



Newsletter

'Earth Minutes'

16th January 2026

Dear Parents, Carers and Friends of St Josephs,

We began the week joyfully celebrating the solemnity of the Baptism of the Lord, a special moment in the Church's year when we remember Jesus being baptised by John. The children explored the beautiful symbolism of water – how it is used to cleanse us and gives life to our world. They were also encouraged to think about how we might help those in other parts of the world who don't have easy access to clean drinking water, and we explored the vital work of CAFOD in areas such as Ethiopia.

You may have heard the phrase "Earth Minutes" popping up at home, or noticed lights being switched off with great enthusiasm. That's thanks to our wonderful Planet Protectors, who have launched an exciting new campaign to help us reduce electricity use across the school when it is not required. Their energy and commitment to caring for our planet has been inspiring. From this week, a new trophy has been introduced to our weekly celebration assembly to continue to promote our mission to build a more sustainable school for the future.

We were also delighted to welcome Michael Boland from the Archdiocese of Liverpool. He was genuinely impressed by the children's passion for looking after God's creation and living out their faith in practical ways.

Stanley Grange and Class Acutis have been enjoying their Thursday Forest School sessions with a focus on creating more biodiversity in our school grounds. A new, large bug hotel, furnished by the children, will shortly be added to our outdoor environment.

Thank you, as always, 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.



Parent Information Session:
Help Your Child Learn to Read with Monster Phonics

Are you hearing terms like phonemes, graphemes and wondering what on earth they all mean?
Join our Parent Webinar to find out and confidently support your child's reading.

You are all invited to our Monster Phonics Event - Next Week!

Join us for a session to learn all about Monster Phonics, a fun and effective way to help your child improve their reading skills!

Are you hearing terms like phonemes, graphemes, split digraphs, and wondering what on earth they all mean? You're not alone — and we're here to help. Join us for an informative and friendly Monster Phonics Parent Webinar designed to demystify phonics and give you the confidence to support your child's reading journey at home. We are running a session at 10am in school on Wednesday (21st January), where parents can also speak with the class teacher about the Phonics programme, read with your child and ask any questions that you may have. Alternatively, there is a virtual session at 7pm on the same day (see below for more details).

What You'll Learn:

- ✓ What phonics is and why it's essential
- ✓ Key phonics terminology made simple
- ✓ An introduction to the Monster Phonics programme
- ✓ How to make phonics & reading at home fun and effective

This session will show you how Monster Phonics makes learning to read exciting and accessible for all children, using colour-coding, characters, and movement to bring phonics to life.

Why Attend? Helping your child at home can make a huge difference — but most parents are never taught how phonics works. This webinar will give you the tools, clarity, and confidence to support your child's learning in a way that's fun for both of you.

- ⌚ Duration: 60 minutes
- 💻 Format: In person at School at 10am or attend our live Zoom webinar at 7pm by registering for tickets here: [EVENTBRITE](#)



Children's Liturgy



This week is the 2nd Sunday of the Year. In the Gospel something happened to Jesus after his baptism. John tells us that he saw the Holy Spirit come down like a dove to rest on Jesus. Because of this, John believed that Jesus was the Son of God.

A dove is one way that the Holy Spirit shows itself, but most of the time the Spirit is invisible. We cannot see it.

Another way to think about the Holy Spirit is like the wind. You cannot see the wind, but you can see the branches of a tree moving when the wind blows.

The wind can be very strong. The wind can also be very helpful.

Like the wind, the Holy Spirit helps us. We receive the Holy Spirit when we are baptised and the Spirit stays with us all through our lives, helping us to do things that are difficult.

Jesus asks us to love other people, to care for people who are sick and to be signs of hope in our world, especially to people who are poor. This is not always easy, especially when people are in different countries to us. But when we do these things, other people can see the Holy Spirit working through us, just as we can see the wind in the trees. What can you do this week to show others that the Holy Spirit is working through you?

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

Sad News: As we celebrate all the joy and learning of this week, we also hold in our hearts some very sad news. We learned of the passing of Mr Barry Henderson, a much-loved volunteer at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School for many years. His kindness, generosity, and gentle presence touched the lives of so many children and staff. We send our deepest sympathy to his wife, Janet, and all affected by this news.

We pray together:

Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace. Amen.



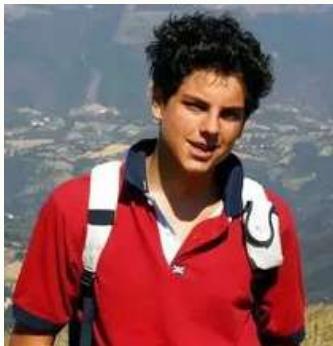


Class Romero

This week in Class Romero, we've been busy learning and exploring across all subjects! In Science, we started our new topic on the life cycle of a frog, and the children were fascinated to learn about frogs—next week we'll be looking

closely at frogspawn! In Design and Technology, we continued exploring chassis and axles, and the children are excited to begin designing their own vehicles. In History, we stepped back in time to discover how Christmas was celebrated in the Victorian era, comparing traditions from the past with those we know today. In English, Year 1 have been learning about non-fiction books and their key features, and next week they'll start collecting information to create their own China fact files. Reception have impressed us with their fantastic sentence writing inspired by Mog's Birthday and have loved getting creative in our birthday-themed provision. It's been a wonderful week of learning in Class Romero, and we're looking forward to all the exciting activities next week will bring!

Miss McEvoy



Class Acutis

This week seems to have flown by! The prayer and liturgy leaders started their week by preparing a wonderful liturgy which they led in the newly decorated chapel and we also had our first session of meditation. At both times the children felt a calmness and showed a deep level of spirituality. Lots of children commented on how much they enjoyed both sessions. We have had a big focus on times tables in math's this week. Year 2 have been applying their knowledge of counting in 2s, 5s and 10s in the context of money, Year 3 have been working on the 4x and 8x tables and Year 4 have been multiplying two- and 3-digit numbers. In English, the children finished their onomatopoeic poems with some superb results. We started our new units in French, History and Science and finally finished our art work inspired by the work of Paul Cummins and Kara Walker. The work the children have produced is incredibly creative and to a very high standard. No wonder the days have passed quickly

- Class Acutis hasn't stopped!

Mrs Lawman



Class Kolbe

We've had a fun-filled week in Class Kolbe. In English, we have been making our way through our text for this half term (Beowulf); the children are well and truly hooked. Each day when we finished out chapter, they are begging for more which is lovely. This of course has transferred into their learning where they have produced some fantastic pieces of work such as a wanted poster for Grendel focusing on the use of figurative language. In RE, we have been looking at Jesus' miracles and how they confirm that Jesus is both fully divine and fully human. Following on from this, the children produced a piece of artwork

focusing on depicting 'Jesus the Miracle Worker'. As you can imagine, each design was truly unique and wonderful. Science was a firm-favourite this week as we created BLOOD -this is part of our circulatory system unit. Once we had created our blood, we used each of our ingredients to explore the role it has in our blood, e.g. marshmallows are white blood cells which help to protect our body from infection and disease. Finally, in History we looked at the Anglo-Saxon society with a focus on translating Old-English words such as Cwen - queen. Once we had done this, we ordered the society using a pyramid of hierarchy. All in all, another busy and wonderful week in Class Kolbe.

Miss Bottomley

Updates, Attendance & Key Reminders

Parent Survey of Interest to extend the wraparound provision to include 3 and 4 year olds from September 2026: Please complete this survey if you feel you would use this service from next September <https://forms.gle/V5edP7Zv1DgJuS5V7>

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](#).

Multi-Sports Club: Coach Scott has started his Thursday afternoon multi-sports club. It is open to all children, and places can be booked on a week by week basis. If you would like your child to attend, please use the "bookings and payments" section of the School Spider app. You will also need to complete the form to tell us who will be collecting your child at the end of the session.

Club update: From next week (January 22nd) the multi-sports club will finish at 4.20pm not 4.30pm as previously advertised.

SATs Masterclass

Just a reminder that the first of our 10 SATs revision sessions for children in Year 6 will start on Wednesday, 11th February. The weekly session will run until 4.30pm.

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

Advance Notice: World Book Day

We will be marking this year's event on **Monday, 2nd March** on the theme "Fantastic Fairytales".

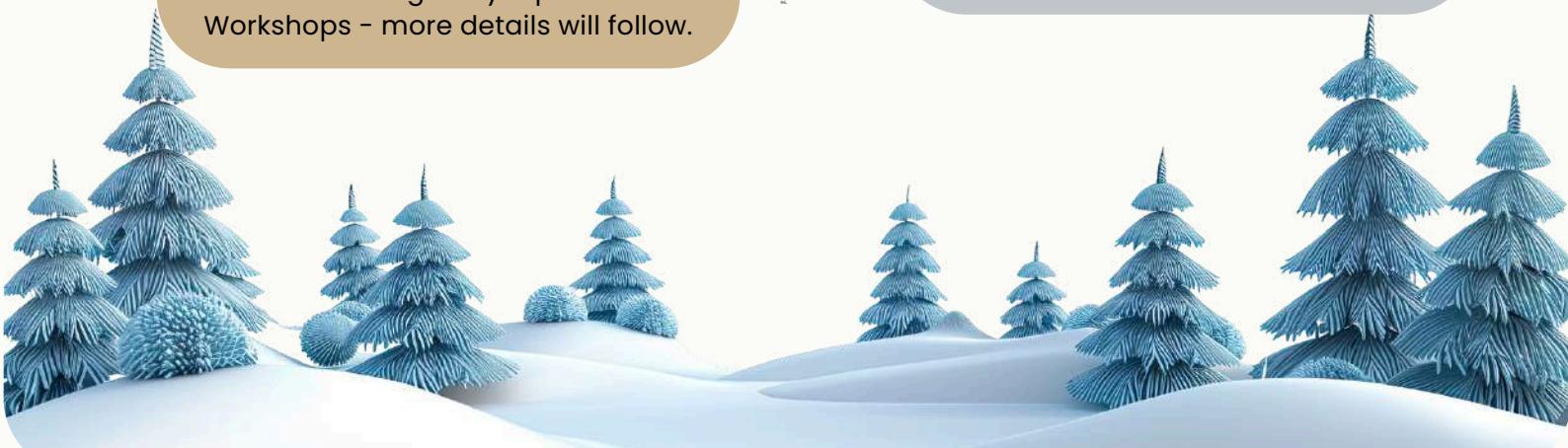
We will be hosting Story Explorer Drama Workshops – more details will follow.

Attendance

Year Group	Weekly	Year
Reception	90%	93%
Year One	100%	95%
Year Two	100%	97.3%
Year Three	95.5%	96.1%
Year Four	97.5%	94.9%
Year Five	93.6%	93.8%
Year Six	94.7%	95.5%
School Total	96%	95.1%

Save the date: PTFA Disco

The next event will be taking place on Thursday, 12th February from 6pm to 7.30pm. More details will follow soon!





This Week in Pictures



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

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

Let's help every child



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.

THE ARK PLAN

WEEK COMMENCING: 12-1-26



Monday

The Indoor activity: Mosaic glue & stick art

The Outdoor/physical activity: Just dance/outdoor equipment

The Snack: toasted wraps cheese + ham

Tuesday

The Indoor activity: spring decorations

The Outdoor/physical activity: yoga/football

The Snack: Pancakes with syrup & blueberries

Wednesday

The Indoor activity: handprint flowers

The Outdoor/physical activity: Just dance/outdoor equipment

The Snack: scrambled egg on toast

Thursday

The Indoor activity: little monster baking

The Outdoor/physical activity: Just dance/yoga

The Snack: pizza pitta pockets

Friday

The Indoor activity: construction

The Outdoor/physical activity: outdoor equipment

The Snack: pitta, veg & hummus

The Big Shopping List:

- 1 tortilla wraps
- 2 breadsticks
- 2 eggs
- 4 milk
- 5 butter
- 6 beloche = 1
- 7 blueberries
- 8 pancakes
- 9 apples = 1
- 10 carrots
- 11 pitta = 2
- 12 carrots individual (5)

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE TO BUILD EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE

With increasing societal pressures, many children struggle with managing emotions, facing challenges and processing failure in a healthy way. This is why building emotional resilience in young people is vital for their mental health and personal success. This guide provides practical strategies for parents and educators to help children develop resilience and foster confidence, adaptability and a positive mindset.

1 ENCOURAGE OPEN COMMUNICATION

Regularly engaging children in open dialogue fosters trust and emotional expression. Encourage them to share their thoughts and feelings freely without judgment. Set aside time daily, perhaps during dinner, to ask open-ended questions such as, "What's made you happy today?". This encourages children to express themselves openly.

2 MODEL POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

Children often learn how to manage emotions by observing adults. By modelling calm and positive responses to challenges, you can teach them valuable emotional management skills. If you've had a difficult day, verbalise how you're feeling and explain how you plan to handle it, such as, "I'm a bit worked-up, so I'm going for a walk to clear my mind."

3 TEACH PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS

Helping children break down challenges into manageable steps encourages a proactive mindset. Explain that every problem has a solution, even if it's not immediately obvious. For example, if a child is stuck on homework, help them in breaking the task into smaller steps, saying things like "Let's focus on just this first question for now."

4 FOSTER A GROWTH MINDSET

Encourage young people to view mistakes as learning opportunities. A growth mindset helps them see setbacks as part of the process, rather than something to be afraid of. After a child loses a game or performs poorly on a test, for example, ask them what they've learned from the experience. This reinforces the idea that effort – and even failure – leads to improvement.

5 PROMOTE SELF-CARE PRACTICES

Teaching children about self-care helps them understand the importance of balancing work with relaxation to maintain emotional wellbeing. Parents and carers could start in screen-free hour before bedtimes where the family engages in relaxing activities like reading, setting an example to the child for how to unwind.

6 BUILD HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Strong relationships with peers and adults provide a support system that enhances resilience. Encourage positive, respectful interactions to develop social skills. Playdates or group activities can be instrumental in teaching children how to resolve conflicts with friends by modelling and practicing calm communication.

7 SUPPORT EMOTIONAL AWARENESS

Helping children to identify and name their emotions allows them to manage those feelings more effectively. When a child is upset, encourage them to talk to you about what they're feeling in an empathetic and supportive manner, and ask them why they might be experiencing these emotions.

8 ENCOURAGE INDEPENDENCE

Giving children opportunities to make their own decisions boosts confidence and problem-solving skills. A good example of this would be letting children choose and pack their own lunches for school, guiding them with options but allowing them to assume responsibility for the task to help them take ownership.

9 DEVELOP COPING STRATEGIES

Teaching children techniques like mindfulness, deep-breathing or journaling can help them to manage stress. Show them how to perform breathing exercises when they're feeling anxious, and practise this regularly. Reinforcing this behaviour in young people will make it easier for them to use these techniques of their own accord during stressful moments.

10 CELEBRATE SMALL WINS

Recognising effort, no matter how small, reinforces perseverance and encourages children to keep trying. After a child completes a difficult task, makes progress on a project or achieves another type of personal goal, praise their efforts. Emphasise the hard work they've put in and be sure to let them know how proud you are!

Meet Our Expert

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



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

Online Safety Newsletter

January 2026

Instagram Teen Accounts - update

You must be over 13 years of age to set up an account. Instagram is used to post photos and videos as well as send direct messages, make voice/video calls, and send disappearing messages.

Teen accounts are automatically set up for users aged 13 – 17. Instagram have announced that teens will now see content similar to content that they would see in a PG-13 movie.

Instagram have also updated their policies around content to include “hiding or not recommending posts with strong language, certain risky stunts, and additional content that could encourage potentially harmful behaviors”

Finally, for parents who would like to apply more stringent settings, Instagram are also introducing a new, stricter setting called ‘Limited Content.’ This setting will mean your child is not able to see, leave, or receive comments under posts as well.

You can read about the updates here: <https://about.instagram.com/blog/announcements/instagram-teen-content-safety-pg-13>



Playing games online

Does your child play games online? We have outlined some risks that you should consider:



Chatting to strangers / risk of inappropriate language

Some games will allow communication via text chat, direct messages or chatting. Some games do offer the ability to switch communication off and/or the option to restrict bad language, so make sure settings appropriate to your child are applied. If your child is playing online with strangers, then you need to be aware that there is a risk of grooming. Some games do allow you to restrict communication to ‘friends only,’ however you would need to monitor that their online friends are real life friends. It can be difficult to moderate online chat so ensure your child knows how to block and report other players.

Cyberbullying

It can be very easy online for children to behave in a way that they would not if they were face to face. Talk to your child about how they speak to others online and encourage them to talk to people online with respect. Other forms of cyberbullying whilst playing games could be excluding others, criticising the ability of other players and ganging up on others.

In app purchases

Many games include the option to purchase additional items/ subscriptions so ensure you do not have payment cards saved or set up restrictions/ a password to approve purchases.

What can I do?

Set up parental controls - as well as setting up appropriate parental controls through the game’s settings, ensure you have set them up on the console/device your child is playing on.

Check age ratings - before buying the game, check that your child is old enough to play it. All games will either have a PEGI rating or be rated by the App Store/Google Play.

Chat to your child regularly about the risks above so that they are aware of what can happen online and remind them to always talk to you or a trusted adult if they have any concerns

Further information

CEOP provides further guidance and support regarding this topic:
<https://www.ceopeducation.co.uk/parents/articles/gaming/>

Snapchat

Snapchat is a popular social media app used for messaging and sharing photos and videos. **You must be 13+ to sign up.** Users can send messages (saps) to others that are only seen for a set time, and users can also upload snaps to stories, which disappear after 24 hours.

Key Concerns

There are potential risks such as:

- theriskofyourchildviewingcontentthat is not appropriate for their age.
- locationsharing(viaSnapMap).
- cyberbullying.
- contactfromstrangers.
- excessivescreentime–childrenmayhave a fear of missing out (FOMO) as well as pressure to maintain “streaks”.
- “disappearing”messagescanleadtomoreriskybehaviouranda “false sense of security.” These messages could be screenshot or another device used to take a photo, so they’re not actually deleted as the sender believes. The image could then be shared. inapp purchases.



Parental Controls / Safety settings

Snapchat's Family Centre is a set of parental controls and includes tools such as allowing you to:

- seewhoyourchildisfriendswith.
- seewhoyourchildhassentmessages(notthecontentsof conversations though), photos or videos to in the last week.
- viewalistofgroupmembersforgroupsthatyourchildhasbeen active in.
- restrictcontenttolimitaccess.
- reportanyaccountsthatyouareconcernedabout.

You can learn more about Family Centre here:

<https://parents.snapchat.com/parental-controls?lang=en-GB>

If your child is using Snapchat, then make sure the appropriate privacy settings are set up, including who can see their location and who can contact them. Also ensure your child knows how to block and report other users if necessary:

<https://help.snapchat.com/hc/en-gb/articles/7012343074580- How-do-I-change-my-privacy-settings-on-Snapchat>

More information

For more detailed advice and information:

- <https://parentzone.org.uk/article/snapchat>
- <https://parents.snapchat.com/safeguards-for-teens>

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Family Smart Start

Family Smart Start is a free toolkit designed to help you and your child navigate the milestone of getting their first phone. The toolkit provides support on how to set up their new phone, how to talk to your child about digital safety and a template family agreement. Find out more here:

<https://familysmartstart.com/>

Cyber security

Cyber security is the process of protecting your information and data whilst online against scams and cyber-attacks. Cyber-attacks are the process of maliciously targeting individuals or organisations to disable networks or steal data for example.

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) have an area on their website with guidance to help protect you and your family. The guidance includes how to manage your digital footprint online, information about anti-virus software as well as top tips for staying online such as:

- Using a strong password
- Setting up 2 step verification

You can find the resources here:

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/advice-guidance/you-your-family>

The NCSC also provide advice on what you should do if you are the target of a scam or cyber-attack. Find out more here:

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/respond-recover/you>

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<https://www.knowsleyclcs.org.uk/january-2026-primary/>