



Newsletter: 1st May 2026

Dear Families,

Join Our Thriving EYFS Unit – Nursery Places for September 2026 Now Open!

We are delighted to share that interest in our Nursery is already growing - and it is easy to see why!

Our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) unit provides a warm, nurturing and inspiring start to school life. We warmly invite families to consider joining our Nursery, where children are encouraged to learn, explore and flourish from the very beginning of their educational journey.

A Unique EYFS Experience

At St Patrick's, our Nursery and Reception children benefit from being part of a vibrant, integrated EYFS unit. This means:

- Children enjoy shared learning experiences, building confidence and social skills together. At the same time, our pupils have dedicated opportunities to explore age-appropriate curriculum content tailored to their stage of development;
- Smooth transition into Reception, as children are already familiar with staff, routines and the learning environment;
- Highly experienced and caring staff;
- Exceptional outdoor learning - one of our highlights is our fantastic outdoor learning area, directly attached to the EYFS classrooms. This space allows children to explore, investigate and play in all seasons, develop physical skills and confidence and engage in imaginative and collaborative play.

Our EYFS team brings a wealth of experience, passion and expertise. They are skilled in supporting every child to:

- Develop independence and curiosity;
- Build strong communication and language skills;
- Feel safe, valued and ready to learn;

Welcoming Rising 3s

We are pleased to offer places in September for rising 3s (if your child turns 3 before September) providing an early start in a supportive and stimulating environment. This is a wonderful opportunity for younger children to begin their school journey with us.

We are thrilled that our Nursery numbers are already increasing — a real testament to the quality of provision and the strong sense of community within our school.

If you are considering Nursery provision for your child, we would love to welcome you to our EYFS family. Come and see first-hand the joyful, engaging environment we offer and discover how your child can thrive with us.

Contact the school office today to find out more or arrange a visit.

Have a lovely, long weekend!

Mrs Burgess

General News

Nursery and Reception - A Joyful Easter Celebration in EYFS

Our Nursery and Reception children have had a busy week as they came together to celebrate Easter.

The atmosphere was truly special, with our youngest pupils shining as they shared their learning through a fantastic Easter celebration. Their enthusiasm, confidence and growing sense of togetherness were evident for all to see. In a moment that perfectly captured the spirit of our school community, the whole school spontaneously joined in singing, creating an uplifting and memorable experience for everyone present.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to our wonderful pupils, who filled the celebration with joy and energy; our fantastic EYFS team, whose dedication and creativity made the event so meaningful and our supportive families, who turned out in such great numbers — your presence helped make the occasion even more special.



It was a lovely example of our school community coming together in celebration.

Ready, Steady, Go!

Alongside this, our Nursery and Reception pupils also took part in their very first "Ready, Steady, Go" session, which they thoroughly enjoyed. This 10-week programme will target their physical development, teamwork and listening skills — all the while having great fun!

Mass

Thank you, to Father Shaun for celebrating Mass with us this week. Thank you, to all family members and parishioners who shared the occasion with us.

Girls' Football Team Update

Well done to all involved in our girls' football team. The team played two matches this week earning a draw and a 3-0 victory! We are delighted with the results, but what makes us even more proud is the great attitude the girls have shown in training and during their matches. Many thanks to our coach, Mr Bell, and Mrs Langley, who leads PE in school, for giving your time so readily. Good luck for the next games!

General News

Sun Safety

As the weather warms up, it is important to remind our children about sun safety. Please follow the Slip, Slap, Slop rule:

- Slip on a shirt to protect their skin.
- Slap on a hat to shield their face and neck.
- Slop on sunscreen to guard against harmful UV rays. Please ensure sunscreen is applied before you leave for school.

We have the 'slip' bit covered but, by practising all these simple steps, we can ensure our children stay safe while enjoying the sunshine. Let's work together to make sun safety a priority!



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 MAKING FRIENDS ONLINE

In today's digital world, it's increasingly common for children to form friendships with people they've never met in person. While online connections can offer children a sense of belonging, they also carry significant risks. Around 19% of children aged 10 to 15 in England and Wales have chatted online with someone they've never met face to face. This guide offers expert advice for parents and educators on helping children navigate online friendships safely.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

ONLINE GROOMING THREATS

Predators can use games, chat apps or social media platforms to build relationships with children and gain their trust. This may quickly develop into grooming or exploitation. Between April 2017 and March 2022, UK police recorded nearly 34,000 online grooming offences – an 82% increase in just five years.

EXPOSURE TO INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Children may encounter distressing or explicit material while interacting with online contents – especially via TikTok, Instagram or Snapchat. This is evidenced in a survey by the Children's Commissioner for England, which found that 45% of children aged 8 to 17 had seen content online that made them feel uncomfortable, worried or upset.

PRIVACY AND DATA RISKS

Children and young people often overshare personal details – such as where they live or go to school – without understanding the consequences. In fact, 4.4% of 10 to 15-year-olds in the UK have met up in real life with someone they'd only spoken to online.

COMPROMISED PERSONAL SAFETY

Meeting an online 'friend' in real life risks placing a child in serious danger. From abduction to coercion, the consequences can be devastating. Reports of children being harmed after such meetings are becoming increasingly common in the UK, highlighting the need for safeguarding intervention.

PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS

Online harm – such as cyberbullying, grooming or exposure to disturbing content – can lead to long-term emotional issues, including anxiety, depression and PTSD. 'Sexortion' gangs, who threaten to release sexual information about a person unless they pay them money, have reportedly targeted children as young as 11, leaving them traumatised and ashamed.

LONG-TERM REPERCUSSIONS

Children exposed to harmful online relationships early on may develop unhealthy beliefs about relationships, consent, or self-worth. In a recent case, a 28-year-old posed as a girl on Snapchat to befriend children aged 10 to 16, manipulating them into sexual activity and causing profound emotional distress. One 12-year-old tragically died by suicide, highlighting the long-term psychological harm online friendships with strangers can cause.

26 FRIENDS ONLINE NOW ✓

Advice for Parents & Educators

TEACH SAFE ONLINE HABITS

Help children understand how to use privacy settings, protect their personal information, spot fake profiles, and report anything suspicious or concerning, like pressure tactics. Encourage them to think critically about what they share – and whom they're talking to.

ENCOURAGE REAL-WORLD CONNECTIONS

Support children in building friendships through school, clubs, hobbies and activities in the real world. Strong offline relationships help reduce children's reliance on online platforms for social interaction, and can help them develop resilience and social confidence.

KEEP CONVERSATIONS OPEN

Let children know they can talk to you about their online life. Avoid reacting with anger or judgement, as this may prevent them from opening up in the future. A child who feels listened to is more likely to discuss problems before they escalate.

USE PARENTAL CONTROLS

Parental control settings on devices, games and apps can help manage screen time, filter out inappropriate content, and monitor activity. While no system is perfect, they provide a valuable layer of protection as children explore digital spaces.

Meet Our Expert

Gabriella Russo is a safeguarding consultant with over 20 years' experience in supporting children, families, and adults across education, social authority, and mental health settings – both in the UK (including at Parliamentary level) and internationally.

#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

May Wellbeing Activities

Positive Affirmations May Calendar

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

1
I believe in myself and my abilities.

2
I am worthy.

3
I am creative.

4
I am unique.

5
I am curious.

6
I am helpful.

7
I can do hard things.

8
I can make a difference.

9
I am free to be myself.

10
I am confident.

11
I always try my best.

12
I am thankful.

13
I am kind.

14
I ask for help.

15
I like challenges.

16
I am a good friend.

17
I am doing the best I can.

18
I am honest.

19
I make good choices.

20
I learn from my challenges.

21
I am a good listener.

22
It is ok if I make mistakes.

23
I stand up for what I believe in.

24
I am patient and calm.

25
I can try again.

26
I am generous.

27
I see the good in myself and others.

28
I believe in my dreams and goals.

29
Today is going to be a great day!

30
I am loved.

31
I am open and ready to learn.



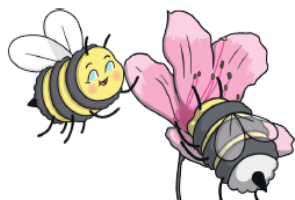
Starfish Breath

Sit down comfortably with your legs crossed. Hold out one hand, face your palm to the sky and spread out your fingers like a starfish. Use the opposite hand and place one finger onto the outside of your thumb. Breathe in as you move your finger up your thumb and breathe out as you move your finger down your thumb. Continue your starfish breathing, remembering to breathe in as you go up each finger and breathe out as you go down each finger. Once you have finished, swap hands and repeat on the opposite hand.



Bee Breath

Sit down comfortably and close your eyes if you are happy to do so. Carefully put your thumbs over your ears and your fingers over your eyes. Breathe in slowly through your nose until your tummy is full and then breathe out through your mouth, making a humming sound like a bee. Repeat this five times until you feel nice and calm.



Butterfly Shortbread Biscuits

Ingredients

- 100g butter
- 200g icing sugar
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- 10 shortbread fingers (or make your own)
- 20 pretzels
- 5 chocolate sticks (or liquorice)
- sprinkles

Equipment

- whisk
- mixing bowl
- sieve
- teaspoon
- tablespoon
- piping bag and nozzle (optional)

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 170°C-190°C fan/gas mark 5.
2. Mix the sugar and butter together until smooth.
3. Stir in the plain flour.
4. Dust the work surface with flour. Then, roll the mixture out until it is roughly 1cm thick.
5. Cut the mixture into fingers and place them on a greased baking tray (or use greaseproof paper).
6. Then, put them in the fridge for 20 minutes.
7. Bake them in the oven for 15-20 minutes until they are golden brown.
8. Place them on the cooling rack and allow them to cool before decorating.



Head Teacher's Awards

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

Reception/ Nursery	Being Ready to Learn	Reuben	For trying so hard to blend and segment in Phonics this week.
Year 1	Being Respectful	Jakub	For always listening very carefully to any instruction he is given.
Year 2	Being Ready to Learn	Toby	For super writing about Flat Stanley. Toby had great ideas!
Year 3	Being Ready to Learn	Evie	For giving teachers 100% of her attention and producing her best work.
Year 4	Being Responsible	Charlotte	For always being organised and ready to listen and learn.
Year 5	Being Ready to Learn	George	For working very hard in arithmetic this week.
Year 6	Being Ready to Learn	Lydia	An excellent attitude to all subjects.

Class Teacher Special Mention Awards

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

Reception/ Nursery	Whole class	For being superstars during our Spring Liturgy.
Year 1	Hannah	For working hard this week to improve her pace when writing.
Year 2	Sophie	For being a lovely friend to everyone.
Year 3	Lexa	For reading confidently with varied volume and expression and adhering to punctuations.
Year 4	Oliver	For writing at length and putting extra detail into his work.
Year 5	Phoebe	For drawing some very accurate angles this week.
Year 6	Daniella	For such an excellent attitude to learning.



Summary of upcoming events

Monday 4th School closed for May Day Bank Holiday	
Wednesday 6 th	Reception Vision Screening in School am
Thursday 7 th	Y5/Y6 Girls' Football at Greenland 4.00pm–5.00pm
Friday 8 th	Y5 Life Science Centre Trip
Saturday 9 th	First Holy Communion
Monday 11 th – Thursday 14 th	Y6 SATs Week
Friday 15 th	SEN drop-in session 2.30 - 3.15 with Miss Clish SENDCO
Monday 18 th – Thursday 21 st	Walk to School Week
Monday 18 th – Thursday 21 st	Art Week
Wednesday 20 th	Y6 Parents' Residential Information Meeting 3.30pm

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