

March Newsletter 2024

Our Journey through Lent

On Sunday, the Church celebrated Laetare Sunday, meaning Rejoice Sunday. In this week's prayers children will explore what it means to rejoice that Jesus the light has come into the world. They will learn that believing in Jesus brings joy here on earth and forever in Heaven.

On Thursday Years 1-6 will attend Mass where they will hear in the Gospel reading that God loved the world so much that he gave us Jesus to show us how to live and to help bring us closer to God.

The key message for our Lenten journey is to put Jesus at the centre during Lent by making time to **GIVE, ACT and PRAY.**

Our newsletters are uploaded onto our school website and our Facebook page. If a paper copy is preferred, please let the office know and a paper copy will be given to the eldest pupil in the family to take home.



Dates for your diary:

Week beginning 11th March Parents' Afternoons

Wednesday 13th March

First Holy Communion Session 3 OLOTR Church 5:30pm

Please keep our first Holy Communion children in your prayers as they will be celebrating the sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time.

Friday 15th March

Non-Uniform day for Red Nose Day - donations welcome. The theme is 'Do something funny for money' so children may come in with crazy hair for the day (optional)



Friday 15th March

Year 5 Mrs Sweeney's Class
Celebration of the Word 9:05am in the prayer room. Please come if you can!

Tuesday 19th March

Celebration of the Word EYFS in the prayer room.
Parents and Parishioners welcome-10am (tea and coffee afterwards)

HOLY WEEK

Monday 25 th March 2024	Palm Sunday-Year 5 Miss Mather	9:05-9:30am Main Hall
Tuesday 26 th March 2024	Prayer Stations- Parents/carers welcome to spend time reflecting at each prayer station in the prayer room with their children.	8:30-9:00am 3:15-3:40pm Prayer room
Wednesday 27 th March 2024	Maundy Thursday-Year 3-Miss Mather's class	9:05-9:30am Main Hall
Thursday 28 th March 2024	Mrs Sutherland with children across KS2- Good Friday	9:05-9:30am Main Hall

Please note we break up for Easter on Thursday 28th March.

School closes at 1pm. Nursery will be closed for the pm session. Unfortunately, there will be no after school provision that day.

TEAM (formerly PTA)

Get Involved

We would love your participation in our newly formed TEAM group, where we are hoping to work collaboratively to support our pupils and all our school families! Please mark your calendar for our upcoming meeting on **Wednesday 24th April at 3.30 pm.**

Our first fundraising event will be a school disco for Reception to Y6 pupils.

This will take place on **Wednesday 5th June**

KS1 3:00pm-4:00pm

KS2 5:30-7:00pm

The theme is '**Get ready for summer**'

KS1 and Reception children will be allowed to come into school in their shorts and shades.

We look forward to working with you to make your children's experience at school even more memorable!



Class Dojo

It was with a heavy heart that we have stopped using Class Dojo. Although it is an excellent tool to communicate some of the lovely things happening at school in some cases, Class Dojo has been used to raise concerns about the teacher, work in class or make a complaint about a teacher or a decision they have made. This is not the intended purpose of Class Dojo. Teachers **do not** now have access to Dojo. To contact a member of staff please phone the office to make an appointment. We will continue to communicate via the website and Facebook. In addition, texts will continue to be sent via teachers2parents.

Attendance!



We continue to work together to ensure your child attends school every day. Please phone the office if your child is unable to attend school. The number of children arriving late to school has decreased slightly-thank you for this. Please continue to ensure your child arrives on time as there are still cases of persistent lateness which will impact the children's learning.

Please contact the school if we can provide any support in improving your child's attendance.

SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding is Everyone's Responsibility. Any concerns about safeguarding should be reported to our designated safeguarding lead, Mrs. Sutherland or the deputy designated safeguarding leads Mrs. White,

Mrs. Myhill, Mrs Henery or Miss Lawrence. Ask at the school office if you would like a paper copy of the safeguarding policy. All of our Safeguarding policies are available on our school website under policies.

Each Wednesday we will share a guide from <https://nationalonlinesafety.com/> giving valuable information on how you can help safeguard your child at home.

This week's focus is **about SnapChat which has an age restriction of 13+**

In the guides, you'll find tips such as playing online games with your child and talking about your child's online life.



Weekend Mass Times: Our Lady of the Rosary Church

Fr. Sean Neylan, Rev Deacon Peter Barrigan & Rev Deacon Neil Haggerstone.

Saturday Vigil 4:30 pm

Sunday Morning 9:30 am

Thank you for your continued support,

Mrs M Graham Executive Headteacher

Mrs C Sutherland Head of School

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

SNAPCHAT

AGE RESTRICTION
13+

Snapchat is an instant messaging app which allows users to send images, videos and texts to people in their friends list. One of Snapchat's unique features is that pictures and messages 'disappear' 24 hours after they've been viewed; however, this content isn't as temporary as many believe - with some users saving screenshots or using another device to take a photo of their screen. This year, Snapchat added 'My AI': a customisable chatbot with which people can chat and share secrets, as well as asking for advice and suggestions of places to visit.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

CONNECTING WITH STRANGERS

Even if your child only connects with people they know, they may still get friend requests from strangers. The Quick Add option lets users befriend people the app recommends - but these 'friends' are merely a username, which could have anyone behind it. Accepting such requests reveals children's personal information through the Story, SnapMap and Spotlight features, potentially putting them at risk from predators.

EXCESSIVE USE

Snapchat works hard on user engagement, with features like streaks (messaging the same person every day to build up a high score). Spotlight Challenges tempt users into spending time producing content in search of cash prizes and online fame, while it's easy for children to pass hours watching Spotlight's endless scroll of videos.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some videos and posts on Snapchat aren't suitable for children. The hashtags used to group content are determined by the poster, so even an innocent search term could still yield age-inappropriate results. The app's 'disappearing messages' feature also makes it easy for young people (teens in particular) to share explicit images on impulse - so sexting continues to be a risk associated with Snapchat.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

My AI is Snapchat's new chatbot, which replies to questions in a human-like manner. However, the software is still in its infancy and has significant drawbacks, such as biased, incorrect or misleading responses. There have already been numerous reports of young users turning to AI for medical help and diagnoses, which could be inaccurate and therefore potentially dangerous.

ONLINE PRESSURES

Although many of Snapchat's filters are designed to entertain or amuse, the 'beautify' effects on photos can set unrealistic body-image expectations - creating feelings of inadequacy if a young person compares themselves unfavourably with other users. Snapchat now also has 'priority' notifications (which still get displayed even if a device is in 'do not disturb' mode), increasing the pressure on users to log back in and interact.

VISIBLE LOCATION

Snap Map highlights a device's exact position on a virtual map which is visible to other users. There are options to restrict who can see this information: all friends, only you (Ghost Mode) or selected friends. Snapchat also has real-time location sharing, which is intended as a buddy system to ensure friends have reached home safely - but which could also be used to track a young person for more sinister reasons.

Advice for Parents & Carers

TURN OFF QUICK ADD

The Quick Add feature helps people find each other on the app. This function works based on mutual friends or whether someone's number is in your child's contacts list. Explain to your child that this could potentially make their profile visible to strangers. We recommend that your child turns off Quick Add, which can be done in the settings (accessed via the cog icon).



CHOOSE GOOD CONNECTIONS

In 2021, Snapchat rolled out a new safety feature: users can now receive notifications reminding them of the importance of maintaining connections with people they actually know well, as opposed to strangers. This 'Friend Check Up' encourages users to delete connections with users that they rarely communicate with, to maintain their online safety and privacy.



DISCUSS AI

Although My AI's responses can often give the impression that it's a real person, it's essential that young people remember this certainly isn't the case. Encourage your child to think critically about My AI's replies to their questions: are they accurate and reliable? Remind them that My AI shouldn't replace chatting with their real friends, and that it's always better to talk to an actual person in relation to medical matters.



CHAT ABOUT CONTENT

It may feel like an awkward conversation (and one that young people can be reluctant to have) but it's important to talk openly and non-judgementally about sexting. Remind your child that once something's online, the creator loses control over where it ends up - and who else sees it. Likewise, it's vital that children understand that some challenges which become popular on the platform may have potentially harmful consequences.



KEEP ACCOUNTS PRIVATE

Profiles are private by default, but children may make them public to gain more followers. Snap Stories are visible to everyone your child adds, unless they change the settings. On SnapMaps, their location is visible unless Ghost Mode is enabled (again via settings). It's safest not to add people your child doesn't know in real life - especially since the addition of My Places, which allows other Snapchat users to see where your child regularly visits and checks in.



BE READY TO BLOCK AND REPORT

If a stranger *does* connect with your child on Snapchat and begins to make them feel uncomfortable through bullying, pressure to send explicit images or by sending sexual images to them, your child can select the three dots on that person's profile and report or block them. There are options to state why they're reporting that user (annoying or malicious messages, spam, or masquerading as someone else, for example).



Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



National Online Safety®

#WakeUpWednesday