



Newsletter 2 – 7th September 2026

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

This half-term's value is 'Thankfulness' (Colossians 2:7)

Attendance: important information

Poor attendance can have a serious impact on children's learning and progress. Any child with poor attendance is at a real disadvantage and it can take a very long time to make up this lost learning time – some children's learning never fully recovers which can have serious consequences on their future life chances. For children to make the best possible progress, it is vital that their attendance is the best it can possibly be. I would like to remind you of the following:

- Parents/carers do not have a legal right to take their child out of school for holidays in term time. Schools are expected to refuse requests for absence during term time unless there are explicit exceptional circumstances.
- Requests for extended leave to attend family weddings or to see ill relatives are not deemed to be exceptional circumstances. The availability of cheap flights or holidays is also not deemed to be an exceptional circumstance.

Our school attendance policy has clear thresholds for different actions to take place – see below. We provide parents with information regarding their child's attendance at the end of each term.

Stage	Trigger	Actions to be taken
1	3 days of absence (6 sessions)	• Text message issued. Parents/carers invited to discuss any concerns if they wish to do so.
2	4 days of absence (8 sessions)	• Attendance concern letter sent home to parents/carers
3	6 days of absence (12 sessions)	• Parents requested to attend a meeting in school to discuss attendance with the Headteacher
4	10 days of absence (20 sessions)	• Parents requested to attend a further meeting with the Headteacher to discuss the creation of a parenting contract with the school and Local Authority.
5	15 days of absence (30 sessions) Parenting contract has been breached and attendance has not improved. Any of the thresholds for legal action have been met	• School will refer the case to the Local Authority. • The Local Authority will utilise appropriate legal powers to enforce attendance. This could include Fixed Penalty Notices, charged at £160 per parent if paid within 28 days. This is reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

Winning Team Party

During the afternoon of this Friday, 11th September, children in Team Attenborough will enjoy their winning team party from last term. They will be able to come to school dressed in non-uniform on that day.

Online Safety

This month's online safety newsletter is attached to this newsletter – see below. It's also available on our school website (www.stmatthewsblackburn.com) on the green 'Parents' tab, under 'online safety'.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Julian Rogers', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Julian Rogers
Headteacher

Online Safety Newsletter

Sept 2026

Childline under 12s site

Childline have a separate area on their website for under 12s. The pages are written for primary school children. The area includes a section full of games and a Buddy Zone with tips, such as how to speak to a trusted adult and information on where to get extra support from.

You can access this area here:
<https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/u12-landing/>

How to manage parental controls for different ages?

Internet Matters asked online experts, Karl Hopwood and Richard Waite to share their advice on how to manage parental controls for different ages.

Find out more here:
<https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/question/managing-parental-controls-for-different-ages/>

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

New guidance issued due to concern of AI-manipulated images

Photos of children that seem completely innocent can be manipulated using artificial intelligence (AI) to create sexualised or abusive images. There is a growing threat that children's images shared online are being manipulated by criminals into AI generated sexual abuse material. As concerns grow, the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) and the National Crime Agency (NCA) have issued new guidance to help you understand the risks around AI image manipulation and advice on how to speak to your child about AI and image consent.



The IWF states that child sexual abuse images or videos created or altered using AI may include:

- Everyday images of a child or young person that are manipulated into child sexual abuse imagery, including images taken from social media, websites or messaging apps, that are manipulated into sexualised or abusive imagery. These are sometimes known as 'deepfakes'.
- Images or videos that look like a real child but are completely artificial.
- AI technology that digitally removes clothing from existing images to create nude or semi-nude images, sometimes known as 'nudifying'.

[source: IWF <https://www.iwf.org.uk/resources/ai-child-abuse-imagery-parent-guide/> accessed 25.08.26]

What can I do?

The guidance provides practical advice about sharing photographs of your child online. Some useful things to consider are:

- Think before you share photographs online. The IWF suggest creating a 'close friends' group to share images.
- Check and adjust your privacy settings on all social media accounts.
- Understand the steps to take if you or your child has any concerns and the organisations you can contact.

Where can I find the new guidance?

The full guidance can be accessed at the link below. It also includes a video highlighting how everyday photos can be misused using AI tools.

<https://www.iwf.org.uk/resources/ai-child-abuse-imagery-parent-guide/>

You can find the full press release/announcement here:

<https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/news/new-guidance-for-parents-and-carers-as-ai-manipulated-images-of-children-become-a-growing-concern>

YouTube

YouTube is one of the most popular platforms, available across many different devices - phones, tablets and Smart TVs etc. **YouTube is intended for users over the age of 13**, however, younger children can still access YouTube with consent from a parent/guardian. There are different options available to access YouTube, depending on your child's age:



1. YouTube Kids – a separate app that includes a smaller selection of videos based on the age category you select: Preschool (ages 4 and under), Younger (ages 5–8) or Older (ages 9–12).

2. Supervised accounts – a parent-managed version of YouTube that allows you to control the content your child can access. You can select one of the following options:

- **Explore** - Generally for viewers aged 9+.
- **Explore more** - Generally for viewers aged 13+.
- **Most of YouTube** - This setting includes almost everything except for videos marked as 18+.

Find out more: <https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/10315420>

What do I need to be aware of?

Whilst YouTube can be educational and fun, it is important to be aware of the potential risks, such as:

- **Inappropriate content**
- **Excessive Screen time** – particularly due to the autoplay feature.
- **Unwanted contact / cyberbullying** – particularly via comments if your child is sharing videos.
- **Algorithms** – algorithms influence what we see to keep us engaged. This can lead to a user being exposed to large amounts of content about one topic/theme, which may not be helpful if it is negative.
- **Adverts** that may not be aimed at or suitable for your child's age.

What can I do?

- Set up appropriate parental controls.
- Show your child the reporting and blocking tools available.
- Watch YouTube together or supervise use.

Further information

<https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/entertainment-search-engines/youtube-app/>

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date released 01.09.26. The inclusion of any links does not imply any affiliation with or endorsement of the linked websites, documents, or videos, nor are we claiming any ownership or copyright in the content of the linked materials.

A guide for parents and carers on managing children's digital lives

The Children's Commissioner has published this guide to help you support your child and make starting conversations about their online world easier. It's a useful read:

<https://assets.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wpuploads/2025/12/cc-what-i-wish-parent-guide.pdf>

Nex Playground

Nex Playground is a new video game console, which features games to get kids active. The games have no ads, no violence and no chat features, however it does rely on purchasing either a yearly or quarterly game subscription. You can find out more here:

<https://www.nexplayground.com/en-gb>

Online Safety Quiz

The NSPCC have created this quiz to test your child's knowledge on how to stay safe online. It's a great way to start a conversation with your child about their online life. You can access the quiz here:

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

WhatsApp Usernames

WhatsApp is introducing the use of usernames, so people no longer have to share their phone number. Wayne Denner provides an overview of the new features, what you need to consider and steps you can take here: <https://www.waynedenner.com/whatsapp-username-what-parents-need-to-know/>