



# Newsletter: 8<sup>th</sup> May 2026

Dear Families,

## **Attendance Matters**

At St Patrick's, we believe that every day in school is a valuable opportunity for our children to grow, learn and flourish. Excellent attendance is key to making the most of the wide range of enriching experiences we offer, from engaging lessons to creative activities and opportunities for personal development. Arriving on time, and being present each day, helps pupils build strong routines, develop confidence and maintain positive relationships with their peers and teachers. We are committed to working in partnership with families to ensure every child has the best possible start each day—because every moment in school truly matters.

We understand that children do become genuinely unwell, and we appreciate that absences for illness are sometimes unavoidable. However, it is important to recognise the impact of regular absence. A child with 90% attendance has missed around one half day of learning every week—this adds up to close to four full weeks of school across the year. At 80% attendance, a child misses the equivalent of one day every week, which is more than seven weeks of learning lost over the year. These missed days can make it much harder for children to keep up, feel confident and fully engage in school life.

Thank you for your continued support in helping ensure your child attends regularly and arrives on time, so they can fully benefit from everything St Patrick's has to offer.

Have a lovely weekend,

Mrs Burgess

# General News

## Year Six SATs assessments

Next week is a big week! We wish our wonderful Year 6 pupils good luck as they take part in their SATs. While these assessments are an important milestone, it is important to remember that no single set of tests can ever define a child's true achievement or potential. We are incredibly proud of how hard our children have worked and the determination, resilience and positive attitudes they have shown in preparing for this week. That said, we want all our pupils to do their very best to show-case their learning and their work ethic.

We would, therefore, like to thank our Year Six pupils in advance for their efforts, and also extend our sincere gratitude to their dedicated teachers, Miss Parry and Mrs McGrady, for the care, commitment and many hours — both in school and beyond — that they have given to support the Year 6 pupils on their journey this year.

Families, we kindly ask for your support in ensuring your child has a good night's sleep, on Sunday evening and throughout next week, so they arrive each day feeling refreshed, confident and ready for action. A calm and positive start to each morning will help them feel settled as they take on their first challenge on Monday.

We know our pupils will approach the week with courage and confidence and we are all cheering them on!

# General News

## Y1/Y2 Visit from the Newcastle Reform Synagogue

As part of our Religious Education curriculum and personal development curriculum, pupils explore a range of different faiths throughout the year. Recently, as part of this learning, children in Years One and Two welcomed Lesley Hagon from the Newcastle Reform Synagogue, who helped to enrich and deepen their understanding of Judaism. This experience supports our curriculum aims, enabling pupils to broaden their knowledge while developing respect and appreciation for different faiths and cultures. We are so fortunate to be part of a school community where diversity and tolerance is recognised and celebrated.



## 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.

## Nursery applications

As we mentioned last week, our Nursery is growing. If you have a child, who is three already, and you are looking for Nursery provision, please come and talk to us and meet our staff. Please spread the word to others!

## 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

## Safeguarding Information

If you are concerned that a child is being harmed or neglected call:  
First Contact 03000 26 7979.

If the child or young person is at immediate risk of harm call 999.

We expect all staff, volunteers and visitors, involved in any aspect of school life, to share this commitment.

We believe our pupils have the right to be happy, to be safe and to learn. At St. Patrick's, we believe safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

**Designated Lead** – Mrs Burgess, Headteacher

**Deputy Designated Lead** – Miss Parry, Assistant Headteacher and Year Six Teacher

**Deputy Designated Lead** – Miss Clish SENDCO and Year Two Teacher

## Girls' Football Team Update

Well done to our brilliant football team, who did us proud last night in their two matches – losing one and winning one. Thank you to their coach Mr Bell and to our supporters.



# General News

## Year Five Trip to Centre for Life

Year Five children enjoyed an exciting educational trip to the Life Centre in Newcastle, today, where they took part in a series of engaging space workshops. Throughout the day, the pupils explored fascinating concepts about the solar system, planets and dinosaurs through hands-on activities and interactive exhibits.

They had the opportunity to learn about astronauts' lives, experience simulated missions and deepen their understanding of scientific ideas in a fun and memorable way. The visit not only supported their classroom learning but also inspired curiosity and enthusiasm for science, leaving the children eager to discover more about the wonders of space. What a brilliant experience! I am not sure who had most fun, Mrs Oswald and Miss Shephard or the children!



## First Holy Communion

One of our lovely Y4 pupils will be making their First Holy Communion on Sunday at St Patrick's Church. Mass starts at 9am. It would be great if you could offer your support. I look forward to seeing you there.

# 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.

## 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

# HELPING NEURODIVERGENT CHILDREN NAVIGATE THE ONLINE WORLD

Neurodivergent people tend to be early adopters of technology, and many influential innovators in this space are neurodivergent themselves. It's therefore likely that a neurodivergent child or young person may be drawn to the online world from an early age. This isn't a concern in itself, but understanding both the benefits and potential risks is essential. Here are ten key considerations to support safe and positive online experiences for neurodivergent children.

- 1 TREAT ONLINE LIKE THE REAL WORLD**  
You wouldn't allow a child to cross a road without guidance – you'd hold their hand, use a pedestrian crossing, and model safe behaviour. In the same way, a neurodivergent child's first experiences online should be supported by an adult who can guide and explain safe and responsible digital behaviour to them from the outset.
- 2 MODEL RESPONSIBLE USE**  
Children learn from what they see. Show all children, regardless of neurotype, what responsible internet use looks like. Reflect on your own use of social media and AI. Consider how often you use them and your own understanding of these platforms. Talk openly about when and why you use these tools, helping all children develop a balanced and informed approach.
- 3 KNOW YOUR LIMITS**  
Current government guidance suggests no sole screen use below the age of two, with a maximum of one hour per day for two- to five-year-olds. Screen time can support communication and connection when shared with an adult. However, passive watching can affect neurodivergent children's attention and language skills. Focus on the type of content they watch, encouraging slower-paced and meaningful material rather than fast-paced, overstimulating content.
- 4 CONSIDER AGES AND STAGES**  
For older children and teenagers, agreed limits are important. Screen time can be beneficial, but it should form part of a balanced lifestyle. Neurodivergent children may find online communication easier than real-world conversation, supporting their social interaction. However, it shouldn't be their only option. Encourage a range of activities, including creative play, physical exercise, and opportunities for real-world connections.
- 5 KEEP CONVERSATIONS OPEN**  
Discussions about online safety should begin early and continue as children grow. However, neurodivergent children may worry about getting things wrong or being misunderstood, meaning these kinds of conversations should feel open and fair, rather than like a lecture. If a child encounters a problem – such as a scam or inappropriate content – they need to feel able to speak to a trusted adult without fear of judgement or embarrassment.
- 6 BUILD YOUR KNOWLEDGE**  
You aren't expected to be an expert, but it's important to stay informed about the platforms, games, or apps neurodivergent children use in order to provide practical support. Social media platforms have age limits, and many apps and games offer parental settings that can control access. Schools and families should work together to understand these tools, helping neurodivergent children use them safely while keeping up to date with new features and changes.
- 7 SET CLEAR BOUNDARIES**  
Children and young people often know more about current technology than adults, meaning it's important to recognise that controls may be bypassed. Clear, predictable boundaries should be used, based on trust and consistency. Involving children in discussions that affect them helps them feel heard. This is particularly important for neurodivergent children, who may respond strongly to perceived unfairness.
- 8 UNDERSTAND AI CONTENT**  
The internet now includes large amounts of AI-generated content, including images, videos, and stories. These can be difficult to identify. Children should be encouraged to question what they see and check the information using trusted sources. Neurodivergent children may interpret content literally, meaning adult guidance is important in helping them recognise what's real and reliable – and what isn't.
- 9 EXPLAIN AI LIMITATIONS**  
AI isn't the same as a search engine. It generates responses based on prompts and patterns, and its accuracy depends on how it's used. Sometimes, it produces incorrect or unrealistic information, known as 'hallucinations'. Both adults and children need to understand this and learn how to check information carefully using reliable and trusted sources.
- 10 CLARIFY AI RELATIONSHIPS**  
AI can feel conversational and personal, but it's not capable of real relationships. It learns from patterns in user input rather than human understanding. Some neurodivergent children may experience a sense of connection with AI chatbots, particularly if they find social situations challenging. It's therefore important to explain that these are simulated conversations and aren't a substitute for real, human relationships.

# May Wellbeing Activities

## Positive Affirmations May Calendar

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
		<b>1</b> I believe in myself and my abilities.	<b>2</b> I am worthy.	<b>3</b> I am creative.	<b>4</b> I am unique.	<b>5</b> I am curious.
<b>6</b> I am helpful.	<b>7</b> I can do hard things.	<b>8</b> I can make a difference.	<b>9</b> I am free to be myself.	<b>10</b> I am confident.	<b>11</b> I always try my best.	<b>12</b> I am thankful.
<b>13</b> I am kind.	<b>14</b> I ask for help.	<b>15</b> I like challenges.	<b>16</b> I am a good friend.	<b>17</b> I am doing the best I can.	<b>18</b> I am honest.	<b>19</b> I make good choices.
<b>20</b> I learn from my challenges.	<b>21</b> I am a good listener.	<b>22</b> It is ok if I make mistakes.	<b>23</b> I stand up for what I believe in.	<b>24</b> I am patient and calm.	<b>25</b> I can try again.	<b>26</b> I am generous.
<b>27</b> I see the good in myself and others.	<b>28</b> I believe in my dreams and goals.	<b>29</b> Today is going to be a great day!	<b>30</b> I am loved.	<b>31</b> I am open and ready to learn.		



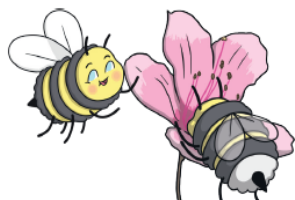
### Starfish Breath

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	Joseph	For listening to an instruction in PE.
Year 1	Being Respectful	Joseph H	For working hard this week on listening carefully to any instruction given by an adult.
Year 2	Being Ready to Learn	Grace	For showing an excellent attitude to learning and working so hard to recall addition facts.
Year 3	Being Ready to Learn	Luke	For consistently being an active learner and producing work to a high standard.
Year 4	Being Ready to Learn	Ailish	For a fantastic attitude in class this week, joining in and listening well.
Year 5	Being Ready to Learn	Evie	For detailed work about the life cycle of an amphibian.
Year 6	Being Ready to Learn	All of Year 6	For working so hard in preparation for SATs next week.

## Class Teacher Special Mention Awards

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

Reception/ Nursery	Esmae	For always approaching everything with a smile.
Year 1	Joey	For working hard on his phonics this week in school and at after school club.
Year 2	Isabelle	For having an excellent attitude to learning and always trying her best.
Year 3	Hannah	For demonstrating an impressive depth of knowledge and sharing it with confidence.
Year 4	Bella	For working extremely hard on learning times tables facts and making a huge improvement.
Year 5	All of Year 5	For participating in the science activity day at 'The Centre for Life.'
Year 6	All of Year 6	For all of the hard work they've put in in the lead-up to their SATs next week



# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

## SUMMER TERM 2026 COME AND SEE AT HOME

*Here are all the topics that the children at St Patrick's are going to be learning about in Religious Education this Summer term. The children will be studying the three themes of Pentecost (Serving), Reconciliation (Inter-relating), Other Faiths, Universal Church (World) and Islam faith.*

### PENTECOST—SERVING

Early Years	GOOD NEWS - Passing on the Good News of Jesus
Year 1	HOLIDAYS AND HOLYDAYS - Pentecost: feast of the Holy Spirit
Year 2	SPREAD THE WORD - Pentecost: a time to spread the Good News
Year 3	ENERGY - Gifts of the Holy Spirit
Year 4	NEW LIFE - To hear and live the Easter message
Year 5	TRANSFORMATION - Celebration of the Spirit's transforming power
Year 6	WITNESSES - The Holy Spirit enables people to become witnesses

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR HOME ACTIVITIES

Talk about good news in your family and how you shared it. Ask your child to tell you the story of Pentecost and the work of the Holy Spirit.

### RECONCILIATION—INTER-RELATING

Early Years	FRIENDS - Friends of Jesus
Year 1	BEING SORRY - God helps us choose well
Year 2	RULES - Reasons for rules in the Christian family
Year 3	CHOICES - Importance of examination of conscience
Year 4	BUILDING BRIDGES - Admitting wrong, being reconciled with God and each other
Year 5	FREEDOM & RESPONSIBILITY - Commandments enable Christians to be free & responsible
Year 6	HEALING - Sacrament of the Sick

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR HOME ACTIVITIES

Talk together about times when you have forgiven and been forgiven. Discuss the importance of saying sorry. Look for opportunities for forgiveness and reconciliation in the day to day life of the family.

### OTHER FAITHS - ISLAM

Pupils will study various aspects of Islam for one week. Ask them what they have been learning about.

### UNIVERSAL CHURCH—WORLD

Early Years	OUR WORLD - God's wonderful world
Year 1	NEIGHBOURS - Neighbours share God's world
Year 2	TREASURES - God's treasure; the world
Year 3	SPECIAL PLACES - Holy places for Jesus and the Christian community
Year 4	GOD'S PEOPLE - Different saints show people what God is like
Year 5	STEWARDSHIP - The Church is called to the stewardship of Creation
Year 6	COMMON GOOD - work of the worldwide Christian Family

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR HOME ACTIVITIES

Together, look through a family scrapbook or photograph album of a visit to a place that is special for your family. Look at a globe or an atlas. Find a special place and pray for the people of that country. Discuss how we can look after our world and support our neighbours, near and far.

## Summary of upcoming events

Saturday 10th	First Holy Communion at St Patrick's Church 9.00am
Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> – Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup>	Y6 SATs Week
Friday 15 <sup>th</sup>	SEN drop-in session 2.30 - 3.15 with Miss Clish SENDCO
Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> – Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup>	Walk to School Week
Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> – Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup>	Art Week
Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup>	Y6 Parents' Residential Information Meeting 3.30pm
Wednesday 20th	Y1/Y2 Soccer Tots at Greenland Primary School am
Thursday 21st	'Break the Rules' Day (50p per rule)

**Thursday 21st May School closes for half term break**

**Friday 22nd School closed due to staff inset day**

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