



# St. Columba's Catholic Primary School

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Headteacher: Miss. R. Quinn



Iona Star – 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025

St Columba's Families,

Happy Friday! We started our day with a fantastic celebration assembly this morning, complete with music and dancing. Well done to all children who received a certificate for their work in class, behaviour around school and living out our BELONG values.

We had our Maths in Action workshops this week, thank you to everyone who attended!

On Wednesday, Year 5 and Year 6 took part in workshops with Northumbria Police around the issue of 'County Lines'. The children were praised for their engagement and excellent questioning.

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 'Fake News and Scams'.

If you have any questions about anything in the newsletter, or if there 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 **95.3 %**. We are **JUST** 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 Reception and Year 5 are the winners of our attendance trophy with an attendance of 98.6% this week. Congratulations!

## Maths in Action Workshops

Thank you to all family members who stayed to take part in our Maths in Action Workshops this week – we hope you enjoyed the opportunity to spend some time with your child in class! Please could we ask for any feedback, using the links below:

Year 5 and Year 6 - <https://forms.office.com/e/LdQ3NzDDsv>

Year 3 and Year 4 - <https://forms.office.com/e/Du8jY6Qfzc>

Year 2 and Year 1 - <https://forms.office.com/e/dtQyBRsacs>



## Valentine Tiffin - On Sale from Monday for 50p

Our Mini Vinnies have been busy, in after school sessions, making tiffin to sell for their favourite charities.

Please support their good causes by buying our tiffin, 50p per piece, every afternoon playtime. Thank you!



## Living Eggs Experience!



On Monday, we will receive a delivery of very special eggs. Hopefully, over the course of the next week, we will be able to see some eggs hatch into baby chicks. We will then have the baby chicks in school for another week to watch them grow, before they are rehomed.

## Stay and Play – Nursery and Reception

A reminder that 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 12<sup>th</sup> February at 9.15am

Reception – Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> February at 9.15am



## Bishop Stephen's Visit to St Columba's

Bishop Stephen will be visiting St Columba's on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> February to meet the children and have a tour of the school. This is part of his pledge to visit all schools within the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. We look forward to meeting him!



## Children's Mental Health Week



This week, St Columba's have been supporting Children's Mental Health week with an assembly on Monday, discussions in class and tasks to think about.

Discussions have been around supporting children to identify and talk about their emotions, as well as strategies to support positive mental health.

For further support and resources, please see our website: [Support for Parents & Families | St Columba's](#)

As part of this, please see Action for Happiness Kindness Calendar for February which supports their mission 'Happier. Kinder. Together'

## 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



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)

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 12<sup>th</sup> February at 9.15am

Reception – Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> February at 9.15am

Monday 10<sup>th</sup> 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 10<sup>th</sup> 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.

Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> February – Bishop Stephen is visiting St Columba's school, as well as the other two Catholic primaries of our parish family.

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> 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 18<sup>th</sup> February – North Tyneside Dance Festival. Year 1 parents will be welcome attend. Further information to follow.

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

Friday 21<sup>st</sup> February – School closes for half term

Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March – School reopens following half term

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> March – World Book Day. More information to follow.

**\*new\*** Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> March – Year 5 and Year 6 will be attending Whitley Bay Playhouse to see St Thomas More's production of 'High School Musical'

**\*change\*** Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> March – Reception class are being visited by dental students to complete a 'Brush Up!' session about oral hygiene.

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

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> March – National Child Height Measurement Programme for Reception and Year 6

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

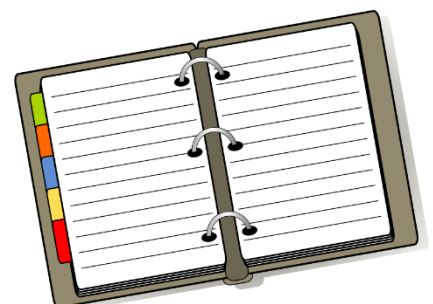
Monday 31<sup>st</sup> March and Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April – Parents evening appointments will be available from 3.30pm – 6.00pm. These appointments will be available to book via SchoolCloud two weeks before the date.

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

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

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> April – school closes to pupils for the Easter holidays

Friday 11<sup>th</sup> April – Staff training day



# Friendly February 2025

MONDAY



TUESDAY



WEDNESDAY



THURSDAY



FRIDAY



SATURDAY

SUNDAY

1 Send a message to let someone know you're thinking of them

2 Ask a friend how they have been feeling recently

3 Do an act of kindness to make life easier for someone

4 Invite a friend over for a 'tea break' (in person or virtual)

5 Make time to have a friendly chat with a neighbour

6 Get back in touch with an old friend you've not seen for a while

7 Show an active interest by asking questions when talking to others

8 Share what you're feeling with someone you really trust

9 Thank someone and tell them how they made a difference for you

10 Look for good in others, particularly when you feel frustrated with them

11 Send an encouraging note to someone who needs a boost

12 Focus on being kind rather than being right

13 Smile at the people you see and brighten their day

14 Tell a loved one or friend why they are special to you

15 Support a local business with a positive online review or friendly message

16 Check in on someone who may be struggling and offer to help

17 Appreciate the good qualities of someone in your life

18 Respond kindly to everyone you talk to today, including yourself

19 Share something you find inspiring, helpful or amusing

20 Make a plan to connect with others and do something fun

21 Really listen to what people say, without judging them

22 Give sincere compliments to people you talk to today

23 Be gentle with someone who you feel inclined to criticise

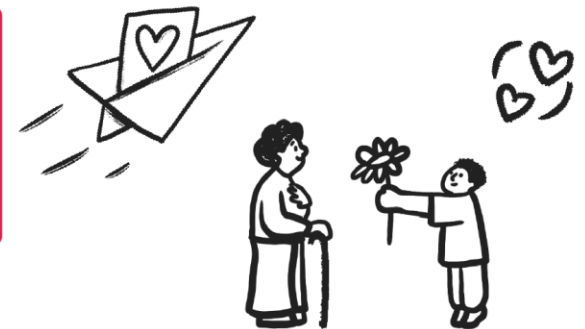
24 Tell a loved one about the strengths that you see in them

25 Thank three people you feel grateful to and tell them why

26 Make uninterrupted time for your loved ones

27 Call a friend to catch up and really listen to them

28 Give positive comments to as many people as possible today



# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about SCAMS AND FAKE NEWS

"Fake news" refers to falsified or misleading material presented as a legitimate account of events. It's often used by malicious actors online to push an agenda, or even by criminals as a way of making scams more persuasive. Scammers can trick us into handing over personal information, security details and even our hard-earned cash.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### "CLICKBAIT" PHISHING SCAMS

A message arrives saying "Have you seen this video of yourself?" or you might be sent an attention-grabbing headline about a celebrity that's been shared on social media. This kind of "bait" is produced by scammers to drive us to click on an unsafe link, where malware could be downloaded to our devices. These scams rely on our curiosity and our "need-to-know" instinct.

Have you seen this video of yourself?

### SALES, DEALS & DISCOUNTS

Some scams appear as adverts, offering a chance to buy something – such as designer products, expensive gadgets or tickets to a popular show – at a reduced price. Such plays often include a time limit or countdown, urging us to hurry so we don't miss out on the deal. This pressure encourages us to input personal details or payment information before pausing to check if it's legitimate.



### YOU'RE A WINNER!

This kind of scam involves fake giveaways, opportunities or freebies. It could be a message saying we've won a prize draw or competition. Or it could be a gift, free trial, bonus credit, and suchlike. It might claim that a package or refund is waiting. All these techniques are used to prompt us to share our personal information, thinking that there's something to be gained by doing so.



### FALSE FRIENDSHIPS

Scammers often pretend to be someone they're not to gain their victims' trust. They might attempt to convince any children they connect with that they're a child of similar age with shared interests. Warning signs include a high volume of messages (often with an intense tone), secrecy, inappropriate levels of intimacy, guilt tripping, emotional manipulation, threats or blackmail.



### PANIC MODE

To trigger a sense of panic, scammers may claim that a child's account has been hacked, or a virus has been installed on their device, or any number of other scary scenarios. They may claim to be able to fix the problem or offer a solution – if the child hands over control of the device or sensitive information. Similar scams involve impersonating a friend or relative, claiming that they're in trouble and need help.



### FAKE CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS

Impersonating influential people online is a common tactic for scammers, who can use technology to create fake photos, audio and even videos that look authentic. These can be used to convince us, for example, to buy products, sign up for so-called "business opportunities" or invest in cryptocurrency schemes – all of which are fake or otherwise malicious. Many scams also involve the impersonation of popular companies' social media accounts, as well as those of individuals.



## Advice for Parents & Educators

### STAY INFORMED

Stay up to date with the latest information and best practice on cyber-security. See what scam stories are reported in the news and make note of what tactics were used. Keep up with young people's digital lives: talk about what they're doing online and use properly endorsed resources to learn what risks certain sites and apps pose to their younger users.



### TALK TOGETHER

Chat often and openly with young people about fake news, online scams and how they both work. Encourage them to talk to you about anything they're unsure of or worried about online. If a child claims to have been scammed, don't pass judgement. Blaming the victim may deter young people from asking you for help. Remember: adults are scammed just as often, if not more.



### ENCOURAGE HEALTHY SCEPTICISM

Most scams rely on emotional or psychological manipulation, tapping into our human instincts – whether that's to keep ourselves safe, help others, find answers, make friends, avoid losing out or to secure something we really want. Encourage children to recognise that pressure to act and to always consult with an adult – especially if what's on offer sounds too good to be true.



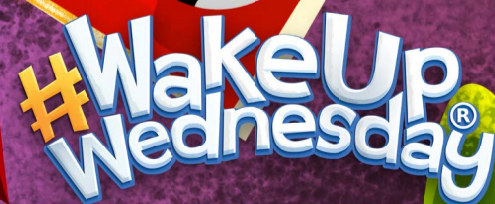
### BE PROACTIVE

Children increasingly use digital devices for education, socialising, shopping and play. Don't wait for a problem to arise before you discuss the risk of scams, false information and fake news. Highlight what to look out for and clearly communicate under what circumstances the child ought to speak to an adult. Finally, ensure that they're aware of the support services that are available to them (such as Childline).



### Meet Our Expert

Dr Holly Powell-Jones is the founder of Online Media Law UK and a leading 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 [OnlineMediaLaw.co.uk](https://OnlineMediaLaw.co.uk) for more.



The National College