



St. Joseph's  
Catholic Infant  
& Junior Schools  
Birtley



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**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

**Dear Parents and Carers,**

A big welcome back to the new school year. Welcome to all of our new pupils – some of whom are new to the area or country. You are most welcome to join our lovely community, here in Birtley.

Last year brought so many highs to our community and we look forward to another fantastic year of residential, adventures, careers, Masses, after-school activities, breakfast clubs, Toddlers, Little Liturgies and sport underpinned by a fantastic curriculum. At St. Joseph's, we recognise the associated benefits of visits and the impact that a good curriculum offer can bring to pupils' personal development, behaviour and attitudes. Below, we have summarised some important updates for you for the next academic year.

*We are grateful that our community has not been affected by the RAAC situation (Reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete) and we pray for the schools who are unable to reunite physically, at this point in the term.*



**Bookings:** You will have received an email from Mrs Thornton, our school business manager, who has explained that Arbor is now operational and all bookings for both breakfast and after-school clubs are to be made via the Arbor APP, or via the browser version of Arbor. From September, we will be charging £2 for after-school clubs to cover either staffing or external provider costs and £3.50 for breakfast club.

As you may be aware, we have had to say a sad goodbye to our priests - Fr. Jim O'Keefe, Fr. Uchenna and Fr. Vincent. We are delighted to welcome Fr. Martin Morris and Fr. Luke Wilkinson to St. Joseph's. Once they are settled into parish life, we will communicate the diary of proposed Masses for the academic year.



**INSET Days 2023 – 2024:** Our school INSET days, which are designated days for teacher professional development will take place on:

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2023

Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2024

Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2024

**Please save these dates in your calendar.**

**Side by Side Arts – Peripatetic Lessons:**



Side by Side Arts have asked us to reiterate that all parents will need to fill in the form regardless if their child has previously had lessons with a tutor. This information will go directly to Side by Side Arts so there is no need for it to go through your schools admin team. This link is specifically for our school.

Lessons are taught in groups of two where each student is matched with another of a similar age and ability. Lessons are £11.50 per child for a 30-minute session and payment will be arranged through Side by Side Arts.

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc3\\_E90rcEbwkl2vsa67I5UHB9hV5bwLO3HBF62timeuBlh3w/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc3_E90rcEbwkl2vsa67I5UHB9hV5bwLO3HBF62timeuBlh3w/viewform?usp=sf_link)

### Uniform:

The purpose of uniform is to ensure that children wear practical non-labelled clothes. School uniform puts every child on an equal footing, so our children aren't worrying about designer clothing or 'not having the right stuff'. It also helps to prepare children for secondary school, where uniform expectations are heightened significantly. We request that all uniform is labelled and ask you to remember that the 'phase-out' for the old uniform is April 2024. Please remember that we ask pupils to wear black shoes for school (not trainers, unless it is a PE day) and children are not permitted to wear leggings as part of their everyday school clothing, but they can wear leggings for PE.



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**Strong school attendance** is very important, as is arriving to school, on time. If your child is walking to school, please check what time they are setting off and track them via an app. We are unable to open our infant gates earlier than 8:35am (with school commencing at 8:45am at the infants), and the juniors gates earlier than 8:30am (with school commencing at 8:55am).

### Physical Education Timetable:

We updated the timetable over the summer holidays and published a copy of the new slot timings on our website. [PE Timetable - St. Joseph's Infant and Junior Schools, Birtley \(stjosephcatholicschoolsbirtley.org\)](https://stjosephcatholicschoolsbirtley.org) **Newcastle United Foundation** will be working across both schools on a Thursday – enabling all pupils to access a lesson with a specialist coach.

Year	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Reception				YES	
Year 1			YES	YES	
Year 2		YES		YES	
Year 3	YES			YES	
Year 4	YES			YES	
Year 5			Swimming	YES	
Year 6			Swimming	YES	

### Swimming:



Due to the closure of Birtley Pool, we have had to make alternative arrangements to source swimming lessons elsewhere. Please note that this means that school has had to fund and subsidise transport costs, which we have not previously had to do because we were within local distance of the pool. Therefore, Year 5 and 6 pupils will now be swimming at Bullion Lane pool, in Chester-le-Street, on a Wednesday morning. We also ask you to look out for the updates on Birtley Amateur Swimming Club as the group seek support from the local community to get the pool back up and running. We have attached their latest updates to this email. Please click the link for their website: [Home \(birtleyasc.com\)](https://birtleyasc.com)

### Staffing Updates:



We are delighted to welcome Madame Harbron to our staff, who will be teaching either Spanish or French, in Key Stage 2 classes, on a Wednesday. Cardinal Hume Secondary School is a specialist Languages Hub. Because the vast majority of our children go onto study at Cardinal Hume, we are working closely with them.

When a child enters Year 7 at Cardinal Hume, they will either learn French or Spanish, depending on whether they enter an 'odd' or 'even' year, and will continue to learn this language for five years – meaning that pupils are better prepared for GCSEs.

To coincide with Cardinal Hume's model, we will also be following suit. Therefore, when your child enters Key Stage 2, they will receive four years of learning one language – which will then match-up with the language that your child will learn if they go on to attend Cardinal Hume in the future. Madame Harbron already works at Cardinal Hume – we therefore hope that this arrangement will promote excellency and consistency in our languages teaching.

Year group:	Language Taught:
Year 3	Spanish
Year 4	French
Year 5	Spanish
Year 6	French



### Toddlers:

Our Toddlers will recommence from Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023, at St. Joseph's Catholic Infant School.

Why not come along and join in some fun, play and singing? The session is 9-10:30am with some juice for the little ones and tea/coffee for the adults.

### Visits to school:

Are you interested in a Reception place for September 2024? If so, please contact our school office to make an appointment for one of the senior leadership team to show you round our settings – we'd be delighted to see you! Don't be shy! 😊 Just email [info@sjib.bwcet.com](mailto:info@sjib.bwcet.com) so that we can find a mutually convenient time slot.



### Heritage Open Days:

Are you looking for something to do? England's largest festival of history and culture is on from September 8<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup>! Every September, thousands of volunteers across England organise events to celebrate our fantastic history and culture. It's your chance to see hidden places and try out new experiences – all of which are FREE to explore. Enter your postcode into the link to find out more: [Search events | Heritage Open Days](#)

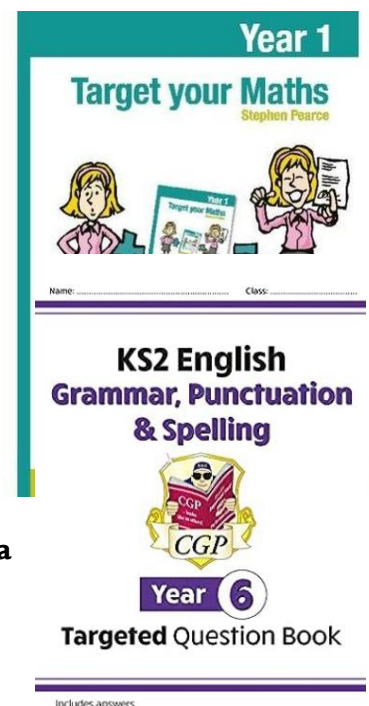
### Homework:

We embarked on a new homework procedure last year, whereby all pupils received and were given homework on the same day of the week so that it was easier for parents/carers to keep track of what was being given out and when it was due to be returned. This method will continue into this academic year, with a slight change. For September 2023 onwards, we have purchased homework books for all year groups, to ensure that there is consistency of approach between classes and year groups. Therefore, one week your child will receive a mathematics homework task, in keeping with the mathematics textbooks which we use in school, and the following week they will receive English grammar, punctuation and spelling homework task to reinforce a taught strategy or concept your child will already have explored in school.

**These tasks will be given out on a Friday and due for return on a Tuesday. Please ensure that all reading books/bags are returned to school on a DAILY BASIS.**

### Little Liturgical Prayer:

Last year, the introduction of Little Liturgical Prayer was a fabulous success and we were delighted to see so many of our families gather with us in the schools, as we celebrated our faith. So that you are prepared for the year ahead, we have published the dates. Please note, that as always, these dates are subject to change – but we will only change them as a last resort, *if we really have to*. We pride ourselves on good organisation and know that parents value this, too. We thank you for your understanding.



Designated Safeguarding Leads for the school:

Mrs K. Swaddle

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads for the school:

Mrs M. Maddock, Mrs C. Peacock, Mrs A. Snaith and Miss Maggiore.

Many prayers and blessings for a successful year ahead,

Mrs K. Swaddle.

Executive Headteacher

Parental invitation for Little Liturgy Prayer Dates:			
<b>SJIB:</b>	<b>Year group:</b>	<b>SJJB:</b>	<b>Year group:</b>
<b>26.9.23</b> (27.9.23 – Feast of Saint Vincent de Paul)	Year 2	<b>4.10.23</b> (St. Francis of Assisi)	Year 3
<b>17.10.23</b> (St. Ignatius of Antioch)	Year 1	<b>1.11.23</b> (All Saints' Day)	Year 4
<b>7.11.23</b>	Reception	<b>15.11.23</b>	Year 5
<b>21.11.23</b> (The Presentation of the Virgin Mary)	Year 2	<b>29.11.23</b>	Year 6
<b>16.1.24</b> (17.1.24 - St. Anthony)	Year 1	<b>10.1.24</b>	Year 3
<b>30.1.24</b> (31.1.24 - St. John Bosco)	Reception	<b>24.1.24</b> (St. Francis de Sales)	Year 4
<b>27.2.24</b> (Second week of Lent)	Year 2	<b>21.2.24</b> (First week of Lent)	Year 5
<b>12.3.24</b> (Fourth week of Lent)	Year 1	<b>6.3.24</b> (Third week of Lent)	Year 6
<b>26.3.24</b> <i>Provisional:</i>	<i>Reception – 10am Palm Sunday liturgical prayer in Church</i>	<b>20.3.24</b> (19.3.24 Feast of St. Joseph)	Year 3
<b>23.4.24</b> (Feast of St. George)	Year 2	<b>28.3.24</b> <i>Provisional:</i>	Year 6 to lead Stations of the Cross in Church at 2pm
<b>7.5.24</b> (Tuesday of sixth week of Eastertide)	Year 1	<b>17.4.24</b> (Wednesday of 3 <sup>rd</sup> week of Eastertide)	Year 4
<b>21.5.24</b> (St. Christopher Magallanes and his companions, Martyrs)	Reception	<b>1.5.24</b> St. Joseph the Worker	Year 5
<b>11.6.24</b> (St. Barnabas the Apostle)	Year 2	<b>5.6.24</b> (St. Boniface)	Year 6
<b>25.6.24</b>	Year 1	<b>19.6.24</b>	Year 3
		<b>3.7.24</b> (St. Thomas, Apostle)	Year 4

## Coal Face

Washington F Pit Museum, Albany Way, Washington, Tyne & Wear, NE37 1BN (Distance: 2 miles)

An exhibition exploring the identity of Washington through the perspective of Washington Miners.

[Opening times & full details ►](#)



## Reduce, Reuse, Recycle – Household Waste Recycling Centre & Waste Transfer Station Site Tour

Waste and Recycling Visitor and Education Centre, Campground, Springwell Road, Wrekenton, Tyne & Wear, NE9 7XW (Distance: 2 miles)

This is a chance to see inside a Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) and Waste Transfer Station (WTS). Residents of Gateshead, Sunderland,



## A Talk on Dragons!

Art Centre Washington, Biddick Lane, Washington, Tyne & Wear, NE38 8AB (Distance: 2 miles)

The Lambton Worm is only one of many North Eastern dragons.

[Opening times & full details ►](#)



## Tanfield Railway

Marley Hill Engine Shed, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, NE16 5ET (Distance: 4 miles)

Visitors can step behind the scenes and take part in exclusive tours to explore the creative achievements of railway workers of the past

[Opening times & full details ►](#)



## Washington Old Hall Free Entry Day

Washington Old Hall Lodge, The Avenue, Washington, Tyne & Wear, NE38 7LE (Distance: 2 miles)

Free for Heritage Open Day. Explore the hall and the gardens in the changing seasons.

[Opening times & full details ►](#)

## North East Land, Sea and Air Museum

North East Land Sea & Air Museum, Washington Road, Sunderland, Tyne & Wear, SR5 3HZ (Distance: 5 miles)

The museum is a transport museum that sits in 4 acres on the edge of Sunderland. The collection encompasses aircraft, military vehicles, cars,...

[Opening times & full details ►](#)

