

SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

Welcome Back!

We've had a lovely first couple of days in school with all pupils both new and returning. We have welcomed our new starters and their families. Our Reception pupils have got off to a flying start and seem very happy to come to St. Joseph's. We also welcome three new pupils to our other year groups. Thank you for sending the children to school on time and looking so smart in their uniforms and school shoes.

Please remember we have an open door policy for any issues you have. Please catch me at the gate or ring the office for an appointment.

Ms Bircham

Contact us

Head Teacher: Joanna Bircham

Office Manager: Michelle Tate
Office Admin: Kate Bentley

Safeguarding: Joanna
Bircham, Joe Haws, Sarah
Robson and Michelle Tate

Email: info@stjh.bwcet.com

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Arrival and Departure of Children

School gates will be opened at 8.25am on a morning and 3pm on an afternoon. For those picking up from after school clubs children will be released from the same gates.

As part of safeguarding procedures, all children from Reception to Year 5 must be brought to school and collected by an adult (person over 18). Parents should ensure children do not play around the parked cars on the road area before or after school.

Depending on your circumstances, you may still prefer to accompany Year 6 children to and from school, or you may choose to give permission for them to walk home alone or with a sibling from secondary school. If this is the case, please contact the school office. If behaviour on the way to or from school becomes a concern for any children in this group, parents will be contacted, and children will need to be accompanied on their journey.

All children must be collected from after school activity clubs by an adult. This is in line with the guidance received from our safeguarding support team.

Roads and Parking

Please can we ask that parents are considerate when parking. The entrance and exit gates should not be used as a turning circle. Car parking is for staff and blue badge holders only.

Parents/visitors should park across the road and use pedestrian crossing to cross safely. Cars must not park or drop off on the yellow lines outside school. This poses a danger to our children. The local authority camera car will issue fines to any cars caught on the lines.

Dogs

Please remember that dogs must not be brought onto the school site at any time or tied up to school railings and left unattended. Please also be considerate of children who are scared of dogs, making sure that dogs are under control, not jumping up at children and that there is plenty of space for people with pushchairs to pass on pavements.

IMPORTANT! ACTION NEEDED

Please check your child's Arbor account to ensure contact information is up to date (mobiles/emails etc) and also that consents are correct. Thank you.



Open Afternoon

We are planning an open afternoon in October for all prospective parents to look around school. Mrs Robson and staff will be on hand to show you our lovely Reception class and will have a few Autumn activities planned in our Reception classroom. We will contact you with the date as soon as it is set.

Communication

Our website <https://stjosephshighfield.bwcet.com/> has all statutory and curriculum information and we also have our **St. Joseph's Highfield Facebook page** which will keep you updated on day-to-day learning and activities in school.

We use our Arbor Parent app both as a payment system and a messaging system, so please sign up for this as soon as possible if you are new to school. Our new reception parents will also receive an email from Arbor (our school communication app. Please ensure your sign up when email is received).

Clubs

We are again planning a full range of clubs this year. Please lookout for a clubs letter next week. We are requesting donations of £2 per week towards the cost of running these and to purchase any resources.

Jewellery - Thank you for sending your children to school today without jewellery. Watches are permitted but must be removed for PE. Pupils who have had their ears pierced over the holidays need to cover the earrings with plasters and remove them as soon as possible or wear flat plastic 'invisible' earrings at school.

PE kit - We ask that children bring in PE kit to keep in school, they will need white t-shirt, navy shorts, joggers and trainers/plimsols. Please label all items with your child's name. Kit should be kept in a drawstring bag which will be stored on their peg/ in locker. Kit will be sent home each half term for washing. PE days are a Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.



Swimming - All Year 3 /4 pupils will be going swimming on a Friday starting Friday 11th September. You will receive a letter about this this week.

Mobile Phones - Pupils are only allowed mobile phones if they transfer between parents homes who live separately or if they walk to school alone. In these cases, please inform us and we will ensure the phones are kept safely in the school office for the day.

Out of School Wrap Around Club

Helping Hands OOSC runs from 7.30am – school starts and after school until 6pm. Morning club costs £4.85 including breakfast and after school club costs £12.00 including tea. These costs can be greatly subsidised by universal credit or tax free payments.



Pupils play outdoors a lot and get to mix with friends so it is a great social experience as well as childcare. Please see Mrs Tate in the office for further details.

Friends of St. Joseph's

The Friends of St. Joseph's raise lots of funds for school including £400 per class per year towards school trips which are now ridiculously expensive. The Friends are a very welcoming group of parents who would love to have more volunteers. If any new or existing parents are interested in joining them, please contact the school office.

Water Bottles

All children should bring a light plastic reusable water bottle each day and this should be filled with still plain water only in line with the requirements of the Oral Health Team and our policies. All children have access to water as part of their classroom provision to top up during the day.

Packed Lunches

If you choose to send a packed lunch, please ensure this meets the standards of the school packed lunch policy (available on the website). We thank you for your support with this.

School Meals

Every child in Reception class, Year 1 and 2 is still eligible for a free school meal under the universal free school meals scheme. **This offer has no bearing on the existing free school meals provision.**

More families are now eligible for enhanced free school meals in Years 3 and above. If you receive any universal credit you may access this provision (This also includes pupils who are adopted from care, no matter what the parent's income).

School Meals from Year 3 onwards

Once your child is in Year 3 school meals must be paid for; the current cost of a school meal is £3.10 per day for children from Year 3. This is payable on Arbor. **Please ensure that school meals are paid for in advance.**

The Government has introduced a new scheme 'enhanced free school meals which means more families can access meals for free. School is able to check eligibility on your behalf – all we need is for you to add your date of birth and national insurance number onto your Arbor record. This data is stored securely and will only be used for this checking service.

Pupils who are entitled to targeted free school meals receive special funding through school for the whole period in which they are on free school meals and for 6 years afterwards, which can help with school trips and educational support, so it really is worth applying for it even when your child is already receiving a free school meal through the universal scheme.

Medical / Diet Forms

The school meal service requires the medical and dietary forms to be updated each September. Where this is applicable, these forms have been sent home and should be returned as soon as possible to ensure your child is served the correct food at lunchtime. If your child has any dietary requirements or medical changes across the year, please inform the school office.

Packed Lunches

If you choose to send a packed lunch, please ensure this meets the standards of the school packed lunch policy (available on the website). We thank you for your support with this.

Attendance

We are required to keep detailed records of pupil attendance and distinguish between authorised and unauthorised attendance. It is vital that parents keep us informed about their child's absence. Please contact the school by 8.40am if your child is anticipated to be late or absent for any reason. If the school is not contacted, we will ring parents to ensure the child is safe at home.

It is important for our pupils to be on time in the morning. Persistent lateness results in pupils missing out on vital information at the start of the day and being disorientated. Furthermore, if your child arrives after the register closes at 9 am, this will be classed as an absence for the whole session.

We monitor attendance very closely and will make a home visit if we are concerned that we have not heard from you during the first morning of absence.

Above all, if your child is happy at school and you set firm expectations for attendance as a parent, excellent attendance usually follows. Please let us know immediately if your child is reluctant to come to school for any reason so that we can work together to get them back on track.

Holiday absence

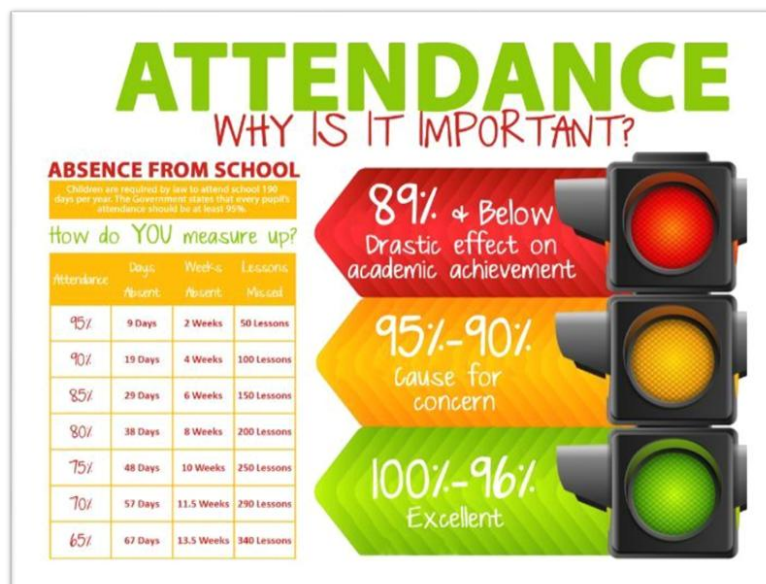
A reminder that, in the coming academic year, school will refer unauthorised holiday absences to the Local Authority, who may impose a penalty notice.

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
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Please note this penalty notice is issued per child and per parent.

Medical and Dental Appointments

Parents should make medical and dental appointments for children outside of school hours and if this is not possible, evidence of the appointment (copy or sight of appointment letter, email, NHS app or text) should be provided or the appointment cannot be unauthorised.



SCHOOL TERM DATES 2026 to 2027

Autumn Term 1 2026 Tuesday 1st September to Friday 23rd October 2026
Staff Training Day 1st September – CHILDREN RETURN Wednesday 2nd
Half Term Holiday Monday 26th October to Friday 30th October 2026

Autumn Term 2 2026 Monday 2nd November to Friday 18th December 2026
Staff Training Day 2nd November – CHILDREN RETURN Tuesday 3rd
Christmas Holiday Monday 21st December to Friday 1st January 2027

Spring Term 1 2027 Monday 4th January to Friday 12th February 2027
Half Term Holiday Monday 15th February to Friday 19th February 2027
Spring Term 2 2027 Monday 22nd February to Thursday 25th March 2027
Easter Holiday Friday 26th March to Friday 9th April 2027

Summer Term 1 2027 Monday 12th April to Friday 28th May 2027
Half Term Holiday Monday 31st May to Friday 4th June 2027
Summer Term 2 2027 Monday 7th June to Wednesday 21st July 2027
Staff Training Days Monday 19th to Wednesday 21st July 2027

School closed on Monday 3rd May - Bank Holiday

St Joseph's Yearly Plan 2026-27	
Date:	Event
September	
1st	Staff training day
2nd	Pupils back at school
11th	Swimming starts today (Year 3 /4)
23rd	Year 6 welcome liturgy for Reception buddies
25 th	Languages Day KS2 Mass St Joseph's @ St Barnabas 10am helpers needed to walk with us
30 th	School photos
October	
15th	Flu vaccines in school
20th	Year 3 /4 Trip to Great North Museum
	Year 5 /6 Northumbria police Safer Internet training
23rd	School closes for half term
November	
2nd	Training day
3rd	School re-opens to pupils
9th	Parent Consultation week (not SEND)
16th	Anti-bullying week in school / Odd socks day
16th	SEND review and parent consultation week
27th	Advent Celebration of the Word Year R /1 /2 2.30pm
December	
2nd	Advent Celebration of the Word Year 3 /4 2.30pm
9th	Advent Celebration of the Word Year 5/6 2.30 pm
10th	Nativity Reception KS1 9am
16 ^h	KS2 Christmas Performance 2pm
17 th	Party day
18th	School closes 1pm
January	
4th	School re-opens for Spring Term 1
8th	Swimming re-starts today Year 3 /4
February	
12 th	School closes for half term
22nd	School re-opens for Spring Term 2
March	
4th	World book day



Week beg 8th	Parents' Consultations (not SEND)
Week beg 15th	SEND reviews and parent consultations
19 th	St Joseph's Day mass
22 nd / 23rd	Decorated egg / Easter bonnet competition
24th	Lenten Celebration of the Word Reception / 1 / 2 8.45am
24 th March	Lenten Celebration of the Word 3 / 4 2pm
25 th March	2pm Stations of the Cross Year 5 / 6
25 th March	School closes for Easter holiday 3pm
April	
12th	School re-opens for Summer term 1
May	
3 rd	Bank holiday school closed
10th	SATs week Year 6 Monday Grammar, punctuation and spelling Tuesday Reading Wednesday Maths papers 1 and 2 Thursday Maths paper 3
28th	School closes for half term 3pm
June	
7th	School re-opens for Summer 2
7 th - 18th	Year 4 multiplication check fortnight
14th	Year 1 Phonics Test week
23rd	SEND review week
July	
12 th July	Reports sent out today
15th	Year 6 Leavers' assembly 2pm
16th	Year 6 Leavers' mass 10am
16th	School closes for Summer holiday 3pm