



# NEWSLETTER

*St. Joseph's is a joyful community which follows the example of Jesus, helping, accepting and respecting everyone, as we learn and grow together, safe in His love.*

As we journey through the season of Advent, St. Joseph's is filled with the joy and anticipation that makes this time of year so special. The excitement of Christmas is in the air, brought to life by the beautiful Nativity plays, the uplifting sounds of our carol services, and opportunities for our pupils to share their voices with the local community.

We also want to take a moment to sincerely thank our wonderful parents for your generous presents, thoughtful gifts, kind cards, and warm wishes this Christmas. Your kindness and support mean so much to all of us and help make this season even more special. Additionally, we want to celebrate the success of our recent charity Fun Day, wonderfully organised by our Year 6 pupils, which demonstrated the generosity and spirit of our school.

We wish you and your families a safe, peaceful, and restful Christmas, and we look forward to welcoming everyone back in the new year, refreshed and ready for the term ahead.

## Attendance

Good attendance is vital for academic success and a positive learning environment. We aim for all classes to maintain at least 97% attendance to ensure students stay engaged and on track. Let's work together to achieve this goal for the benefit of all.



Class	Attendance
5M	98%
5C	96.9%
4A	96%
6H	94%
4B	93%
1C	92.8%
6B	91.5%
2F	91.4%
3R	91%
1B	90.9%
3T	88.3%
2P	87.6%
RD	81%
RW	80.1%

## JANUARY KEY EVENTS

- Mon 6th Jan– Spring Term begins
- Tues 7th Jan– Yr4 Viking Workshop
- Wed 8th Jan– 4B Swimming begins
- Mon 20th Jan– Young Voices Concert (Yr5/6 Choir)
- Tues 21st Jan– Year 5 Ancient Egyptian workshop
- Wed 22nd Jan 3T– Windmill workshop
- Thurs 23rd Jan– EYFS Chinese Dragon Workshop
- Thurs 23rd Jan (2:30pm)– 2F Class Assembly
- Fri 24th Jan– Jubilee Year Launch Day (info to follow)
- Wed 29th Jan 3R Windmill workshop
- Thurs 30th Jan– Active Kids Event– info to follow
- Please note 1C's class assembly had been moved to Thursday 13th February

## Attendance Raffle

Congratulations to the following children who won cinema vouchers:

KS1: Elsie 2F, Lidia 2F, Grace 1B, Thomas F, 2F  
KS2: Amy 5M, TI 4B, Elsie 6H, Aisling, 3R

A big thank you to Aquinas Education, powered by Zen Educate, for providing the attendance raffle prizes – £15 Vue vouchers.



## REMINDERS

- Our winter uniform includes a tie and a button shirt.
- Please refrain from using the school car park, including before and after school.
- We have a number of unclaimed scooters. Please see the school caretaker, Colin, on the gate if you believe one belongs to you.



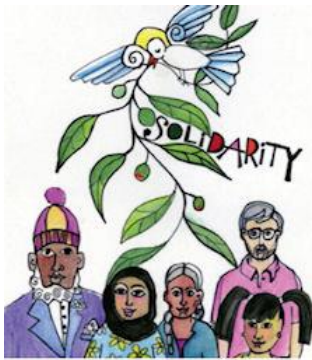
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## Catholic Social Teaching

### Solidarity and Common Good

Last week, during our Star of the Week assembly, we took the opportunity to reflect on our Catholic Social Teaching principle of Solidarity and the Common Good as we wrapped up the half term.

We explored the powerful idea that we are stronger when we come together as a community. With the help of building blocks, the children were able to visually demonstrate that by contributing our unique gifts and talents, we create something greater than ourselves. As they considered what 'blocks' they could add to the tower, many pupils reflected on the values of the Gospels, thinking about how virtues such as kindness, compassion, and generosity can strengthen our community. This hands-on activity reinforced the importance of unity, cooperation, and supporting one another, reminding us all of the strength found in working together for the common good..



**Solidarity & The Common Good**



What blocks do you have for the common good of others?



What we do isn't just because it feels like 'the right thing to do', it is because it is what we are taught to do by our Catholic faith.

Loving God,

You created us to be one family.

Help us to care for each other and to share what we have.

When someone is in need, give us generous hearts to help them.

Teach us to work together, like the parts of one body,

so that everyone can live with joy and peace.

Bless our school, our families, and our community, and guide us to build Your kingdom of love.

Amen.



## Stay & Pray dates

14<sup>th</sup> January – Year 1

21<sup>st</sup> January – Reception

28<sup>th</sup> January – Year 6



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## Gospel Values

At St. Joseph's, Gospel values are at the heart of everything we do, shaping the way we behave and how we treat each other. We are committed to fostering a school community where everyone is encouraged to live out the teachings of Jesus, following the example He set for us.

Our values are based around St. Luke's Gospel, which guides us to love, respect, and serve one another, just as Jesus did. St. Luke's Gospel reminds us to show kindness, compassion, forgiveness, and humility in our daily actions.

Congratulations to the following children who were nominated for showing PEACE around school:



KS1	KS2	
Elara (RW)	Aaron (3R)	Emmy (5C)
Aaron (RW)	Aiveen (3R)	Matilda (5C)
Harry (1B)	Grace (3T)	Jomi (5M)
Emilia (1B)	Francesco (3T)	Tom O'B (5M)
Isla (2F)	Evie (4A)	Millie A (6B)
Thomas F (2F)	Ella (4A)	Grey (6B)
Isabelle (2P)	Albie (4B)	Harrison E (6H)
	Eva (4B)	Harrison J (6H)

## House Points- AUTUMN CHAMPIONS!

Congratulations to St. Paul's House for being the house with the largest total for the term! They have enjoyed an additional non-uniform day and some extra playtime to congratulate them for their efforts, and to all of the children for their hard work and determination throughout the term to support their house!

St. Anne's	St. Edward's	St. Helen's	St. Paul's
29	13	24	33

Our running total starts at zero for the Spring Term. Who will take the coveted prize at the end of the next half term?





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## Reception Nativity

### Reception Kick Off Advent in Style

Our wonderful Reception children kicked off the Advent season in true style with a beautiful performance that brought the Nativity story to life. Through their fabulous reading and heartfelt singing, they reminded us all of the true meaning of Christmas and filled St. Joseph's with joy and excitement. A huge well done to all the children for their hard work and enthusiasm—it was a performance to remember! We look forward to many more years of their inspiring contributions to our school celebrations.



## Year 5 and 6 Carol Service



A huge congratulations to the pupils in Year 5 and 6 for their outstanding carol service in the church. The service was a beautiful blend of reflection, prayer, and music, perfectly capturing the true meaning of Christmas. Mrs. Durell shared after the dress rehearsal that, for her, the Year 5 and 6 carol service always signifies that Christmas has truly arrived—and we're sure many others in our school community felt the same. The children's stunning harmonies, moving narrations, and sincere prayers created a magical and unifying experience for everyone. A heartfelt well done to all involved for delivering such a memorable and uplifting celebration!





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## Key Stage 1 Nativity



### Year 1 & 2 Shine in a Memorable Nativity Performance

The Year 1 and 2 children delighted audiences with their enchanting recreation of the Nativity, inspired by the beautiful story *Refuge*. Through heartfelt performances, they brought the tale of Mary, Joseph, and the donkey's search for a safe place to rest vividly to life, reminding us all of the power of kindness and compassion during this special season. The children's dedication and talent shone through in every line and song, captivating family and friends alike. The performance concluded with a joyful, festive dance to popular Christmas tunes, spreading cheer and getting everyone in the Christmas spirit—a perfect way to get us all into the Christmas spirit!







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## Year 3 and 4 Choir

On the 30th November, the Year 3-4 choir performed at a Christmas concert hosted by CDot choir. They sang beautifully and helped put everyone in the festive spirit.

There was even some audience participation for the unsuspecting parents! We received many compliments on the children's lovely singing and behaviour. The event raised £750 and the money raised at the event will be donated to the youth of the parish.



### Year 1 Christmas Cards

Our thoughtful Year 1 pupils have been busy spreading festive cheer by writing heartfelt Christmas cards for the residents of Ladyville Nursing Home. Each card was lovingly created, with the children adding cheerful messages and colourful designs to brighten someone's day. We hope the residents enjoy receiving their special cards and feel the warmth and joy of the season that the children worked so hard to share. Well done, Year 1, for bringing the true spirit of Christmas to our wider community!







# ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



## Year 6 Fun Day

Our Year 6 students once again made us incredibly proud during their annual Fun Day, which was a tremendous success! The children took the lead in organising a fantastic range of games and activities, showing great creativity and teamwork. They not only entertained, but also engaged with and supported the younger pupils, ensuring everyone had a memorable time. The day was filled with excitement, with many children walking away with raffle prizes, toys, books, bracelets, and, of course, plenty of sweets! Through their hard work and dedication, Year 6 raised an impressive £1500, all of which will be donated to families in need across London and our local community this Christmas. A huge thank you to all the parents for their unwavering support and generosity, which played a vital role in making the day such a resounding success.







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## Christmas Lunch

Festive cheer was served alongside turkey and trimmings as the children enjoyed a Christmas dinner to remember! A huge thanks to our amazing cook, Emma, and her team for whipping up the feast and to our midday staff for sprinkling the festive magic everywhere.

The highlight? Our 'superstar' teachers and TAs putting their vocal talents—or enthusiasm, at least—to the test, serenading the children with Christmas classics. Let's just say Simon Cowell hasn't called yet, but the laughter and smiles said it all—it was a day of festive fun to help us get ready for the BIG DAY next week!







## Year 3's Culinary Creations

This term in Design and Technology, our Year 3 children explored essential culinary skills by practicing **slicing and spreading** techniques. Alongside honing their practical abilities, they delved into the importance of **food hygiene**, learning how to handle and prepare food safely and hygienically. The children then enjoyed their creations in class, well done to those who tried something new!



## Christmas Tree Festival at Upminster Methodist Church

Year 4 visited Upminster Methodist Church on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December to sing carols as part of the Christmas Tree Festival. They were able to see the tree that they had decorated and were joined by their friends, families and a few members of the Methodist Church too. They sang beautifully and it was a very special occasion. Well done Year 4!



## Campion Day Run Success at Pages Wood!

We are thrilled to share the fantastic results from the recent Campion Day run at Pages Wood. Our team of runners did an incredible job, with both our girls' and boys' teams achieving **second place** in their respective categories! Their hard work, determination, and teamwork were evident throughout the event, and they represented our school with pride. A huge congratulations to all the runners and a big thank you to the parents and staff who supported them. Here's to more successes in future races!



## Thanks for Year 4!

Here is a letter Mr. Ross received from the Methodist Church, thanking our pupils for their efforts:

*I am writing to thank the school choir for the lovely concert they performed for us at the Christmas Tree Festival last Thursday. The choir sang beautifully, and it was good to see their enjoyment and enthusiasm. The variety and complexity of the music was very impressive.*





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## Admissions September 2025

The initial window for applications to Reception in September 2025 is open until 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025. Please encourage friends and family with children in this age cohort to apply. Applications no longer require a 'Certificate of Practice' (*thought of as a priest reference.*) which had previously deterred families from applying.

Applications can be made by anyone, regardless of faith or address and we warmly welcome families from a range of backgrounds. Queries can be sent to [admissions@st-josephs.havering.sch.uk](mailto:admissions@st-josephs.havering.sch.uk)

There is an open day tour date left on 8<sup>th</sup> January – contact the address above to book a space.

## A Christmas Prayer for St. Joseph's

Loving God,

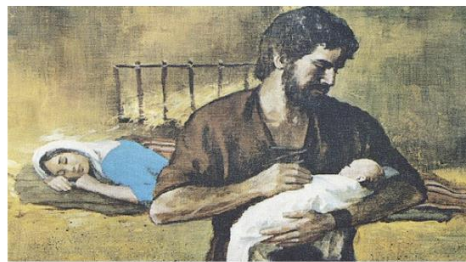
Thank You for the gift of Jesus, Your Son, who was born at Christmas to bring love and peace to the world. Help us to share His joy and kindness with everyone we meet.

We ask St. Joseph, who cared for Jesus and Mary, to guide us to be patient, loving, and faithful like he was.

Bless our families, friends, and school this Christmas. Help us to think of others and share Your love in all that we do.

May the light of Jesus stay in our hearts now and always.

Amen.



**St. Joseph  
Pray for Us**

## Family Advent Resources

Below are some family-friendly resources that can help guide you and your loved ones in preparing for Christmas during the Advent season. These activities and materials will offer meaningful ways to reflect on the true spirit of Advent, strengthen your faith, and engage with one another as you count down to the celebration of Jesus' birth:

- Ten Ten Parent Newsletter for December: <https://www.tentenresources.co.uk/prayers-for-home/parent-newsletter/>
- Mission Together Digital Advent Calendar: <https://missiontogether.org.uk/digital-advent-calendar/>
- SVP [Reverse Advent Calendar](#)



# 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

## SAFETY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Currently, children are growing up in an immediate and throwaway culture when it comes to content that's consumed online. So much material is now deliberately created to be shorter in nature – and may often contain hidden elements such as advertising, or extreme political and cultural views. With complex algorithms built to keep people on their phones and engaging with social media content, it's becoming increasingly difficult to reduce time spent on these platforms.

### 1 REDUCE DOOMSCROLLING

It's concerning how common for young people to spend hours 'doomscrolling': trawling through social media and aimlessly viewing every post they see, many of which might make them feel sad or anxious. Social media can be useful for keeping in touch with friends and family, as well as staying up to date on current events. However, it's important to use it with a clear purpose, instead of endlessly scrolling through content, which could lead to young people accidentally discovering harmful material.

### 2 TALK ABOUT THE CONTENT

It's important to keep apprised of the kind of content that a young person is being exposed to. Discussing what they're watching online can help you understand why they're using social media in the first place. Furthermore, ensure that children are aware of hidden content, such as advertising of a product – and that they know how to spot that the creator is being paid to talk about it.

### 3 FIND POSITIVE ASPECTS

Despite all the concerns, there's plenty of wholesome content on social media. It's worth spending time with children to help them find something suitable and enjoyable. Perhaps you'll even discover a joint interest, and you can enjoy the content alongside the child. As part of this, you should also point out why certain things shouldn't be given attention, explaining why it isn't suitable and why it's been created in the first place.

### 4 REDUCE SCREENTIME

Young people can sometimes be unaware of the exact amount of time they spend looking at social media. Smart phones don't just have the capacity to monitor screentime; they also record how much time is spent on each app. Consider setting targets to reduce this and support children to meet these goals, gradually reducing the amount of time spent on different apps.

### 5 FILL THE VOID

Monitoring and reducing screentime can create a lot of free time to fill, and young people can even face withdrawal symptoms when made to step away from their phones. To mitigate this, consider what offline activities you could introduce the child to, and what they would enjoy. This can ensure that young users will permanently cut down on their screentime, rather than temporarily doing so while they know it's being monitored.

### 6 REDUCE NOTIFICATIONS

One way in which social media platforms keep people coming back is through notifications. The algorithms behind these apps track people's daily habits, including the times of the day where they're most likely to engage with the platform. This data is then used to deliver specifically timed notifications to draw them back in. To avoid young users being exposed to this tactic, simply turn off notifications for the app in their phone's settings.

### 7 LIVE IN THE REAL WORLD

Overexposure to social media can distort someone's perception of the real world – from body norms to social conventions. This filtered environment can make it hard for young people to distinguish reality from online content, which is now becoming even more difficult with the rise of AI. To mitigate this concern, take time to teach young people how to discern truth from fiction, both on and off social media.

### 8 DIGITAL DETOX

Encouraging young people to take a 'digital detox', from even just a couple of the apps that they use, can result in an overall reduction of screentime and less exposure to potentially harmful content. Alternatively, rather than avoiding the app entirely, encourage children to take a 'digital detox' from content creators and influencers, and instead, keep in touch with friends and family – which is generally a far healthier use of these platforms.

### 9 MODEL GOOD BEHAVIOUR

Consider the habits that you're demonstrating to your children. How much time do you spend on your phone? How much do you 'doomscroll'? Comparing your own usage with the child's could put things into perspective for them – or if it turns out that you're also overusing social media, it can turn screentime reduction into a joint mission, which you and the child can work on together.

### 10 BE CLEAR ON THE "WHY"

Research shows that young people can become addicted to social media. There are many schools that are moving towards being 'phone free' due to the negative impacts of using social media and phones continuously. It's important to explain to young people why managing screentime is important. Set out the benefits and ensure they have all the relevant information, so it's not just seen as a punishment.

## Meet Our Expert

John Insley is a senior leader in a Birmingham secondary school and has vast experience in leading schools over the past 15 years – including the development of computing curriculums across primary and secondary schools, writing e-safety policies and supporting schools with computing and e-safety advice.



#WakeUpWednesday®

The National College

Source: See full reference list on guide page at <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/top-tips-for-safety-on-social-media>

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