



St Augustine's Newsletter

Friday 21st March 2025
Newsletter No.25

Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you so much to all those who joined parents evening last week. Having worked in setting where I have had to almost bribe parents to attend I know how lucky we are to work in a school where parents really value education and support us.

Friday was a very productive INSET day. The Learning Support Assistants and Admin staff joined others from across the Xavier family of schools for some training. The teachers were here learning to use a new assessment tool to measure pupils' social, emotional and behaviour needs as well as looking at new ways to assess learning in History and Geography.

Upcoming Events –	
Monday 24 th March	KS2 Music Festival
Tuesday 25 th March	Xavier Science Fair for KS2 school finalists to attend
Thursday 27 th March	Firefighter visit to YR as part of 'People who help Us' Topic
Friday 28 th March	Year 5 Mass at OLQH at 2p.m. YR Mother's Day Afternoon
Wednesday 2 nd and Thursday 3 rd April	Year 4 Easter Liturgy at 2.15p.m. each day
Thursday 3 rd April	PTA Happy Bag
Friday 4 th April	PTA Break the Rules Day /End of term – early finish

Sacrament of reconciliation

This week, our children in upper Key Stage 2 had the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, allowing them to grow closer to Jesus during this holy season of Lent. Through this sacrament, they experienced God's infinite mercy and love, fostering a deeper spiritual connection and understanding of His grace. We are grateful for this chance to support our children's faith journey and encourage them to embrace the true meaning of Lent.

This is what some of the children said afterwards: "W, Yr 5 "I felt a bit nervous but when I left, I felt very happy because I knew God has forgiven me now."

L, Y5, "Before I went in, I wasn't sure how it was going to go but when I went in, I felt better and knew that God had forgiven me."

A, Y5, "After I received the Sacrament, I felt joyful that I had been forgiven by God."

This is the Act of Sorrow children are using during this season of Lent:

Oh my God,

because you are so good,

I am very sorry that I have sinned against you

and with the help of your grace I will not sin again. Amen



Year 6 singing at Our Lady Queen of Heaven, Saturday 8th March 2025:

We are delighted to share that our Year 6 students recently joined the parishioners at Our Lady Queen of Heaven church to sing during Mass. Their talent in singing hymns and leading the congregation in music truly stood out. A heartfelt thank you to Mr. Ellson for his support and enthusiasm in teaching our Year 6 students to sing. His dedication has made a significant impact on their musical journey.



Well, done, Year 6! Your voices brought joy and inspiration to all.



Congratulations!

Huge congratulations to Maya and Belle and the other members of their synchronised swimming squad. They did it and won gold medals making them the National Age group (under 12) champions! This takes a huge amount of stamina strength, endurance, creativity and teamwork – all whilst holding their breath. Well done for all the hours of training and hard work!

Well done also to David who has won the school Chess Club Championships! Next we will be hosting a chess tournament here against two other schools. We wish all those competing good luck and thank Mr. Welling for all of his hard work organising this for pupils.



Music lessons in school

I have some spaces for individual Piano and Keyboard lessons next term.

My group music classes for Reception, Year 1 and 2 are proving to be very popular. I'm Kodaly trained so we focus on the general principles of music, singing and lots of instruments with a particular focus on the Piano. We have great fun!

Next term I will be running Group or Individual lessons for Keyboard, Recorder and Ukelele.

I hold Theory classes online out of school hours.

Please message me for details. Miss Hobday 07770 375719



Sports Crew Festival

On Wednesday, 19th March, the sports crew conducted a festival with some year 1 children. The Sports Crew led four separate events in a round robin. They needed to follow the 'mr NEDD' scheme (Name, Explain, Demonstrate, Deliver) to ensure that the event was well explained to the children, so that they could have as much fun as possible.

By completing this, they will be one step closer to receiving their Silver Sports Crew badge!

Well done to the sports crew who were absolutely fantastic in delivering the festival, and thank you to the year 1s for being excellent listeners.



Year 3/4 football tournament- 19th March

On Wednesday, children from year 3 and 4 played in matches against Mytchett and Crawley Ridge in a friendly tournament. There wasn't a winner or a loser, but there were plenty of opportunities to learn and develop their game. Well done to all who played.

Y3 team- Luke C, Zane MD, Lukas D, Matteo M, Oscar K, Ernest Z

Y4 team- Ethan A, Tymon K, Henry M, Ryaan A, Caolan M, Oluhle M

PTA News

Break the Rules Day: Friday, 4 April 2025

For one day only, the PTA are repeating the very popular Break the Rules fundraising day. Once you have agreed with your parents which rules to break (such as come to school in non-uniform clothes, with coloured hair and painted nails, an unhealthy snack and juice/squash in your bottle, wear face paint/make up, etc), they will need to pay the fine of 50p each. Or why not break all rules for £5! For a full list of rules to break and the fines for each, visit www.staugustinespta.co.uk. All fines will need to be paid by Thursday, 3 April. See poster attached. Bring on the chaos!

Secondhand Uniforms

Are your little ones growing fast? Do you need some cheap uniform to get you through to the end of the year? If so, you can always order uniform by emailing st.augustines.school.pta@gmail.com. We have lots of jumpers, trousers, polos, pinafores, skirts, PE items, shoes and more.

Save the Date: Summer Fair on Saturday, 28 June 2025

The giant inflatables and games will be back at school this summer. Please save the date in your calendars and join us at our annual Summer Fair. If you know of anyone or any companies who would be interested in supporting the school in return for promotion and advertising, please get in touch at st.augustines.school.pta@gmail.com.

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Free School Meal Eligibility – A message from Surrey Conty Council:

Important information about potential upcoming changes to Free School Meals Eligibility – Transitional Protections

'We estimate that in Surrey, there are over 2,000 families that if checked, would likely be found eligible for free school meals, but who aren't currently accessing this entitlement.

We know that schools and settings understand the enormous benefits that free school meals provision can bring, both to the individual eligible learner and in terms of the additional pupil premium funding for your setting.

Currently, any child found eligible for free school meals enjoys protected status under transitional protection arrangements, meaning they remain eligible until the end of their current phase of education. However, this may change very soon with the media reported expected ending of these protections.

From April 1, 2025, the current transitional protection arrangements are due to end.

If protections do cease on 31 March 2025, those found eligible after this date would lose their FSM status immediately upon any change in circumstances.'

If you think your child may be eligible for Free School Meals (even if in the infants) please speak to the school office now

'The Anxiety Generation' by Jonathan Haidt

A few months ago Mr. Welland spoke to me about this book that he had read and felt strongly that I should read it, and that it was a book that every parent should read. I did (as have some others on the team) and agree that it is an incredibly important read on child development.

The author explores the rise in mental health issues among Generation Z, attributing much to the rapid integration of digital technology into child's lives. The author cites much research for his work.

Key Points the author makes:

- **Impact of technology** – Haidt argues that the widespread use of smartphones and social media has significantly contributed to the increase in anxiety and depression among young people. He highlights how these technologies have altered childhood experiences, reducing unsupervised outdoor play and increasing screen time. Parents in the UK have been led to believe that children are not safe outside the house and that they would be judged for doing this by society. This links to the research we have been looking at with regard to our OPAL (Outdoor learning and play initiative) where children are on average looking at a screen 5 hours per day and playing outside an hour a week. Apparently only 1 in 12 children have the same upper body strength as those a generation ago. **The biggest risks our children face right now are actually online**. I would also question personally the impact on speech and language development, concentration, social skills and maturity / resilience that we have been witnessing at school.
- **Mental Health Crisis-** The book presents data showing a sharp rise in mental health issues, particularly among adolescent girls, since the early 2010s. This claim is corroborated by self-reported data and hospital admission data. (gaming appears to be affecting boys)
- **Parental and Societal Roles** – The author discusses how overprotective parenting and societal changes have also played a role in this mental health epidemic. He suggests that children need more opportunities for free play and real-world interactions to develop resilience and emotional stability.

The book offers solutions to help mitigate these issues, including promoting a play-based childhood and setting healthier boundaries for technology use. Haidt's work provides a comprehensive look at challenges faced by today's youth and offers insights into how we can better support their mental health and development. It's well worth a read.

Technology is with us, whether we love it or not. All of us will use it daily and there are many positive uses. We use it at school sometimes because technology can be fantastically helpful for learning and home learning but there is bad screen time also and this is where we need to be a lot more discerning. Some parents will say that this isn't my business but childhood is really short and it's critical to get this right.

The book advises parents to not buy children at primary school their own devices – if you haven't gone down that route yet – think carefully - let them share yours when needed. If you have bought a device think very carefully about what rules you are operating. Stick to all the age restrictions and make sure that you have filtering systems in place. I can't tell you how easy it is for children to access stuff you really wouldn't want them to see. Remember you pay for it – you make the rules and pull the plug on it if needed!

I don't want any smart watches at school. We've had one incident recently with one ringing in the middle of a lesson. I don't want any child with a device on site with a camera for safeguarding reasons. I will be talking to the Governing Body but I would like to have a smart phone free school. For those children at the top of the school walking to school I am going to suggest get a simple mobile that makes calls only but is locked away by staff during the school day. Please let me or the governors know your thoughts as we will be starting to look at this.

There's a growing movement called smartphone free childhood and I can see that some of you must have already signed up <https://smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk/>

It's really hard when you feel like you are the only one sticking to the rules. I wouldn't let my girls get on social media platforms until they met the age restrictions. I am sure if I hadn't been a safeguarding lead for 25 years and dealt with a lot of dark stuff I may have caved earlier. A growing number of parents are signing up to this. Have a look at the website.

Have a lovely weekend,
Alison Walsh