



St Luke's C E First School

20th
December
2024

Dates for your Diary

January

Monday 6th – TED school closed to pupils

Tuesday 7th – First day back for the spring term!

Thursday 9th – Lion class first swimming

Week Beginning 20th – All classes to complete NSPCC's Speak Out, Stay Safe activities

Wednesday 22nd – Elephants Class Sporthall Athletics at Trinity High School

February

Wednesday 12th – Lions Adopt a Chef 2nd session

Friday 14th – Break up for Half Term

Monday 24th – School Re-opens for Spring 2



This week...

We have come to the end of the Autumn term and what a wonderful term it has been! At the end of a term, it is always lovely to reflect back on the highs and successes of the time we have spent in school – and there have been many! From school trips, visitors, performances, work with me sessions, swimming and lots, lots more – we have packed a lot into this first term! We are so proud of all of our delightful children for their hard work and efforts every day, and for the joy they bring to our school community! At this time of year, I would like to take the time and the opportunity to thank our dedicated and hard working staff team who do a fabulous job every day for the children. Thank you also to our parents/carers for your support for the school – it is really appreciated. I know the staff will want to join me in thanking you also for your very kind gifts, cards and goodwill messages – again, these are very much appreciated.

We wish you all a lovely Christmas break. I hope you all take the time to spend it with your friends and loved ones and that you find some time to relax!

We look forward to welcoming the children back to school on **Tuesday 7th January 2025**.

Attendance:

Our attendance to date is **94.9%**.

For the first time this academic year, our attendance has dropped below 95%. We are aware of winter germs and illnesses but we hope that we can turn this around in the spring term and get our overall attendance back up to above 95%.

The grid below shows this week's attendance for each class/whole school on the top row and the bottom row is the cumulative attendance for each class/whole school from 4.9.24 to 20.12.24.



Bears	Giraffes	Elephants	Tigers	Lions	Whole School
89.83%	89.0%	85.38%	92.14%	95.17%	90.39%
93.26%	94.15%	94.57%	97.03%	95.93%	94.9%

School Admissions

A reminder that if you are applying for a first or middle school place for September 2025, the deadline for applications is **15th January 2025**. You can apply here:

<https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/schools-education-and-learning/apply-school-place>

PTA Christmas Fair

Thank you to our PTA for organising and running our Christmas Fair last Friday, and thank you to all the parents/carers and family members who attended the event – we hope you enjoyed it! For our Christmas themed events, the PTA have raised almost £450 which will be spent on enrichment for the children here at school. I would like to thank the PTA for their hard work and commitment to the school over the past term. Due to their fundraising and hard work the children have had the opportunity to enjoy the pumpkin party disco and a cinema night. December is always a busy time and this year has been no different with the Santa breakfast, grotto experience and Christmas Fair. The PTA have also provided the children with Christmas crackers this week so they could celebrate our Christmas lunch in style!

A Fond Farewell

Today we say a very difficult goodbye to Mrs Cox as she leaves to start her retirement after over 30 years being associated with St Luke's. Mrs Cox first began coming to St Luke's when her children attended here and, since becoming a member of staff, has become an integral part of the team. I think I echo the thoughts of both parents and staff when I say we're not quite fully sure how we are going to cope without her knowledge and expertise in the school office, but we also want to say a huge 'congratulations' to her on her retirement and we wish her all the very best for an exciting future of holidays and time with her grandchildren.



As you will know from my recent letter, this term we also say a fond farewell to Mrs Cockram as she has made the difficult decision to not return to her post in the new year. We send our warmest wishes to Mrs Cockram and her family and we hope to see her back in school for a visit soon.

This week we have also said goodbye and happy retirement to Mrs Amin, who works for Cupcakes Catering serving our lunches. Mrs Amin has been coming to St Luke's for 5 years and she will be fondly missed by staff and children alike – but we wish her all the best in her retirement!

Christmas Experience

What a wonderful time we had on Tuesday at the Christmas Experience. Reverend Ruth and her team made us all feel so welcome, as always, and the children really enjoyed hearing about the Christmas story and getting their passports stamped!



Spring 1 Clubs

Our Spring 1 clubs start on Tuesday 7th January. If your child has been successful in gaining a place in one of our clubs, Mrs Cox will have notified you by Class Dojo message. If your child will be attending a sport club, we have also explained our uniform expectations. As a reminder:

Monday Running Clun KS2 – children to come to school wearing PE kit

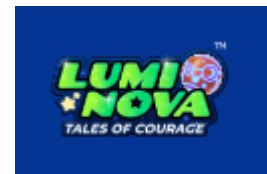
Tuesday Disney Shooting Stars Football – children to wear school uniform and bring trainers to change into

Thursday Dodgeball Years 2-4 – children to wear school uniform and bring trainers to change into



Lumi Nova – A reminder of the new free APP to support children (aged 7-12) with anxieties, fears and worries

Herefordshire and Worcestershire NHS have partnered with BFB Labs to offer children and young people in Herefordshire and Worcestershire free access to Lumi Nova from 1st October 2024.



Lumi Nova: Tales of Courage is a digital therapeutic mobile game supporting children with fears, worries and anxiety. Designed for children aged 7-12 years, Lumi Nova helps children to reflect on their feelings, build resilience and learn lifelong skills to self-manage their worries in a fun intergalactic adventure.

- Recommended by NICE (The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence)
- Lumi Nova offers a Gold Standard of Care by facilitating graded exposures (the active ingredient of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) with psychoeducation
- Parent/guardian supported intervention
- Built in safeguarding & accessibility features

You can access the app here - <https://luminova.app/>

You can watch this short-animated video to learn more: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmgrU4zXU3M>

Online Safety

We shared the internet safety poster at the end of last week's newsletter, but with the Christmas break fast approaching and the possibility of members of your family receiving new technology and devices as gifts, we thought it was worth re-sharing in this week's newsletter, especially as we have become aware recently of some inappropriate websites being viewed by some of our children.

The National College released the following information along with the internet safety poster:

The holiday season is fast approaching! While we hope you're excited to kick back, relax, and enjoy some well-earned rest with friends and family, it's still vitally important that we do all we can to safeguard the children and young people in our care over the festive period. However, it can be tricky to know what specific steps we can take to ensure our winter break is as calm and risk-free as possible, which is why we've put together this week's free guide. Check out our expert advice on keeping youngsters safe over the festive season.

We have also added an additional E-Safety poster to the end of this newsletter – this time, information for parents and carers about keeping safe on social media.

Mental Health Support

Christmas can be a difficult time of year. The following website has links to a wide range of mental health support:

<https://www.startingwellworcs.nhs.uk/wellbeing/>



Worcestershire HAF It

Worcestershire's HAF It! Offers FREE holiday clubs, activities and events for families in Worcestershire during the school holidays funded by the Department for Education.

To find out more, go to visit the HAF page on the Worcestershire County Council website:

<https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/childrens-social-care/virtual-family-hub/holiday-activities-and-food-haf-programme>

Or, to get live updates about the programme, follow the HAF Worcestershire Facebook page:

https://www.facebook.com/HAFWorcestershire?locale=en_GB

Collective Worship

In collective worship this week, we have shared the Christmas story ahead of the children visiting the Bridge Church for the Christmas Experience.

In our Celebration Worship we have said "congratulations" to children impressing their teachers by showing our school values. I was delighted to hand out values certificates to Elias (Bears) Yusha (Giraffes), Jemimah (Elephants), Shannon (Tigers) and Ammishaddai (Lions).



We also handed out the termly Headteacher awards to – Alexia (Bears), Isla (Giraffes) Hafsa (Elephants), Zorain (Tigers) and Eva (Lions).

These children have been chosen for being excellent role models, hard workers and all-round super stars for the entire term. We congratulate them and thank them for all their hard work and efforts.

Lunchtime award winners: Macy, Hannah & Haniya (Lions).

OPAL Golden Welly Winner: Hunter (Elephants).

Earth Team are the team point trophy winner with a whopping 1147 team points for the term!

Our Lions class have received the only attendance certificate of the week for attendance over 95% - well done!

St Luke's Stars of the Week

Each week in our celebration assembly, the teachers will be choosing a pupil to recognise for their excellent work and attitude to learning. Please see Class Dojo for pictures of our 'St Luke's Stars of the Week'. We are very proud of everyone for their hard work and achievements.



Bears: Denis for willingly coming to do his focus learning and wonderful singing in the Christmas play!

Giraffes: Ollie - for trying really hard with his reading – keep it up!

Elephants: Bertie for his brilliant understanding of Christmas and why Christians celebrate Christmas.

Tigers: Ursula for her amazing retell of Gregory Cool, using all of our Year 3 writerly skills including adverbials, conjunctions and direct speech.

Lions: Macy for her work in all foundation subjects/areas of school life! Macy's confidence has really developed this half term. She is coming into school every day with a beaming smile, ready to learn and she is applying all of her writing skills to other areas of the curriculum.

Please continue to send in certificates and awards from outside of school achievements so we can share them with the whole school community during our celebration assembly

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

SAFETY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Currently, children are growing up in an immediate and throwaway culture when it comes to content that's consumed online. So much material is now deliberately created to be shorter in nature – and may often contain hidden elements such as advertising, or extreme political and cultural views. With complex algorithms built to keep people on their phones and engaging with social media content, it's becoming increasingly difficult to reduce time spent on these platforms.

1 REDUCE DOOMSCROLLING

It's concerningly common for young people to spend hours 'doomscrolling': trawling through social media and aimlessly viewing every post they see, many of which might make them feel sad or anxious. Social media can be useful for keeping in touch with friends and family, as well as staying up to date on current events. However, it's important to use it with a clear purpose, instead of endlessly scrolling through content, which could lead to young people accidentally discovering harmful material.

2 TALK ABOUT THE CONTENT

It's important to keep apprised of the kind of content that a young person is being exposed to. Discussing what they're watching online can help you understand why they're using social media in the first place. Furthermore, ensure that children are aware of hidden content, such as advertising of a product – and that they know how to spot that the creator is being paid to talk about it.

3 FIND POSITIVE ASPECTS

Despite all the concerns, there's plenty of wholesome content on social media. It's worth spending time with children to help them find something suitable and enjoyable. Perhaps you'll even discover a joint interest, and you can enjoy the content alongside the child. As part of this, you should also point out why certain things shouldn't be given attention, explaining why it isn't suitable and why it's been created in the first place.

4 REDUCE SCREENTIME

Young people can sometimes be unaware of the exact amount of time they spend looking at social media. Smart phones don't just have the capacity to monitor screentime; they also record how much time is spent on each app. Consider setting targets to reduce this and support children to meet these goals, gradually reducing the amount of time spent on different apps.

5 FILL THE VOID

Monitoring and reducing screentime can create a lot of free time to fill, and young people can even face withdrawal symptoms when made to step away from their phones. To mitigate this, consider what offline activities you could introduce the child to, and what they would enjoy. This can ensure that young users will permanently cut down on their screentime, rather than temporarily doing so while they know it's being monitored.

6 REDUCE NOTIFICATIONS

One way in which social media platforms keep people coming back is through notifications. The algorithms behind these apps track people's daily habits, including the times of the day where they're most likely to engage with the platform. This data is then used to deliver specifically timed notifications to draw them back in. To avoid young users being exposed to this tactic, simply turn off notifications for the app in their phone's settings.

7 LIVE IN THE REAL WORLD

Overexposure to social media can distort someone's perception of the real world – from body norms to social conventions. This filtered environment can make it hard for young people to distinguish reality from online content, which is now becoming even more difficult with the rise of AI. To mitigate this concern, take time to teach young people how to discern truth from fiction, both on and off social media.

8 DIGITAL DETOX

Encouraging young people to take a 'digital detox', from even just a couple of the apps that they use, can result in an overall reduction of screentime and less exposure to potentially harmful content. Alternatively, rather than avoiding the app entirely, encourage children to take a 'digital detox' from content creators and influencers, and instead, keep in touch with friends and family – which is generally a far healthier use of these platforms.

9 MODEL GOOD BEHAVIOUR

Consider the habits that you're demonstrating to your children. How much time do you spend on your phone? How much do you 'doomscroll'? Comparing your own usage with the child's could put things into perspective for them – or if it turns out that you're also overusing social media, it can turn screentime reduction into a joint mission, which you and the child can work on together.

10 BE CLEAR ON THE "WHY"

Research shows that young people can become addicted to social media. There are many schools that are moving towards being 'phone free' due to the negative impacts of using social media and phones continuously. It's important to explain to young people why managing screentime is important. Set out the benefits and ensure they have all the relevant information, so it's not just seen as a punishment.

Meet Our Expert

John Inasley is a senior leader in a Birmingham secondary school and has vast experience in leading schools over the past 15 years – including the development of computing curriculums across primary and secondary schools, writing e-safety policies and supporting schools with computing and e-safety advice.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

Source: See full reference list on guide page at <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/top-tips-for-safety-on-social-media>

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

SAFETY OVER THE FESTIVE SEASON

The holiday season, marked by Christmas and New Year, brings joy and togetherness but also presents unique safety challenges for children, families and educators. From busy holiday shopping, traveling and family gatherings to managing digital activity during school breaks, staying safe during this period requires heightened awareness. This guide offers practical tips to help families and educators maintain a more secure and fulfilling festive period.

1 MONITOR DIGITAL ACTIVITY

Children spend more time online during school holidays, increasing exposure to potential dangers such as cyberbullying, inappropriate content and online predators. Balancing screen time, avoiding harmful websites and ensuring children engage positively online can be difficult without proper monitoring tools. Set clear boundaries, encourage open discussions about online safety and use parental controls to manage content exposure and screen time effectively. Regular check-ins and positive reinforcement around digital habits encourage safe online behaviour.

2 PRACTICE FIRE SAFETY PROTOCOLS

The incidence of house fires increases during Christmas due to greater use of candles, cookers and electrical decorations. Open flames, electrical overloads and the need for quick response plans can make fire safety challenging. Ensure smoke detectors are operational, keep fire extinguishers on hand and teach children how to respond in case of a fire emergency. Avoid leaving cooking unattended and use fire-safe candles to prevent mishaps.

3 CREATE TRAVEL SAFETY PLANS

More families tend to travel during the holidays, resulting in busier roads, increased traffic accidents and weather-related hazards. Weather conditions, road rage, fatigue and busy airports can all compromise travel safety. Pack emergency kits and adhere to seatbelt laws. Plan routes in advance and allow extra travel time to avoid rushing and mitigate risks on busy roads.

4 BEWARE OF ALLERGIES

Holiday meals often involve many foods that may contain allergens. Cross contamination, unclear labelling and lack of allergy-friendly options can lead to severe reactions. Communicate any allergy needs to hosts, provide safe food alternatives and carry necessary medications like antihistamines or EpiPens. Teaching children how to advocate for themselves and recognise dangerous foods also contributes to safer celebrations.

5 PREVENT THE SPREAD OF ILLNESS

Cold weather and seasonal socialising can increase the spread of viruses like flu and COVID-19. Crowded gatherings, schools out of session and frequent travel can lead to higher infection risks. Emphasise hygiene, encourage vaccination, disinfect surfaces and isolate symptomatic individuals. Communication with children about proper hygiene practices is essential to reduce the spread of illness.

6 STAY VIGILANT ON THE ROAD

Increased holiday traffic heightens the risk of accidents for both drivers and pedestrians. Distracted driving, pedestrian safety and inclement weather can complicate road safety. Encourage pedestrian safety practices, avoid distracted driving and never drive under the influence.

7 MAINTAIN SAFE DECORATIONS

Festive decorations such as Christmas lights and candles can pose electrical, fire and choking hazards if mishandled. Frayed wires, toppling Christmas trees, small ornaments and open flames can be difficult to control, especially in busy households with children. Inspect and maintain decorations, secure Christmas trees, place fragile or small items out of reach and ensure candles are never left unattended. Testing smoke alarms and using flame-retardant decorations can significantly reduce risks.

8 SET BOUNDARIES FOR GIFTS

Some toys and gadgets can present choking, sharp-edge or safety risks, particularly for young children. Ensuring that gifts meet safety standards and are age appropriate can be complex with so many options available. Inspect all toys carefully and ensure any tech devices have parental controls. Setting expectations around safe gift use and discarding packaging that poses a risk also helps to prevent accidents.

9 ADDRESS STRESS & FATIGUE

Holiday pressures can lead to burnout, which affects both physical and mental health. Overpacked schedules and a lack of downtime can cause stress and fatigue, leading to accidents or poor decision making. Incorporate rest, maintain regular routines and seek support to reduce stress. Encourage activities that promote relaxation to create a healthier, happier holiday experience for everyone.

10 DRINK RESPONSIBLY

Alcohol is commonly present at holiday events, raising concerns about safety and supervision. Excessive alcohol consumption can lead to accidents, impaired judgment and lack of supervision for children. Designate responsible adults, limit consumption and provide transportation alternatives for guests. Teaching moderation and modelling responsible behaviour in front of children ensures that celebrations remain positive and secure.

Meet Our Expert

James Whelan is a chartered health and safety consultant with 10 years of experience in promoting family and community safety. Specialising in risk assessment and preventative strategies, he has worked with educational institutions, public health agencies and community groups to deliver safety education and training.



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Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/safety-over-the-festive-season>