

Our Lady and Saint George's Catholic Primary & Nursery School

Headteacher: Ms R McGlynn

Shernhall Street, Walthamstow, London E17 3EA



17th January 2025

Newsletter 9

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome back to the first newsletter of 2024. On behalf of the staff on both sites we would like to wish you a very happy 2025 and say a big thank you for all the gifts and cards received from you at Christmas. Your generosity is much appreciated.

Pupil Voice Commissioning Service

On Friday 10th January, children from our various pupil voice groups were celebrated with a special commissioning service at our Church. They all received certificates and pledged to serve God and others through their pupil voice roles. Congratulations to all our Mini Vinnies, Pupil Chaplains, PathFinders, Bible Stewards, Ambassadors for Christ and class RE Ambassadors. Special thanks to Father Michael and Mrs Rodrigues for leading and organising the Commissioning service.

TriGolf Competition

Today some Year 3 pupils were selected to participate in a TriGolf competition at Peter May Sports Centre. Pupils got the opportunity to learn and practise golf skills and compete alongside other local schools. Well done to everyone who participated.

Attendance/ Punctuality

Every week we will be awarding certificates to the class on each site with the highest attendance for the previous week. The winning classes will be awarded with special golden time or extra play on Friday afternoons. Our winners for the first week back were Year 2 Generosity who had an excellent 99.5% attendance and Year 4 Hope who had 96.3%.

Last week our whole school attendance was 92.5%. We are aiming for a whole school target of 96% which we hope to achieve this year.

Keeping safe online

There is a free guide at the end of the newsletter on what parents need to know about TikTok. It explores the potential online safety risks of TikTok, letting you know how to safeguard children and young people who use the platform. Please note that TikTok should only be used by children aged thirteen and above.

Remember if you see something you don't like or it makes you feel uncomfortable, tell a trusted adult or report it.

Free Badminton for Over 8s

The Waltham Forest Sport and Leisure Team have partnered with GLL and Feel-Good Accredited Club Black Arrows Badminton Club to launch a new Junior Badminton Programme aimed at boys and girls aged 8 to 17. These **FREE weekly sessions** will take place at Walthamstow Leisure Centre, 243 Markhouse Road, London, E17 8RN on Friday's between 5pm to 7pm from Friday 24th January to Friday 27th June 2025. For more information about the programme, please contact Feel.Good@walthamforest.gov.uk

Reflection

We enjoy getting outdoors in the spring and summer months, but today we can reflect that even in this cold and dark season, there is still beauty. We are reminded that every season of life holds its own beauty, even when things seem bare or dormant.

We must also reflect on how, at the start of each year, we often talk about doing a “new thing” or being a “new you”. That can be wonderful, but sometimes we focus so much on the “new” and what is to come, that we forget the beauty of the process itself. The ‘new’ is not just in the end result — it is happening all around us, even now. The trees show us this: the new when the buds appear in spring, the new in their full bloom in summer, the new when their leaves change in autumn, and the new when they stand bare in winter. Every season has its own form of renewal, and so does our journey with God. He is always at work, even when it is not as obvious.

We must remember to embrace the process and trust that every season of life—even the barren ones— are part of the beauty God is creating in us.

Stay and Pray

Every Monday after school we invite you to bring your child/children to the day chapel of Our Lady and St. George's Church to spend a while with Jesus, in Adoration. We spend time singing and praying together.

If you attend **the 8:30am Mass, on Sunday**, please bring your child/children to the choir area to sing along with the choir.

Prayer Room

This week's prayers were written by Heaven , Year 5 and Gift, Year 5 .

Dear God,

Thank you for the world you have given us,grant us your protection,peace and grace.

Amen

By Heaven

Dear God,

As the Pupil chaplains,Re Ambassadors,Minnie vinnies, Bible stewards and the Ambassadors for Christ have been commissioned,

may your blessings fall upon us and we will become your pupil voices

forever. We ask you that your blessings may stay with us forever and that you will keep us from any dangers that we are not aware of. We will stay safe in your hands. Amen

By Gift

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2024/2025

Diary Dates - January 2025

Tuesday 21st January

Year 6 trip to BFI Dig for Victory Day

Wednesday 22nd January

Year 2 trip to Wren 300, St Paul's

Thursday 23rd January

Parish Mass- Truth and Curiosity, 9.15am

Sunday 26th January

Family Mass 10.00am

Tuesday 28th January

Wisdom class assembly 2.15pm

Diary Dates- February 2025

Monday 3rd February

Year 2 & 5 Fire Brigade Workshop in school

Tuesday 4th February

Discernment class assembly 2.15pm

Thursday 6th February

Parish Mass Honesty & Generosity 9:15am

Tuesday 11th February

Resilience class assembly 2.15pm

Thursday 14th February

Parish Mass Hope & Vocation 9:15am

Friday 14th February

Last day of school - Half Term

Monday 24th February

Pupils return to school

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

TIKTOK



WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Adults tend to associate online videos with YouTube – but among teens, TikTok is king. The app provides a stream of short clips tailored to users' interests, based on what they've already watched. Around half of British children use TikTok, and while much of the content is benign, Ofcom considers it the app where youngsters "were most likely to encounter a potential harm".

AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

While TikTok's following feed only displays videos from familiar creators, For You is a collection based on a user's previously watched clips. Most of these videos will probably be inoffensive, but the app could potentially show something unsuitable. If children then engage with this content, more like it will follow. TikTok's guidelines prohibit the sharing of illegal or inappropriate content, but the huge number of uploads means that a small amount inevitably slips through.

BODY IMAGE AND DANGEROUS CHALLENGES

According to Ofcom, most online harms for teens are body image related for girls (promoting unhealthy eating, body shaming and so on) and dangerous stunts for boys. Both are prevalent on TikTok. One extreme example of the latter was the 'blackout' trend, which encouraged users to hold their breath until they passed out from a lack of oxygen. This led to two families filing lawsuits against TikTok over the tragic deaths of their children.

IN-APP SPENDING

TikTok is free, but users have the option to buy TikTok coins, which can be used to purchase gifts for content creators. Coin bundles range from £9.99 to an eye-watering £99; while that may not sound appealing, the app still generated £7.9 billion in user spending in 2023. TikTok's policy is that under-18s can't make in-app purchases, but it's possible to bypass this with a fake birth date.

CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

With more than 1.5 billion users globally, the potential for contact from strangers on TikTok is high – especially as accounts created by over-16s (or young people using a fake date of birth) are set to public by default. This means that not only is someone's profile visible to everyone else on the app, it also suggests their videos to others and enables anyone to download or comment on them.

MISINFORMATION AND RADICALISATION

Although the short videos on TikTok tend to be more frivolous than the longer ones on YouTube, clips can still influence impressionable minds in a negative way. Not only is there plenty of dangerous misinformation on TikTok, but Ofcom reports that nearly a third of 12 to 15-year-olds use TikTok as a news source – so you should be wary of misogynistic, racist or conspiracy-themed material shaping how they see the world.

ADDICTIVE DESIGN

With its constant stream of eye-catching videos, TikTok can be addictive to young brains. In 2024, UK children spent an average of 127 minutes per day on the app: that's twice as much as in 2020. Excessive use can interfere with young people's sleep patterns – often leading to irritability – and distract them from other, healthier activities. The instantly skippable nature of bite-size videos may also impact children's ability to maintain focus.

Advice for Parents & Educators

ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING

Family Pairing allows parents to link their TikTok account to their child's, and control settings remotely. Parents can then turn on Restricted Mode (reducing the chances of a child seeing inappropriate content), set screen-time limits, make accounts private and manage whether their child can send messages – and if they can, to whom. Children can't alter these settings without parental approval.

BLOCK IN-APP SPENDING

If a child is using an iPhone or Android device to access TikTok, you can alter their settings to prevent them from making in-app purchases. We'd recommend enabling this feature, as it can be quite easy for a young person to spend a significant amount of real money buying TikTok coins to unlock more features of the app – sometimes without even realising.

DISCUSS THE DANGERS

If a child wants to use TikTok and you're happy for them to do so, it's good practice to discuss the potential risks. Ensure that they don't share any identifying personal information, and that they know to talk to a trusted adult if they're worried by interactions on the app. With more teens using TikTok for news, it's also worth talking about misinformation and propaganda, and how to identify it.

READ THE SIGNS

If you're concerned that a child is spending too much time on TikTok, or that they've been emotionally affected by something they've seen, it's important to know how to spot the signs. Increased irritability and a lack of concentration are potential red flags, as is failing to complete homework or skipping meals. Remember, the parental controls are there for a reason, and it's never too late to introduce limits.

Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, TechRadar, Tom's Guide, The Evening Standard and The New Statesman.



Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/tiktok-2025>