



# St Mark and All Saints C of E Primary School and Hedgehogs Nursery

## Welcome Back and Happy New Year!

I think in our first two weeks of term we have experienced almost all forms of January weather- which doesn't leave a lot of variety for the rest of the term! Thank you for continuing to do your best to ensure your children are at school on time every day with the right equipment, despite the challenges that the weather and traffic have presented so far.

We are pleased to say we have 39 applications for Year R in September, 23 of which are first choice, a number which has grown year on year. Thank you for all that you do to promote our school to the wider community of parents in Godalming.

We are very happy that the majority of our planned playground markings were able to be completed last week despite the snow. All that is remaining is our large Times Table square for the front playground - even the blowtorches couldn't bring such a large surface area up to the required temperature that day but it will be done very soon. The pictures below are from the KS1 playground which many of you won't have been able to see but which is being very much enjoyed by our children every day - thank you ALL for your fundraising efforts!



***Our value this half term is Perseverance***

## Dates for the Diary

21<sup>st</sup> Jan - Y3 Class Assembly 9 - 9:30 - Families Welcome

21<sup>st</sup> Jan - Y5 Visit to Charterhouse - Subject Carousel

23rd Jan - Family Voice Surrey PINS coffee morning 9am

28<sup>th</sup> Jan - Y5 Visit to Charterhouse - Subject Carousel

29<sup>th</sup> Jan - Y1 Parents Invited - Phonics/Little Wandle

Information Session 2:45 - 3:15

30<sup>th</sup> Jan - FOSMAS Bounce For Books event

2<sup>nd</sup> Feb - Open Classrooms 2:45 - 3:15 - Families Welcome

3<sup>rd</sup> Feb - Y3 Trip to Haslemere Museum

4<sup>th</sup> Feb - Y5 Class Assembly 9 - 9:30 - Families Welcome

4th Feb - YR Visit to Godalming Library

4<sup>th</sup> Feb - Y5 Visit to Charterhouse - Subject Carousel

9th Feb - Y3 Swimming Week

10<sup>th</sup> Feb - Y4 Viking & Anglo Saxon Workshop

11<sup>th</sup> Feb - Y5 Visit to Charterhouse - Subject Carousel

**16<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> Feb - HALF TERM**

**23<sup>rd</sup> Feb - INSET DAY**

24<sup>th</sup> Feb - Y1 SATRO Workshop

25<sup>th</sup> Feb - Y5 Visit to Charterhouse - Subject Carousel

2<sup>nd</sup> Mar - Book Week - More details to follow

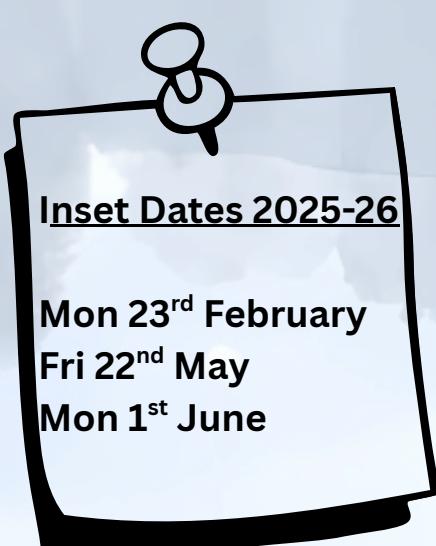
2<sup>nd</sup> Mar - Open Classrooms 2:45 - 3:15 - Families Welcome

3<sup>rd</sup> Mar - Y6 Try a Bike Course - Details to follow

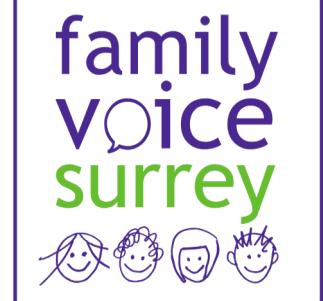
4<sup>th</sup> Mar - Y6 Learn to Ride a Bike - Details to follow

4<sup>th</sup> Mar - Y5 Visit to Charterhouse - Subject Carousel

4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> Mar - Y4 Residential to PGL Marchants Hill



# Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) Parents and carers coffee and information sessions



**Friday, January 23 at 9am – drop in welcome**

**Come along to a coffee morning to promote inclusion of children at St Mark and All Saints. There will be an update from the Senco, Jill Mills, with a chance to ask questions and make suggestions for how parents and the school could work together to strengthen inclusion.**

## **Why Join Us?**

**Our group is open to everyone, with a special focus on supporting children with additional needs. No matter where you are on your journey - wondering if your child might need extra support, working with school to explore their needs, awaiting an assessment, or already navigating a diagnosis or EHCP - you are welcome here.**

**Every voice and every experience matters. Join the conversation!**

## **Meeting Details**

**Date & Time:** Friday, January 23 from 9am onwards

**Refreshments available**

## **How to join**

- You are welcome to drop in on the day**
- Or let us know you're coming by emailing Jill Mills on [senco@stmarkallsaints.uk](mailto:senco@stmarkallsaints.uk)**

**This session will be facilitated by Sara Draycott from Family Voice Surrey, the parent carer forum for Surrey. <https://familyvoicesurrey.org/your-voice-matters/>**  
**If you have any questions or comments, please email Sara, from Family Voice Surrey, on [sara.d@familyvoicesurrey.org](mailto:sara.d@familyvoicesurrey.org)**

**We hope you will join us and encourage other parent carers to come along too.  
We look forward to seeing you!**

# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about WHATSAPP



WhatsApp is a free messaging service owned by Meta which allows users to send text and voice messages, make video calls, share multimedia – such as images, videos, documents and polls – and have group chats. WhatsApp messages are encrypted, meaning only the sender and the recipient can view what is sent. While this privacy may sound attractive on paper, this app comes with several associated risks that must be considered – especially for younger users.

## GROUP CHATS



Group chats let friends talk together but can pose problems for young users. They might feel excluded – like discovering events they weren't invited to. Hurtful comments can also escalate quickly, as more people join in, amplifying the impact through a wider audience.

## EVOLVING SCAMS



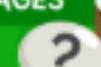
WhatsApp's popularity makes it attractive to scammers. Tactics include impersonating a child in an 'emergency' to request money, or triggering a login code, then pretending to be WhatsApp and asking for it – giving them access to private messages and personal data.

## CHANNELS



'Channels' let users follow topics anonymously, interacting only through polls or emoji reactions. However, fake channels can mimic real ones, spreading misinformation, hate speech, or phishing for personal data. WhatsApp may also collect and share channel-following info with third parties, raising privacy issues.

## DISAPPEARING MESSAGES



Disappearing messages help share sensitive info, but young people may wrongly assume they're fully private. Senders can opt for their message to vanish after 24 hours, 7 days, or 90 days – or for media, after one view. However, recipients can still save them by bookmarking or taking screenshots, reducing their privacy.



## FAKE NEWS

WhatsApp's simplicity makes sharing news quick – accurate or not. To help curb misinformation, messages forwarded over five times now show a 'Forwarded many times' label with a double arrow. This alerts users that the message isn't original and may be unreliable.

## CHAT LOCK



The new 'Chat lock' feature lets users store specific messages in a separate, password- or biometrically-protected folder. While useful for privacy, it could be misused by younger users to hide conversations or content they know parents and educators might find inappropriate, including age-restricted material.

## VISIBLE LOCATION



WhatsApp's 'live location' feature helps friends meet up or parents check a child's route home. However, anyone in a child's group chats can track their location, potentially revealing their home address or regular travel patterns to strangers.

## AI INTEGRATION



Meta AI on WhatsApp poses risks to children, including exposure to misinformation, inappropriate content, and data privacy issues. AI responses may be inaccurate, and kids might share personal information unknowingly. It can also hinder critical thinking by offering ready-made answers.



## Advice for Parents & Educators

### EMPHASISE CAUTION



Encourage children to treat unexpected messages with caution. Get them to consider, for example, whether it sounds like something a friend or relative would really send them. Make sure they know never to share personal details over WhatsApp, and to be wary of clicking on any links in messages. Setting up two-step verification adds a further layer of protection to their WhatsApp account.

### THINK BEFORE SHARING

Help children understand why it's important to stop and think before posting or forwarding something on WhatsApp. It's easy – and all too common – for content sent to one user to then be shared more widely, and even publicly on social media. Encourage them to consider how an ill-judged message might damage their reputation or upset a friend who sent something to them in confidence.

### ADJUST THE SETTINGS



It's wise to change a child's WhatsApp settings to specify which of their contacts can add them to group chats without needing approval. To do this, go to 'Privacy', then 'Groups'. You can give permission to 'My Contacts' or 'My Contacts (except...)'. Additionally, if the child needs to use 'live location', emphasise that they should enable this function for only as long as they need – and then turn it off.

### CHAT ABOUT PRIVACY



Have a conversation with young users about how they're using WhatsApp, emphasising that it's for their own safety. If you spot a 'Locked Chats' folder, you might want to talk about the sort of messages that are in there, who they're with and why they have been hidden. Also, if a young user has sent any 'view once' content, discuss their reasons for using this feature.

### Meet Our Expert



Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian Government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.

#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

# ROBLOX



Roblox is one of the most popular video games among children. In 2020, the game's developers claimed that more than half of the USA's children had played it. As a 'sandbox' title, the game lets players create their own gaming experiences with Roblox Studio to build custom levels, which can then be shared online.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### ONLINE PLAY RISKS

Because Roblox connects random players across the world, it can put younger players into an environment with anonymous users who could use the platform for nefarious reasons. For example, some role-play games are used for online doxxing and mature role play, which could expose youngsters to inappropriate messages in the public chat box.

### MATURE CONTENT

Content is difficult to moderate throughout Roblox, due to the number of games available. This is particularly notable on smaller games and experiences, but in summary, some of the games and experiences offered on the platform contain age-inappropriate content that could easily be seen by young players.

### IN-GAME SPENDING

The majority of games within Roblox have extensive monetisation options, usually through session passes or in-game transactions. Purchases can range in value from a few pennies up to much larger sums of money. While some games offer a lot of content via purchases, others can offer very little for real world money, causing younger players to end up out of pocket.

### ANONYMOUS PLAYERS

The anonymity of users can leave players vulnerable to bullying, harassment, and predatory behaviour. Without the right parental controls or monitoring, users can connect with each other via personal messages or friend requests, and it is very difficult to know who's behind a username in this vast online world.

### RISK OF ADDICTION

Roblox games can feature rewarding or satisfying mechanics that keep players coming back – or persuade them to stay logged-in for much longer. Like most games, they focus on interactivity, with constant rewards via in-game unlocks and currencies, which can sometimes lead to an addictive need to remain online for long periods of time.

### SCAMS

Many of the games on Roblox feature collectible items, pets, or characters. These objects, while digital, are worth a lot of real money on certain online markets. Scammers will attempt to trade with younger users in the hopes of getting rare items that can be sold for real money, manipulating the child into handing them over, usually via misleading information.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### MONITOR THE CONTENT

While Roblox does implement plenty of moderation tools and parental controls, it's up to parents and guardians to monitor the types of games a child or impressionable player is experiencing. If a youngster wants to play Roblox, be sure to check out which specific games they want to play within it, and get a good idea of their content.

### TAKE ADVANTAGE OF TOOLS

Use the parental controls within the game itself and teach your gather how to report and block other players. Knowing the powers within their reach will make Roblox a safer, happier experience. You can set age ranges for who's allowed to contact you, close public chat boxes, block spending, and even make your Roblox profile completely private. All these options are helpful in cutting off bad actors from engaging with children.

### PLAY TOGETHER

Consider playing Roblox with the children in your care. There are few more effective ways to see how monetisation works, gauge whether the game could lead to addictive behaviours, or even witness how interaction between players works, than sitting down and trying the game for yourself. This should help you figure out whether it's suitable for particular children.

### TEACH ONLINE BEHAVIOURS

Have an open conversation about the risks of online play and how to spend money wisely. By being honest and giving tips on how a younger user can protect themselves, you can empower them to not only take care of themselves, but others too. Any user can be reported to Roblox moderators by other players for behaving inappropriately. With this knowledge, younger players can be aware of what to look for and help prevent it.

### Meet Our Expert

Don Luiscombe is a videogame journalist and author of over 20 books on gaming, including books on Minecraft, Fortnite, Roblox, and more. For 10 years he has been writing about his passion for gaming. When he's not playing games, he's talking about them at [@AMNBooks](#).



**Wake Up, Wednesday**

The National College



ENJOY A  
FREE  
SESSION

AGES  
10-WEEKS  
TO  
12-YEARS

# OPEN WEEK

EXPERIENCE THE LITTLE GYM DIFFERENCE  
12-18 JANUARY

SCAN ME  
TO BOOK!



THE LITTLE GYM GODALMING

01483 343 000 | [GODALMING@THELITTLEGYM.CO.UK](mailto:GODALMING@THELITTLEGYM.CO.UK)



## Waverley Family Centre Open Morning (Loseley)

Monday 19<sup>th</sup> January  
from 9am to midday,  
Loseley Family Centre,  
Green Lane, Binscombe

## Beat Blue Monday!

Don't let Blue Monday get you down...  
Grab a FREE coffee and pastry, supplied  
by Green Bean Coffee Co, and funded by a  
donation from Burstow Lodge, Croydon.  
Stay to chat and play, and to find out  
more about the support available from  
Waverley Family Centre.

Pop in, or give us a call  
(01483 417157)

Scan the QR code to go to our  
website.



**BARNARDOS**

Changing childhoods.  
Changing lives.

# Happy New Year!



## New Online Courses for January

We are delighted to bring you two new online courses this January from The National Handwriting Association.

Many dyslexic learners struggle with handwriting, and this can have a number of negative impacts on learning. Finding out about the skills involved in handwriting, why some learners struggle, what research tells us about handwriting, and how to support learners with handwriting difficulties at home or in the classroom, is extremely valuable for both parents and education professionals.

The National Handwriting Association are experts in this field and we are delighted that they will come and share all their knowledge and expertise over these two new Spotlight Sessions with us.



Need and Supporting Best Practice in Handwriting

Date: 14 January 2026  
Time: 6-7pm  
Cost: £10  
Online Course

This is Session 1 of a 2-part series by the National Handwriting Association (NHA).

Handwriting is a complex task which requires the integration of cognitive skills such as idea generation, grammar and spelling with the motor skill involved in letter formation. Research on writing skills in children with dyslexia has increased in recent years.

Dr Emma Sumner is one researcher in the field who has considered handwriting and typing skills in detail. Her research will be presented alongside implications and strategies for teaching handwriting in the classroom.

In this session, our presenters Emma and Michelle will explore:

- What does handwriting typically look like in children with dyslexia and how does this differ from the handwriting of neurotypical children
- What does current research tell us about handwriting difficulties and support options
- What role does weak spelling have on the impact of handwriting
- Practical strategies and top tips for supporting handwriting both at home and in the classroom

This session is appropriate for parents and education professionals and is amazing value for CPD at just £10 per session.

Recording available to those who book but are unable to make the event live online.



Spotlight 2: Wider Implications of Handwriting Difficulties

Date: 19 January 2026  
Time: 6-7pm  
Cost: £10  
Online Course

This is Session 2 of a 2-part series by the National Handwriting Association (NHA).

In this session, our presenters Emma and Michelle will explore:

- What does current research tell us about the wider implications of handwriting difficulties
- What are the options for reasonable accommodations e.g. extra time/use of word processor
- Practical strategies when handwriting difficulties persist into secondary school
- What role do handwriting interventions have
- When to consider touch typing

This session is appropriate for parents and education professionals and is amazing value for CPD at just £10 per session.

Recording available to those who book but are unable to make the event live online.



National  
Autistic  
Society

Wednesday  
21<sup>st</sup> January  
2026



# Access and advice to Autism support

**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2026, 10am-12pm, Godalming**

This session is for parents, carers and wider family members to hear about what is available to support families of Autistic children.

We are able to support pre and post diagnosis.

## During this session you will:

- Learn about the help and support available from the Surrey Family Support Service
- Find out how you can access our support
- Learn more about The Mindworks partnership
- Be signposted to other local support
- Have the opportunity to join a Q&A session for information and advice

## How to attend?

- You can just turn up on the day, however if you are able to let us know you are coming it would be helpful for our planning.
- If you would like to know more or to tell us your coming, please email [chris.dempsey@nas.org.uk](mailto:chris.dempsey@nas.org.uk)
- The session will be held at NAS Old Mill, 14 High Street, Godalming, GU7 1ED

# Attendance Matters

ATTEND TODAY  
ACHIEVE TOMORROW



## Punctuality Matters too!

As a school, we are aware that lateness can severely affect achievement. We monitor punctuality closely and have strategies in place to address lateness.

The school gates are open from 8:45 am and close at 8:55 am,

any child arriving after this point must report to the school office with their adult, as this is the time that registers close.

Any child who arrives after 9:30 am will be given an unauthorised absence for the morning. If you have 10 unauthorised sessions within a 10 week period you will be issued a penalty notice.

## Holidays (Leave of absence)

Taking holidays in term time will have a detrimental effect on your child's progress, as they miss chunks of their learning.

In line with St Mark & All Saints Attendance policy, we will not authorise any holiday in term time apart from in very specific circumstances and you must see Mrs Mallett to request leave of absence.

**Please remember it is your responsibility to call the school office (01483 422924) to report all absences before 9 a.m. or to email [info@stmarkallsaints.uk](mailto:info@stmarkallsaints.uk)**

# **PENALTY NOTICES**

Just to remind parents/carers that if they take their children out of school without authority for 5 or more days (which do not have to be consecutive), then the following will apply:

1. If you have not incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children in a rolling 3 year period since 19 August 2024, then the penalty notice will be charged at the rate of £160.00, per parent/carers per child, if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80.00 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
2. If you have incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19 August 2024, the rolling 3 year period will be activated from the date of the first penalty notice and the second penalty notice will be charged at the flat rate of £160.00, per parent/carers per child, if paid within 28 days. There will be no reduction for payment within 21 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
3. If you have incurred 2 penalty notices relating to this child/children in the rolling 3 year period since the first penalty notice was issued, then you will NOT receive a third penalty notice – Surrey County Council will have no option but to consider a prosecution, per parent/carers per child, in the Magistrates Court under s 444 Education Act 1996.

Surrey County Council is not responsible for authorising pupil absence and therefore cannot withdraw any Penalty Notice requests without the written permission of the Headteacher.