



Newsletter: 12th December 2025

Dear Families,

The Gigantic Star



This year's Nativity was nothing short of magical. Reception, Year One and Year Two came together to perform The Gigantic Star and filled the church with festive joy.

Our fantastic children captivated everyone with their enthusiasm, confidence and beautiful singing.

The story of the star that shone so brightly was brought to life through great teamwork and great energy from all involved. Each child played their part brilliantly, supported by the guidance and encouragement of staff. The performance reminded us of the true meaning of Christmas and the importance of hope and light.

A huge thank you to everyone for their incredible hard work in preparing the children and to families for supporting this special event. It was a wonderful celebration of community and faith and we could not be prouder of our pupils.

Have a lovely weekend!
From All at St Patrick's

General News

Year Five and Year Six Spread Christmas Cheer at Dipton Manor

This week our fantastic Year Five and Year Six pupils brought festive joy to the community with a special visit to Dipton Manor Care Home for carol singing. Despite braving torrential rain on the walk there and back, their smiles and enthusiasm never wavered.

The children sang beautifully, filling the room with warmth and Christmas spirit. Residents joined in with familiar carols and were delighted by the energy and kindness shown by our pupils. It was a wonderful opportunity to share music, laughter and friendship across generations.

We are so proud of our pupils and we are very grateful to the residents, staff and families of Dipton Manor for allowing this wonderful link with St Patrick's.

Christmas Cards for Delight Court

As well as visiting Dipton Manor, our pupils have also been producing Christmas cards for Delight Court. We hope this gesture will bring some smiles to the faces of the lovely residents and staff.



General News

Dipton Christmas Tree Lighting

The children who joined the choir for the Dipton Christmas tree lighting ceremony received a lovely thank you from the organisers.

I know our fantastic pupils would have been ready to join in this lovely, community event without the reward; nevertheless, it is certainly a very kind gesture which is much appreciated. We look forward to joining in with the next event.



Christmas Jumper Day

We all enjoyed the chance to wear our Christmas jumpers on Thursday for Save the Children's Christmas Jumper Day.

If you are able to contribute, please do so via our fundraising page below. So far, we have raised £151!

<https://christmas.savethechildren.org.uk/fundraising/CJD250008546>



General News

St. Patrick's Christmas Tree Festival

Year Six have been busy creating decorations for our exhibit for the St. Patrick's Christmas Tree Festival, which takes in place in Church this weekend. We designed our tree around the theme 'Live Simply' and tried to make environmentally friendly choices when decorating it.



General News

St Patrick's Nursery

We are delighted that we have already received some applications for our new Nursery provision opening January 12th 2026.

This is the next stage of an exciting journey for us as a school as we widen our offer to more families and younger pupils.

We are starting small as we feel this will allow us to provide the best possible start.

We have already been in contact with our 'Nursery' families and our newest pupils will be invited for a visit very soon.

Please complete the link below if you would like to apply for your child's place in our Nursery provision.

<https://forms.office.com/e/ayzpUTshMc>

Reception Applications for September 2026

If you are a family with a child due to start the Reception year in September 2026, we encourage you to look around our wonderful school when making this decision.

We are very happy to introduce you to our fantastic staff and pupils and show you how our school is organised.

Please contact the school office to make an appointment. If you have friends or family in this position, please pass on our details.

Please apply for your child's Reception place on the link below.
Applications close on Thursday 15 January 2026.

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-primary-school-place>

Parish newsletter

Please click [here](#) to view this week's parish newsletter for St. Patrick's and St. Joseph's parishes. Here you will find news about upcoming parish events and news.

General News

Parent Governor Vacancy

We currently have a vacancy for a Parent Governor to join our Local Governing Committee. Parent Governors play a vital role in shaping the strategic direction of the school, supporting leadership and ensuring that decisions are made in the best interests of all pupils.

This role involves working as part of a team to monitor school performance, contribute to policy decisions and uphold our vision and values. A Parent Governor should strive to ensure that St Patrick's remains an inclusive and welcoming school for all, with the highest expectations for every child.

If you are interested in making a difference and supporting our school community in this way, please email us with your expression of interest by Thursday 18th December. Please state what specific skills you feel you could bring to the role.

If we have a number of interested candidates, this will move to a vote. If you would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact the school office and an appointment can be made to chat through this further.



Online safety

We will give regular updates throughout the year regarding the need for vigilance with online safety. Please alert us to any concerns you may have.

Please see the following guidance and advice from National Online Safety.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about TOY SCALPING, FAKES & SCAMS

Online scalping is when individuals or groups use automated software (bots) to bulk-buy high-demand items – such as gaming consoles, concert tickets, limited-edition trainers, or exclusive merchandise – with the intention of reselling them at vastly inflated prices. It's a fast-moving online trend that can frustrate young consumers and expose them to misleading practices or financial harm. As this unethical tactic grows, it's important to help children and young people understand how scalping works and how to navigate it responsibly.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

- FINANCIAL PRESSURE AND MANIPULATION**
Scalpers create artificial scarcity by buying up large quantities of stock before the public has a fair chance to purchase. This drives up demand and pushes prices to extreme levels. Young people may feel intense pressure to spend more than they can afford for fear of missing out entirely.
- EXPLOITATION OF FANDOMS**
Scalping often targets popular releases with strong fan bases, knowing that loyal followers are emotionally invested. Children and young people may place huge value on owning certain items linked to their favourite artists, sports teams or games, making them more likely to accept unfair prices or questionable sellers.
- ACCESSING UNSAFE WEBSITES**
In the rush to secure rare items, young people might click through to unverified sellers, online marketplaces with little consumer protection, or even sites designed specifically to harvest personal and financial data. This can expose them to fraud, malware, and identity theft.
- NORMALISING UNETHICAL BEHAVIOUR**
Some influencers and online communities present scalping as a clever money-making scheme rather than an exploitative one. This can normalise dishonest behaviour and blur the line between legitimate business and opportunistic profiteering for younger audiences.
- RISK OF SCAMS OR COUNTERFEIT GOODS**
Not every high-priced resale is legitimate. Fraudulent sellers may take payment for goods they never send, or ship counterfeit versions of branded items. In some cases, the product may look authentic in photos but turn out to be of poor quality or completely different from what was advertised.
- REINFORCING INEQUALITY**
Scalping makes already expensive items even less accessible, particularly for lower-income families. Children may feel excluded from trends or shared experiences with friends if their family cannot meet the inflated prices, which can lead to feelings of isolation and disappointment.

Advice for Parents & Educators

- TALK ABOUT ONLINE FAIRNESS**
Use scalping as an opportunity to discuss fairness, consumer ethics, and how some people exploit markets for profit. Encouraging children to think critically about whether they truly need an item – and at what cost – can help them make more considered decisions.
- ENCOURAGE PATIENCE OVER IMPULSE**
Teach young people to wait for official restocks or future releases instead of paying over the odds. Many products come back into circulation, and patience can save significant amounts of money while reducing the likelihood of falling victim to scams.
- SUPPORT INFORMED PURCHASING**
Show children how to check seller credentials, read independent reviews, and verify whether a site is secure before making any payment. Knowing how to spot red flags, such as unrealistic promises or missing contact details, can prevent costly mistakes.
- SET SPENDING BOUNDARIES**
Establish clear rules for online spending, including limits on prepaid cards, gaming gift cards, and online wallets. Discuss the real-world value of money spent on digital or collector's items so children understand the long-term impact of their purchases.

Meet Our Expert

Home to the world's largest CPD library for educators, The National College has transformed the way education establishments go about developing their workforces and managing compliance. Our three memberships help all phases and types of setting raise standards, save time, reduce risk, and build a culture of improvement.

The National College

#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

Source: See full reference list on guide page 67

December Wellbeing Activities

I am loved.

Christmas Wellbeing Advent Calendar

I am thankful.

<p>1</p> <p>Do something kind for someone else.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Make a batch of Christmas biscuits to share with family and friends.</p> 	<p>3</p> <p>Find some seasonal natural treasure and bring it inside to display.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Get a cosy blanket and snuggle up on the sofa with a good book.</p> 	<p>5</p> <p>Create a piece of art using natural materials.</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Arrange to see a friend for a chat and a giggle.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Wake up in time to see the sun rise.</p>
<p>8</p> <p>Make a Christmas card for a friend thanking them for something.</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Get creative! Use paint to create a winter scene.</p> 	<p>10</p> <p>Listen to your favourite Christmas song.</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Go for a winter picnic with hot chocolate and a cake.</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Complete a seasonal craft project. Use sequins, glitter or colouring pens to get creative.</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Sit in a quiet area outside and listen to all the natural sounds you can hear.</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Look outside in the early evening and try to spot some stars.</p>
<p>15</p> <p>Dance to your favourite Christmas song.</p> 	<p>16</p> <p>Research a charity. Think of a way you could help raise money to support a good cause this Christmas.</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Create a senses box. Place smells and textures that remind you of Christmas inside it.</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Plant some spring flowering bulbs like daffodils or tulips.</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Sitting comfortably, close your eyes and breathe deeply. Think of five things you are grateful for.</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Create ice art. Collect leaves or petals and put them in a pot of water and then freeze it. Take your ice sculpture out of the pot and display it.</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Watch your favourite Christmas film with someone special.</p> 
<p>22</p> <p>Invite a friend round to play a game.</p> 	<p>23</p> <p>Wrap up a gift for a family member.</p> 	<p>24</p> <p>Arrange a family meal where everyone suggests a course.</p> 	<p>25</p> <p>Wrap up warm and go for a walk outside.</p>			

Cocoa Meditation

Why not make up your own cocoa ceremony? Make a hot chocolate, using a special cup, pouring technique and serving tray. Make the hot chocolate as if something very profound is happening. Drink it slowly and with your full attention. Tidy it away with that same sense of quiet joy.



Light it Up

There is nothing like a little light show. Put on the Christmas lights and spend time just enjoying their twinkle. Watch the colours, the light areas, shadows and how they change. You might spend more time there doing a quiet task or listening to gentle music.



Chain Gang

Making paper chain decorations is a really calming and productive way to spend your time. Simple strips with tape at the end can be linked together to create a lovely decoration. Decorate the strips before assembling with written messages or hopes.



Shining Star Pose

Lie on the floor with your legs and arms stretched out comfortably so you are in a star shape. Imagine your heart is the centre of the star and that it beams out peaceful love. Breathe slowly and easily as you relax your shoulders and neck. Rest here for 10 lovely breaths.



Christmas Pudding Rice Cereal Cakes

Ingredients

50g rice cereal
30g raisins
50g butter
100g milk chocolate
2 tbsp crunchy peanut butter
30g mini marshmallows
80g white chocolate
Icing decorations such as holly leaves (these can be bought pre-made)

Equipment

Chopping board
Sharp knife
Hob
Small bowl
Medium saucepan
Large mixing bowl
Wooden spoon
Egg cup
Cling film
Microwave

Method

1. Chop the raisins and break your milk chocolate into pieces.
2. Put the butter, milk chocolate pieces, peanut butter and marshmallows into your saucepan and heat gently on a low heat. Stir the mixture until the chocolate and butter have melted and the marshmallows are just going gooey.
3. Pour the sticky butter, milk, peanut butter and marshmallow mixture into your bowl with the raisins and rice cereal and stir well until everything is mixed together and coated.
4. Line your egg cup with cling film and then press about a tablespoon of the mixture into the egg cup.
5. Press the mixture down firmly and then pull the cling film out of the egg cup and remove from your rice cereal ball. Place the ball, flat side down, into one of the cupcake cases.
6. Continue steps 4 and 5 until you have used up all your mixture. You should be able to make between 10 and 12.
7. Place the rice cereal cakes in the fridge and chill until they are firm.
8. Whilst the rice cereal cakes are chilling, put the white chocolate in a small bowl and melt in the microwave. Do this in short bursts to make sure that the chocolate doesn't burn.
9. Once the chocolate is melted and the cereal cakes are firm, spoon a little chocolate over the top of each pudding.
10. Top the white chocolate with your pre-made holly leaf decorations.

Head Teacher's Awards

The following children have received a head teacher's certificate this week:

Reception	Being Respectful	Charlotte	For always having beautiful manners in school.
Year 1	Being Ready to Learn	Joseph H	For being ready to learn in writing and producing a fantastic piece of work.
Year 2	Being Ready to Learn	Toby	For working so hard to learn times tables facts.
Year 3	Being Respectful	Lucy	For always listening carefully, lining up silently and looking after equipment.
Year 4	Being Ready to Learn	Theo	For sharing fantastic ideas for writing and working very hard all week.
Year 5	Being Ready to Learn	Samuel	For working extremely hard in English and maths.
Year 6	Being Respectful	Phoebe	For looking out for others and being a good friend to all.

Class Teacher Special Mention Awards

The following children have received a Class Teacher Special Mention certificate this week:

Reception	Rosie U	For her amazing singing in The Gigantic Star Nativity this week.
Year 1	Faith	For her hard work in phonics this week.
Year 2	Freddie	For always working hard and trying his best.
Year 3	Patrick	For always being a fantastic and cheerful member of our Year 3 class.
Year 4	Bella	For putting so much effort into every piece of work this week.
Year 5	Evie	For always asking for help and support in class.
Year 6	Lucas	For expert decoration-making for the Christmas tree festival.



Summary of upcoming events

Saturday 13 th and Sunday 14 th	Parish Christmas Tree Festival 1-4pm
Monday 15 th	Y3/Y4 Liturgical Dance 2.15pm in school. Y3/Y4 Parents/carers welcome.
Tuesday 16 th	Y5/Y6 Carol Service 2.15pm in school. Y5/Y6 Parents/carers welcome. FOSP Christmas Raffle to be drawn after the service.
Wednesday 17 th	Christmas Parties – EYFS + KS1 am / KS2 pm (Non uniform)
Thursday 18 th	Christmas Lunch Day (children can wear Christmas jumpers)

**Friday 19th December School Closes for
Christmas holidays
School re-opens to pupils on Tuesday 6th
January**

**[Please click here to view our Diary of Events for
the rest of the Academic year](#)**

Parent/Carer Information



Mental Health & Emotional Support

for **children, young people & families** in County Durham

This is a **great starting point** to help you **access support**

If **Christmas is a hard time** for you, it's important to **remember that you are not alone.**



KOOTH | www.kooth.com

Free, safe and anonymous support around mental wellbeing for 11 years +

CAMHS - Single Point of Access | 03001 239 296 www.tewv.nhs.uk

Community mental health teams for children (0-18 years)

Emotional Health & Resilience Team | 03000 263 532

Emotional health, advice and guidance for 5-19 years

NHS 111 | www.nhs.uk

Get medical help near you or advice on your nearest walk-in centres

TEWV Crisis line | NHS 111 Option 2 | www.tewv.nhs.uk

24 hour service for young people experiencing a mental health crisis

Children's Social Care First Contact 03000 267 979

www.durham.gov.uk/FirstContact

Report a concern about a child's welfare

Childline | 0800 1111 | www.childline.org.uk

Confidential telephone counselling service for any child with a problem

Early Help Triage Line Professionals Only | 03000 267979 (option 4)

Early Help Triage can support professionals to identify appropriate support options based on family's needs

Mind | 0300 123 3393 | www.mind.org.uk

Provides information and signposting around mental health, including where to get help and treatment options

Samaritans | 116 123 | www.samaritans.org

The Samaritans offer a safe space to talk in your own time and way about what is important to you

Parent/Carer Information

Young Minds | 0808 802 5544 | www.youngminds.org.uk

Helping young people around isolation and gaining support around mental health

The Mix | 0808 808 4994 | www.themix.org.uk

Free, confidential support for under 25 via online, social or mobile

PAPYRUS | 0800 068 4141 | www.papyrus-uk.org

Confidential support and advice for young people with thoughts of suicide

Shout | Text SHOUT to 85258 | giveusashout.org

Confidential 24/7 crisis text support when you need immediate assistance

BEAT Youthline | 0808 801 0711 | www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk

Provides support for children and young people with an eating disorder

Remember your **local school** and **GPs** are **available to help**.

You are **not alone**, we can get through this **together**.

NHS
County Durham
Clinical Commissioning Group

Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

County Durham
Care Partnership 

Durham
County Council 



Parent/Carer Information



Tickets available at all
Christmas performances
and will be drawn at the
final performance on Dec
16th

CHRISTMAS RAFFLE

£1 PER STRIP

All money raised will go
back into the FoSP fund
to help with future
events and towards
school supplies.

PRIZES INCLUDE:
Overnight stay at Lord
Crewe, Bamburgh
Family Voucher for the New
Moti Jheel, Mini Photo
Shoot,
Hampers and more

Parent/Carer Information



Christmas
TREE FESTIVAL

DECEMBER

13TH - 14TH 1 PM-4 PM

**ST PATRICK'S CHURCH
DIPTON**

**TREES - TEA ROOM
TOMBOLA - RAFFLE**

Parent/Carer Information

STANLEY FAMILY OF CATHOLIC PARISHES

CHRISTMAS
CONCERT



*Craghead
Colliery
Band*

21ST DECEMBER 2025 3PM

ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH STANLEY

THIS IS THE PERFECT WAY TO EMBRACE THE MAGIC OF THE CHRISTMAS SEASON
WITH JOYFUL MUSIC, BEAUTIFUL MOMENTS, AND WELCOMING ATMOSPHERE.

MULLED WINE & MINCE PIES

£5 PER TICKET