



Newsletter 23 – 2nd March 2026

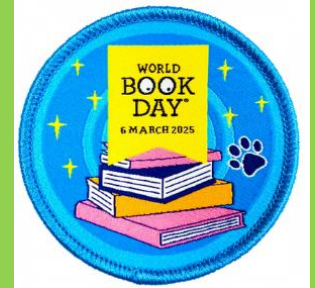
Knowledge begins with respect for God (Proverbs 1:7)

This half-term's value is 'Forgiveness' (Ephesians 4:32)

World Book Day

A reminder that we will be celebrating World Book Day this Thursday, 5th March. On this day children are encouraged to wear comfortable clothes for reading in – we did this last year and it saved parents buying anything special or worrying about costumes!

If your child would like to dress up as a book character, they are very welcome to do so.



Breakfast Club – Cashless trial

From next week, 9th March, we would like to trial online payments for breakfast club. Instead of paying cash each day/week you will be able to pay using our online payment system, SchoolMoney, using the Teachers2Parents app. At the end of each week the amount owing for the days your child has attended that week will appear on the payment tab.

School Photographer

The school photographer will be in school next Thursday (12th March) to take photographs of individual children.

For many years we have arranged for family group photos to be taken but we have noticed that hardly any parents or carers have bought these. This also causes quite a bit of disruption to children's learning, so from this year, we are doing things differently.

Family group photos will no longer be taken automatically. If you have more than one child in school and you would like a photo of them taken together, you will need to bring them to school between 8.00 – 8.20am on the above date. Please only do this if you intend to buy the photos.

As usual, there will be the opportunity for parents to bring pre-school brothers and sisters in between 8.00 – 8.20am to be included in family group photos. For safeguarding purposes, parents need to report to the main office, not through the breakfast club or classroom doors.

Please note that this is ONLY for pre-school brothers and sisters, not older children who do not attend St Matthew's.



School Meals

A big thank you to all the parents and carers who regularly order their child's school meals and pay for them in advance – your help in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Sitting down with your child to choose their lunches together makes sure that they will get something they will particularly enjoy. This ensures that your child eats a good amount at lunchtime; something very important for their health and wellbeing, as well as their concentration in their afternoon lessons.

Remember to click the 'Pay' button after making your choices, even if you don't pay for your child's meals. This saves your choices.

Scholastic Book Club

You will remember that at our Parents' Evening in December, we held a Book Fair. The company behind this, Scholastic, is providing parents and carers with another opportunity to buy books at discounted prices. As this week is World Book Day week, this is a great opportunity for you to treat your child and support school as we seek to show children that reading is fun and a great alternative to too much screen time!

Go to <https://clubs.scholastic.co.uk/C-24264MV4> to browse the latest books and order online. For every £1 you spend in the Book Club, our school will earn 20p in Scholastic Rewards.

Orders need to be placed online by March 20th, 2026.

Best wishes



Julian Rogers
Headteacher

Attached to this newsletter:

- This month's online safety newsletter – please read this to keep yourself as up to date as possible.

This week's Amazing Achievers!

You've Been Spotted!

Children who have been demonstrating one of our school values:

Zinab Solaiman Khil & Tehmina Patel – Robins
 Maryam Nakhuda – Woodpeckers
 Abeera Chaudry – Kingfishers
 Deen Hussain – Swallows
 Mikail Hussain – Doves
 Zara Malik – Owls
 Zakariya Faqir – Kestrels
 Aminah Farooq – Hawks
 Subhan Nain – Falcons
 Azaan Hussain – Eagles

Headteacher's Award

Children chosen for a special achievement:

Alayna Shafiq & Amirah Bhamjee – Robins
 Maliha Khan – Woodpeckers
 Idrees Chothia – Kingfishers
 Haaniya Farooq – Swallows
 Muhammadhusayn Sathia – Doves
 Ahmed Hassan – Owls
 Humairah Bhamjee – Kestrels
 Safaa Zaman – Hawks
 Malik Hasan – Falcons
 Yahya Hooti – Eagles

Recent Reading Badges

Swallows

Mustafa Ibrar – Topaz

Doves

Zahra Akhtar – Pearl

Hawks

Hooria Abbas, Salman Khaled, Ahmad Mahmood
 & Anayah Patel – Ruby

Safaa Zaman – Bronze Star

Mariya Bismillah – Silver Star

Umar-Farooq Chothia, Fatima Geloo & Rehan Khan – Gold
 Star

Remarkable Readers

Children who have impressed their teachers with their reading this week:

M. Aaron Patel – Woodpeckers

Zoya Satia – Kingfishers

Salahuddin Nawaz – Swallows

Rayhan Rizwan – Doves

Amna Hussain – Owls

Aaishah Sidat – Kestrels

Zakariyya Motala – Hawks

M. Abdul-Qadir Hussain – Falcons

Haniya Shaikh – Eagles

**Mrs Martin's Class of the Week:
Woodpeckers**

**Mr Ulhaq's Ultimate Achiever:
Adam Sabir (Woodpeckers)**

Mr Richardson's Lunchtime Awards:

Shehryar Ahmed (Swallows) & Jumaanah Isa (Kestrels)

Last Week's Attendance

	Best attendance	Best punctuality
Infants	Robins & Swallows	Robins
Juniors	Eagles	Falcons

YouTube Safety Update: New Parental Controls

YouTube have published their latest update on how parents can support their child on YouTube. YouTube will now allow parents to set the amount of time viewing Shorts – this can even be set to zero. YouTube Shorts are short videos, usually less than 60 seconds long, which when continuously watched, can lead to excessive screentime. Furthermore, parents will also be able to set bedtime and 'take a break' reminders. You can find out more here:

<https://blog.youtube/news-and-events/updates-youtube-supervised-accounts-teens/>

If you would like to find out more about supervised accounts on YouTube, then this article explains the different settings available:

https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/10315420?hl=en-GB&ref_topic=15279060&sjid=15225282118002181205-EU

Would you like to read this newsletter in a different language? You can use the translate tool on our web version: <https://www.knowsleycitylearningcentres.org.uk/march-2026/>

Mobile phones: do you know the risks?

We know that children having access to a smartphone can expose children to risks including:

- Viewing inappropriate content
- Excessive screen time/use, which in turn can affect their mental health and sleep pattern.
- Contact from inappropriate people/grooming
- Cyberbullying
- Spending money on in-app purchases/scams

What effects do mobile phones have on children's mental health?

Compass discuss the research around this important topic, outlining the positive and negative effects that mobile phones have:

<https://compass-uk.org/services/compass-changing-lives/online-resources/what-effects-do-mobile-phones-have-on-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health/>

EE Online Safety Hub

EE has published age guidance for smartphone usage to improve children's digital wellbeing. In summary, they recommend that children under 11 should use non-smart devices, for children aged 11-13, they advise that if a smartphone is used, then parental controls should be enabled and access to social media restricted. Finally, for 13-16-year-olds they still recommend that parental controls are implemented and appropriate restrictions set up. You can read the full guidance here:

<https://ee.co.uk/internet-online-safety>

Could you delay when your child is given a smartphone with Smartphone Free Childhood?

The premise behind this movement is that all parents/carers of a class all agree not to give their children smartphones (therefore the level of peer pressure is reduced) for a set time or until a specific age:

<https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/>

What device?

When you think it is the right time for your child to have a phone, then 'Which?' provide an overview of some options available:

<https://www.which.co.uk/reviews/mobile-phones/article/buying-a-first-mobile-phone-best-dumb-phones-and-smartphones-for-kids-aA03C3Y8aTzr>

Virtual Private Networks

A Virtual Private Network (VPN) helps make your connection between a device and the internet more secure and can help protect personal information and add privacy. However, whilst a VPN has benefits, it is important that you are aware that if your child is using a VPN, they may be able to get round Wi-Fi restrictions, access blocked or restricted websites and bypass parental controls. It may also mean that their browsing history is hidden.

The NSPCC provides a helpful overview of VPNs, plus top tips and conversation starters here:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/vpns-and-online-safety/>

Social Media Algorithms

What is an Algorithm?

Algorithms influence what we see on social media platforms and predict what type of content we are most likely to interact with, thereby keeping us online for longer. The algorithm uses information such as who you follow, what you have searched for and what you have watched, liked or shared to determine what it thinks most interests you. It will then show you this content more, for example, in the explore tab on Instagram.



What do I need to know?

Whilst there are benefits to algorithms, for example it means we tend to see content that does interest us, unfortunately there are negatives as well. They can lead to increased screentime as we continue to see things that interest us. Secondly, it can lead to users being shown large amounts of inappropriate content which can for example, exacerbate negative body image or heighten access to misogyny content. It can also lead to 'echo chambers' where you are only seeing content that relates to your opinion rather than seeing a balanced viewpoint.

Further information

- <https://cybersmarties.com/behind-the-screen-how-algorithms-shape-what-kids-see-online/>
- The BBC discuss algorithms in this article about doomscrolling: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zwnk3qt>

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Five Nights at Freddy's

Five Nights at Freddy's is a horror game designed to frighten players with jump scares or creepy characters. It can be accessed from several places, for example on an Xbox (PEGI rating of 12) and on the App store (age rating of 13+). There is merchandise available, which may suggest that it is child friendly. We would recommend that you preview the game first to ascertain its suitability for your child. You can view Bark's review here:

<https://www.bark.us/content-review/five-nights-at-freddys-review/>

Screen time and online harms

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health have created a page that brings together key resources on screen time. Find out more here:

<https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/screen-time-online-harms-resources-members>

New government campaign: Is your child influenced by toxic content?

The Government have launched a new campaign providing guidance to parents on safety settings, conversation prompts and advice for tackling misinformation and harmful content. It also includes a quiz to help you and your child spot misleading or unreliable information online. You can find out more here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/is-your-child-influenced-by-toxic-content-new-government-campaign-supports-parents-to-talk-about-harmful-online-content>