



Newsletter



Happy New Year!

9th January 2026

Dear Parents, Carers and Friends,

A very warm Happy New Year to all our children, families, and staff. It has been wonderful to see everyone return to school with such enthusiasm, ready to begin a new term filled with hope, learning, and community.

This week in our Celebration of the Word, we reflected on the Gospel of the Epiphany—the moment the Magi recognised Jesus as the Light for all nations. We explored what it means to seek Christ in our daily lives and how, like the Wise Men, we are called to offer our own gifts of kindness, faith, and service.

To deepen our understanding of the Epiphany, each class has taken part in special activities throughout 'King's Week':

- Romero Class created thoughtful gifts and travelled around school to deliver them to the worship tables of other classrooms. Their joy truly embodied the spirit of the Magi's journey.
- Acutis Class designed a gift they felt would be fitting for a Messiah born in today's world. Their ideas were creative, heartfelt, and full of modern-day meaning. They also reflected on the 'Big Question': 'What would you say to Baby Jesus as you knelt before him?'
- Kolbe Class explored the symbolism of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, learning why these gifts were so significant. They also researched the tradition of chalking the door—a blessing for the year ahead. Many of our classroom doors now proudly display this ancient Christian custom.

These activities have helped the children reflect deeply on the message of the Epiphany and the ways we can bring Christ's light into our school community.

Parish Consultation Update

At Mass last weekend, we heard the announcement regarding the proposed closure of our Parish on 31st January, following a further short period of consultation which will last until 22nd January.

As a school community, we continue to pray for the future of our Parish, holding in our hearts all those affected by this uncertainty. We remain hopeful that a long-term, sustainable solution can still be found to secure the Parish's future. We will keep parents, carers, and the wider community updated with any further information as soon as it becomes available to us.

PHSE Curriculum Consultation

We are making some important updates to our PHSE curriculum, and we are now consulting with parents to gather your views. Your feedback is incredibly valuable as we continue to shape a curriculum that supports the wellbeing, personal development, and formation of every child in our care.

Please take a moment to read the message on School Spider, where you will find further information and access to the Parent Portal. There is also a short parent survey available—if you are able to spare the time, we would be very grateful for your contribution.

As always, thank you for your continued support as we love, learn and follow Jesus every step of the way.

Wishing you all a wonderful weekend.

The St Joseph's Team.



Consultation

I have asked Fr. Dunne to read this letter to you as part of my wish to alert you to the proposal and ensure that there is further consultation before any decision is reached. Additional information is being circulated to enable you to communicate with the archdiocese in relation to this proposal. This consultation will be open until 22 January 2026. A meeting will be held on Monday 19 January at 7pm in the Church which I will attend. Thereafter, I will consult once more with the Council of Priests and provide a further update as soon as I am in a position to do so.

I ask for your prayers for myself and for the priests of the Deanery as we journey through this further phase of consultation.

With an assurance of my own prayers for you.

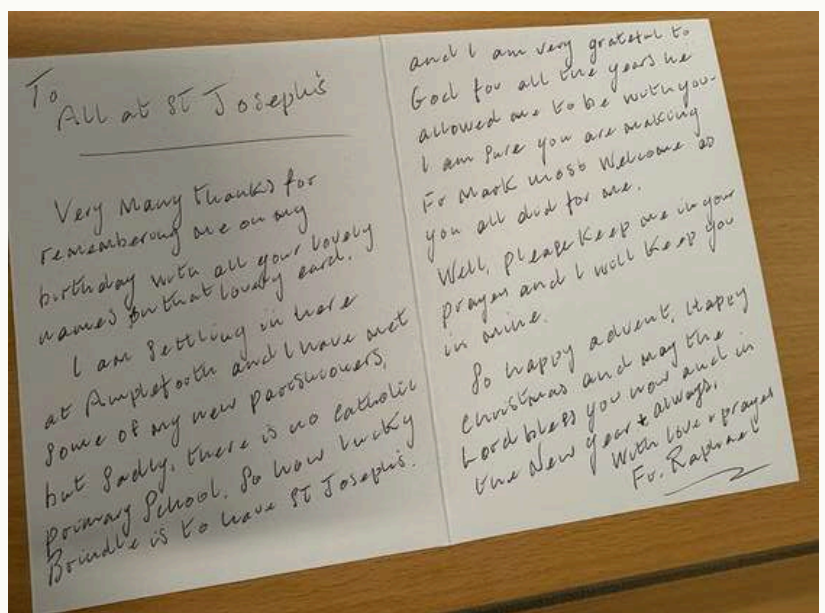
+ 

Archbishop of Liverpool

To access the full letter [click here](#).



A message from Father Raphael...



Children's Liturgy

This week is the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. In the Gospel we will hear about how Jesus is baptised by John in the waters of the River Jordan

Jesus was baptised by John at the start of what we call Jesus' 'public ministry' (when Jesus taught and talked to the people around him and healed them, which resulted in him being arrested.) When we were baptised it was a big change in our lives too. Baptism is the moment when we became part of the Church and received the Holy Spirit.

There are lots of symbols used during a baptism. Water: Water is necessary for all life: we need to drink it for our bodies to work. It keeps us clean (and therefore helps us be healthy). In baptism water is poured over the person's head or they are put into the water. This washes away our sins, and God blesses us so we can re-start living for Jesus. Name: Your name is very important to you – it tells people who you are. When a person is baptised, their name is said aloud, so that everyone knows who they are. When Jesus was baptised, God's voice told everyone who Jesus was: 'This is my Son'. White garment: In places/times without washing machines or much water, white clothes symbolise newness. For Christians, white is a sign of new life in Christ. In church white means 'Jesus is here' that is why people are wrapped in a white blanket just after they have been baptised. Baptismal Candle. Just after the person is baptised, the Baptismal Candle is lit from the Easter Candle. The lit Baptismal Candle is given to the person who has been baptised (or their godparents). The lit Candle reminds us that Jesus is the Light of the World, the baptised person is now wrapped in Jesus so they can light the world with love too. We have been baptised into new life like Jesus was, even though we might not remember it. God has saved us through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, so we can live like Jesus.

Ask someone to tell you about your baptism.

We do hope you can join us – it would be lovely to see you – **don't forget Mass is now on a Saturday afternoon – 4:30pm**

Children's Liturgy Team

PE Lessons

This term, PE will take place on the following days:

Class Romero – Monday & Thursday

Class Acutis – Friday

Class Kolbe – Monday & Thursday

Pupils should come to school in their uniform and bring their PE kit to get changed into.

Year Six can bring their Leavers' Hoodies to wear as part of their PE kit.



Forest School Sessions

Class Acutis will be going out to Forest School with Ben, Adam and Paul on a Thursday afternoon.

They can come to school in their Forest School kit, which must include long legged bottoms (not shorts), a long sleeved top and a coat. Please make sure they are dressed for being outside whatever the weather – wet, cold or warm.

They will also need footwear for Forest School, as well as for doing PE.





Class Romero

What a wonderful first week of Spring One it has been in Class Romero. The children have settled back into our daily routines brilliantly. We have begun our new units for this half term, and the children are particularly enjoying our DT unit on wheels and axles. This week, we also celebrated Epiphany Day and my birthday! It was lovely to mark these occasions with the children by taking part in a range of fun and engaging activities together. In maths, Year 1 have been exploring numbers above 20, practising counting forwards and backwards. Reception children have been investigating the number 0, identifying what is and what is not zero. In English, the children have been writing about their Christmas holidays, and it has been a pleasure chatting with them about everything they enjoyed over the break. In history, we created our own personal timelines. The children were especially amazed when they saw baby photos of me! I am looking forward to another busy and exciting week in school.

Miss McEvoy



Class Acutis

It has been so lovely to see the children again and to hear about their Christmas celebrations. They all seem to have grown so much in two weeks! We have started the new year as we mean to go on - in amazing style. Although the decorations may have disappeared, we discussed how the Christmas period is only just coming to an end with the celebration of Epiphany. The children thought deeply about what they would say to the baby Messiah and then moved on to imagine what gift would be suitable and helpful for a Messiah born in 2026. In maths, the children in Year 2 have continued to investigate the properties of 3D shapes, while in Year 3 and Year 4 the focus has been on multiplication and division. We have continued with the genre of poetry in English but this time focusing on onomatopoeia which has been really fun. In art we are nearing the end of a topic which is inspired by the work of Paul Cummins and the children have been learning how to show tone through collage - the results are fantastic. This week has also been the first session of Forest School, please ensure your child is suitably dressed on Thursdays so they can get the full enjoyment from this session. Finally I wish you all a happy new year and many thanks for your continued support.

Mrs Lawman



Class Kolbe

It has been lovely to welcome the children of Class Kolbe back, and they have quickly settled into learning after the Christmas holidays. We have had an incredibly productive week across the curriculum. In English, we began our exciting new unit on legends, focusing on Beowulf, which has already captured the children's interest. In science, we launched our unit on the circulatory system, and the children were incredibly enthusiastic and eager to learn more about how the body works. In RE, we explored the theme of Epiphany by looking at the meaning behind Jesus' gifts from the Wise Men and the tradition of chalking the door. Finally, we have started the new year with a big push on reading as 2026 is the National Year of Reading; therefore, we continue to encourage the children to develop a lifelong love of books and reading.

Miss Bottomley

Updates, Attendance & Key Reminders

Annual Plan of Provision: In line with the new Prayer & Liturgy Directory requirements, all schools are now asked to produce an Annual Plan of Provision (APOP). Our APOP for 2025–2026 is now available to view on the school website. You can also access it directly by clicking the following link: [APOP 2025–2026](#).

Earth Minutes: To help our children become true stewards of creation and live out the message of 'Laudato Si', we will be introducing 'Earth Minutes' from next week. Each class will record how many minutes they spend each day without using electricity, finding simple ways to care for our common home. The class with the highest total will receive a special 'Laudato Si' trophy during our Celebration Assembly on Friday at 2.50pm. Everyone is warmly invited to join us for the celebration.

Rocksteady: Sessions resume from Monday and will be in the Hub. It is not too late to book your child a place. Please see the flyer attached for more information.

Multi-Sports: Coach Scott will begin the multi-sports after school club from next Thursday until 4.30pm. Places are limited, and it is open to all children, so please book your child's place via the "bookings and payments" section of the School Spider app as soon as possible to avoid disappointment. You will also need to complete the form to tell us who will be collecting your child at the end of the session.

Attendance		
Year Group	Weekly	Year
Reception	100%	93.1%
Year One	98.1%	94.6%
Year Two	97.9%	97.1%
Year Three	100%	96.2%
Year Four	96.9%	94.7%
Year Five	97.7%	93.8%
Year Six	97.8%	95.6%
School Total	98.3%	95.1%

Masterclass

All year 6 children are invited to attend our 10 SATS revision sessions with Miss Bottomley & Mrs Bridge. Children are welcome to bring along snacks and treats to enjoy after school, but be aware that there is a 10% teacher tax to be paid on all chocolate! (Please do ensure that any treats brought along are also nut-free). There is of course no charge for this additional tuition so please do take advantage of this opportunity to ensure that your child feels well prepared, confident and ready to shine in May.

The sessions will run from 3.20pm–4.30pm on the following Wednesdays:

- 11th February
- 25th February
- 4th March
- 11th March
- 18th March
- 25th March
- 15th April
- 22nd April
- 29th April
- 6th May



The Ark

If you need to contact staff in The Ark before 8.15am or after 4.15pm, in case of emergency, to change pick up arrangements or if you are running late, please ring:
07496 813054.
At all other times please ring the main school office number.

Celebration of the Word

Celebration of the Word: All are welcome to join our Class Worship at 9am on the following dates:

- 30th January – Class Acutis
- 6th February – Class Kolbe
- 13th February – Class Romero

This Week in Pictures



St Joseph, most loving and watchful father.
Pray for Us...



THE ARK PLAN

WEEK COMMENCING: 12-1-26

Monday

The Indoor activity: Playdough

The Outdoor/physical activity: Just dance/yoga

The Snack: Scrambled egg on toast

Tuesday

The Indoor activity: Flower colouring

The Outdoor/physical activity: Just dance/
football

The Snack: Toasted wraps - cheese - ham

Wednesday

The Indoor activity: Spring decorations

The Outdoor/physical activity: yoga/outdoor
equipment

The Snack: Soup and roll

Monday Thursday

The Indoor activity: Little monster making

The Outdoor/physical activity: Just
dance/shipping ropes

The Snack: toasted pitta with hummus

Friday

The Indoor activity: construction

The Outdoor/physical activity: outdoor
equipment

The Snack: Sandwiches - jam/ham/cheese

The Big Shopping List:

- 1 Red pepper hummus
- 2 breadsticks
- 3 Eggs
- 1 ham
- 5 croissants - 2
- 4 brisachs - 2
- 1 milk
- 8 fruit juice
- 8 Apples 2
- 10 rolls
- 11
- 12

Wednesday

Thrive activities useful for parents of children up to 7 years old – week one



Children love having parents who are playful, fun, interested and curious about them. Children enjoy feeling important and special and really benefit from having some individual time with parents. Here are some creative activities that you can use with your child to support their emotional development at home. Play releases lots of feel good chemicals that help us feel calm, steady and connected. If possible, look to do these activities for as much as 20 minutes or more each day.

Monday	Use a finger to draw a flower on your child's hand; extend this to a guessing game with older children by drawing a shape, number, pattern or creature.
Tuesday	Dance together: perhaps teach your child a dance you did when you were younger. Be willing to learn one from them.
Wednesday	Make a den with cushions, blankets, bed sheets, clothes pegs, pillows – anything soft!
Thursday	Do loud singing then quiet singing, or very active movement then slow movement eg. find your favourite song and create a dance for it.
Friday	Use face paints together eg. favourite animals. After painting, wash each other's hands or wipe the fingers free of substance. Or draw each other's faces – you could even do it with your eyes closed!
Saturday	Set-up a treasure hunt: take it in turns to hide things for each other. Or play hide and seek!
Sunday	Try some gentle yoga moves. Or explore family.gonoodle.com/activities/around-the-town or family.gonoodle.com/activities/melting

Top Tips:

- ✓ Draw up a routine of what you are doing and when.
- ✓ Keep cardboard boxes or clean recycling objects to use for arts later.
- ✓ Don't worry if things go wrong - play can be fun and endings can be difficult.
- ✓ Remember – children learn hugely through play, especially with an adult they love.



Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back to school and a Happy New Year to all.

January is traditionally the month of beginnings – a time for making a new start. In Church this Sunday we celebrate a special feast – The Baptism of the Lord.

In this Sunday's Gospel, John the Baptist didn't see the need to baptise Jesus, because Jesus was sinless. But Jesus insisted because he wanted to stand alongside the community - to help them make a new start and give them an example to follow.

Wednesday 7th January 2026

Jesus, God's beloved Son, came for everyone: to draw us all into his family so that we can become more like him and joyfully share in God's own life.

Enjoy a special time together this evening, hearing your child's thoughts about this Sunday's Gospel and this Wednesday's words, which are **NEW START**.

Dom Henry Wansbrough



A Word from the Saints

"Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin."

Saint Teresa of Calcutta

THE GOSPEL IN CHURCH

Sunday 11th January 2026



Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John. John tried to dissuade him. "It is I who need baptism from you," he said, "and yet you come to me!" But Jesus replied, "Leave it like this for the time being; it is fitting that we should, in this way, do all that righteousness demands." At this, John gave in to him. As soon as Jesus was baptised he came up from the water, and suddenly the heavens opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him. And a voice spoke from heaven, "This is my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on him."

Adapted from Matthew 3:13-17
The Baptism of the Lord, Year A

Getting to know Jesus makes life joyful.
Learn more about this Sunday's Gospel in your local Parish Church: all are very warmly invited.

Family Time Prayer & Share Overleaf

Good News for Everyone

Regardless of our past, God invites each one of us to make a new start, each and every day. Families who make a new start with God find that they grow closer together and begin to know and share the joy that Jesus brings.



Good News for Families

TOGETHER TIME



1 READ & REFLECT! Listen & Learn with Jesus, the Word!

Jesus went to the River Jordan to be baptised by John the Baptist. As soon as Jesus was baptised he came up from the water, and suddenly the heavens opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him. And a voice spoke from heaven saying: "This is my beloved Son and with him I am very pleased."

What happened when Jesus came up from the water?

Which word or words stood out for you in this Sunday's Gospel, and why? Spend a few relaxing moments pondering the picture together. Share any thoughts before moving on.



Sunday Gospel Gallery

Look at this Sunday's Gospel picture. What can you see? How do you feel? What does it make you think about?

2 SHARE & CARE! Growing in Goodness & Love : This Wednesday's Words...

"Every day we must begin anew. Have patience with all things — but first of all with yourself." *St. Francis de Sales*

NEW START



This new year presents an opportunity for us to make a new start. Each of you say what is the best thing that you've ever started. What did you like about it? Ask your child if they have made any new starts in 2026. If so, how is it going? It may help your child if you mention any new starts or resolutions which you have made for 2026 and tell them how it's going for you. How does your new start help you or others?

As we begin this new year, are there any new starts that we can make with our family, friends or with God? Perhaps we can: always try to be around the home before having to be asked; remember to start each morning with a prayer and thank God for each new day and for each other; make a new start with church; be peacemakers and try to make friends with someone we've fallen out with. You may like to choose something new to start together that will strengthen your family.

3 Dear Lord Jesus, please help me to be always ready to make **newstart** with you and with each other as we start this New Year. Amen.



R K D H N R L J R B N J
P Y E O V H V O I C E Z
F W S F R E Y H V S V B
T S I T P A B N U S A E
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B E L O V E D H P Y Z E
V O I C R W S E J E S V

WEDNESDAY WORD SEARCH

SMARTSEARCHERS FIND THESE EIGHT WORDS EITHER ACROSS OR DOWN



JOHN BAPTIST

BAPTISED JESUS

HEAVEN VOICE

BELOVED SON



SUPERSEARCHERS FIND THE WORDS BACKWARDS OR DIAGONALLY

Cross out the letters **t k u** in the jumbled words below to find 4 real words.

hueatvenk betlokvedu skonut voticuke

And a ____ spoke from ____ saying:

"This is my ____."

In this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus makes a new start and begins his mission to the world. We can be sure that our efforts will always be rewarded when we take the time to make a new start with Jesus. Spending time with him (through prayer) helps us become the best we can be. Happy New Year!

This week I will try my best to ...

Write a promise & draw a big smile on Smiley



What Parents & Educators Need to Know about DIGITAL DEVICES & WELLBEING

Children aged 7 to 14 now spend roughly 3 to 5 hours a day on phones, tablets, consoles, and computers. That much screen time has parents and educators worried – not just about the hours logged, but about online safety and the knock-on effects on mental health. This guide brings together practical, expert-backed strategies so adults can nurture healthier digital habits and help young people thrive both on and offline.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

SLEEP DISRUPTION

Excessive screen time, especially before bed, can interfere with melatonin production and delay sleep onset. Children may struggle to concentrate or regulate emotions due to poor sleep hygiene linked to late-night device use.

ONLINE PEER PRESSURE

Social media platforms expose children to unrealistic standards and peer validation loops. Likes, comments, and follower counts can influence self-worth and lead to anxiety or risky behaviour to gain approval.

CYBERBULLYING EXPOSURE

Children may encounter bullying through messaging apps, games, or social media. This can be persistent and anonymous, making it harder to detect. Victims often feel isolated and reluctant to report incidents.

REDUCED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Time spent on screens often replaces outdoor play and physical activity. This sedentary lifestyle can contribute to obesity, poor posture, and reduced cardiovascular health.

EMOTIONAL DYSREGULATION

Fast-paced digital content can overstimulate young brains. Children may become irritable, impatient, or struggle with boredom and emotional control when not engaged with screens.

PRIVACY AND SAFETY RISKS

Children may unknowingly share personal information or interact with strangers online. Without guidance, they may not understand the long-term consequences of digital footprints or unsafe online behaviour.

Advice for Parents & Educators

SET CLEAR BOUNDARIES

Establish screen-time limits and device-free zones, e.g. classrooms and dinner tables. Use parental controls and co-create a digital use agreement with children to encourage accountability. Trying a visual schedule or timer app can help children understand and stick to limits.

MODEL HEALTHY HABITS

Children mirror adult behaviour. Demonstrate balanced device use, take regular screen breaks, and prioritise face-to-face interactions to reinforce positive behaviours. Making a habit of putting your phone away during meals and conversations can show that real-life interactions come first.

ENCOURAGE OPEN DIALOGUE

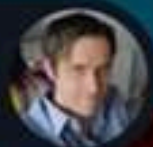
Create a safe space for children to talk about their online experiences. Ask open-ended questions like, "What did you enjoy online today?" to build trust and awareness. Try setting aside 10 minutes each day for a digital check-in where children can share what they've seen or done online.

PROMOTE DIGITAL LITERACY

Teach children how to evaluate online content, recognise misinformation, and understand privacy settings. Empower them to think critically and act responsibly in digital spaces. You could use real-life examples from the news or social media to help children practice spotting fake information.

Meet Our Expert

Adam Gillert is Associate Vice Principal for Personal Development at Penistone Grammar School and works on a secondment one day a week for *Minds Ahead*, which works with schools on improving their mental health provision.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

ROCK
STEADY

DOES YOUR CHILD WANT TO PLAY MUSIC IN THEIR OWN BAND?



With Rocksteady, children learn to play an instrument through fun and inclusive weekly in-school rock and pop band lessons.

It's the perfect way to learn new musical skills, make friends and have a great time - all at school! There's no musical experience necessary and instruments for lessons are provided.

Rocksteady lessons are also shown to boost confidence, improve wellbeing and encourage teamwork!



*Scan QR code to
find out more!*

98%

**OF PARENTS SAY
THEIR CHILD LOVES OR
ENJOYS ROCKSTEADY
BAND LESSONS**



94%

**OF PARENTS SAY
ROCKSTEADY
IMPROVES THEIR
CHILD'S CONFIDENCE**



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rocksteadymusicschool.com