



St. Joseph's  
Catholic Infant  
& Junior Schools  
Birtley



*All are welcome in this place*

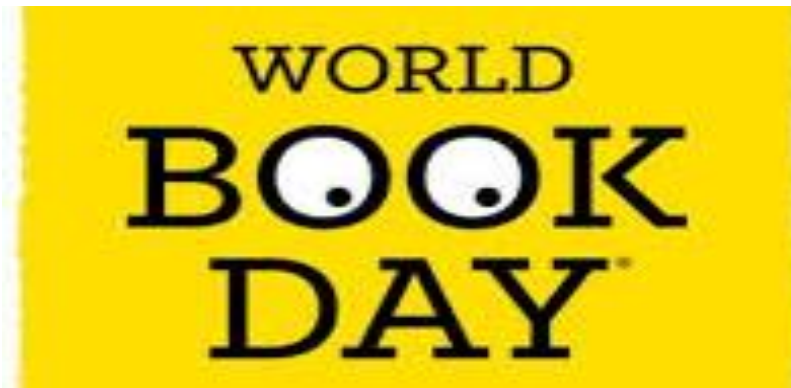
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**Friday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2026**

**Dear Parents & Carers,**

### **World Book Day**

This year, we will be having our World Book Day Celebration Lunch (*menu as shown*) on **Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March**, but children will dress-up as their favourite book character (*or wear non-uniform*) on **Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March**, due to PE taking place on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March. There will also be various World Book Day activities taking place across the two days. All children will receive a book token today to choose one free world book day 2026 book as listed on the voucher or £1 off a book in participating booksellers.



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### **Our Journey Through Lent**

This week we marked the beginning of the Season of Lent with the distribution of ashes in school, on Wednesday, and celebrated Mass this morning. This marks the beginning of this important time of reflection and preparation. Throughout the week, children have all made Lenten promises in school and Lent bags are being given to different children each day for them to bring home and share with you for the evening.



As in previous years, we will be taking part in Cafod's Big Lent Walk in school on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March. Further details of this will be shared nearer the time. Supporting Cafod in this way is an important part of our mission for charitable giving during Lent. We support this cause each Lent and stand in solidarity with our global neighbours.

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## Spring School Disco:



Our disco raised £851.27 – a huge thank you to all of your support – the children had a wonderful time and it was fantastic to see their outfits and dance moves. Their behaviour was impeccable and the hall was left clean and tidy.

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## Spring Term Parents' Evening Appointments:

'Guardian Consultations' for both schools will take place on **Monday 2nd March** and **Wednesday 4th March** and most appointments have now been booked via Arbor – please contact the school office if you need assistance with your booking.

We would like to take this opportunity to check the information we hold on Arbor, so on arrival at school for your appointment, Mrs Thornton (at the juniors) and Mrs Watson (at the infants), will ask you to check over a print out of this data, which you can amend as necessary, for us to update on your behalf. Many thanks in advance for your help with this important task.

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## LiveSimply Award:

Our 'Nature Park Grant' application for our infant school (*unfortunately, our junior school wasn't eligible to apply*) was successful! We will keep you updated with ongoing progress. Well done, Miss Sheavills!

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## Pause:

Gateshead Local Authority has launched **Pause**, a new free parenting app designed to support parents and carers of children aged 3–11. The app provides personalised advice, practical strategies and tailored ideas to help families support children's wellbeing, behaviour and development, promoting happy and confident children. Parents can download the app using the QR code on the flyer and enter the access code provided to gain free access to resources, skills and information.

**Pause**  
How to set up the Pause app

Pause can answer your parenting questions with personalised advice to help your 3-11 year olds grow into happy, confident children.

**First** download the app with this QR code

**Second** Enter the code **GA999** for free access

**Third** Get skills, info and tailored ideas to help you support your child

Gateshead Council

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## Times Table Rock Stars:

Last week's Times Table Rockstars head-to-head battles were full of speed, focus, and fantastic multiplication skills!

Year 3 vs Year 5 – a great battle, but Year 5 powered ahead to take the win

Year 4 vs Year 6 – an incredibly close contest, but Year 4 just edged it and claimed victory

A huge well done to all pupils who took part — the effort, determination, and rock-star attitude were amazing to see!



Next time....

Winners Battle: Year 5 vs Year 4

Runners-Up Battle: Year 3 vs Year 6

Who will come out on top? Keep up the hard work and keep practising those times tables!

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## School Meal & Wraparound Care Payments:

Please note that Breakfast Club and Wraparound Care must be booked by 7:00pm, the night before. As you will appreciate, we must carefully manage our staffing ratios and ensure that we have sufficient staff cover for the pupils attending.

May we also politely remind you, to '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.

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## Mass for the Holy Land – Saturday 25th April, at 11.00am, St Joseph's Church, Birtley

All are warmly invited to attend Mass for the Holy Land on Saturday 25th April at 11.00am at St Joseph's Church, Birtley, celebrated with members of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, Northumbrian Section.

The Order supports the Christian presence in the Holy Land, assisting local Christian communities through pastoral, educational and charitable work. At a time of great challenge and uncertainty for many in the region, this mission remains especially important. This Mass offers an opportunity for the parish to pray together for peace and to stand in solidarity with Christians in the Holy Land.

Members of the Order will be present and will take part in the Mass, including a formal liturgical procession. This will also be an opportunity to find out more about the work of the Order and its mission.

Parishioners, families and friends are very welcome, and all are encouraged to come along and join in prayer.

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## School Photographs:

School photographs will be taken on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> March, which is the day we return from the February half-term break. **On the day, please ensure that children come to school in full school uniform. If this is a PE day, we ask that pupils bring their PE kits to change into.**

If you wish for your child to have a photo taken with siblings who do not attend our school, and/or are split between the infant and junior schools, please attend either school at 8.30am prompt.

Class photographs will also be taken on this day, which all parents/carers are able to purchase, so **if you wish for your child not to be included in the group photo, please let us know.**

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## PE Days

Please note that from next half-term, our Year 5 cohort will be attending swimming lessons, each Friday, instead of Year 3. Year 3 will therefore have PE on Fridays instead of swimming. Please ensure pupils come into school in their PE kits on this day.

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

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This February half term, the Community Physical Activity team at Gateshead Council have organised a multi-Sports Activity Day at Birtley Leisure Centre as part of their Holiday programme!

The event is for 6–11 year olds and is free of charge. Lunch is also included.

Booking is essential by the link below or scanning the QR code:

[www.gateshead.gov.uk/feb26sports](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/feb26sports)



**Multi-Sports Activity Day**  
for ages 6 - 11  
**Birtley Leisure Centre**  
**Tuesday 24 February**  
**10am - 2pm**  
Our activity days are packed with a combination of sports, games and challenges to keep kids entertained and active.  
**FREE OF CHARGE** and includes lunch.  
Booking essential at:  
[www.gateshead.gov.uk/feb26sports](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/feb26sports)

Gateshead Council



### **Dates for the Diary**

***(Please note that these dates are subject to change)***

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> February – Break up for Spring Half Term Holiday  
Monday 02<sup>nd</sup> March – Children return to school  
Monday 02<sup>nd</sup> March – School Photos – **Rescheduled from 9<sup>th</sup> March by the photographer**  
Monday 02<sup>nd</sup> March – Parents' Evening  
Tuesday 03<sup>rd</sup> March – Year 5 Celebration of the Word – 9:00am  
Tuesday 03<sup>rd</sup> March – Year 4 Visit to Vindolanda – 9:00am  
Wednesday 04<sup>th</sup> March – Parents' Evening  
Thursday 05<sup>th</sup> March – World Book Day Celebration Lunch  
Friday 06<sup>th</sup> March – World Book Day - Dress up as your favourite book character / non-uniform  
Friday 06<sup>th</sup> March - Year 5 Highways Industry Careers Event at Newcastle College – 12:45  
Monday 09<sup>th</sup> March – Year 4 Library visit – 9:00am  
Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March – Year 1 Celebration of the Word – 9:00am  
Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March – Year 5 Singing Festival – 9:00am  
Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March – Year 5 Library visit – 9:00am  
Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March – Year 4 Celebration of the Word – 9:00am  
Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March – SJIB Visit to Beamish – 9:30am  
Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March – Big Lent Walk for Cafod  
Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March- Year 6 Library visit – 15:00  
Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March – Year 2 & Year 4 Dance festival- 13:00  
Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March – Mothers' Day Reception Celebration of the Word-9:00am  
Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March – Year 3 visit to Little White Farm- 9:15am  
Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> March – Year 1 and Year 2 Palm Sunday Liturgy in Church - 9:30am  
Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> April – Year 4 and Year 5 Maundy Thursday Celebration of the Word Service – 9:30am  
Thursday 02<sup>nd</sup> April – Last Day of Term

*Designated Safeguarding Leads for the school: Mrs K. Swaddle*

*Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads for the school:*

*Mrs R. Nutton, Mrs E. McConnell and Mrs A. Snaith and Mrs J. Smith.*

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