

St Paul's Catholic Primary School Newsletter



Friday 11th September 2026

'Our school is a place of learning, a place of love'

Dear Parents and Carers,

A warm welcome back to the start of this new academic year! It already feels like we have been back a few weeks as the children have settled in so quickly to new routines and in their new classrooms. Over the past week I have been popping into classrooms and have been really impressed at how focused the children have been. Last week, as part of our first few PSHE sessions with the children in class, we have launched our new behaviour curriculum, which focuses on explicitly teaching children the behaviours, attitudes and social skills they need to thrive, rooted in our ST PAULS values of; Sharing, Teamwork, Politeness, Always trying our best, Understanding, Learning and Spirituality. The curriculum aims to create a culture of exceptionally good behaviour, help children take responsibility for their choices, and ensure that every member of our school community is treated with kindness and respect.

Earlier on in the week, it was lovely to see so many parents attend our class curriculum welcome meetings for children in year 1 to year 6. Over the next few days, the class teachers will be sharing the content of the meetings on their class webpages and on seesaw.

Finally, next week the children will be electing their new school council representative. If you child would like to stand for school council, please support them in writing their manifesto to bring in on Monday and share with their peers.

Wishing you a lovely weekend
God bless,
Mrs Worton-Geer
Executive Headteacher



Autumn Term Dates 2026

September 2026	
Week commencing 14th September 2026	Morning booster sessions to start (letters to be sent to children who are invited to attend) Clubs to start (school led)
Monday 14th September 2026	Year 6 Chaplaincy Team welcome service (in school for children) and retreat afternoon
Tuesday 15th September 2026	International Day of Democracy and School Council voting day (in school for children)
Tuesday 15th September 2026	2:45pm – year 4 Cuffley residential trip meeting for parents
Wednesday 16th September 2026	Year 6 Crucial Crew trip
Friday 18th September 2026	Youth Mental Health Day
Monday 21st September 2026	St Matthew House Feast Day – celebrations for St Matthew house led by House Captains in school
Monday 21st September 2026	10:30am Start of Year Mass – parents/carers invited
Tuesday 22nd September 2026	2:40pm – Parents phonics session (EYFS and KS1 parents invited)
Wednesday 23rd September 2026	2:40pm EYFS buddies' welcome assembly – parents/carers invited year 6 and reception class
Week Commencing 28th September 2026	SEN child centered planning meetings with class teachers and parents (parents of SEN children will be sent a day/time to attend)
Tuesday 29th September 2026	2:40pm – Reading afternoon with parents/ carer in school

Reminders

OPAL

OPAL is in full swing at lunchtime. Please ensure your child has a named pair of wellies in school and brings a coat to school daily with a hood. You may want to provide spare socks for your child. Children go out come rain or shine! If you have any toys/bikes/donations, please bring these to the school office. Thank you.

Communication

From September we will be using Seesaw for our class-based communication for year 1 to year 6. In EYFS we will be using tapestry. Whole school communication will continue to be sent by Arbor. We will not be using Marvellous Me. By reducing the number of apps that we use, we hope this supports in streamlining communication. All our staff are here to support our community at all times. Please ensure that all communication with staff is respectful and courteous. We are always happy to listen and work together positively to resolve them. Further support can be found on our website in our contact us and policy section

Punctuality

Just a reminder that doors close at 8:45am for registration. After this time, children need to be signed in via the office and are marked as late.

Term Dates 2026-2027

Our dates for 2026-2027 are now on our website [St Paul's Catholic Primary School - Term Dates](#)

More news and information...

Online Safety

Please find an online safety guide below. further support can be found via our website [St Paul's Catholic Primary School - Online Safety](#)

Spotlight

Year 3

What a better way to record our experiences than a diary entry? Year 3 have been learning about five key features of a diary entry using The Stone Age Boy book in English. They have really enjoyed the character and plot of the story.

Year 5

Year 5 have had a busy week enjoying the biographical book *Hidden Figures* in English, creating timelines in History, and writing thoughtful letters to our favourite bands and artists about caring for our planet and becoming more sustainable.

Here is a list of helpful sites that you may be interested in.

- [CEOP Online Safety](#)
- [Net Aware](#) - find out about the games your child is playing online
- [National Literacy Trust](#) - ideas for helping your child's literacy
- [Think! Road Safety](#) - Road Safety information site
- [Barnados](#)
- [ChildLine](#)
- [Rainbow Trust](#) - provides support for children with a life threatening or terminal illness
- [NSPCC](#)
- [NHS Oral Health Advice](#) - oral health and tooth brushing
- [Catholic Church in England and Wales - Catholic Bishops' Conference \(cbcew.org.uk\)](#) - Catholic Bishops website

A PRAYER FOR GOD'S CREATION

Lord of life and giver of hope,
we pledge ourselves to care for creation,
to reduce our waste, to live sustainably,
and to value the rich diversity of life.
May your wisdom guide us,
that life in all its forms may flourish,
and we may be faithful in voicing creation's praise.
May the commitment we have made this day
be matched by our faithful living.
Amen

Our Parish Church – St Paul's Mass times

Saturday – 5pm

Sunday – 9am and 11am

<https://parish.rodow.org.uk/cheshunt/>



Website: [St Paul's Catholic Primary School - Home](#)

Contact:
01992 635060



Email address:
admin@stpauls373.herts.sch.uk



In today's digitally connected world, children and adults are constantly presented with new ways to engage, react and contribute. We're sociable beings; it's a natural human instinct, especially amongst younger audiences, to want to belong and join in. Viral Challenges (as they're often known) draw on these emotions and, as the name suggests, spread and gather pace very rapidly. New challenges are constantly emerging and evolving. They're often completely innocent, raising awareness of worthy causes or simply providing amusement. However, they can have much more sinister undertones, putting children at risk of physical harm or, in extreme cases, fatal injury.



What parents need to know about ONLINE CHALLENGES

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

As well as having the potential to cause actual physical harm, some challenges can be extremely upsetting for children. Many are created with the sole purpose of instilling fear in an individual in order to coerce them into doing things that could have a long-term emotional effect on them.

VARYING LEVELS OF RISK

As a parent or carer, it's important to take a balanced view and understand that not everything online has the potential to do harm. Mass-following and interaction can be a force for good. For example, the Ice Bucket Challenge, which swept the nation, set out to raise money and awareness of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). At its height, over 28 million people uploaded, commented on, or liked Ice Bucket Challenge related posts on Facebook. It's equally important to be aware though that online challenges often have a darker side. Malicious trends and challenges can expose children to dangerous or even life-threatening situations, so it's critical that parents and carers are aware of the latest risks and understand what steps to take to mitigate them.

'FOMO' - FEAR OF MISSING OUT

The 'Fear of Missing Out' (FOMO) is a strong emotional characteristic, particularly displayed in young people. The nature of viral challenges encourages children to explore and push boundaries. They tap into FOMO by feeding on a child's natural desire to join in, be accepted and share experiences with their friends and the wider online community. A recent study also found that FOMO is one of the greatest causes of Social Media addiction.



STRIVING FOR LIKES

In a major study by the Children's Commissioner, it was found that children as young as ten years old are reliant on 'Likes' for their sense of self-worth. A major concern around viral challenges is not knowing how far children will go to earn 'Likes'. Couple this growing appetite for acceptance with commonplace peer pressure and the potential problem is compounded. The result is that when young people are drawn into online challenges, because it is what all their friends are doing, saying 'no' can seem like a very hard thing to do.

"The coolest person at school will start a trend and then everyone copies her"
Merran, 12, Year 7

"If I got 150 likes, I'd be like that's pretty cool it means they like you"
Aaron, 11, Year 7



National Online Safety®



Top Tips for Parents



COMMUNICATION & MONITORING

It's important to talk to your child regularly and monitor their online activities. Encouraging honesty and openness, will give you a much clearer viewpoint of how your child is interacting online and what concerns they have. Create an atmosphere of trust. Ensure they feel they can confide in you or another trusted adult regarding anything they may have seen or experienced online that's upset them.

THINK BEFORE ACTING

As with most concerns in life, let common sense prevail when it comes to Viral Challenges. Young people need the freedom and space to explore and going in all guns blazing may well be counter-effective. Address the importance of safety and wellbeing, both online and offline, by getting the facts and understanding the risks. Start a discussion about the Online Challenges that may have captured your child's interest, gauge their likely involvement and explain the importance of thinking and acting independently when it comes to participating.

SETTING UP EFFECTIVE PARENTAL CONTROLS

As with all online activity, ensuring you have effective parental controls set up on all devices will help filter and restrict the dangerous or inappropriate content you don't wish your child to access. Additional measures for protecting your child include checking the privacy settings on your child's devices, monitoring their friends list, ensuring their personal information is safe and secure and keeping a watchful eye on the content they're sharing.

REPORTING & BLOCKING

Parental controls can only go so far in blocking potentially harmful content. A rise in the decoding of social media algorithms, has led to age inappropriate content increasingly appearing on platforms and apps used by children. Where possible, you should regularly monitor what your child sees online and flag/report any content which is inappropriate or dangerous. You should take the time to talk to your child, define what you consider to be appropriate content and show them how to report and block users/accounts themselves.

VALIDATE SOURCES

Not everything is as it seems. Some people create fake content that's designed to 'shock' in order to encourage rapid sharing. If your child has seen something online that has triggered concern you should encourage them to, check its origin, verify that it came from a credible source and check the comments made for any clues to its validity.

FACING REALITY

Trends and Viral Challenges can be tempting for children to take part in; no matter how dangerous or scary they may seem. As a parent or carer it can be difficult to keep pace with the very latest Online Challenges emerging. In recent months these have included potentially dangerous crazes, including the 'Bird Box' challenge, which was inspired by Netflix's popular film and encourages followers to upload videos of themselves attempting everyday tasks while blindfolded. The best advice is to keep talking to your child. Show that your taking an interest and not just prying. Ensure your child knows they don't have to get involved and if they're unsure, let them know you're there to talk before they consider participating. Children often need reassurance that not everything they see online is real. If your child has viewed distressing or frightening content it's important to talk to them about their experience, support them and, if required, help them find additional support.

SOURCES:

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/fake-news-twitter-spreads-further-faster-real-stories-rtnews-political-a8247401.html> | <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2209452/Teen-dies-copying-pass-game-time-YouTube.html> | <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6307331/Boy-11-dies-YouTube-choking-challenge-mother-warns-parents-son-strangled-himself.html> | Children's Commissioner Life in 'Likes' report - RSPH - Status of mind report | <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-2901707> | <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-wellbeing/fear-of-missing-out-fomo-one-of-greatest-causes-of-social-media-addiction-study-finds-36975296.html> | <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/children-as-young-as-eight-addicted-to-social-media-likes/>