



Newsletter: 24th April 2026

Dear Families,

We hope you had a wonderful Easter break and enjoyed all your chocolate treats!

We were delighted to welcome parents and carers to our recent workshop led by Caroline Daly from the SEN Team at Durham. The session provided a warm, informal space for families to come together, ask questions and access practical advice and support around children's additional needs.

With Miss Clish, SENDCO, also involved, feedback highlighted how valuable it was to share concerns, gain reassurance and learn strategies in a relaxed and supportive environment. Opportunities like this allow parents and carers to feel heard and supported while also strengthening the partnership between home and school.

From a school perspective, we are extremely proud to be able to offer these additional events for our families. They reflect our ongoing commitment to addressing anxiety, promoting wellbeing and, very importantly for long-term health, building resilience in our children and young people. Working closely with external professionals ensures that families can access expert guidance in a way that is approachable and accessible.

Being part of the STAR initiative gives St Patrick's a real advantage in developing this work further. It enables us to place emotional wellbeing and mental health at the heart of our provision, ensuring that support extends beyond the classroom and into the wider school community.

We look forward to continuing to offer similar workshops in the future, strengthening relationships with families and ensuring that every child is supported to thrive.

We appreciate that not every family can be represented at these events so we have attached a brief overview of ideas, sent by Caroline Daly, which you can explore independently. This will also be sent via Arbor.

Have a lovely weekend and enjoy the sunshine!

Mrs Burgess
Headteacher

General News

Emotional Regulation Take Aways

A careful use of language – top tips



SEND & Inclusion Service



Supporting Emotions

VISUALS Use a picture to help you think about the situation.	ADJUST TO USE Use a picture to help you think about the situation.	PLAN SUCCESS Use a picture to help you think about the situation.
USE LETTERS & PUNCTUATION Use a picture to help you think about the situation.	TEACH ME UP TO GET IT Use a picture to help you think about the situation.	ADD TO VISUALS Use a picture to help you think about the situation.
2 PEOPLE AND 2 Use a picture to help you think about the situation.	WATCH FOR SIGNS Use a picture to help you think about the situation.	SOCIAL COGNITIVE COGNITION Use a picture to help you think about the situation.
STOP Use a picture to help you think about the situation.	PUT PEOPLE AND I GET Use a picture to help you think about the situation.	EMOTIONAL COGNITION Use a picture to help you think about the situation.

Lazy 8 Breathing



The Six Sides of Breathing



SEND & Inclusion Service



Calm box ideas

- Visual calm down strategy cards – exercises, activities, task ideas
- Bubbles
- Chew toys/necklaces
- Small handheld puzzle – e.g. Rubik's cube
- Fidgets – tangle toys etc.
- Soft toys/animals
- Weighted blanket/vest
- Ear defenders
- Stretchy resistance bands
- Relaxation cards – basic yoga poses
- Soft bristle hairbrush/toothbrush
- Kaleidoscope
- Stress ball
- Playdough/putty
- Bubble wrap
- Small etch-a-sketch
- Colourings and pencils
- Small light up toys
- Small plastic snow globe
- Pipe cleaners
- Tissue paper
- Scarves
- Spinning top
- Small mirror (plastic)
- Whistle/harmonica – good for breathing out
- Puzzles – mazes, dot-to-dot, word searches
- Books/picture books
- Small handheld massager
- Items linked to specific interests e.g. dinosaurs, space



Belly Breathing

Take 5 deep breaths.



SWAP This & This

Expected response	Instead of this	Try this (Healthy Swap)
Running away, hiding	Chasing	Create a safe retreat spot
Shouting, screaming	Talking over them; giving long explanations	Provide structured and useful e.g. picture drawing
Hitting, kicking, throwing	"Stop hitting"	Offer appropriate words that set boundaries and promote alternative responses
Refusing, avoiding	Adding more demand	Do together, offer choices, lower demand
Freezing/shut-down	Adding more demands. Trying to distract	Provide structured and offer sensory supports
Arguing, talking back, unkind words	Shout back	Use reflective language, keep calm, provide a rest and regulate emotions
Physical towards the environment	Shouting and commenting on the action	Provide sensory compression (fidget response, yoga, sensory, self-soothe to help regulate) (drawing, dance, outdoor play)



WAVES
Parent/Carer
Support Group



Family Hubs

General News

School Improvement Partner (SIP) Visit

This week we were pleased to welcome our school improvement partner (SIP) to St Patrick's.

A school improvement partner is an experienced education professional who works with schools to offer external support and challenge. Their role is to help us reflect on how well the school is doing, recognise strengths and suggest next steps so we can continue to improve for the benefit of all our children.

During these visits, which are a normal and valuable part of ensuring ambitious standards and continual improvement, time is spent in classrooms, speaking with children and staff and rigorously looking through the work children produce.

We were delighted that the feedback from the visit was extremely positive.

The SIP described St Patrick's as a *lovely school* with a *calm and purposeful atmosphere* and a *wonderful feel throughout*. She commented particularly on how *extremely well behaved* the children are and how *fully involved they are in their learning*. It was also noted how confidently and respectfully pupils engage with staff and with one another.

We are immensely proud of our children and staff, and grateful for the continued support of our parents and carers which helps make St Patrick's such a positive, caring and successful school community.

Pupils starting Reception in September 2026 - Late Applications

We would like to remind families that it is still possible to submit a late application for a place in our Reception Class for September 2026.

Late applications can still be made and will continue to be processed. If you have not yet applied for a Reception place but wish your child to join us in September, we encourage you to complete an online application as soon as possible via the Durham County Council School Admissions portal.

Submitting a late application ensures your child is included in the next stage of allocations or re-allocation rounds. If you would like any help with the process, please get in touch with our school office — we are always happy to support you.

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.

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 IMAGE-ALTERING FILTERS

From playful puppy ears on Snapchat to 'beauty mode' on TikTok, image-altering filters are now a routine part of how young people communicate online. While many are harmless, others subtly reshape people's faces and bodies. This can blur the line between reality and edited content, potentially influencing how children and young people see themselves and others.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

- ALTERED BEAUTY STANDARDS**

Many 'beauty' filters smooth skin, reshape facial features, or adjust body proportions. Over time, repeated exposure to these filters can shift a child's idea of what is 'normal' or attractive, creating unrealistic expectations about their own and others' appearances.
- HIDDEN ADVERTISING**

Some filters are linked to beauty products or trends, subtly promoting third-party brands. Children and young people may not recognise this as advertising, while also sharing personal data – such as facial images and usage habits – with apps and third parties.
- PRESSURE TO LOOK PERFECT**

Filtered images can often attract more 'likes' and positive comments. This can encourage children and young people to rely on editing tools to gain others' approval, rather than feeling confident in their natural appearance.
- BLURRED REALITY**

As filters become more advanced and natural-looking, it can be difficult for children and young people to distinguish edited content from real life, especially when filters are used in everyday photos and videos.
- LOW SELF-ESTEEM**

Regularly viewing heavily filtered content can lead to comparisons with unrealistic images. This is linked to body dissatisfaction and reduced self-esteem, particularly among children and teenagers.
- SEXUALISED EDITS**

Certain tools can make users appear older or more sexualised. This may attract unwanted attention, increase the risk of images being shared without consent, and expose young people to unsafe interactions.

Advice for Parents & Educators

- START OPEN CONVERSATIONS**

Talk regularly about filters, such as how they work and why people use them. Ask the children and young people in your care how filtered images make them feel and encourage honest discussion without judgement.
- CHALLENGE 'PERFECT' POSTS**

When viewing content together, gently point out the signs of editing, filters, or posing techniques. This builds critical thinking and helps children and young people question unrealistic images.
- REINFORCE WHAT'S REAL**

Help children and young people understand that filtered images are digitally altered and are not an accurate reflection of real life. Emphasise that they don't need to meet these artificial standards.
- PROMOTE OFFLINE CONFIDENCE**

Encourage activities that build self-worth beyond appearance, such as sports, hobbies, friendships, and creative interests, so that confidence isn't tied solely to online validation.

April Wellbeing Activities

Spring Self-Care Calendar

1 Think of a way you can be active every day this month.

2 Think about a person in your life you are grateful for. What is it about them that makes them special?

3 Draw around your hand, cut it out, decorate it and then write on one side something that makes you feel happy.

4 Decorate a stone with a kind word to leave somewhere for another person to find and to make them smile.

5 Listen to some music that makes you feel good.

6 Do some crazy dancing.

7 Do a craft.

8 Make a thank-you card for somebody.

9 Make a beautiful flower out of tissue paper, a straw and a button.

10 Go on a mindful walk with a trusted adult.

11 Make some playdough.

12 Go to the park and play on your favourite equipment.

13 Give someone you love a big cuddle. This could be a pet too!

14 Do a jigsaw puzzle.

15 Build a bug hotel in your garden.

16 Think of what you are looking forward to as the days get longer and brighter.

17 Do a 5km walk or 2km run with a member of your family.

18 Wear your favourite outfit today, just to make yourself feel good!

19 Do some baking – you could try to make some Easter biscuits!

20 Go on a hunt to collect some things in nature and use them to make spring pictures.

21 Go for a picnic outdoors and pack your favourite snack.

22 Do something that makes you laugh.

23 Arrange a play date with one of your friends.

24 Do some mindfulness colouring.

25 Watch your favourite feel-good film or TV programme.

Let's Keep Moving - Yoga Cards

Cobra Pose

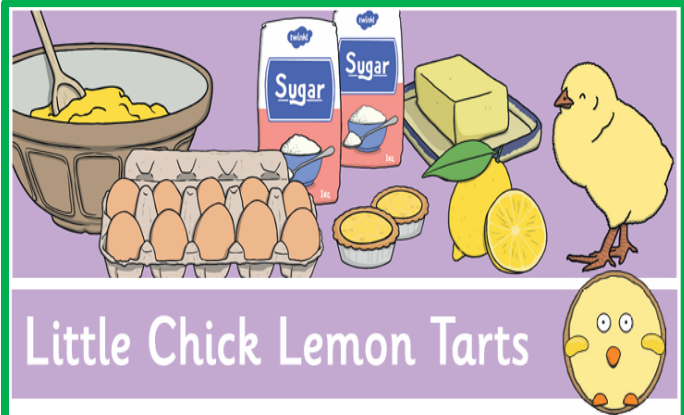
Lie on your tummy on the floor. Point your toes and raise your head and front up using your arms for support on the floor. Hold the pose.



Let's Keep Moving - Yoga Cards

Warrior Pose

Stand with both feet together. Step your left leg forward keeping your left foot facing forward. Turn your right foot to face sideways. Stretch your left arm forward and your right arm backwards keeping your fingers pointed. Bend your left knee. Hold the pose.



Ingredients

1 cup white sugar
 3 eggs
 1 cup fresh lemon juice
 Zest of 2 lemons
 ½ cup butter, melted
 Frozen mini tart shells
 White sweets for the eyes
 Orange sweets for the feet and beak
 Yellow sweets for the wings

Equipment

Baking tray
 Glass bowl
 Whisk
 Metal spoon
 Fine mesh sieve

Method

- Place the frozen tart shells on the baking tray and make holes in the bottom of them using a fork.
- Bake in the oven according to the instructions.
- Whilst the tarts are baking make up the rest of the ingredients.
- Combine the white sugar, eggs, lemon juice, lemon zest and butter in the bowl.
- Whisk them all together until smooth.
- Heat in the microwave 1 minute at a time. Stir after every minute.
- The lemon filling is ready when it starts to cover the back of a metal spoon.
- Pour the lemon filling through the sieve.
- Pour in the lemon filling and leave to set.
- Finally, use the sweets to decorate your chick.

Head Teacher's Awards

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

Reception/ Nursery	Being Ready To Learn	Freya	For trying her best in everything she is asked to do.
Year 1	Being Ready to Learn	Nathan	For having an amazing first week being ready each day for new piece of learning.
Year 2	Being Ready to Learn	Harlow	For working hard to check sentences make sense.
Year 3	Being Ready to Learn	Robin	For giving teachers 100% of his attention, working hard and producing his best work.
Year 4	Being Ready to Learn	Lesley	For fully participating in discussions and sharing some interesting thoughts about our book.
Year 5	Being Ready to Learn	Charlie	For thinking about his sentence construction in English this week.
Year 6	Being Ready to Learn	Indiana	For an excellent attitude to self-study.

Class Teacher Special Mention Awards

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

Reception/ Nursery	Rosie U	For always being such a kind and caring friend.
Year 1	Amber	For showing real resilience this week with new challenges.
Year 2	Jory	For not giving up even when work is tricky.
Year 3	Eva	For confidently reading with varied volume and expression and adhering to punctuations.
Year 4	Niall	For amazing work with decimals this week.
Year 5	Niamh	For always being a happy and joyful member of the class.
Year 6	Ella	For listening to advice about how to improve in maths.



Summary of upcoming events

Monday 27 th	Easter Mass 2.15pm in church. All welcome.
Tuesday 28 th	Y1/Y2 Synagogue Visit in School
Wednesday 29 th	Little Acorns Meeting 9-10.30am. Led by Caroline Daly SEND & Inclusion Advisory Team. Invited carers
Thursday 30 th	Y5/Y6 Girls' Football at Greenland 4.00pm–5.00pm
	
Friday 1 st	Reception Easter Celebration 9.15am. Reception Parents welcome.
Monday 4th School closed for May Day Bank Holiday	
Thursday 7 th	Y5/Y6 Girls' Football at Greenland 4.00pm–5.00pm
Friday 8 th	Y5 Life Science Centre Trip

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