with Mrs Wallace in the school office.

We know that many pupils want to see the return of football and there are plans for landscaping and reseeding of grassed areas later in the Spring term when hopefully this will become a possibility again.

4. Extracurricular Opportunities

We are passionate about offering children extra opportunities. We continue to offer sports clubs, choir, drama club, Lego League and choir. We also know that 'Calm Kids' and YMCA have both been popular clubs in the Autumn Term. In the next half term, we hope to offer new opportunities and are, again, collecting pupil voice on this matter.

We can reassure parents that, even though Mrs Iliadou is no longer at St Columba's, we are committed to giving children opportunities with sport and would like to reintroduce football training as soon as the weather becomes warmer and certain opportunities, such as Lego League, are finished.

Resources for families: Racism, Diversity and Promoting Equality

Following successful workshops, activities and discussions with pupils in the 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>



Year of Jubilee Launch



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".

The children watched the launch video and discussed some of the events that will take place across 2025 including an art competition, poems, prayers and missions which will involve us working together with Catholics across the world to bring hope to each other in small ways, to make a big difference.

The Jubilee Prayer

Father in heaven,
may the *faith* you have given us
in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,
and the flame of *charity* enkindled
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
reawaken in us the blessed *hope*
for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us
into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel.
May those seeds transform from within both humanity and the whole cosmos
in the sure expectation
of a new heaven and a new earth,
when, with the powers of Evil vanquished,
your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee
reawaken in us, *Pilgrims of Hope*,
a yearning for the treasures of heaven.

May that same grace spread
the joy and peace of our Redeemer
throughout the earth.

To you our God, eternally blessed,
be glory and praise for ever.

Amen



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)

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

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

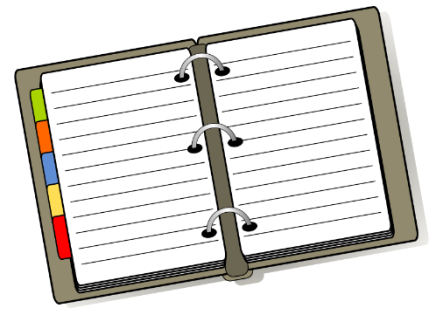
Monday 31st March and Wednesday 2nd April – Parents evening appointments will be available from 3.30pm – 6.00pm. These appointments will be available to book via SchoolCloud two weeks before the date.

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 JUSTALK KIDS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

JusTalk Kids is a child's version of the JusTalk app – a highly popular social networking platform – designed for users up to 13 years of age, allowing them to video call, message and participate in group chats. While adults can link their own JusTalk account to their child's and make use of parental controls, it's important to understand the risks associated with the app.

SUBSCRIPTION FOR PREMIUM ACCESS

While JusTalk Kids is free, there's the option to subscribe to a kids' premium account or a premium family account. At a cost, this feature allows children to have access to more fun features such as games they can play with others in a call; exclusive stickers; a badge denoting them as a premium subscriber; and exclusive ringtones and themes.

RESISTANCE TO CONTROLS

JusTalk Kids endeavours to allow children the sense of having a chat-based app while allowing parents to set controls (within the app or from their own adult JusTalk account). The basis behind this is positive; however, some children are challenging their parents by refusing to use JusTalk Kids, preferring to use the adult version without any restrictions in place.

KNOWING THE PARENT PASSCODE

After downloading JusTalk Kids, parents can set a passcode which users must enter to add contacts. The parental controls help to manage which content can be viewed and who children can add as a contact: this then allows children to chat with friends in a controlled environment. However, prospective contacts don't have to know a specific username. In theory, someone could type in a random name and then add them as a friend.

POTENTIAL DATA LEAKS

JusTalk and JusTalk Kids claim to be secure and encrypted, going so far as to state that even the developers themselves won't access your data. However, a security lapse in 2022 highlighted that messages were not in fact encrypted – leading to concerns around the security of the app and the transparency of the development team.

CYBERBULLYING

Online chats can provide a sense of anonymity, leading some users to post things which they wouldn't normally say in person. Combined with the option of group chats, there's a risk that young people might join in with this kind of behaviour, escalating it further and potentially turning what should be a fun experience into something deeply negative.

TOO MUCH SCREENTIME

A report by the UK Parliament Education Committee highlighted a 52% increase in children's screen time between 2020 and 2022 – as well as finding that 25% of children used their smartphones in a manner consistent with screen addiction. Introducing children to social networking apps when they're too young can lead to bad digital habits and a reliance on technology from an early age.

Advice for Parents & Educators

JUSTIFY THE CONTROLS

If parents allow their child to use JusTalk Kids, they should explain that they're putting parental controls in place to make the app safer. Make sure the child knows not to put their full name on the account and doesn't use a photo of themselves as their profile picture. This type of open discussion will help to ensure that a child is aware of the app's potential risks and knows how to reduce them.

TALK ABOUT ONLINE FRIENDSHIPS

Young children could be excited to use this app. However, highlight that they must do so in a positive, respectful and responsible manner. While it can be easy to get caught up in a group chat, it's important to talk to others politely and call out any unpleasant behaviour. Discuss the importance of limiting their contacts to people they know in real life and use parental controls to enforce this.

DOS AND DON'TS OF SHARING

Some children might not understand the potential dangers of oversharing online. Set clear guidelines around what *is* and *isn't* safe to share on the internet, and discuss the concept of a digital footprint. Children need to understand that the things they say and share online can never be completely erased. Even if they delete it themselves, it can be saved and distributed by others.

ENCOURAGE OPEN COMMUNICATION

Apps like JusTalk can sometimes lend themselves to bullying behaviours. Parents should monitor what their child is sending and receiving, check in with them regularly and encourage them to share their feelings (both positive and negative) at home. Remind them that they can block a contact if someone is treating them disrespectfully.

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

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/justalk-kids>