



Thursday 20th October 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

What an exciting first half-term we have had! From football team success, to seeing new faces at toddlers, to our First Holy Communicants preparing for the next steps in their faith journey – *and* holding our first joint Harvest Mass (for over three years!), it's been wonderful to witness everyone's commitment to our St. Joseph's Community.

Our Headboy and Headgirl and their deputies were selected, our house groups have now been implemented in St. Joseph's Infant School so the children are beginning to know which Saint group they belong to (St. George, David, Patrick or Andrew) – and we have given out over 100 certificates in our weekly Friday Awards Assemblies. You may have noticed that we have also introduced the St. Joseph's Virtues certificates, to reflect our mission statement.

Today, we are sending home a copy of our school's new mission and vision statement, so that you can display this somewhere prominent and pray this together as a family.

Parents' Evening:

You should now have received electronic links for booking Parents' Evening online. Please note that the booking system is electronic, but the appointments are face to face. This allows you to select the appointment slots that work for your family.

To book an appointment:

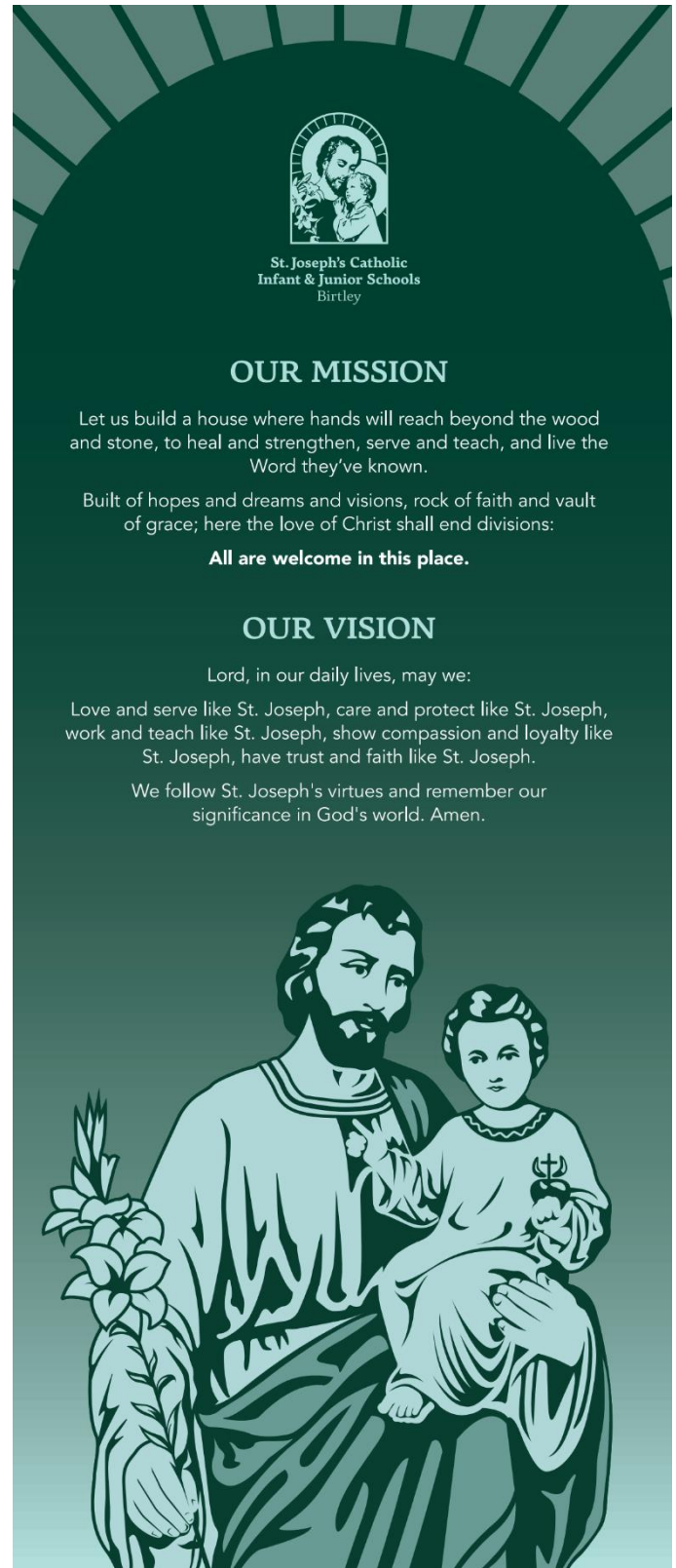
- Click on the SchoolComms App or log into School Comms via your browser.**
- Click on Useful Links – this will then take you SchoolCloud where you can select your appointment slot.**

If you're struggling to book – please contact either office, who will try to accommodate your request.

Please note that as per our diary dates on the last newsletter, the first day of Year 1's Parents' Evening has moved to Monday 14th November.

E-Payments:

We're in the process of finalising e-payments for educational visits. Please bear with us as we hope to have this implemented for after half-term. Thank you!





SchoolComms:

As we move to a new system, there are likely to be small teething problems; however, by now, all parents should have been able to register on SchoolComms by 'logging in' and subsequently being sent a pin, which confirms your mobile phone number with 'the system'. Please let us know if you have any problems by emailing the school office who will try to resolve the query. If we can't resolve it, we will contact the person who can. Thank you.

Attendance:

When parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means that children must attend every day that the school is open, except in a very small number of exceptional circumstances.



We are now working with Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) who will be monitoring those who are regularly late and those who are known persistent absentees. If your child is not attending school regularly, then you may receive a call or visit from the EWOs as well as a letter from us. Please note that we have a statutory duty to ensure that pupils are attending school, regularly. Government policy states: ***'The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.'***

Soft Start to the Day:

The darker mornings are coming as well as the cold and damp weather! Therefore, after half-term, we will be holding a soft start for pupils. This means that pupils will arrive on site (between 8:35 – 8:45am at the infants, or 8:30 – 8:55am at the juniors), enter the classroom and get straight on with morning work - this will help to maximise learning time in the classroom.

Anti-Bullying Week:



This year, Anti-Bullying Week, Democracy Week and Children-In-Need all fall on the same week!



During this week, pupils will embark on a **daily** social justice and Relationships and Health Education lesson, which will focus on the big themes of anti-bullying, political awareness and charitable support. Throughout the week, we'll also be discussing British Values, political parties and the importance of democracy.

On **Monday 14th November** – it's **Odd Sock day** to support the National Anti-Bullying campaign.

Friday 18th November is the date of the annual Children-In-Need appeal. **Pupils can wear non-uniform for the day for the voluntary contribution of £1, which can be paid via SchoolComms or by cash.** The theme is often 'wear your spots' but we recognise that not every child has spots to wear in their wardrobe; therefore, we will celebrate by holding a **spot-or-stripe-tacular day!** However, if you don't have anything spotty or stripey – don't worry – we don't mind – come in whatever clothes you feel comfortable in.





Bible Explorers:

We are blessed to have been asked to become part of a Bible Explorers project. Every half-term, Mr Taylor, a retired teacher will come to school to deliver a Bible Story to the children. He's a wonderful storyteller who uses simplistic retelling techniques and felt pictures to retell happenings from the Old and New Testament. He will also ask the children to remember a 'memory verse' which is a famous quotation from the story he retells. Mr Taylor will then ask the children to recall the verse the next time he sees them – selecting a winner to receive a prize! He will come the juniors this term, and then both schools, next term.



Reception: We are inviting our Reception parents to a 'Stay and Play' and an introduction to Tapestry – our new e-learning portal for recording pupils' learning journeys. We hope that all parents can attend the session on **Tuesday 8th November, at 8:45am (for a 9am start)** where we will first of all, invite the children into class, while we explain and demonstrate the system to parents in the infant hall. We will then offer an opportunity for a shared session between parents and children in the classroom and hall. We strongly advise and

encourage you to come as this will be a fabulous way of keeping in touch with your children's learning in the classroom. If you are unable to attend, then we ask you to send a family representative to support your child during the session – thank you! If Reception parents haven't already signed-up to Tapestry – then please do so:

<https://forms.office.com/r/KcTjnSXnD2>

Year 1:

As part of our introduction to Rocket Phonics (our phonics and reading programme), we are holding a Phonics Workshop for Year 1 parents and pupils. We are inviting parents into school at **8:45am (for a 9am start), on Tuesday 15th November**, for a short breakdown of the Rocket Phonics programme and we will then run a series of phonics games and activities both in the classroom and in the hall. Again, we appreciate that some parents may be unable to attend, but if possible, please send a family member who can share the messages.



Year 6 Curriculum Evening:



Mrs Thomson is going to conduct an introduction to Key Stage 2 assessments for parents and carers on **Thursday 17th November at 4pm**. We strongly encourage all parents and carers to attend so that you are aware of the content of the tests and how we will help to support pupils each day throughout the course of the year.

Kensho Karate: Please note that due to Sensei Zach competing, Kensho Karate is cancelled on Tuesday 1st November,. We wish him every success!

After-School Clubs	Infants	Juniors
Monday	Singing Club	Kensho Karate Singing Club
Tuesday	Kensho Karate	Gateshead Football Club
Wednesday		
Thursday	NUFC Club (pupils will rotate)	Gymnastics Club
Friday		

St. Joseph's Catholic Infant School
Mitchell Street
Birtley
Chester-le-Street
County Durham
DH3 1LU
Telephone: 0191 410 2324
Email: birtleystjosephscatholicinfantschool@gateshead.gov.uk
<https://stjosephcatholicsschoolsbirtley.org/>



St. Joseph's Catholic Junior School
School Street
Birtley
Chester-le-Street
County Durham
DH3 2PN
Telephone: 0191 410 2231
Email: birtleystjosephscatholicjuniorschool@gateshead.gov.uk
Email: stjosephsjuniorslearning@gatedu.org

Scholastic Book Fair:

We have the perfect excuse for some Christmas shopping on **Tuesday 22nd and Wednesday 23rd November** with our Scholastic Book Fair. Between **3.30 and 4.00pm** at St. Joseph's Juniors, you will be able to browse hundreds of fantastic titles, many of which have been selected by school staff, based on the types of books we know our pupils love to read. There will be a range of books for all children's ages and any purchases made will help fill our school libraries with more wonderful books. The Book Fair will only be selling Key Stage 2 books, but we have asked Scholastic to come to the infants in due course – watch this space for further information! However, any families who would like to attend from St. Joseph's Infant school are always welcome to call in.



Dates for the Diary (Please note that dates are subject to change):

Monday 24th October – Friday 28th October – School closed for half-term

Monday 31st October – Closing Day for Secondary School Admissions

Tuesday 1st November – Mass to celebrate All Saints Day in St. Joseph's RC Church at 10:00am.

Tuesday 1st November – Parents' Evenings at both schools – 3:30pm – 6:00pm (not Year 1)

Thursday 3rd November – Parents' Evenings at both schools – 3:30pm – 6:00pm

Tuesday 8th November – Reception Parents and Pupils – Stay and Play and an Introduction to Tapestry at 8:45am for a 9am start

Friday 11th November – Remembrance Day – Mass in Church 11am

Monday 14th November – Parents' Evening (Year 1 additional session)

Monday 14th November – Wear your Odd Socks Day to support Anti-Bullying Week

Tuesday 15th November – Year 1 Phonics Workshops for Parents – 8:45am for 9am start

Thursday 17th November – Year 6 Introduction to Key Stage 2 Assessment Evening – 4pm

Friday 18th November – Children in Need – Spot or Stripe-tacular Day Voluntary Contribution of £1

Tuesday 22nd and Wednesday 23rd Scholastic Book Fair at Juniors (after-school)

Tuesday 13th December – Reception Performance

Thursday 15th December – KSI Performances

Tuesday 20th December – KS2 Carol Service – 5pm at St. Joseph's RC Church, Birtley

Sunday 15th January 2023 – Admission portal closes for Reception and Year 3 admissions – parents need to apply for places for infant pupils transferring to junior school

Please note that St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Saturday Night Vigil Mass commences at 5:00pm on Saturday evenings – you would be most welcome to attend.

Weekday Masses occur at Church, on most Tuesdays (7pm), Thursdays (12 noon) and Fridays (10am).

Visit: [St Joseph's Birtley Bulletins \(stjosephsbirtley.co.uk\)](http://StJosephsBirtleyBulletins.stjosephsbirtley.co.uk) for more information