



STELLA Spotlight



'Together we strive for excellence, inspired by the joy of the Gospel.'

Children Cancer North Awards 2025

We are delighted to share that our school has been honoured at the 42nd Anniversary Children's Cancer Run Schools' Awards, receiving the Peacock Community Award for Outstanding Contribution in Hosting a Charity Event. This prestigious award, named after Chris Peacock and his family, who are longstanding supporters of Children's Cancer North, recognises the incredible unity, joy, and generosity shown by our school community. This marks a wonderful moment, as we become the first school ever to receive this award. It is a testament to the spirit of compassion and service that defines our school, and a shining example of Catholic Life in action. Our Faith in Action.

A huge thank you to Miss Steel, who has led this project with dedication and care over the last two years. She has ensured that our Cancer Run was not only a successful event, but a deeply meaningful experience for all involved.

To every pupil, parent, family member and staff member who contributed - thank you. Your support has made such a real difference, and this award belongs to all of you.

Together, we live our faith through action.

Together, we support one another.

Together, we celebrate this incredible achievement.

Mr J Craig
Headteacher



Thank you to everyone who came along to support last weeks coffee morning in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support. Our final total is an amazing £240.43.



*"Faith and love are everything, and nothing is more precious than these."
St Ignatius of Antioch*

Year 4 Assembly

Children from Year 4 will be presenting their assembly to parents on Tuesday 7th October at 9.00 a.m. in the school hall. All are welcome to attend.

Year 3 Liturgy

On Friday 10th October, Year 3 children will be hosting a Liturgy for their parents at 2.30 p.m. in the school hall followed by coffee and chat.

It would be lovely to see you all there.

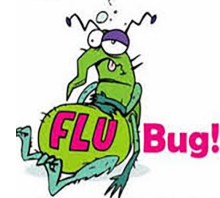
Nasal Flu Spray - Reception to Year 6

We still have parents who have not logged on to register their child to receive the annual flu spray. Even if you do not want your child to get this, could you still log on and complete a non-consent form.

This will take place on Tuesday 11th November.

Please click on the following link <https://www.northumbriaimmunisations.co.uk/Forms/Flu> which will direct you to an online consent form for you to complete using the following school code **NB149052**.

Squash that



KS1 & EYFS

SPOOKTACULAR Party

Friday 10th October
4.00pm - 5.00pm



Keystage 2 tickets will be on sale from Friday 10th October and their Spooktacular Party will be in Friday 17th October. Tickets will be £2 each.

Year 5 and Year 6 Curriculum Evening

The rescheduled curriculum evening for Year 5 and 6 will take place on Wednesday 8th October at 4 p.m. in your child's classroom.

We would like to see as many there as possible. If you are unable to attend, we will be sending the power point home via email the following day.

Cross Country Star

Well done to Dixie Hood in Year 4 who placed for a medal at the recent school cross country event.

Another win for Stella!



Arbor

We would be grateful if parents could familiarise themselves with Arbor. Parents must use this portal to book parents evenings when the dates are released, make payments for lunches and trips etc.

There is also a consent section which must be completed.

We need for all parents to kindly look at this section. You will need to give school consent for photographs, trips, going to church etc.



Safeguarding Reminder

Safeguarding the children in our care is one of the school's main responsibilities, one that St Mary and St Thomas Aquinas take very seriously.

As you are already aware from previous updates, our Designated Safeguarding Lead is Mr Craig. You can speak to him by phone, make an appointment via the school office, or catch him when he's outside greeting/saying goodbye to children, if you ever have a concern. We also have our Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead in school, Mrs Bennison (Assistant Headteacher/ Year 2 class teacher and senior leader), Mrs McDonald (Year 4 teacher) and our business manager Miss Foster.

If you are unable to speak to Mr Craig, you can speak to Mrs Bennison or any other member of staff about your concern (s).

The school has an updated Safeguarding policy, that can be found on the school website, or paper copies can be requested from the school office.

All staff receive annual safeguarding refresher training, as well as other training throughout the year on key areas, including record keeping and reporting. Our school also has a termly visit from our Safeguarding Consultant, who completes an audit of the school's safeguarding and identifies any future improvements or training needs.

Why do parents need to know this information?

- To reassure you that we take keeping our children safe in school very seriously at St. Mary and St. Thomas Aquinas.
- It's good to remind parents/carers of the key members of staff, in case new parents did not know who they were.
- To highlight the continual work that the school puts into keeping our children safe in school.

Attendance

During celebration assembly on Friday, we have been celebrating whole class attendance and each week the class with the highest attendance will receive our Attendance Trophy, well done to Year 4 who won the trophy this week.

Week beginning: Monday 29th September 2025	
Year group	Attendance percentage
Reception	95.19
Year 1	91.67
Year 2	96.55
Year 3	98.65
Year 4	98.92
Year 5	93.19
Year 6	95.24

Parking

Can we please remind parents and carers to be considerate when bringing their children to school at the beginning and end of the school day We have had a few phone calls from residents about parents blocking driveways and causing an obstruction when parking.



Home time

If you wish for your child to go to a friends house for tea or if they are going to be collected by a different adult, the school office must be informed. This is to enable us to ensure all of our children are safe to go home with an appropriate adult.



Spotlight Celebration

Aila competed in the North East vocal championship this weekend and received two adjudicator's awards, most memorial musical theatre performance and most potential vocal in the open category

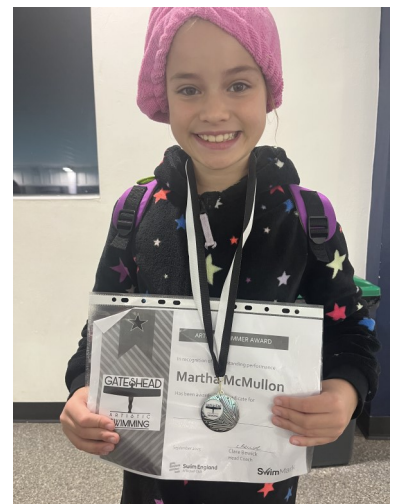


Noah enjoyed the views from the top of High Rigg Wainwright, a harder climb than anticipated. Well done Noah.

Dixie from Year 4 won Star of the week for mastering a hand spring this week in gymnastics.



Casper and his friend Jack went to see Newcastle United play last weekend. Unfortunately they didn't bring them any luck as they did not win.



Martha in Year 5 received an award for her synchronised swimming this week! Well done Martha!

We would love to see more achievements, works of art or an event that you are proud of.
Please send them to hgreen@stmb.bwcet.com

Dates for Your Diary

Tuesday 7th Oct	Year 4 assembly 9 a.m. in the school hall
Wednesday 8th Oct	Year 5 & 6 rescheduled Curriculum Evening 4 p.m. in the classrooms
Friday 10th Oct	Year 3 Liturgy 2.30 p.m. in the school hall
Tuesday 14th Oct	Year 2 assembly 9 a.m. in the school hall
Friday 17th Oct	Year 6 Liturgy 2.30 p.m. in the school hall
Tuesday 21st Oct	Year 5 assembly 9 a.m. in the school hall
Friday 24th Oct	Year 4 Liturgy 2.30 p.m. in the school hall
School Holiday Monday 27th October 2025 to Friday 31st October 2025	
Monday 10th Nov	Parents Evening
Tuesday 11th Nov	Parents Evening
Tuesday 11th Nov	Reception assembly 9 a.m. in the school hall
Friday 14th Nov	Year 2 Liturgy 2.30 p.m. in the school hall
Tuesday 18th Nov	Year 3 assembly 9 a.m. in the school hall
Friday 21st Nov	Year 5 Liturgy 2.30 p.m. in the school hall
Tuesday 25th Nov	Year 1 assembly 9 a.m. in the school hall
Monday 8th Dec	Reception Nativity (p.m.)
Tuesday 9th Dec	Keystage 1 Nativity (p.m.)
Wednesday 10th Dec	Nursery Nativity (a.m.)
Wednesday 10th Dec	Keystage 1 Nativity (p.m.)
Thursday 11th Dec	Keystage 2 Performance (p.m.)
Friday 12th Dec	Keystage 2 Performance (p.m.)

Please note that if any of these dates change we highlight the new date in **Red**.



What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

TIKTOK

AGE RESTRICTION
13+
(Certain features are restricted to over-18s only)

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.

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.

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.

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.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

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

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