

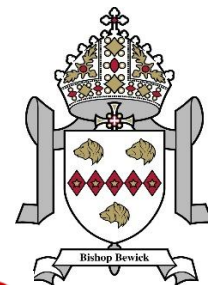
St. Columba's Catholic Primary School

Station Road, Wallsend, Tyne and Wear. NE28 8EN

Telephone: 0191 262 3098 Website: www.stcolumbasprimary.co.uk

Email Address: scpschool@stcolumbasprimary.co.uk

Headteacher: Miss. R. Steinmetz



Learning, loving and respecting with God in our hearts.

Iona Star – 10th October 2025

St Columba's Families,

We hope that you are well – it's been a busy two weeks at St Columba's and there's lots to tell you about!

Last week, Year 5 and 6 children enjoyed a fun-packed, adventurous (and not too wet!) week in High Borran's – they were caving, ghyll scrambling, hiking and orienteering. We are so proud of their achievements, resilience and independence throughout the week. Thank you to the staff who attended – Mrs Maddison, Miss Barnett and Miss Wilson – and gave up their time so that the children could have such an opportunity.



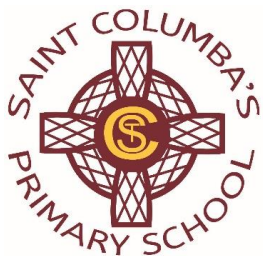
This week, Year 5 and Year 6 were visited by community police officers who shared key messages about anti-social behaviour. The children were so inspired that they are creating a display in our meeting room all about it!

On Thursday, Nursery, Reception and Year 1 children had a fantastic day on the yard taking part in 'Balance Bike' taster sessions with ProRide Coaching. They all thoroughly enjoyed the experience!



Year 3 have attended Mass in the parish this week, and they all lit a candle for World Peace after hearing some special prayers about the situation in Gaza.

Today, Year 5 delivered an assembly for their parents around 'World Mental Health Day'. All the



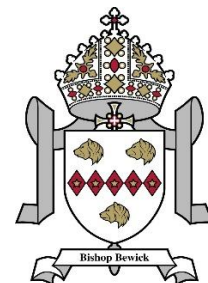
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children in school have been wearing yellow today – the colour of joy and kindness. Mr Horn introduced a 'pay it forward' challenge in assembly today so our school community has been thriving with kind actions, words and deeds. Well done everyone!

Below, you will find key messages and information for the term ahead. At the end of the newsletter are key dates for parents and families.

Also attached to the Iona Star is a guide for both parents and school staff to support current national issues— this week's focus is information and advice regarding 'Dealing with Traumatic and Challenging Events'.

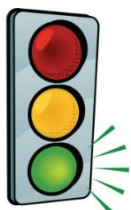
If you have any queries about anything in the Iona Star, or anything else that we can help with, please do not hesitate to contact the school office.

Have a lovely weekend!

Take care,
Mrs Steinmetz

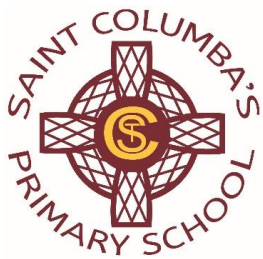


Attendance and Punctuality



Our whole school attendance from Reception to Year 6 for this week has been 96.6%. This means that we are in the green zone and we are meeting our targets set by the Department for Education. Well done everyone!

We are delighted to announce that Year 1 are the winners of our attendance trophy with an amazing overall attendance of 98.6%. Congratulations!



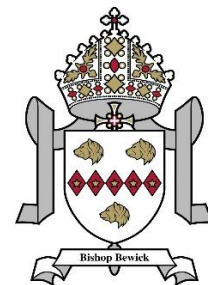
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School Council and House Captains

We had the pleasure of announcing our elected School Council representatives and House/Deputy Captains for this year. Please check SeeSaw for the announcements! Well done to all of our representatives – we can't wait to hear your ideas and work with you to improve St Columba's this year.



Thank you from the Mini Vinnies



Thank you to everyone who has bought tiffin, in support of Macmillan Cancer Nurses and Muhuroni baby unit. Mini Vinnies will continue to sell tiffin during the next week and look forward to presenting Father David and Macmillan Nurses with our contributions. Once the final pennies are counted, we will let you know the total amount that has been raised!

Smoking on School Premises

A polite reminder that smoking (including the use of e-cigarettes/vapes) is not permitted on school premises. Please help us to ensure that our school grounds are kept smoke free. Thank you.

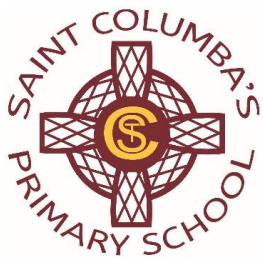


Promoting Tolerance and Respect for All

At St Columba's, we believe that all children and families have the right to feel as though they belong. As a Catholic school, this is part of the fabric of our being and our ethos – we welcome any family to belong to our community; we are here for all.

With growing news and social media stories, including this week the terrorist attack on the Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation Synagogue, we would like to signpost parents to resources which may help discuss some of these issues with children. [Parents' Resources - Educate Against Hate](#)

At times, we appreciate that it is hard to know what or how to talk to children about such sensitive issues and we can always support families if you have concerns or worries. However, everyone has a place in our school community and this embodies our values at 'At St Columba's we all BELONG'.



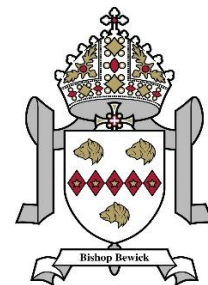
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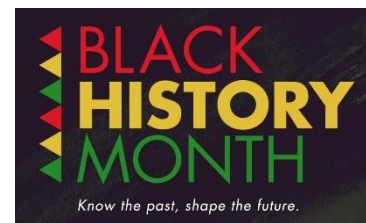
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Black History Month

Throughout the month of October, St Columba's will be listening to stories, taking part in lessons, attending assemblies and having social discussions to mark this event.

Year 2 to Year 6 will take part in an assembly from BigFoot Arts called 'Hidden Figures'. This is a 1 x hour assembly, which brings to life stories of important Black figures from history.



Please follow the link to find a list of recommended books to share with your child during Black History Month and beyond: [Black History Month Books for All Ages | Scholastic](#)

PTA – Halloween Events

Please see the posters attached to the Iona Star, and around school, for information on the Halloween Disco and Pumpkin Carving competition. We hope you can join us!

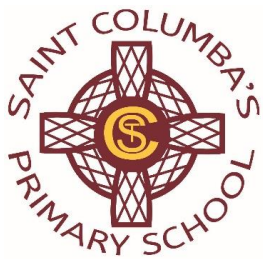
Email Communication with Staff

We appreciate that there are times when you need to speak directly with classroom staff, a reminder that you can do so via the year group email address for your class (e.g. year2@stcolumbasprimary.co.uk). You can also contact the school office and your email/telephone message will be passed onto the relevant member of staff.

Please could we ask parents and family members to be mindful that, our teaching staff will get back to you as soon as possible, however, this may not be an immediate response due to teaching commitments or other meetings already in the diary. It is school policy that all emails will be responded to within 5 working days – although very often staff manage to respond much sooner than this.

If you issue or concern ever requires an immediate response, we would ask you to contact the school office and Mrs Craggs, Mrs Wallace or Mrs Steinmetz will assist you. We appreciate your understanding with this.





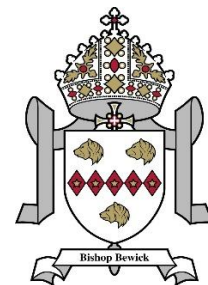
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World Mental Health Day – Resources for Families

This year the theme is “Access to Services: Mental Health in Catastrophes and Emergencies,”. Although the theme changes, the goal remains the same: to make mental health a priority and ensure everyone feels safe, heard, and supported and for schools this means fostering a mentally healthy environment for everyone.

The theme this year highlights the importance of people being able to protect their mental health in times of global instability. Repeated exposure to news coverage of conflicts can impact our mental health so the Mental Health Foundation have put together some useful guidance for adults:



- Tips on managing feelings of overwhelm can be found here: [WMHD 2025 – tips poster](#)
- Tips on managing our news consumption in a healthy way: [Doomscrolling – tips for healthier news consumption | Mental Health Foundation](#)

The [Mentally Healthy Schools website](#) provides a wide range of resources and guidance to support mental health and some specific ideas for [selfcare](#) including:

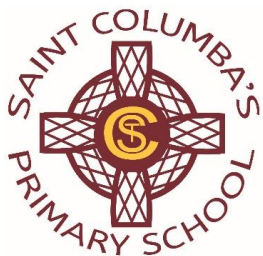
- [Emotion wheel for children : Mentally Healthy Schools](#)
- [Cloud watching mindfulness activity : Mentally Healthy Schools](#)
- [How to make a self-soothe box : Mentally Healthy Schools](#)
- [Catch it, check it, challenge it, change it: CBT technique : Mentally Healthy Schools](#)

Parent Views and Feedback

We also welcome feedback from parents and family members around school procedures, protocols and routines. We do sincerely appreciate and will respond to any feedback and often make changes as a result of this communication.

It is only by working together than we can make improvements to our school community and ensure that we are serving children and their families in the best way. Any parent or family member is always welcome to chat to us on the gate, call the school office or email us on scpschool@stcolumbasprimary.co.uk





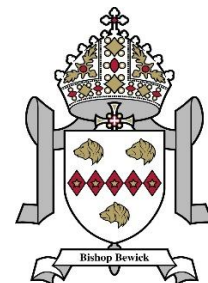
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Admissions Reminder from North Tyneside Council

The deadline for Y7 Admissions is on the 31st of October.

We strongly encourage parents to apply online through the North Tyneside Council website:

[Online school applications | North Tyneside Council](#)

Important Reminders:

- Parents of children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) do not apply through the School Admissions route; this process is managed by the SEND Team.
- For pupils who reside outside North Tyneside, parents should be advised to apply for school places through their home local authority.
- Applying online and selecting the email response option is the most efficient way for parents to receive their school allocation on 2 March 2026.

We also encourage parents to consult the *Essential Guide to Schools*, which provides detailed information on the admissions process and may answer many frequently asked questions. The guide is available on the North Tyneside Council website: [Essential guide to schools | North Tyneside Council](#)

Wellbeing Hub



Parents at St Columba's Catholic Primary School

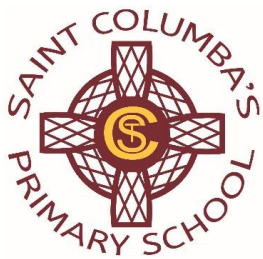
Through our partnerships with Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust, we are pleased to be able to offer all parents, staff and children aged 10+ access to a wealth of information through The Wellbeing Hub.

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=1b5372e0e7384337b68bf150a0f7c597>





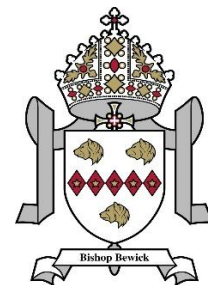
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Diary Dates

Tuesday 14th October – Year 2 to Year 6 'Hidden Figures' assembly

Friday 17th October – Year 6 and Reception Buddy assembly. Parents of both classes are invited to the school hall for 9.15am

Monday 20th October – Year 2, Year 5 and Year 6 will receive 'Speak Out, Stay Safe' workshops from NSPCC volunteers. Further information will be sent to parents ahead of this date.

new Wednesday 22nd October – Halloween Disco!

Friday 24th October – Year 4 assembly. Family members are welcome in the school hall for 9.15am

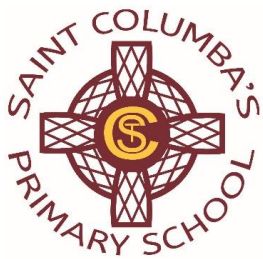
Friday 24th October – School closes to staff and pupils for October half term

Monday 3rd November – School reopens to staff and pupils

new Monday 3rd November – Pumpkin carving competition

WB Monday 3rd November – For two weeks, we will be rebuilding our 'Remembrance' outdoor display and there will be poppies, alongside other merchandise to purchase from school. All proceeds will go to the Royal British Legion.

Wednesday 5th November – School photographs will be taken by Tempest Photography. They will take individual photos of the whole school and then whole class photos for Reception and Year Six.



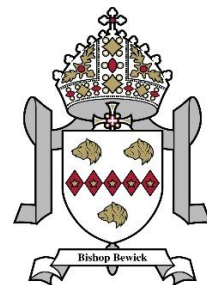
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Families with younger siblings who do not attend St Columba's, but wish to have a family photograph, are welcome to come to the hall via the main office from 8.30am until 9.00am

WB Monday 10th November – SEND parent review meetings. Parents of children with an identified SEND need will be invited to book an appointment with staff two weeks before this date.

WB Monday 10th November – Anti-Bullying Week. Children will be taking part in activities throughout the week to promote tolerance, kindness and identify what to do if bullying occurs.

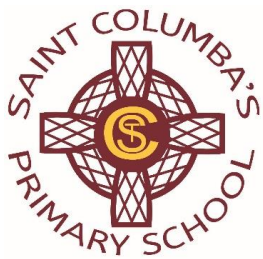
Friday 14th November – Children in Need. Wear your spots to school! There will also be merchandise to purchase from school with all proceeds going to the charity.

Friday 14th November – Year 3 assembly. Family members are welcome in the school hall for 9.15am

WB Monday 17th November – Internal school assessment week. All pupils in KS2 will complete assessments.

Monday 24th November and Wednesday 26th November – Parents Evenings. All parents will be invited to book an appointment with their class teacher two weeks before this date. Appointments are in person, for 10 minutes and will be available from 3.45pm onwards.

Friday 28th November – Whole school trip to the pantomime. Reception to Year 6 will travel to The Customs House to watch the production of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'



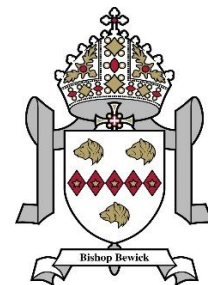
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Friday 5th December

The school choir will be carol singing in Wallsend Forum Shopping Centre for Marie Curie. Family members are welcome to join us

Christmas Performances – further information to follow

Nursery – Monday 8th December at 10am

Reception – Monday 8th December at 2pm

Year 1 – Friday 5th December at 2pm

Year 2 – Wednesday 10th December at 2pm

Year 3 – Friday 12th December at 2pm

Year 4 – Tuesday 9th December at 2pm

Year 5 – Thursday 11th December at 2pm

Year 6 – Monday 15th December at 2pm

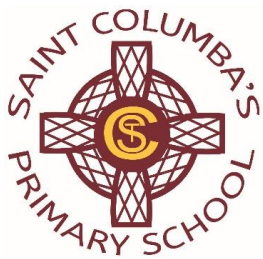


WB Monday 15th December – further information to follow

Family members will be invited into school to make a Christingle with their children and take part in a liturgy to celebrate the time of year

Friday 19th December – School closes to staff and pupils for the Christmas break

Tuesday 6th January – School reopens for all pupils



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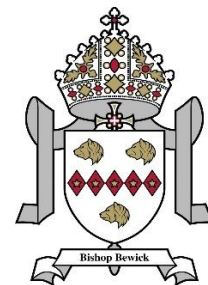
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DISCO

HALLOWEEN

Wednesday 22nd October

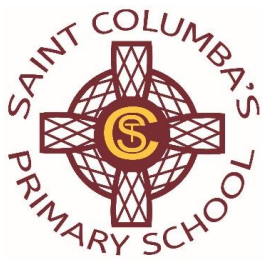
EYFS, KS1 - 4.30 to 5.30

KS2 - 5.45 to 6.45

£2 ENTRY FEE

INCLUDES FREE DRINK

HOT DOGS, SWEETS AVAILABLE TO BUY



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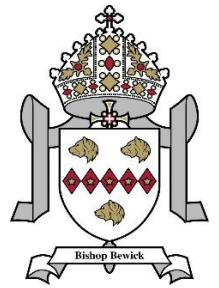
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PUMPKIN CARVING COMPETITION

£1 TO ENTER A
PUMPKIN

Monday 3rd November

Bring your pumpkin to
school on the first day back!

WE CAN'T WAIT
TO SEE YOUR
SCARY DESIGNS!

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

DEALING WITH TRAUMATIC & CHALLENGING EVENTS

Children and young people may face a wide range of traumatic or challenging events – from bereavement and illness to bullying, family breakdowns, or witnessing violence. These experiences can affect their mental health, behaviour, relationships, and academic progress. With the right support from trusted adults, children can begin to feel safe, rebuild resilience, and develop healthy coping strategies. This guide offers practical and empathetic ways to provide support and promote positive outcomes.

1 A PREDICTABLE ENVIRONMENT

Children who have experienced trauma often feel unsafe or uncertain. Creating routines, setting clear expectations, and maintaining consistency can help restore a sense of security. This structure offers reassurance and helps children feel more in control of their surroundings.

2 USE LANGUAGE THAT MATCHES THEIR AGE

Speak clearly and sensitively, choosing words that are appropriate for the child's age. Avoid overwhelming them with too much information at once. Offer gentle, honest explanations and focus on reassurance, especially when talking about difficult or sensitive subjects.

3 TRAUMA AND THE BODY

Mention briefly that trauma can show up in physical ways, such as changes in sleep, appetite, concentration, or as physical aches and pains. Consider this before labelling behaviour as 'difficult' or 'lazy'. Some children may become withdrawn, while others may be more outwardly challenging. Highlight that there's no 'one way' children respond.

4 AVOID RETELLING OR RELIVING TRAUMA

Children sometimes get asked to explain or repeat their experience multiple times. Striking a balance of when to listen and when to gently redirect can help to avoid unnecessary re-traumatisation. Acknowledge, but don't probe for detail unless safeguarding procedures require it.

5 AVOID DISMISSING OR MINIMISING FEELINGS

Seemingly well-meaning comments like "It's not that bad" or "You're okay" may shut down children's emotional expression and are often not helpful. Instead, acknowledge what they're feeling, even if it seems small. Validating a child's emotions helps them feel seen and encourages open communication in future.

6 UNDERSTAND HOW THEY'RE FEELING

Many children don't have the words to express their emotions, especially during distress. Supporting them to name what they're feeling – such as angry, scared or sad – builds emotional literacy. Tools like emotion charts, drawing, or storytelling can help externalise feelings in a safe, manageable way.

7 BE AWARE OF YOUR OWN RESPONSES

Children pick up on adult emotions and reactions, often mirroring them. Staying calm, even in challenging situations, helps children feel more secure. Practising your own self-regulation is an important way to model healthy stress management and encourages children to do the same.

8 SEEK PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

While many children benefit from everyday emotional support, some will need more specialised help. If symptoms persist, worsen, or disrupt their daily life, consult with school safeguarding leads, a GP, or a mental health professional. Early intervention can prevent long-term difficulties and support healthy recovery.

9 MAINTAIN CONNECTION

Isolation can worsen the impact of trauma. Encourage involvement in group activities, praise their efforts, and ensure they feel like a valued part of the school or family community. Meaningful connection with trusted adults and peers builds resilience and a sense of belonging.

10 BE PATIENT – HEALING TAKES TIME

There's no quick fix for emotional recovery. Children may have good days and setbacks, and progress may not always be visible or linear. Your ongoing support, patience, and presence can help them move forward at their own pace, knowing they are not alone.

Meet Our Expert

This guide has been written by Anna Bateman. Anna is passionate about placing prevention at the heart of every school by integrating mental wellbeing within the curriculum, school culture, and systems. She has been a member of the advisory group for the Department for Education, advising them on their mental health green paper.



The National College®