

# ST COLUMBA C OF E

## SCHOOL NEWS - AUTUMN 2 2024



### MESSAGE FROM THE TEAM...



Dear Parents, Carers, and Children,

As we approach the end of the Autumn Term, I would like to take a moment to reflect on what has been a truly remarkable few months at our school.

Firstly, please take a look below to see some of the fantastic curriculum opportunities the children have enjoyed this term – their learning and engagement have been truly inspiring. We are very lucky to have such a great team who create these opportunities for the children. We hope the first of the four classes class worship was well received, next half term Beech Class will be welcoming you to see their worship, please check the dates for your diary page below.

The festive period is always a busy one, we could not have put on all of these experiences without the help of our wonderful PTA. Their hard work in organising the Christmas Fayre was nothing short of spectacular, and the festive cheer it brought to our school community was truly magical. We are also deeply grateful for the delicious refreshments they provided at the Carol Service, which added a warm and welcoming touch to a festive memorable evening.

This term, we say farewell to Mrs. Linford, who has been a valued member of our school community. We are incredibly grateful for all her hard work and dedication, she will be greatly missed by staff, pupils, and families alike. We wish her the very best in her next chapter.

Finally, thank you to our families and students for your continued support and enthusiasm. Your involvement and positivity make our school such a special place. I wish you all a peaceful and restful break, and I look forward to seeing everyone in the new year on the 6th January 2025, ready for another exciting term.

Mrs Viola  
Head of School



# CONGRATULATIONS!

## **Congratulations to Mrs. Chorlton!**



We are delighted to announce that Mrs. Chorlton has achieved her qualification as a Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA)! This is a remarkable accomplishment and a testament to her hard work, dedication, and passion for supporting our students and school community.

This achievement will have a fantastic impact on our school. As an HLTA, Mrs. Chorlton will bring an enhanced level of expertise and support to both teaching and learning, helping us to provide even more opportunities for our students to thrive and succeed.

We are so proud of Mrs. Chorlton and excited for the positive difference she will continue to make in the lives of our students. Please join us in celebrating this wonderful milestone in her career!



## **Congratulations to Miss. Lever**



We are thrilled to share some fantastic news with you! Please join us in congratulating Miss Lever, who has officially become a qualified Thrive Practitioner! This achievement highlights her dedication to fostering the emotional well-being of our students and supporting their personal growth. With Miss Lever's qualification, we now proudly have four fully trained Thrive Practitioners here at St. Columba. This milestone reflects our deep commitment to being a Thriving School, where every child's mental health and emotional resilience are nurtured to help them shine both inside and outside the classroom.

The Thrive Approach helps us create an environment where students feel supported, valued, and ready to learn. Together, we are building a stronger, more compassionate school community.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Let's celebrate this wonderful achievement for Miss Lever and the entire St. Columba family!



**ANDREW SIMPSON SAILING CLUB  
PORTSMOUTH**

**GOOD  
ATTENDANCE  
WINNER SPRING  
TERM 1**

*Students with good attendance during Spring Term 1 will be entered into a draw to win a free paddlesports voucher at the Andrew Simpson Sailing Club in Portsmouth.*

## Attendance Reward Update

We're excited to share an update to our attendance reward criteria! To make the system fairer, we've decided to change from requiring 100% attendance to recognising "good attendance."

We understand that children may occasionally be unwell or need to attend urgent medical appointments, and we don't want these unavoidable absences to prevent them from being rewarded. This change ensures we can celebrate students who show a strong commitment to attending school, while also being understanding of situations beyond their control.

Thank you for your continued support in encouraging regular school attendance!

## Good Attendance Reward

As we get ready for the festive season, we just want to say a big thank you to all our parents and carers for supporting your child's attendance this term. It makes such a difference, and we're really grateful for all you do!

We're also super excited to tell you about a new reward we've got lined up for next term. Every child with good attendance will be entered into a draw to win an awesome paddlesports voucher at the Andrew Simpson Centre in Portsmouth. What a fun way to celebrate – don't miss this amazing opportunity for your child!

We hope you all have a fantastic Christmas and a brilliant New Year. Can't wait to see everyone back next term for more learning (and fun)!

# ROAD SAFETY WEEK



Recently, four pupils from Oak class participated in training to become Junior Road Safety Officers (JRSOs) – a huge congratulations to them!

As part of Road Safety Week, our new JRSOs created a display and delivered an assembly to the rest of the school on three key areas:

We learned about the importance of wearing a seatbelt in vehicles and the consequences when a seatbelt is not worn. Did you know, children should use a booster seat until they are 12 years old or 135cm tall?



We also heard about Maisie – a girl who collided with a car when cycling and whose life was saved by wearing a helmet. We learned how important it is to always wear a helmet when cycling or scootering to protect our heads (the most common area of injury for bike/scooter accidents). Please ensure your child has a fitting helmet for bike/scooter use!



## Beech Class



IN OUR D&T SESSIONS, THE CHILDREN WERE TASKED WITH SHOWCASING SEASONAL FOODS OF MAY/JUNE...

SO WITHOUT FURTHER ADO.... HERE ARE OUR SEASONAL TARTS...



## Hazel Class

DURING FOREST SCHOOL, THE CHILDREN HAVE LOVED EXPLORING AND LEARNING ABOUT THE OUTDOORS THIS HALF TERM!



WE MADE THE BIGGEST 'LEAFSTALK' WE COULD...



# COOKING CLUB

WELL DONE TO THE WONDERFUL CHILDREN WHO  
BAKED THE AMAZING MINCE PIES FOR THE  
CHRISTMAS FAYRE!



ALL IN AID OF RAISING  
FUNDS TO SUPPORT THE  
PTFA!

*Well done!*



## Christmas Dinner & Jumper Day

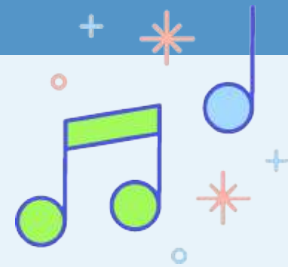


## Christmas Dinner & Jumper Day





## Choir Club



OUR CHOIR CLUB HAD THE HONOR OF PERFORMING CHRISTMAS CAROLS IN FRONT OF EVERYONE AT STEWARTS GARDEN CENTER! A MASSIVE THANK YOU TO STEWARTS GARDEN CENTER!



WE ARE VERY PROUD OF THEIR PERFORMANCE! WELL DONE TO EVERYONE!



AND THANK YOU TO FAMILY AND FRIENDS WHO CAME TO WATCH!



## READY TO HELP CLUB



ON FRIDAY, WE HAD A LITTLE PARTY FOR OUR YOUNG CARERS AND PLAYED SOME PARTY GAMES. THIS GROUP HAS GROWN OVER THE LAST SIX MONTHS WITH SOME CHILDREN ATTENDING WHO ARE NOT YOUNG CARERS BUT ENJOY THE ACTIVITIES AND THE SOCIAL ASPECT OF THE 'READY TO HELP CLUB'.

WE USUALLY MEET ON THE LAST FRIDAY OF EACH MONTH AND IT IS A CHANCE FOR CHILDREN TO COME TOGETHER AS A GROUP, JOIN IN WITH ACTIVITIES AND MAKE NEW FRIENDS. IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILD COULD BE A YOUNG CARER, PLEASE SPEAK TO MRS EDMUNDS, WHO IS THE YOUNG CARERS OPERATIONAL LEAD.

# THANK YOU



St Columba Church  
changing lives



## A Heartfelt Thank You

**We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to St Columba Church for their generous donation of Christmas hampers.**

**Your thoughtful contribution has made a significant difference in the lives of many families within the St. Columba School community. These hampers, filled with essentials and festive cheer, have brought joy and comfort during this special time of year.**

**On behalf of the families who received these hampers, thank you for your kindness and generosity. Acts of compassion like yours truly embody the spirit of Christmas, reminding us all of the power of community and care.**

**With thanks,  
The St. Columba School Community**

## 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', browsing 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 Inley 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



## SPRING 1 CLUB LIST

Club	Year group	Day	Teacher
football	3-6	Monday	Mr Smith
drawing	3-6	Monday	Miss Woodhouse
arts & craft	R-2	Monday	Mrs James
Yoga	1-6	Tuesday	Miss Lever
Cooking	4-6	Tuesday	Mrs James
Gymnastics	1-6	Wednesday	outsourced
Construction	R-2	Thursday	Mrs Robertson
STEM club	5-6	Thursday	Mrs Chorlton

New Clubs for Spring Term. These clubs start week of 6th January 2025 up until Friday 14th February 2025.

Clubs are bookable on Arbor; first come first served. Please check the table above to see what club your child is eligible to join - based on their year.

[These clubs will be open on Arbor for parents to sign up their children from Friday 20th December at 16.00.](#)

Please note Gymnastics is payable at £3.80 per session and payment will need to be made on Arbor to secure your child's place.

If a club becomes full and you are unable to enroll your child, please contact [admin@stcolumba.school](mailto:admin@stcolumba.school) and we can add them to our wait list.



# CHRISTMAS FAYRE

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO SUPPORTED WITH THE CHRISTMAS FAYRE, PARENTS, PTFA AND SCHOOL STAFF!



WE ARE ALL GRATEFUL OF YOUR TIME AND DEDICATION TO MAKING THIS EVENT CHRISTMASSY AND MAGICAL!

EVERYONE AT ST COLUMBA, CHILDREN AND STAFF, PARENTS AND FRIENDS, HAD AN AMAZING TIME!



# CHRISTMAS FAYRE



## 🎉 Exciting Playground Fun Coming in January! 🎉



Dear Parents and Guardians,

We're thrilled to announce a brand-new Play Initiative launching this January! Our staff has been hard at work preparing an exciting lineup of activities, and the children can't wait to dive in.

At lunchtimes, parts of the playground will transform into activity zones, offering something for everyone:

🏌️ Mini Golf

🎾 Tennis

🏑 Hockey

Football Shooting

🏃 Agility Ladders & Speed Hurdles

🏃 Skipping & Multi-Skipping Challenges

🎯 Velcro Dartboards

📦 Bean Bag Games

🏐 Netball

♟️ Board Games



A huge thank-you to our amazing PTFA for generously providing the new equipment to make this possible!

This initiative is all about fostering fair play, creativity, and teamwork. To make it even better, we'll have Captains and Zone Buddies helping to ensure the zones run smoothly and that everyone gets involved.

We can't wait to see the playground buzzing with energy and smiles as the children explore these new opportunities for active and collaborative play. Let's make 2024 a year of fun and fitness!



TO THE PTFA, STAFF,  
PARENTS, FAMILY AND  
VOLUNTEERS WHO  
HELPED MAKE THE  
CHRISTMAS FAYRE A  
SUCCESS!

PARENTS, PLEASE PROVIDE  
FEEDBACK FOR OUR CHRISTMAS  
FAYRE, SO WE CAN CONTINUE TO  
MAKE THE GREATEST EVENTS:

[HTTPS://WWW.SURVEYMONKEY.COM  
/R/X2RKZQL](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/x2rkzql)



# 2025

## January

Monday 6th - Back to school  
Friday 17th - Guide Dog Talks

## February

3rd - School Council Visit to Mayor's Parlor  
11th - Winchester Trip 5/6  
14th - INSET  
Monday 16th - Friday 21st - Half Term  
24th - Back to School

## March

5th - NSPCC Talks Y2, 5 & 6  
6th - World Book Day  
18th & 19th - Parents Evenings  
28th - Mothers day Shop

## April

Wednesday 2nd - Easter Service 9.30-10am  
Easter Egg Hunt 1pm  
Monday 7th - Monday 21st - Easter Holidays  
Tuesday 22nd - Back to School

## May

12th - 16th May SATS Week  
14th - Bikeability Y5-Y6  
23rd May - INSET  
Monday 26th - 30th May - Half Term

## June

Monday 2nd - Inset Day  
Friday 6th - Monday 9th - Y5/6 Residential Trip  
Friday 13th - Fathers Day Shop  
16th - School Photos  
18th - Sports Day

## July

2nd - Transition Day - Henry Cort Y6  
Friday 18th - Last day of term

## Inset Days 2025

14th February  
23rd May  
2nd June

## Half Terms

23rd December - 3rd January 2025  
16th - 21st February 2025  
7th - 18th April 2025  
Monday 21st April - BANK HOLIDAY  
26th-30th May 2025

# Important Notices

## Important Update on School Meals



From the start of the Spring Term, 4th January 2025, school meals will need to be paid for when ordered. If there are any outstanding monies owed for unpaid meals this will have to be cleared before ordering a school lunch can resume.

Can we ask that any outstanding balances are cleared before the start of the new term.

Please contact the school if you would like to talk to us about payment options of any outstanding amounts.

Free School Meals (FSM) recipients are unaffected by this change.

We raised a total of £22.62 for the Royal British Legion.  
Thank you to everyone who donated.



## After school club - Barn Owls

Barn Owls are providing breakfast (from 7.30am) and afterschool (until 5.30pm) wrap around care for the St Columba children. For any families who require a space for their child/children or have any enquiries please contact Barn Owls directly on: 07359 883847.

