

St Columba's

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2026

Thrive

The Thrive Room – Supporting wellbeing at St Columba's

At our school, we are fortunate to have a dedicated Thrive Room – a calm, welcoming space used for workshops, small group sessions and targeted interventions.

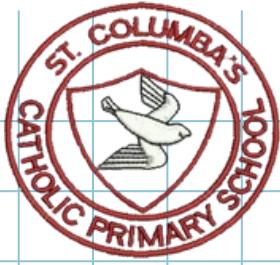
The Thrive Room has been in use since September and has quickly become a valued space for many of our children. It supports the 'Thrive Approach', a whole-school therapeutic programme designed to develop children's social and emotional skills alongside their mental health and wellbeing.

As part of this approach, we use Thrive Online to screen classes, which helps us plan and deliver an effective social and emotional curriculum.

In some cases, parents and carers may receive a consent letter for an individual Thrive Online screening. This allows us to create a bespoke action plan, which may involve one-to-one or small group support tailored to a child's specific needs.

The Thrive Approach helps children build confidence, manage emotions and develop positive relationships, enabling them to feel ready to learn.





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Upcoming dates

Monday 2nd Feb- Y6 SATS meeting for parents - 3.20pm

W/B 9th Feb - Children's Mental Health Week

Wednesday 11th Feb- Year 2 class assembly- 2pm

Thursday 12th Feb- Wear red for the
British Heart Foundation
£1 donation



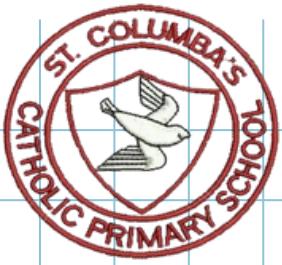
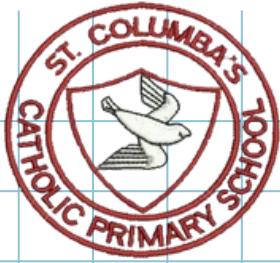
Friday 13th Feb - Y6 Imperial War Museum trip - school uniform

Friday 13th Feb - Year 3 STEM trip- school uniform

Friday 13th Feb - Finish for half term - 3/3.10pm

Monday 23rd Feb - School re-opens after half term

W/B 23rd Feb - Parents' evening will take place throughout this week



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Attendance

Every Day Counts, Every Child Matters

Our whole school attendance currently sits at **90%**. Although this may sound high, it is well below expectations and shows **too many children are missing significant amounts of school**.

90% attendance equates to missing 4 weeks of school per academic year. Even small amounts of time off add up and can have a serious impact on learning, friendships and confidence.

There are two types of absence:

Authorised absence

This is when the school has agreed that the reason for absence is unavoidable.

Examples include:

Illness (when a child is genuinely too unwell to attend).

Medical or dental appointments (where possible, these should be arranged outside school hours).

Exceptional circumstances agreed in advance with the school.

Unauthorised absence

This is when an absence is not approved by the school.

Examples include:

Holidays taken during term time.

Staying at home due to minor illnesses or tiredness.

Absence without a valid reason.

Late arrival after the register has closed.

What unauthorised absence can lead to...

Where attendance falls below expectations, we have a legal duty to take action. This may include:

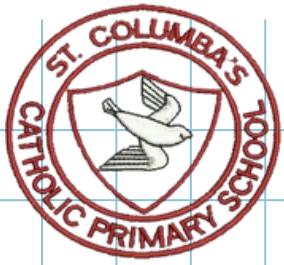
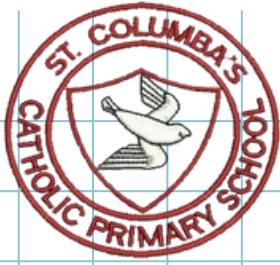
Attendance meetings with parents/carers

Attendance support plans

Referrals to the local authority attendance service

Fixed Penalty Notices (fines) for unauthorised holiday **or** persistent absence

Legal action (only in more serious cases)



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Attendance

Support and celebrate!

At our school, attendance is always addressed through a **support-first approach**.

We recognise that every families circumstances are different.

If we invite you to a meeting about your child's attendance, this is an opportunity to:

- Share any concerns or challenges your family may be experiencing
- Help us understand what may be affecting your child's attendance
- Work together to identify support and next steps

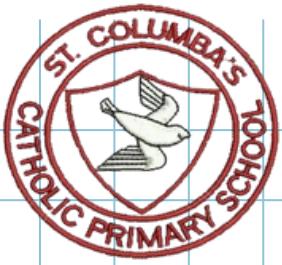
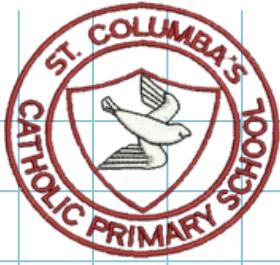
We are committed to supporting families and addressing attendance concerns early. **Only when this support does not result in improved attendance, or when engagement is limited, do we consider escalation.**

Alongside our support first approach, we are proud to **celebrate our attendance achievements**.

Last half term, **year 1** were the class with the most 'attendance points'. To recognise their fantastic commitment to being in school every day, they enjoyed a **Domino's Pizza Party** as a special treat.

Each half term brings a fresh start! The attendance leader board is wiped clean, and every class has the chance to be our next attendance winner.





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Parent/carer reminder

Arriving Late or Leaving Early

We have seen an increase in the number of children arriving late to school or being collected early.

Please be reminded that children should only be collected early if:

- They have a medical or dental appointment (evidence will be required)
- Early collection has been agreed in advance

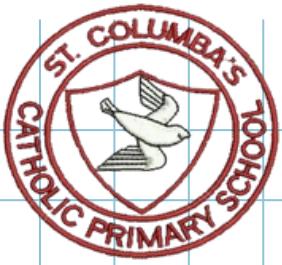
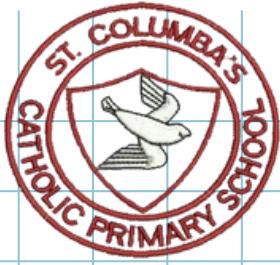
Arriving late or leaving early can be disruptive to learning and has a negative impact on children's progress and routines. We appreciate your support in ensuring children attend school for the full day whenever possible.

Holy Communions

Year 4 Holy Communion will take place on

Thursday 21st May.

Further details are to follow.



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Religious Education

The Epiphany

On Friday 9th January, the celebration of the Epiphany brought together two school communities (St Columba and St John Fisher) under one parish in a spirit of unity, faith, and hope. As we gathered as one, we were reminded of the meaning of the Epiphany- the revelation of Christ as light for all people- and how that light calls us to journey together, guided by faith and love.

This special occasion also marked the closing of the Jubilee Year of Hope, a year that invited us to reflect deeply on God's promises and to live as signs of hope in our world. Coming together as one parish community allowed us to give thanks for the blessings of the past year and to recognise the strength that comes from shared faith and partnership.

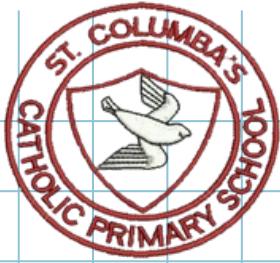
Pupils, staff, Fr Mike, governors, and parishioners celebrated as one community- one united in Christ. As we move forward together, the spirit of the Epiphany and the hope nurtured during the Jubilee Year will continue to guide us, encouraging us to walk together in faith, serve one another and shine God's light in all that we do.

Mini Vinnies

This month, our Mini Vinnies are promoting kindness within our community. They will be putting kindness posters up near our local shops. Next month, they will be promoting recycling.

Faith in Action

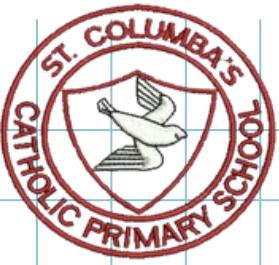
Our lovely Year 6s are going to take part in the Faith in Action Award this year. We are looking forward to seeing what creative things they do!



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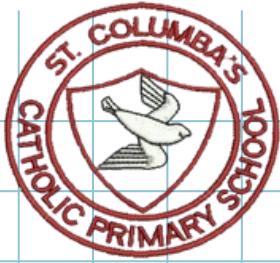
Healthy schools pledge

A huge thank you to the parents and carers who attended the pledge and continue to support healthy choices at home. Your involvement really does make a difference. Together, we are helping our children to develop positive, healthy habits for life ❤️

We are so excited to be taking part in this important initiative and to encourage everyone in our school community to make positive choices and lead healthy, active lifestyles.

This week we launched our Swap Station, where children with packed lunches have the opportunity to swap an item from their lunchbox for a healthier alternative. We have been so pleased to see so many children making positive choices and embracing these healthy changes.





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Inside our school days



Our talented girls' football team got through to the county finals and played with determination and resilience at LFC Academy



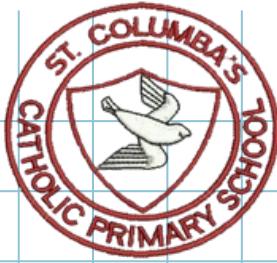
Some of our Year 5 and Year 6 pupils are taking part in the Beacon Project with Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service.



Thank you to Kieron from the LFC academy for delivering anti-discrimination workshops to our KS2 pupils.



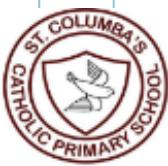
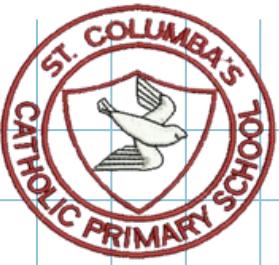
Year 3 and Year 4 took part in a storytelling workshop with Liverpool Empire.



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Online Safety Newsletter January 2026

Instagram Teen Accounts - update

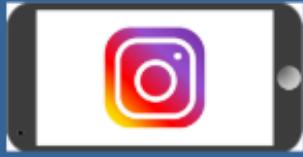
You must be over 13 years of age to set up an account. Instagram is used to post photos and videos as well as send direct messages, make voice/video calls, and send disappearing messages.

Teen accounts are automatically set up for users aged 13 – 17. Instagram have announced that teens will now see content similar to content that they would see in a PG-13 movie.

Instagram have also updated their policies around content to include "hiding or not recommending posts with strong language, certain risky stunts, and additional content that could encourage potentially harmful behaviors".

Finally, for parents who would like to apply more stringent settings, Instagram are also introducing a new, stricter setting called 'Limited Content.' This setting will mean your child is not able to see, leave, or receive comments under posts as well.

You can read about the updates here: <https://about.instagram.com/blog/announcements/instagram-teen-content-safety-pg-13>



Playing games online

Does your child play games online? We have outlined some risks that you should consider:

Chatting to strangers / risk of inappropriate language

Some games will allow communication via text chat, direct messages or chatting. Some games do offer the ability to switch communication off and/or the option to restrict bad language, so make sure settings appropriate to your child are applied. If your child is playing online with strangers, then you need to be aware that there is a risk of grooming. Some games do allow you to restrict communication to 'friends only,' however you would need to monitor that their online friends are real life friends. It can be difficult to moderate online chat so ensure your child knows how to block and report other players.



Cyberbullying

It can be very easy online for children to behave in a way that they would not if they were face to face. Talk to your child about how they speak to others online and encourage them to talk to people online with respect. Other forms of cyberbullying whilst playing games could be excluding others, criticising the ability of other players and ganging up on others.

In app purchases

Many games include the option to purchase additional items/ subscriptions so ensure you do not have payment cards saved or set up restrictions/ a password to approve purchases.

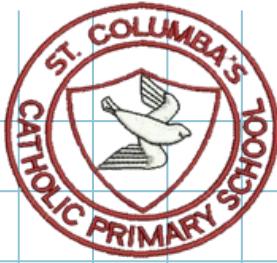
What can I do?

- **Set up parental controls** - as well as setting up appropriate parental controls through the game's settings, ensure you have set them up on the console/device your child is playing on.
- **Check age ratings** - before buying the game, check that your child is old enough to play it. All games will either have a PEGI rating or be rated by the App Store/Google Play.
- **Chat to your child regularly** about the risks above so that they are aware of what can happen online and remind them to always talk to you or a trusted adult if they have any concerns

Further information

CEOP provides further guidance and support regarding this topic:
<https://www.ceopeducation.co.uk/parents/articles/gaming/>

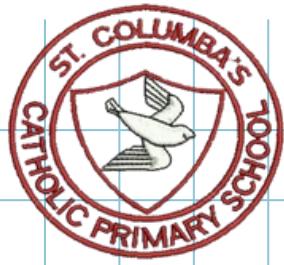




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Snapchat

Snapchat is a popular social media app used for messaging and sharing photos and videos. You must be 13+ to sign up. Users can send messages (saps) to others that are only seen for a set time, and users can also upload snaps to stories, which disappear after 24 hours.

Key Concerns

There are potential risks such as:

- the risk of your child viewing content that is not appropriate for their age.
- location sharing (via Snap Map).
- cyberbullying.
- contact from strangers.
- excessive screen time – children may have a fear of missing out (FOMO) as well as pressure to maintain "streaks".
- "disappearing" messages can lead to more risky behaviour and a "false sense of security." These messages could be screenshot or another device used to take a photo, so they're not actually deleted as the sender believes. The image could then be shared.
- in app purchases.



Parental Controls / Safety settings

Snapchat's Family Centre is a set of parental controls and includes tools such as allowing you to:

- see who your child is friends with.
- see who your child has sent messages (not the contents of conversations though), photos or videos to in the last week.
- view a list of group members for groups that your child has been active in.
- restrict content to limit access.
- report any accounts that you are concerned about.

You can learn more about Family Centre here:

<https://parents.snapchat.com/parental-controls?lang=en-GB>

If your child is using Snapchat, then make sure the appropriate privacy settings are set up, including who can see their location and who can contact them. Also ensure your child knows how to block and report other users if necessary:

<https://help.snapchat.com/hc/en-gb/articles/7012343074580-How-do-I-change-my-privacy-settings-on-Snapchat>

More information

For more detailed advice and information:

- <https://parentzone.org.uk/article/snapchat>
- <https://parents.snapchat.com/safeguards-for-teens>

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Family Smart Start

Family Smart Start is a free toolkit designed to help you and your child navigate the milestone of getting their first phone. The toolkit provides support on how to set up their new phone, how to talk to your child about digital safety and a template family agreement. Find out more here:

<https://familysmartstart.com/>

Cyber security

Cyber security is the process of protecting your information and data whilst online against scams and cyber-attacks. Cyber-attacks are the process of maliciously targeting individuals or organisations to disable networks or steal data for example.

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) have an area on their website with guidance to help protect you and your family. The guidance includes how to manage your digital footprint online, information about anti-virus software as well as top tips for staying online such as:

- Using a strong password
- Setting up 2step verification

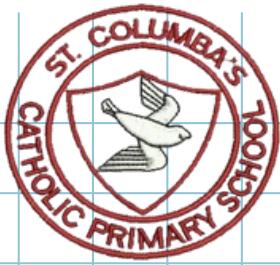
You can find the resources here:

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/advice-guidance/you-your-family>

The NCSC also provide advice on what you should do if you are the target of a scam or cyber-attack. Find out more here:

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/respond-recover/you>

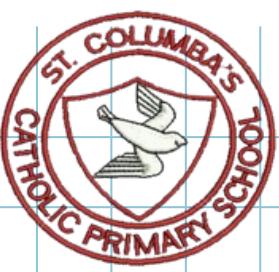
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<https://www.knowsleyclcs.org.uk/january-2026-primary/>



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February Holiday Club, St. Columba's Primary (Huyton)

Football, dance games, sports, indoor + outdoor activities!

Primary Age Children +

8am - 6pm

Ofsted Registered

Full Details Online

We accept tax-free
childcare payments!

raringstars.com
contact@raringstars.com

