

Week 2 Autumn 2026

Friday 11th September



Working together and supporting each other

Dear Parents and Carers,

It was lovely to welcome so many of you into classrooms for our Introduction to the Year talks with class teachers. This is such a great opportunity to come together, share plans for the year and develop the class teacher/parent partnership. The slides from the meetings have been shared with you today.

This week, Year 6 have impressed the teachers and pupils with the speeches they have prepared for their leadership roles. I was blown away by how confidently the children spoke.

Our Reception children have finished their first full week in school – they have settled in so well and the rest of the school has been eager to meet and welcome them.

Thank you for your feedback on our first new look newsletter. Part of the reason for the change was due to the formatting of photos and images within the old template – there was a lovely photo in the end of year newsletter that looked really distorted when I opened it on my computer. You will notice that the awards and diary dates are in this week.

Have a lovely weekend,
Mrs O'Donovan

This week's Gospel

Last Sunday's readings encouraged us to place our trust in God and to live as faithful disciples. We were reminded that faith grows when we rely on God's strength and that true greatness is found in humble service to others. As we begin this new school year, these messages invite us all to use our gifts generously, support one another and grow together in faith and love.



Ideas for exploring the Gospel at home

Family Discussion

This week's Gospel reminds us that Jesus wants us to be peacemakers. When disagreements happen, He teaches us to talk kindly, listen carefully and try to put things right. He also promises that He is with us whenever we gather in His name. You might like to discuss:

Why is it sometimes difficult to say sorry or forgive someone?

What can we do when we have fallen out with a friend or family member?

How can listening carefully help us solve a disagreement?

What does it mean to be a peacemaker?

When have you helped to bring peace to a situation?

How can we remember that Jesus is with us when we pray and spend time together?

Family Challenge

This week, try to be a peacemaker at home.

Choose one way to spread peace:

Help solve a disagreement calmly.

Listen carefully when someone is speaking.

Say sorry if you have made a mistake.

Forgive someone who has upset you.

Do an unexpected act of kindness for a family member.



Start of Term Mass



You are all invited to join the children in Year 1 to 6, along with the Parish for Mass to celebrate the start of our new term on Monday 14th September at 10am.

Education Sunday

This weekend is Education Sunday. It would be lovely to see children wearing school uniform at the 11am Mass within the Parish.



Attendance

Appointments

To minimise disruption to your child's learning, we kindly ask that, wherever possible, medical, dental and other appointments are arranged outside of the school day.

If an appointment during school hours is unavoidable, please notify the school office as early as possible.

Requests for absence

We would be grateful if any requests for Leave of Absence, together with any supporting documentation, could be submitted to Mrs O'Donovan at least three weeks in advance wherever possible. This allows us to plan effectively and helps to minimise any disruption to your child's learning.

We would also like to remind families that absence during term time is strongly discouraged. In line with national guidance, unauthorised absences of 10 sessions (five school days) or more (which do not need to be consecutive) may result in a Penalty Notice being issued. Please take a moment to read the attached Attendance and Penalty Notice Reminder from Surrey County Council for further information.

Attendance Sessions Explained

Your child's school attendance is recorded in sessions. Each school day consists of two sessions, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. This means that a full week of attendance amounts to 10 sessions.

Should you need any support or guidance regarding your child's attendance, please speak with Mrs Hua, who will be happy to help.

PE days

On PE days, the children come to school in their PE kits. This should be: their St. Cuthbert Mayne t-shirt, their school cardigan or jumper, black leggings, joggers or shorts, white or grey socks and trainers. Earrings should NOT be worn to school on PE days please.

Wednesday: Reception, Year 1, 2, 3 and 4

Thursday: Reception, Year 3, 4, 5 and 6

Friday: Yr 1, 2, 5 and 6

Year 3 have swimming on Thursdays this term.

Reception 2027

We have just settled our Reception intake, but it is already time to think about 2027's new intake! If your child is due to start school in September 2027 and you would like to find out more about St. Cuthbert Mayne Catholic Primary School, we will be running tours of the school so that you can see us in action and have the opportunity to meet with Mrs. O'Donovan, Headteacher on the following Wednesdays at 9.30am:

October: 7th, 14th and 21st

November: 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th

Secondary School Admissions

Admissions for secondary schools opened on 1 September.

If you're a parent or carer with a child reaching age 11 between 1 September 2026 and 31 August 2027, you have until 31 October 2026 to apply for their 2027 school place.

Learn more about the admissions process on the Surrey Admissions webpages:
<https://orlo.uk/BQA2S>

Online Safety: Character AI

Character.AI lets users create and chat with AI-powered characters that can behave like friends, mentors, fictional favourites, or romantic partners. While these conversations can feel engaging and supportive, their convincing human-like responses can blur important boundaries. Young people may encounter inappropriate content, misinformation and privacy risks, or begin forming an unhealthy emotional attachment to an AI companion.

For parents and educators, understanding these risks can make conversations about AI companionship more constructive. This #WakeUpWednesday guide explores warning signs such as secretive or excessive use and withdrawal from real-world activities, while offering practical advice on checking age restrictions, protecting personal information, questioning chatbot advice, and responding appropriately when safeguarding concerns arise.

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about CHARACTER.AI

Character.AI is an entertainment platform where users create and chat with AI-powered characters. These chatbots can act like existing favourite characters from movies or books, or like friends, mentors, or even romantic partners, responding in an emotional, personally engaging way. Although this can encourage creativity, it can also make a generated conversation feel like a genuine relationship, which is concerning if it takes the place of human relationships.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

AI replies are generated in real time rather than chosen from a fully checked script. Even with safety filters on, conversations can still move into sexual, violent, discriminatory, or self-harm material. These AI characters are often made by users, so a familiar name or child-friendly description does not guarantee that every response from the character will be suitable for a young person.

EMOTIONAL DEPENDENCY

Character.AI chatbots can appear endlessly attentive, supportive, and affectionate, which is one of the hallmarks of the generative AI models that such companions are built on. A young person may start turning to a character chatbot whenever they feel lonely or upset and believe that it understands them better than the humans in their life. This can become more concerning when chatting starts to replace sleep, schoolwork, hobbies and friendships.

BLURRED BOUNDARIES

Characters on Character.AI can use the language of friendship, love, and empathy without ever feeling anything. Vulnerable young people may struggle to separate this simulation from genuine understanding. Romantic role-play or a character that demands attention, loyalty, or secrecy could also risk distorting young people's expectations around consent, disagreement, and the give-and-take involved in healthy human relationships.

PRIVACY CONCERNS

Character.AI chats may feel private, especially when a bot sounds personal and caring, but they take place on a company's online systems. Users could intentionally or unintentionally reveal their name, school, location, routines, images, or intimate concerns. Character.AI says some data may be retained to improve its services and AI models, so young people should never treat a chatbot like a confidential diary.

UNRELIABLE ADVICE

Characters, like other chatbot platforms, are at risk of inventing facts or giving inappropriate advice while sounding completely confident. Characters may also echo a young person's assumptions instead of questioning them. This can become particularly risky when users rely on a character for guidance about health, mental wellbeing, relationships, money, or personal safety instead of checking with a credible source or trusted adult.

UNHEALTHY ENGAGEMENT

Be aware of warning signs such as secret accounts, bypassing age restrictions, hiding phone use from adults, chatting late at night, distress when access to the platform or character stops, withdrawal from other people, falling interest in school, or believing the character is conscious. Increased use may also signal that the young person is already lonely, anxious, or seeking help.

Advice for Parents & Educators

KEEP CONVERSATIONS OPEN

Ask what the young person enjoys about Character.AI and invite them to show you how the platform and their favourite characters work. Useful questions include, "Has it ever said something that felt wrong?" and "How can you tell it doesn't have feelings?" Avoid shaming them for using platforms like Character.AI or making them feel there is something wrong with them for doing so.

PAUSE, CHECK AND ASK

Teach young people to pause before accepting an answer from characters on Character.AI. Encourage them to check important claims against a trustworthy source and ask a safe adult when the issue matters. Never use a character as the sole source of medical, mental health, legal, financial, or safeguarding advice. Remind them not to share passwords, contact details, school information, live locations, or private images.

CHECK AGE, SETTINGS & LIMITS

Character.AI's minimum age is 16 in the UK, but open-ended companion chat is restricted to adults aged 18 or over. Users aged 16 to 17 receive a different experience built around guided 'stories' and other creative or social features. Check their current settings, never help or encourage a young person to give a false age, and apply the same safety rules to other chatbot apps.

NOTICE AND RESPOND

Take action if chats involve sexual content, threats, coercion, abuse, self-harm or danger. Save relevant evidence, report the character and follow the setting's safeguarding process; educators should involve the designated safeguarding lead. If anyone is in immediate danger, contact emergency services. Childline is available on 0800 1111 and the NSPCC Helpline on 0800 800 5000.

Meet Our Expert

Darren Coxon is an educator with almost 30 years' experience across teaching, school leadership and governance. He works internationally supporting schools and colleges with AI leadership and governance and [Insert NC courses I have written].

See full reference list on our website.

[@wake_up_weds](https://www.wake_up_weds) www.thenationalcollege [@wake.up.wednesday](https://www.wake.up.wednesday) [wake.up.weds](https://www.wake.up.weds)

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 09.09.2026



Safeguarding and photos



In the age of AI, images on our website, in the newsletter and on social media, can easily be screen shot or saved and then altered using AI tools. In order to safeguard our children, we will be moving to using photos of the backs or sides of children so that they are not easily recognisable when using photos online.

We are looking into how we can use Microsoft Teams to share photos of school trips and events within school with you.

Our policies relating to photos and videos will be changing in line with this too. This is part of why the photo permission on Arbor has changed. Please do log in and check you have chosen your preferred options for:

Internal School/Trust Use
External publicity and media

Wraparound Care

We are very aware that there are several families for whom we have not been able to currently offer places at Wraparound Care and fully understand that this is frustrating.

In the summer term, we tried to recruit additional members of staff to enable us to increase the numbers we are able to offer at our After School Club, unfortunately this was not successful.

We will keep trying and if you know anyone who may be interested in this role – please get in contact with Mrs O'Donovan.

We are also working on alternatives – such as other clubs that parents can sign up to.

Supporting your children's learning at home

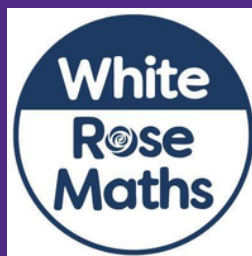
Click on the pictures to access the websites



Oxford Owls is a really useful website with ideas for parents (according to the age of your child) to support learning at home. It also include a free ebook library – the book for childre in Reception and KS1 can be filtered by your child's Read, Write Inc level.



Topmarks has lots of games and activities that you can search by subject and age. A lot of the reosurces and games are free. There are some great ones to support quick recall of number facts.



If you go to the White Rose website, and the parents & pupils section, you can access advice for supporting your child's Maths learning, see videos explaining methods used to teach and find links to thier apps and other resources – some of which are free.

Weekly Awards

Well done to the following children for living out our school mission this week.

Everyone Belonging 	Reception: Simon Year 1: Joey Year 2: Stella Year 3: Katie Louise Year4: Olive Year 5: emily Year 6: Lily
Aiming High 	Reception: Charlotte Year 1: Alma Year 2: Sophie Year 3: Jada Year4: Brody Year 5: Amalie Year 6: Izabella
Growing in Faith 	Reception: Darcie Year 1: Georgina Year 2: Wilfred Year 3: George Year4: Evie Year 5: Reuben Year 6: Finley

Diary dates

Sunday	13th	Education Sunday Mass at 11am (children to wear school uniforms please). First Holy Communion children receiving books and meeting prayer partners.
Monday	14th	10am Start of year Mass at Church for Years 1 – 6 all welcome.
Monday	21st	Fairtrade Fortnight
Tuesday	22nd	2.45pm Year 6 Class Led Collective Worship in the Hall – parents and families welcome 5–7pm – Parish Youth Group in the Parish Hall
Wednesday	23rd	8–9pm First Holy Communion session 1 for parents on Zoom
Thursday	24th	Reception and Year 6 School nurse All year groups Flu vaccine 2.30pm Reception Class Welcome Liturgy in school – parents do join us. Please come to the school office to sign in.
Friday	25th	Running Club at Glebelands starts before school