



St Edward's Newsletter



May 2026

Month of Mary

We have come to the end of another half term, and the last term of this academic year is fast approaching. Through this half term, there have been many exciting events taking place. This newsletter highlights some of the events and some important information including key dates and times to note in your diaries.

The month of May is a special time in the Catholic church because it is dedicated to Mother Mary. There are several ways to honour Mother Mary and this month in school children have been praying the Rosary every day at lunchtimes, and there was a special Rosary service on our MUGA in the playground led by Mrs Dourado.

We celebrated Mental Health Awareness Week by taking part in a 'Wear It Green Day' and we raised a fantastic amount of money that will go to the Mental Health Foundation to help with the great work they are doing in supporting wellbeing.

A group of our children thoroughly enjoyed a visit to Zippos circus in Central Park where they were entertained by acrobatics, unicycling, juggling and skilful motor bike riding.

Our Year 6 children successfully completed their SATs exams and their week finished with a beautiful surprise from our catering team who cooked some delicious cakes for the children to enjoy.

To end the term there was our summer Fun Day led by our amazing PTA and staff. A range of different activities were on offer, and a significant amount of money was raised which will go towards resources for the school.

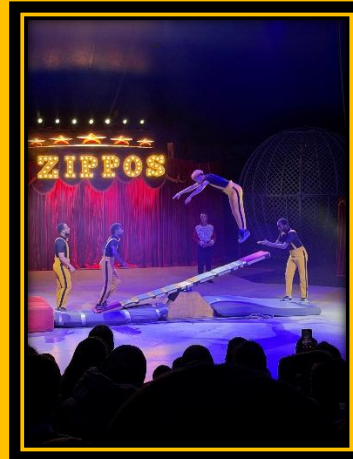
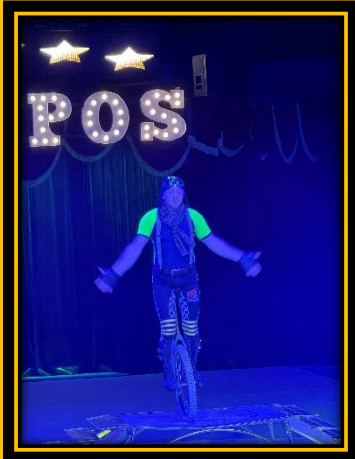
This would not have been possible without the generosity of our parents/carers who donated items in abundance.

This term we have combined safeguarding items into this general newsletter rather than a separate newsletter. Please read through the information towards the end of this newsletter as it provides important points on how to keep children safe online including neurodivergent pupils, SEND pupils, children under 5 years of age and advice on online grooming which due to the digital world remains a concern for parents and their children.

The coming week beginning the 25th of May will be our half term break. We look forward to welcoming our children back to school on Tuesday the 1st of June 2026 for the last half term of the year.

Zippos Circus

Some of our children had the fantastic opportunity to go and see Zippos circus in Central Park. This is an event that has been going on for many years but since last year the Rotary Club of Barking have offered some places especially to schools. The children and staff had a wonderful time watching a range of different performances including unicycling, ventriloquists, motorcycle riding, balancing acts, aerial acrobatics and juggling. Thank you to Ms Sandy for organising this event.



'Following Christ we reach our goals'



Earth Day themed lunch

Olive Dining prepared a delicious Earth Day themed lunch for our children. Earth Day is celebrated annually on the April the 22nd. Established in 1970, Earth Day is a global event dedicated to raising awareness about environmental issues, promoting sustainability, and encouraging collective action to protect the planet. It highlights critical concerns such as climate change, pollution, deforestation, biodiversity loss, and the health of oceans, forests, and freshwater systems, which are essential for human well-being and economic resilience. Ms Williams and our Pupil Parliament put up a display highlighting what we can do that will help keep our world a healthier and safer place.



Blessed Mother Mary procession

Last Thursday, Mrs Dourado led a rosary service on the MUGA in the school playground. The whole school completed a procession in the school playground before having class photos taken next to our statue of Mary.



A lovely surprise for our SATs superstars

Olive Dining organised a wonderful surprise for our Year 6 children after a week of SATs exams. This was an amazing way to end the week, and it was a delight to see the children's and teacher's faces when they arrived in the Teaching Suite. Thank you to Ms Gill and Olive Dining for the delicious cakes and drinks and thank you to our staff who got the children ready in class and through the booster sessions. Finally, congratulations to our children who have worked so hard showing true determination and belief in themselves.



Olive
dining
food with passion



Congratulations





Mental Health Awareness Week

During the week commencing the 11th of May we celebrated Mental Health Awareness Week. The children completed some activities in class focusing on how they can improve their mental health and wellbeing. On the Friday we had a 'Wear It Green Day.' This is a colour suggested by the foundation as it is linked to nature and has a calming effect. A huge thank to everyone in our school community who donated for this cause. We raised an amazing amount of £400, and this money will be sent to the Mental Health Foundation to help with the great work they are doing.

CYO at the Carlton Club

On the evening of Monday the 11th May our children were delighted to perform at the prestigious Carlton Club in Mayfair as part of the Commonwealth Choir. Our children were invited to attend the launch of the Pupil Parliament in honour of the late Sir David Amess. The Carlton Club were very impressed with our children and informed us that it was the first time that children had been invited in since its establishment 150 years ago. What an amazing opportunity and experience!



'Following Christ we reach our goals'



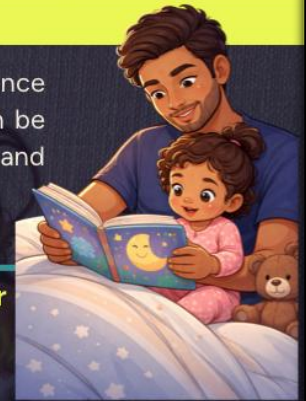
Summer Fun Day

The sun was shining and there was a sense of excitement in the air as we finished this half term with our summer fun day. Our amazing PTA and staff worked together to put on a range of different stalls from face painting, gift shops, bouncy castles, karaoke, nail painting, rainbow raffle and henna designs. A summer fete would not be complete without food and drinks so there were also burgers, sweets and cakes, candy floss and to beat the heat ice cream and cold drinks. A big thank you for all the donations sent in and for everyone that came along to the fete. We raised a significant amount of money which will be used for future events but most importantly for our school to support our children in their education and overall development.

Screen use by children aged under 5



Digital screens are part of modern life, but finding the right balance between screen time and other activities for young children can be challenging. This evidence-informed guidance supports parents and carers in shaping healthy screen habits for children under 5.



How Much Screen Time Should My Child Have?



Recommended guidance:

- **Under 2 years:** Avoid screen time other than shared activities with family that encourage bonding, interaction and conversation.
- **2–5 years:** Try to keep screen time to **no more than 1 hour per day**. Less is better where possible.

Shared screen activities may include:

- Video calling friends and family
- Looking through digital photo albums together

What Content Is Better Content?

Choose:

- Slow-paced, predictable content
- Content with simple stories
- Programmes with fewer scene changes
- Characters who speak slowly and clearly
- Content where emotions are easy to see and understand



Avoid:

- Fast-paced, overstimulating videos
- Social media content
- Inappropriate or harmful content (use parental controls)
- AI toys, tools or chatbots until more evidence is available on their effects (including interactive robots, smart speakers or AI chat apps)

How Does My Own Screen Use Affect My Child?



Key points:

- Spending long periods on your phone can reduce awareness of your child's needs and emotions
- Young children need attention, interaction and shared moments to feel secure and supported

When and Where Is It OK for My Child to Use Screens?

Guidance:

- Avoid young children using screens alone
- Watch and discuss content together where possible
- **Keep bedrooms and mealtimes screen-free**
- Avoid screens being on in the background during family time, meals or playtime

Screen-free swaps:

- **Mealtimes:** Conversation, background music, table games, colouring, "I Spy"
- **Bedtime:** Reading stories together; **avoid screens for 1 hour before bed**

How Does Screen Time Affect My Child's Development?

90% of brain growth happens before age 5, and young children learn best through interaction with parents and carers. Too much screen time can affect development, sleep, eyesight and healthy weight. Screens should not replace sleep, active play or time with parents. Reading, play, games and conversation help build the foundations for learning, behaviour and relationships.

My Child Has SEND – Is the Advice the Same?

Some children with SEND may need a more tailored approach, and screen-based assistive technology can support communication and daily activities. However, like all young children, they still need plenty of play, sleep, interaction with parents and carers, and protected screen-free time where possible.

Read the full expert-led summary of evidence report on GOV.UK -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/screen-use-by-children-aged-under-5>

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

HELPING NEURODIVERGENT CHILDREN NAVIGATE THE ONLINE WORLD

Neurodivergent people tend to be early adopters of technology, and many influential innovators in this space are neurodivergent themselves. It's therefore likely that a neurodivergent child or young person may be drawn to the online world from an early age. This isn't a concern in itself, but understanding both the benefits and potential risks is essential. Here are ten key considerations to support safe and positive online experiences for neurodivergent children.

1 TREAT ONLINE LIKE THE REAL WORLD

You wouldn't allow a child to cross a road without guidance – you'd hold their hand, use a pedestrian crossing, and model safe behaviour. In the same way, a neurodivergent child's first experiences online should be supported by an adult who can guide and explain safe and responsible digital behaviour to them from the outset.

2 MODEL RESPONSIBLE USE

Children learn from what they see. Show all children, regardless of neurotype, what responsible internet use looks like. Reflect on your own use of social media and AI. Consider how often you use them and your own understanding of these platforms. Talk openly about when and why you use these tools, helping all children develop a balanced and informed approach.

3 KNOW YOUR LIMITS

Current government guidance suggests no solo screen use below the age of two, with a maximum of one hour per day for two- to five-year-olds. Screen time can support communication and connection when shared with an adult. However, passive watching can affect neurodivergent children's attention and language skills. Focus on the type of content they watch, encouraging slower-paced and meaningful material rather than fast-paced, overstimulating content.

4 CONSIDER AGES AND STAGES

For older children and teenagers, agreed limits are important. Screen time can be beneficial, but it should form part of a balanced lifestyle. Neurodivergent children may find online communication easier than real-world conversation, supporting their social interaction. However, it shouldn't be their only option. Encourage a range of activities, including creative play, physical exercise, and opportunities for real-world connections.

5 KEEP CONVERSATIONS OPEN

Discussions about online safety should begin early and continue as children grow. However, neurodivergent children may worry about getting things wrong or being misunderstood, meaning these kinds of conversations should feel open and fair, rather than like a lecture. If a child encounters a problem – such as a scam or inappropriate content – they need to feel able to speak to a trusted adult without fear of judgement or embarrassment.

6 BUILD YOUR KNOWLEDGE

You aren't expected to be an expert, but it's important to stay informed about the platforms, games, or apps neurodivergent children use in order to provide practical support. Social media platforms have age limits, and many apps and games offer parental settings that can control access. Schools and families should work together to understand these tools, helping neurodivergent children use them safely while keeping up to date with new features and changes.

7 SET CLEAR BOUNDARIES

Children and young people often know more about current technology than adults, meaning it's important to recognise that controls may be bypassed. Clear, predictable boundaries should be used, based on trust and consistency. Involving children in discussions that affect them helps them feel heard. This is particularly important for neurodivergent children, who may respond strongly to perceived unfairness.

8 UNDERSTAND AI CONTENT

The internet now includes large amounts of AI-generated content, including images, videos, and stories. These can be difficult to identify. Children should be encouraged to question what they see and check the information using trusted sources. Neurodivergent children may interpret content literally, meaning adult guidance is important in helping them recognise what's real and reliable – and what isn't.

9 EXPLAIN AI LIMITATIONS

AI isn't the same as a search engine. It generates responses based on prompts and patterns, and its accuracy depends on how it's used. Sometimes, it produces incorrect or unrealistic information, known as 'hallucinations'. Both adults and children need to understand this and learn how to check information carefully using reliable and trusted sources.

10 CLARIFY AI RELATIONSHIPS

AI can feel conversational and personal, but it's not capable of real relationships. It learns from patterns in user input rather than human understanding. Some neurodivergent children may experience a sense of connection with AI chatbots, particularly if they find social situations challenging. It's therefore important to explain that these are simulated conversations and aren't a substitute for real, human relationships.

Meet Our Expert

Catrina Lowri is a neurodivergent former SENCO and Advisory Teacher who works with nurseries, schools, colleges, and businesses to improve inclusion for neurodivergent people. She is the Founder and Director of Neuroteachers and the author of "The Other 29 – How Supporting Your Neurodivergent Learner Can Improve Teaching and Learning for the Whole Class".



See full reference list on our website

#WakeUpWednesday®

The National College®

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about ONLINE GROOMING

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Online grooming is when someone builds a relationship with a child or young person online to gain their trust for the purpose of sexual abuse, exploitation, radicalisation, or criminal activity – such as county lines or financial scams. According to the NSPCC, police in the UK recorded over 7,000 offences involving sexual communication with a child in a single year – an increase of 89% since 2017/18.

STRANGERS USING FAKE IDENTITIES

Groomers often pose as children or teenagers online to build trust. They may create convincing fake profiles, share photos stolen from real people, or mimic the interests of the child. By pretending to be someone their age, they make conversations feel safe and relatable. Over time, they may ask for personal details, photos, or suggest meeting in person, exposing children to significant emotional and physical harm.

EXPLOITATION THROUGH GIFTS AND FLATTERY

To gain trust quickly, groomers often send gifts, gaming credits, or money. Alongside material offerings, they use excessive compliments, affection, and attention to create emotional dependency. These tactics make children feel valued and special, lowering their defences. Once trust is secured, groomers may escalate their requests, often asking for photos or private conversations, making the child feel pressured or indebted to continue.

GROUP CHATS AS HIDDEN PATHWAYS

Unmonitored group chats on platforms like WhatsApp or Discord provide a cover for groomers. They can watch how children interact, identify those who seem vulnerable, and then move conversations into private messaging. This transition makes detection difficult for trusted adults. The seemingly harmless group setting often masks the presence of predators, giving children a false sense of security.

THE RISE OF SEXTORTION

Sextortion involves pressuring children into sharing explicit content, then blackmailing them for more. Offenders may claim to have hacked a child's device, threaten to share images with friends or family, or demand money. Many victims remain silent out of fear and shame. This growing crime is particularly dangerous because children often feel trapped, believing there's no safe way to escape the situation.

GAMING PLATFORMS AS GROOMING GATEWAYS

Games like Roblox, Fortnite, or Call of Duty, which include live chat features, are frequent targets for groomers. Conversations often begin casually during gameplay and can become manipulative over time. Groomers may offer in-game gifts, credits, or exclusive add-ons to build rapport. Children using headsets or private chat features are especially at risk, as conversations are harder for adults to monitor.

CRIMINAL & RADICALISATION RISKS

Grooming is not always sexual. Some offenders manipulate children into criminal activities such as drug running or online fraud. Others attempt to radicalise young people with extreme ideologies. Groomers often use fear, money, shame, or promises of belonging to control their victims. These forms of exploitation can be just as harmful as sexual grooming, and often leave lasting psychological and social consequences.

Advice for Parents & Educators

KEEP CONVERSATIONS REGULAR

Rather than having one "big talk" about online safety, weave conversations into everyday life. Ask questions about children's online friendships and interests. Share real-life examples to make discussions relatable and encourage honesty instead of secrecy. When children feel comfortable discussing their digital lives, they are far more likely to share concerns or admit when something feels wrong, reducing the chance of risky interactions going unnoticed.

CREATE A "TELL ME" CULTURE

Children often keep silent because they fear being punished or losing access to their devices. Reassure them that coming forward with concerns won't get them into trouble. Emphasise that you are there to help, not judge. Creating a safe, open environment encourages children to speak up if something feels wrong, and helps to ensure they don't suffer in silence when facing potential grooming risks.

UNDERSTAND THE PLATFORMS CHILDREN USE

Take time to learn about the apps, games, and social platforms children are on. Familiarise yourself with privacy settings, parental controls, and group chat features. Use resources like The National College guides or conduct quick searches to stay updated. By understanding how these platforms operate, you'll be better equipped to set boundaries, guide safe use, and notice any unusual or concerning online behaviour early.

STAY ALERT TO WARNING SIGNS

Be attentive to both behavioural and digital red flags. Sudden secrecy, mood swings, or new online contacts may signal a problem. Watch for unexplained gifts, new social media profiles, or changes in sleep patterns. Increased anxiety or reluctance to attend school can also be indicators. Regularly checking in and showing interest in those whom they communicate with online help prevent small issues from escalating into serious risks.

Meet Our Expert

Staffordshire Police is dedicated to keeping people safe and tackling crime across both the physical and digital world. The force continues to strengthen its digital investigation and safeguarding capabilities to protect children and vulnerable people online, working in partnership with local, regional and national organisations, schools, and the wider community.



See full reference list on our website



Safeguarding - NSPCC

Children continue to learn about online safety through the curriculum and the Purple Mash scheme of work. In addition to this there are several planned assemblies and workshops throughout the year appropriate to the children's age groups. **On Friday the 19th of June we have booked a virtual workshop on online safety and exploitation for PARENTS/CARERS with our Newham Community Safety Team. This will be from 1.30 to 2.30 pm. We will send out the link for the meeting via Arbor nearer the time.**

'Following Christ we reach our goals'

Gospel Reading

John 21:15-19

When Jesus had revealed himself to his disciples and they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.

" He said to him, "Feed my lambs." He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.

" He said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you."

Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go."

This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God. And after saying this he said to him, "Follow me."

Gospel Reflection

John 21:15–19

In the story, Jesus asks Peter a question. It's not just any question; it's the most important question. If love is the basis of everything, then this is "the" question: "Do you love me?"

This question is asked three times, which shows how important it is. In the Bible, the number three means perfection and completion. Asking it three times means that it can't be skipped; it has to be done over and over again.

A lot of people think that Jesus asks Peter the same question three times to make up for the three times he denied him. But what we need to see here is not a logical equation of three rejections and three confirmations.

Instead, it is a fair way for Peter to get ready for his big job as a leader. We all fail and fall, and sometimes we deny and reject, but we must always try to get back what we've lost or what we've been missing.

His answer shows that he is honest and humble: "Lord, you know that I love you," and the third time he adds a little more: "Lord, you know everything." Peter is real and humble, but he is also sure of himself.

That's why he could say, "Lord, you know that I love you." He doesn't give a long speech or a lot of examples and reasons; he just says, "Lord, you know."

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

Monday 1st June – Start of Year 4 Multiplication tests

Wednesday 3rd June – Year 6 at Thorpe Park

Thursday 4th June – Corpus Christi Mass at church

Friday 5th June – Iris class assembly

Monday 8th June – Phonics Screening Week

Thursday 11th June – Class photos

Thursday 11th June – Olive Dining King's theme celebration lunch

Friday 12th June – Acorn class assembly – ONE PERFORMANCE ONLY AT 10 AM

Monday 15th June – KS2 Sports Day at Central Park

Friday 19th June – Parents/Carers ONLINE workshop – online safety – 1.30 pm

Friday 19th June – Chestnut Class assembly

Friday 19th June – Father's Day Event

Monday 22nd June – International Week

Monday 22nd June – KS2 Sports Day

Thursday 25th June – Summer Governor's Day

Friday 26th June – Reception & KS1 Sports Day at school

Monday 29th June to Wednesday 1st July – Year 6 at Fair Playhouse

Friday 3rd July – Year 6 at Stubbers

Friday 3rd July – Nursery Teddy Bear Picnic

Friday 3rd July – Lily Class Assembly

Friday 10th July – Year 6 Summer Soiree

Monday 13th July – meet your new class teacher day

Tuesday 14th July – Rock Steady concerts – KS1 & KS2

Wednesday 15th July – Year 6 Leaver's Mass in church

Thursday 16th July – Olive Dining summer picnic themed lunch

Friday 17th July – last day of summer term – school closes at 11.45 am for pre-school/Nursery pupils

Friday 17th July – last day of summer term - school closes at 1.15 pm for pupils in Reception to Year 6

Thursday 3rd September – start of new academic year – 2026/2027

PLEASE NOTE THESE DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

'Following Christ we reach our goals'