

ENGLISH MARTYRS' CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



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NEWSLETTER

Friday 13th February 2026

Dear parents and carers

This final week of Spring Term 1 was such an exciting one for our children in so many ways. All our children have been focusing on the importance of mental health as part of **Children's Mental Health week**. We also learned about staying safe online; on Tuesday, the whole school marked **Safer Internet Day**.



On Tuesday Year 1 visited the **Horniman Museum** where they took part in different Chinese New Year activities such as role playing the story of the Nian, playing instruments, and using the chopsticks.

On Wednesday our Year 6 pupils left for their **Residential trip to Grosvenor Hall** in Ashford. It was an exciting adventure for all which included among other things, activities such as Laser quest, ZipWire challenge, group games and much more. (See more images about of some of the activities on page 3 of this newsletter).

We now look forward to a short break next week and we'll then be back in school on **Monday 23rd February**.

Thank you and have a good half term break.

Wednesday of next week is

ASH WEDNESDAY

On **Wednesday 18th February** we begin the **season of Lent**.

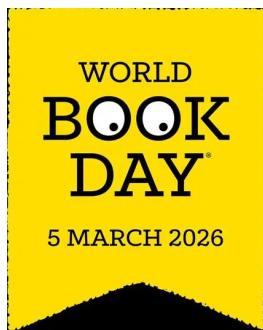
This is a time of repentance and renewal.



We will not be in school next week but there will be **Ash Wednesday masses** in church in the morning and evening families can attend to mark the beginning of Lent.

WORSHIP TOGETHER - ASPIRE TOGETHER - EXCEL TOGETHER





WORLD BOOK DAY

We will be celebrating
World Book Day 2026 on

Thursday 5th March

One of the activities we are planning is a
Character Competition.

Children are to dress up as their favourite
book character and to be in the chance of
winning a prize.

Look out for up coming events soon.

ONLINE SAFETY

Nowadays our children are exposed to a number of **social media** platforms that are not appropriate for their age.

One of these apps is **WHATSAPP**. Have a look at page 6 of this newsletter to find out more about how to make sure we are all using social media in a safe way.



Please make sure you always monitor what your children are accessing on laptops or mobile phones in order to

ATTENDANCE and PUNCTUALITY

We are very proud of our high percentages of our pupils' school attendance over these last few years. However, parents are reminded that **no holidays or travel should be booked during term time** and that all children arrive by no later than **8.45 am** each morning.



Year 6 SATs Revision

Vocabulary Ninja will be uploading **weekly support videos** on their **YouTube channel** for the next 16 weeks!

Each video will cover important topics that are likely to come up in the SATs tests.

Please encourage your child to watch these videos to support their revision.

<https://www.youtube.com/@vocabularyninja>

Every week our Mid-day meals supervisors award stars to pupils who show our school values during lunchtime breaks.

The following are the names of our Star children for this week.



Nursery:
Aslan, Amaya

Reception:
Pamileri, Joshua

Year 1:
Nah'tian, Makbel

Year 2:
Dream'rae, Kane

Year 3:
Nevaeh, Juan Pablo

Year 4:
Harli, Destiny

Year 5:
Kyla, Jana

Year 6:
Akeem, Deborah



FROM AROUND THE SCHOOL THIS WEEK

CLASS 5T

This week, Class 5T have been reading the book **Anne Frank**. We have learnt about the **adversities** that Anne and her family had to endure during **World War Two**. This has deepened our understanding of the different genres of writing



that can come from the experiences of Anne's life. Furthermore, we have **written letters** as Anne's friend, a **newspaper report** and an **obituary**. This has helped us to show off our skills using **relative clauses, parenthesis (for extra information) and noun phrases**.



In RE, for this term we have been looking at **'Inspirational People'**. For **Edith Stein, the Beatitude**, 'Blessed the pure in heart for they will see God.' (Matthew 5:8) has given us the opportunity to look at our own lives, and how we ourselves can live that Beatitude.

YEAR 6 RESIDENTIAL TRIP

All our Year 6 children will remember these last three days for a very long time! They have been away since Wednesday taking part in a range of activities at Grosvenor Hall centre near Ashford, Kent. Below are some images of activities they have been taking part in including climbing and abseiling, Zipwire and other group games.



Mr Field's fundraiser for The Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD)

Mr Field will be running the London Marathon in April 2026 to raise money for CAFOD. Please use the link below if you would like to donate towards this great cause.

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/john-field-2>



After taking on the Great North Run for the last two years, I am excited to share that I will be taking on the London Marathon team 2026 by running in the marathon on April 26, 2026. I will be running in support of the wonderful work of CAFOD.

Through my 11 years as a teacher at South London Catholic Primary School in Southwark and 27 years as an Altar Server (and now MC) at St George's Cathedral in Southwark, I have learnt more and more about the wonderful work CAFOD do.

CAFOD is an international development charity dedicated to helping people affected by poverty, climate change, conflict, and injustice around the world. Their work is vital, as they collaborate with local experts within communities to create real, lasting change.

For instance, in Bolivia, one of the poorest countries in South America, CAFOD partners with organizations to ensure that 'the most disadvantaged people have the skills and knowledge to propose and implement strategies to change their lives and communicate their needs to decision-makers.' In Bangladesh, they have provided essential support for Rohingya refugees by offering shelter, water and sanitation services, as well as nutrition and education for children.

Donations made on my page will be sent directly to CAFOD in a fast and secure way. My target is £3,000, any donations and sharing of this would be great.

A LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION

This week we received a letter about something that everyone at English Martyrs' school ought to be proud of.

The Secretary of State for Education Bridget Phillipson wrote to us to congratulate us for the fantastic results achieved at the end of the last school year, particularly by disadvantaged children. We thank all school staff for their hard work in supporting our children in so many ways. Thank you also to all parents for their support and for working with the school to enable all our children to continue to make good or better progress.

A big thank you naturally goes to all pupils who show how keen they are on their learning and want to continue to learn more and excel as they move from one year to the next at English Martyrs' school.

A message from Bridget Phillipson



Dear John,

Congratulations to you and your team on the excellent outcomes the disadvantaged pupils at English Martyrs' Roman Catholic Primary School achieved at the end of the 2024/25 academic year. Your school's performance places it among the very best nationally, and this is a significant achievement.

This success reflects the dedication of your staff and the hard work of your pupils. It shows what can be achieved when ambition and commitment come together. Thank you for everything you do to give children the best possible opportunities to succeed.

Your school's achievements demonstrate what is possible, and I hope you will continue to share your experience and best practice with others. Even the strongest schools can go further.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about WHATSSAPP

...MSG ME...

WHAT ARE
THE RISKS?

EVOLVING SCAMS

WhatsApp's popularity makes it a lucrative hunting ground for scammers. Recent examples include posing as the target's child, requesting a money transfer because of a spurious 'emergency'. Plus a scam where fraudsters trigger a verification message by attempting to log in to your account, then (posing as WhatsApp) call or text to ask you to repeat the code back to them, giving them access.

CONTACT FROM STRANGERS

To start a chat, someone only needs the mobile number of the WhatsApp user that they want to message. If your child has ever given their number out to someone they don't know, that person could then contact them via WhatsApp. It's also possible that your child might be added to a group chat (by one of their friends, for example) containing other people that they don't know.

FAKE NEWS

WhatsApp's connectivity and ease of use allows news to be shared rapidly – whether it's true or not. To combat the spread of misinformation, messages forwarded more than five times on the app now display a "Forwarded many times" label and a double arrow icon. This makes users aware that the message they've just received is far from an original – and might not be entirely factual, either.

NEWS

ONLINE

'VIEW ONCE' CONTENT

The facility to send images or messages that can only be viewed once has led to some WhatsApp users sharing inappropriate images or abusive texts, knowing that the recipient can't re-open them later to use as evidence of misconduct. People used to be able to screenshot this 'disappearing' content – but a recently added WhatsApp feature now blocks this, citing increased privacy.

CHAT LOCK

Another new option allows users to store certain messages or chats in a separate 'locked chats' folder, saved behind a passcode, fingerprint or face ID authentication. The risk here is that this function creates the potential for young people to hide conversations and content that they suspect their parents wouldn't approve of (such as age-inappropriate material).

VISIBLE LOCATION

WhatsApp's 'live location' feature lets users share their current whereabouts, which can be helpful for friends meeting up or parents checking that their child's safely on the way home, for example. However, anyone in your child's contacts list or in a mutual group chat can also track their location – potentially letting strangers identify a child's home address or journeys that they make regularly.

Advice for Parents & Carers

...TYPING...

EMPHASISE CAUTION

Encourage your child to treat unexpected messages with caution: get them to consider, for example, whether the message sounds like something a friend or relative would really send them. Make sure they know never to share personal details over WhatsApp, and to be wary of clicking on any links in messages. Setting up two-step verification adds a further layer of protection to their WhatsApp account.

ADJUST THE SETTINGS

It's wise to change your child's WhatsApp settings (go to 'Privacy', then 'Groups') to specify which of their contacts can add them to group chats without needing approval: you can give permission to 'My Contacts' or 'My Contacts Except ...'. Additionally, if your child needs to use 'live location', emphasise that they should enable this function for only as long as they need – and then turn it off.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Suttorp is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools; she has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



THINKING BEFORE SHARING

Help your child to understand why it's important to stop and think before posting or forwarding something on WhatsApp. It's easy – and all too common – for content to then be shared more widely (even publicly on social media). Encourage your child to consider how an ill-judged message might damage their reputation or upset a friend who sent something to them in confidence.

CHAT ABOUT PRIVACY

Some parents like to check in with their child about how they're using WhatsApp, explaining that it will help to keep them safe. If you spot a 'Locked Chats' folder, you might want to talk about the sort of chats that are in there, who they're with and why your child wants to keep them hidden. Also, if your child has sent any 'view once' content, you could discuss their reasons for using this feature.

...HEY
OSCAR...

National
Online
Safety®
#WakeUpWednesday

Source: <https://blog.whatsapp.com/on-open-letter/> | <https://faq.whatsapp.com/10704889547332/> | <https://faq.whatsapp.com/10704889547332/en/help/loc.html> | <https://www.whatsapp.com/secure/whatsapp.html> | <https://blog.whatsapp.com/chat-lock-making-your-most-important-conversations-secure-and-private> | <https://www.our.com/learn/whatsapp-home>



FEBRUARY HALF-TERM HOLIDAY CAMP



The Lions Centre, Bolina Rd, SE16 3LD



10am-3pm



Monday 16th February - Friday 20th February



£12 per day or £50 for five days



Age 5-13 year-olds



Contact: Epoole@millwallcommunity.org.uk
or telephone: 07958026876 for more information



Football, Multi-Sports and Arts & Crafts Camp



Register here or visit:
<https://tinyurl.com/3uz98zrh>



MCT
40 years



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GROUP

