



St. Joseph's
Catholic Infant
& Junior Schools
Birtley



All are welcome in this place

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Wednesday 7th January 2026

Dear Parents & Carers,

Centenary Celebrations!

Welcome back to 2026! On behalf of staff and governors may we take the opportunity to wish you a very Happy New Year.

This forthcoming week is a very exciting time for our community as we celebrate 100 years of St. Joseph's Catholic Infant School, Mitchell Street, Birtley. We are excited that Abbot Geoffrey Scott OSB, Titular Bishop of Lindisfarne, is coming to preside at our special Mass, on Monday 12th January 2026. After the event, there will be a special display within the infant school in which any special visitors including ex-pupils, staff, or wider connections to the school, are able to attend.



Centenary Celebrations on Tuesday 13th January:

On the afternoon of Tuesday 13th January, Year 1 and 2 pupils will be helping to prepare a small afternoon tea of scones, cakes and tartlets. It is hoped that all of our Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils' parents/carers will be able to join us at 2:30pm, on Tuesday 13th January, to share in the celebration. Once afternoon tea has been served, parents/carers are welcome to take their infant school pupils' home, or pupils can remain in their after-school club, as normal.

Due to numbers and space, we encourage our current parents/carers to attend the afternoon tea at the infant school, on Tuesday 13th January, so that other members of the community, who are travelling to Birtley from

afar, can celebrate with us on Monday 12th January and enjoy the display of memorabilia with a tea/coffee. We thank you for your understanding and support.

We appreciate that some junior school parents/carers may also wish to see the display in school. You are welcome to attend the infant school on Tuesday 13th January, from 3:30pm – 4:30pm, to look round our display of memorabilia.

DfE School Rebuild Programme Progress Update:

As you are aware, St. Joseph's Catholic Infant and Junior Schools, Birtley, were selected as part of the DfE School Rebuild Programme in 2022. I am pleased to inform you that good progress has been made, and we have successfully completed the feasibility stage of the Department for Education's building programme.

We are now moving forward to the next phase, which involves the appointment of a contractor to deliver the design development and rebuild works. This marks a significant milestone, as it will bring our two schools together on a single site, creating a unified, modern learning environment for our pupils and staff, with excellent facilities. Further updates will be shared as the procurement process progresses.

Staffing:

We send sincere congratulations to Miss Tiplady, who was married during the Christmas holiday. She will now be known as Mrs Fishwick. I know you will join us in wishing her every happiness for the forthcoming years ahead.

PE Timetable:

Just a reminder that PE days for this half term are as follows:

PE Timetable	Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Monday		PE				PE	
Tuesday							
Wednesday			PE				PE
Thursday	NU Foundation	NU Foundation	NU Foundation	NU Foundation	NU Foundation		NU Foundation
Friday				Swimming	PE	PE	

Water Bottles:

May we politely request that children bring a water bottle to school each day, containing healthy plain water only - no flavoured water, juice or fizzy drinks please. Even in the colder weather, children often return thirsty, from an energetic break time or PE lesson, so drinking water is very important, to ensure that they remain hydrated throughout the day, therefore aiding their concentration in the classroom learning environment.

School Meal & Wraparound Care Payments:

Please be reminded that your child's school meal and wraparound care accounts should be in credit, at all times. Please ensure that you 'top up' the necessary pots in Arbor in a timely manner, to avoid any negative balances going into each week. **We cannot allow credit for these provisions, moving forward.**

FREE Lunch for Every Child:

On **Thursday 15th January 2026**, BWCET will be offering a **FREE school meal** to all primary school children. This has been arranged in conjunction with Gateshead Council Catering and will be fully funded by Bishop Wilkinson

Catholic Education Trust. The theme will be "**Ristorante Pasta and Pizza**", providing a selection of both, accompanied by potato wedges, sweetcorn and salad. We hope that all children enjoy this day and take this opportunity to have a school meal with their friends – **it will be available for all children at St Joseph's, there is no need to pre-book!**

If you believe your child qualifies for free school meals and you haven't already done so, please apply here - [Free school meals - Gateshead Council](#). Whilst we would encourage all children to take up our school meal offering, your child does not actually need to be in receipt of a daily meal to attract the significant extra funding available for our schools. Even if you provide a packed lunch for your child, we urge you to please make the free meal application in order to benefit our school budgets.



**RISTORANTE
PASTA & PIZZA**

THURSDAY 15TH JANUARY

**SAVOUR OUR SELECTION OF PASTA, PIZZA,
POTATO WEDGES, SWEETCORN & SALAD BAR**

**Free Meal
for every
pupil!**

PLEASE GET IN TOUCH VIA THE SCHOOL OFFICE IF YOUR CHILD HAS AN ALLERGY OR SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENT. YOUR CATERING TEAM WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO DISCUSS HOW WE CAN PROVIDE TAILORED MENUS TO CATER FOR YOUR CHILD'S NEEDS.



Bishop Wilkinson
Catholic Education Trust

Dates for the Diary

(Please note that these dates are subject to change)

Tuesday 6th January – Children return to school
Monday 12th January – Centenary of SJIB Mass in Church – 10:00am
Monday 12th January – Year 5 Library visit – 13:30
Tuesday 13th January – Year 1 Celebration of the Word – 9:00am
Tuesday 13th January – Centenary Celebration for Parent/Carers – SJIB – 2:30pm
Thursday 15th January – Reception Class Multi-Sport Festival at Gateshead Stadium- 11.45am
Thursday 15th January – Free School Meal ‘Ristorante Pasta & Pizza’
Thursday 15th January – Bible stories with Derek Taylor SJJB – 13:00
Friday 16th January – Bible stories with Derek Taylor SJJB – 13:00
Monday 19th January – Year 6 Library visit – 9:00am
Tuesday 20th January – Year 6 Visit to Centre for life – 9:00am
Tuesday 20th January – Year 4 Celebration of the Word – 9:00am
Thursday 22nd January – Year 2 Indoor Cricket Festival at Gateshead Stadium –9:15am
Monday 26th January – Reception Library visit – 9:30am
Tuesday 27th January – Reception Celebration of the Word – 9:00am
Monday 02nd February – Year 1 Library visit – 9:00am
Tuesday 03rd February – Year 3 Celebration of the Word – 9:00am
Monday 09th February – Year 2 Library visit – 9:30am
Tuesday 10th February – Year 6 Celebration of the Word – 9:00am
Tuesday 17th February – Year 2 Celebration of the Word – 9:00am
Tuesday 17th February – Spring School Disco - 4:00-5:15pm SJIB & 5:15-6:30pm SJJB
Friday 20th February – Break up for Spring Half Term Holiday
Monday 02nd March – Children return to school
Monday 02nd March – Parents’ Evening
Tuesday 03rd March – Year 5 Celebration of the Word – 9:00am
Tuesday 03rd March – Year 4 Visit to Vindolanda – 8:30am
Wednesday 04th March – Parents’ Evening
Monday 09th March – SJIB & SJJB School Photos
Tuesday 10th March – Year 1 Celebration of the Word – 9:00am
Tuesday 17th March – Year 4 Celebration of the Word – 9:00am
Wednesday 18th March – SJIB Visit to Beamish – 9:30am
Tuesday 24th March – Mothers’ Day Reception Celebration of the Word-9:00am
Tuesday 31st March – Year 1 and Year 2 Palm Sunday Liturgy in Church - 9:30am
Wednesday 1st April – Year 4 and Year 5 Maundy Thursday Celebration of the Word Service – 9:30am
Thursday 02nd April – Last Day of Term

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