



# Newsletter: 21<sup>st</sup> May 2026

Dear Families,

## **Break the Rules Day!**

At St Patrick's, we have ended the half term on a real high with our much-loved *Break the Rules Day*—a fun-filled occasion that brought smiles, laughter and a wonderful sense of community across the whole school.

For one special day, pupils are given permission to bend a few of the usual school rules, all in the spirit of celebration and creativity, of course! From mixing up hairstyles and painted nails, to dressing down from uniform and bringing in some chocolate treats, the excitement was clear to see.

Our pupils are truly brilliant and work incredibly hard throughout the term, so it was wonderful to take this opportunity to relax, have fun and let loose together.

It has been a short, but busy, half term. I think we are all ready for a bit of rest and a bit of sunshine, so let us wish for both next week.



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

## General News

At St Patrick's, we are extremely proud of our Catholic ethos and heritage. It shapes us as a community that celebrates each individual child and continually strives for the absolute best for all our pupils. Our school is rooted in tolerance, acceptance and a deep understanding of what it means to follow in Christ's footsteps.

As such, we are a truly joyful school family — embracing children from all Catholic traditions, as well as those of other faiths and of no faith. All pupils are welcome at our school.

This ethos of curiosity and acceptance has been beautifully lived out through recent visits from representatives of the Newcastle Synagogue and the Newcastle Gurdwara. These experiences give meaningful opportunities for our children to learn about and appreciate different faiths and cultures, deepening their understanding of the world around them.

Our children benefit from engaging first-hand with visitors, asking thoughtful questions, and drawing connections between shared values such as respect, kindness and community. These encounters enrich both our Religious Education curriculum and personal development curriculum and help to nurture pupils who are open-minded, compassionate and respectful of others—qualities that lie at the heart of our mission.



# General News

## Art Gallery Event in School – Wednesday 3rd June



### A FUNDRAISING EVENT FOR OUR SCHOOL

Come along to our art gallery  
to view and purchase your child's  
amazing artwork — **framed** and **ready to treasure!**



ART DISPLAY  
**WEDNESDAY 3<sup>RD</sup> JUNE**  
**2:45-5:30pm**



ST PATRICK'S CHURCH



REFRESHMENTS  
WILL BE SERVED

BEAUTIFUL  
ARTWORK  
CREATED BY  
OUR AMAZING  
CHILDREN!

PRICES WHEN PAYING FOR MULTIPLE SIBLINGS



FRAMES WILL BE SENT HOME  
ON FRIDAY WITH YOUR CHILD



YOUR SUPPORT HELPS FUND RESOURCES, ACTIVITIES & OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR CHILDREN

# General News

## Survey The Big Future

We have been asked to share this with you from Dame Rachel de Souza, Children's Commissioner for England.

*As Children's Commissioner, I am writing to ask for your support in helping children at your school take part in my new survey, The Big Future.*

*You can take part here:*

*<http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/thebigfuture>.*

*As many of your Year 6 pupils will have recently finished their SATs, this could be a great opportunity for them to reflect on their time at primary school and share their hopes and ideas for the future in their own words.*

*I want to hear from children aged 0–18 from every background, in every part of the country, and your support will help make that possible. I'm asking children about the things they enjoy, the challenges they face, the changes they want to see in their communities, and what they think a good childhood should look like today.*

*I would be hugely grateful if you could share the survey with pupils, parents and carers across your school community. Schools with particularly high participation rates will receive formal recognition for helping amplify children's voices, along with a summary of their pupils' responses, and an invite to my final Festival of Childhood.*

*I'll publish the findings next year, and they will help shape the conversations and decisions being made about children's lives and futures at the highest levels.*

*Thank you very much for your support.*

*Dame Rachel de Souza, Children's Commissioner for England.*

## General News

### St Patrick's Church Summer Craft Fair July 11th

We are excited to invite all our families to the Summer Craft Fair hosted by the Stanley Family of Catholic Churches at St Patrick's Church on Saturday July 11th.

We encourage children to take part in our Cupcake Competition at this year's event! To keep things simple, children are asked to bring two identical cupcakes on the day. These will be judged on both decoration and taste by a panel of lucky parishioners.

There will be prizes for winners and runners-up in two age categories: 4–7 years and 8–11 years. We would love your support!

Alongside the competition, there will be plenty of fun for everyone. Children can enjoy free crafts and activities in the children's zone, as well as face painting, an ice cream van, and even the chance to meet Highland cows! A traditional 1961 tractor will also be available for photo opportunities.

The ever-popular tearoom will once again offer homemade treats and drinks at just 50p, ensuring everything remains affordable for families. Visitors can also enjoy live music, browse over 20 craft stalls, and take part in tombolas, raffles, and a bake sale.

We look forward to seeing you there for a fantastic day of community, creativity, and fun!

## General News

# SUMMER 2026 CRAFT FAIR

Hosted by  
Stanley Family of Catholic Churches



OVER 20 CRAFT STALLS



**SATURDAY  
11TH JULY**



**12:30pm-  
3:30pm**



**ST. PATRICK'S  
CHURCH  
DIPTON**

Raffle, Tombola, Children's area, Tea Room, Face Painter,  
Highland Cows and 1961 Fordson Dexter Tractor  
Children's Cup Cake Competition

**General News**

**STANLEY FAMILY OF  
CATHOLIC CHURCHES**



**CUP  
CAKE**

**COMPETITION**

**SATURDAY  
JULY 11**

**AT ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH,  
DIPTON**



**FREE  
ENTRY**

**Open to children  
aged 4 to 11**

**BRING TWO CUPCAKES  
OF ANY FLAVOUR  
AND ANY DECORATION**



**PRIZE FOR BEST DECORATION  
AND BEST FLAVOUR  
REGISTRATION OPEN FROM**

**12:30PM - 1PM**

# **General News**

## **Pupils starting Reception in September 2026**

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!

## **Fidget Toys**

We are seeing an increase in children bringing chew toys and fidget toys into school.

To ensure consistency and avoid unnecessary distraction, we ask that any such resources are discussed with the school in advance. Chew and fidget toys not general classroom accessories, and both the benefits and any potential challenges should be carefully considered.

We want to ensure all our pupils are given the support necessary to thrive at school, however, when a child is coping well, participating fully and remaining regulated during the school day, these items are not necessary in class. They should not be viewed as a general or trend-based approach and should only be used when highlighted in a health care professional report and after discussions with the class teacher.

In terms of fidget toys, teachers can ensure things are available within the classroom in times of need.

We appreciate your support in helping us maintain a calm, focused and supportive learning environment for all pupils. Please do contact us if you would like to discuss your child's individual needs and an appointment can be made with your child's class teacher in the first instance.

# 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 MINECRAFT

AGE RESTRICTION PEGI 7

Still the best-selling game of all time, Minecraft is a bastion of creativity and community, with hundreds of millions of players building and crafting in its almost endless world. The popularity of Minecraft among gamers of all ages means it's important to remain informed about the game, including how to play it safely and whether it's suitable for the children in your care. That's why we've created this guide explaining the risks associated with Minecraft and how to ensure a purely enjoyable gaming experience.

### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

#### SCARY ELEMENTS

While Minecraft can be seen as a kind of 'digital LEGO', certain game modes include creatures accompanied by eerie sound effects. These can be a bit too frightening for some younger players, potentially leading to distressing in-game combat and other encounters – although the combat is quite basic and free from any real depiction of violence.

#### GRIEFING

Some players in Minecraft take pleasure in deliberately damaging or destroying another person's creations. This behaviour, known as 'griefing', is a form of bullying – it intentionally ruins someone else's experience by erasing hours of their work and forcing them to start over. Many public servers regard griefing as a serious offence and often ban those who engage in it.

#### ADDICTIVENESS

Minecraft's focus on creativity means that, as with any creative endeavour, it can be easy to get carried away. If your child is finding it difficult to manage their time because they're drawn in by Minecraft's gameplay loop of resource gathering and building elaborate projects, it could have a knock-on effect on their social interactions and schoolwork.

#### PUBLIC SERVERS AND COMMUNICATIONS

With public servers being so easily accessible in Minecraft, it's highly likely that children will end up chatting with strangers through the in-game text chat. Some servers even place an emphasis on social interaction, actively encouraging communication between players. While there's nothing inherently wrong with this, it does carry certain risks. In addition to the concerns around speaking with strangers online, players who host their own servers may have their IP addresses exposed, posing a further security concern.

#### ADDITIONAL PURCHASES

Minecraft is available as a free trial on a variety of devices; however, the full game requires a one-off purchase. After that, players have the option to buy additional cosmetic upgrades or subscribe to Minecraft Realms. Realms is an entirely optional subscription service that allows users to run their own private server to play with friends. Without proper supervision, younger players may end up making unintended or excessive purchases.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### CHOOSE THE RIGHT MODE

Selecting Creative or Peaceful mode allows children to play Minecraft without having to contend with enemies. It's also a great way for you to get used to playing the game with them, since the difficulty level is far lower. This allows you to work together on a long-term project, creating something special without the threat of enemies and creatures attacking you or damaging your building.

### HOST A PRIVATE SERVER

The easiest way to find a safe server for children to play on is to make one yourself. Hosting a server prevents strangers from finding it, unless they've been given its address and password. A private server also lets you control who's allowed to enter and – if necessary – ban anyone who shouldn't be there. This is the closest equivalent to parental controls in Minecraft. Hosting a private server, however, will cost a monthly fee.

### TALK ABOUT STRANGERS

At some point in their lives, almost everyone will make contact with a stranger online. Talking to children about online safety, therefore, is essential – as is having a plan for dealing with any hostile or difficult people. It's important that a child knows never to tell a stranger about themselves online and that they should come to you straight away if they do encounter a problem.

### RESEARCH CONTENT CREATORS

Much of Minecraft's early stages can be an exercise in frustration for players who don't know where to start. Thankfully, there's a wealth of material online and in video format to help you learn the basics. Just be mindful that some of this content may not be appropriate for children, so you should consider watching it yourself first.

### PLAY MINECRAFT WITH YOUR CHILD

As a creative building tool, Minecraft makes it great fun for children to team up and construct vast buildings accompanied by imaginative landscapes, much like working with LEGO or model kits. Playing in a game mode that includes enemies can encourage critical thinking and teamwork; however, you should consider which game mode is appropriate for the child in your care.

### Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is Gaming Editor at the Daily Star, and has worked in games media for more than 11 years. A long-time gaming enthusiast, he is also a parent and therefore a keen advocate of online safety for children of all ages.

#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

# 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.		



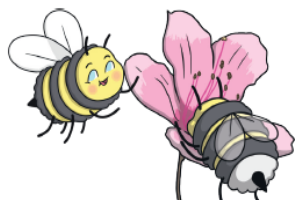
### Starfish Breath

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	Joshua	For his perseverance when things get tricky.
Year 1	Being Respectful	Ada	For showing adults in school respect every day through her actions.
Year 2	Being Ready to Learn	Robin	For listening and trying hard.
Year 3	Being Ready to Learn	Leo	For taking pride in his presentation of work.
Year 4	Being Ready to Learn	Lyla	For putting in so much effort into learning her times tables.
Year 5	Being Ready to Learn	Harrison	For working hard in art this week, taking his time and creating a detailed piece of work.
Year 6	Being Respectful	Indiana	For consistently following all expectations.

## Class Teacher Special Mention Awards

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

Reception/ Nursery	Filip	For trying so hard with his letter formation.
Year 1	Rogan	For working hard this term to take turns with others in class.
Year 2	Finn	For taking his time to produce beautiful art work.
Year 3	Lucy	For showing outstanding creativity when making pop artwork this week.
Year 4	Cora	For listening to advice and always trying to be the best she can be.
Year 5	Anya	For settling back into St Patrick's and making more lovely friends.
Year 6	Lydia	For a consistent excellent attitude to all areas of school



## Summary of upcoming events

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

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



**Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June School re-opens to pupils**

Throughout June	New Reception Transition Sessions
Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> – Friday 12 <sup>th</sup>	Y4 Multiplication test window
Wednesday 3rd	Art Gallery Event 2.45-5.30pm
Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup>	Y5/Y6 Girls' Football at Greenland 4.00pm–5.00pm.
Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> - Friday 12 <sup>th</sup>	Y1 Phonics screening test window/Y2 resits where necessary
Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> – Friday 12 <sup>th</sup>	World Faith Week – Islam
Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup>	Little Acorns Meeting 9-10.30am. Invited carers
Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> – Tuesday 16 <sup>th</sup>	Y6 Residential Visit to Newby Wiske Hall Adventure Centre, Northallerton

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



**FOUNDATION  
OF LIGHT**

THE WORLD AT YOUR FEET



# MAY HALF-TERM HOLIDAY COURSES

26-29 MAY



THREE DIFFERENT VENUES

**FOOTBALL**

26-28 MAY



**HOLIDAY  
CLUB**

26-28 MAY



WEAR 4 ALL SEND

**SPORTS CAMP**

26 AND 29 MAY



**TODDLER  
TALES**

26 MAY



**MINI  
BAKERS**

26 MAY



**JUNIOR  
BAKERS**

27 MAY

## 26-29 MAY

### Tues 26 - Thurs 28 May

3 Day Football | Beacon of Light  
SR5 1SN | 9.30am-3pm | £50

### Tues 26 - Thurs 28 May

3 Day Football | Wellfield School  
TS28 5AX | 9.30am-3pm | £45

### Thurs 28 - Fri 29 May

2 Day Football | Beamish Centre  
DH9 6PZ | 9.30am-3pm | £30

### Tues 26 - Thurs 28 May

3 Day Holiday Club | Beacon of Light  
SR5 1SN | 9.30am-3pm | £50

### Tues 26 May

Toddler Tales | Beacon of Light  
SR5 1SN | 10am-12pm | £6

### Tues 26 May

Mini Bakers | Beacon of Light  
SR5 1SN | 1.30-3.30pm | £15

### Tues 26 May

Wear 4 All SEND sports camp  
| Beacon of Light SR5 1SN |  
10am-3pm | Free

### Tues 26 May

1.1 Coaching | Beacon of Light  
SR5 1SN | 4-5.30pm | £30

### Wed 27 May

Junior Bakers | Beacon of Light  
SR5 1SN | 10am - 12pm | £15

### Wed 27 May

1.1 Coaching | Beacon of Light  
SR5 1SN | 4-5.30pm | £30

### Thurs 28 May

1.1 Coaching | Beacon of Light  
SR5 1SN | 4-5.30pm | £30

### Fri 29 May

Wear 4 All SEND sports camp  
| Beacon of Light SR5 1SN |  
10am-3pm | Free

# MAY HALF-TERM HOLIDAY COURSES

SCAN QR  
TO BOOK

