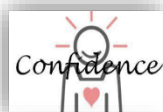




Our values this term:



Holy Rood Catholic Primary School Newsletter

3rd February 2026



Heavenly Father,

Thank You for our children, our families, and our school community.

Help us to guide our children with love and patience,

and to show them Your kindness in all we do.

Bless our homes with peace and joy,

and our hearts with faith, hope, and courage.

May we always walk close to You

and share Your love with everyone we meet.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Upham Road parking reminder

Despite previous reminders, we are unfortunately still receiving complaints from local residents about parking issues on Upham Road. Due to ongoing safety concerns, the school has asked our Police Community Support Officer (PSCO) to carry out regular patrols in this area.

We would like to remind families that parking on the zig-zag lines by the Upham Road zebra crossing and blocking residents' driveways is unsafe, illegal, and causes disruption to both our community and traffic flow. Most importantly, this creates unnecessary risk for our children.

We value the positive relationship we have with our neighbours and ask for your continued support in helping us maintain this. Please do not park along Upham Road when dropping off or collecting children.

Instead, we strongly encourage parents and carers to use Immanuel Church car park, where parking is safe and permitted, and walk the short distance to school.

Thank you for your understanding, cooperation, and ongoing support in keeping our school community safe.





Year 3 and Year 4 drop off reminder

We kindly remind parents of children in Year 3 and Year 4 that pupils should remain with you until their official start time. Please do not leave children at the end of the driveway or unattended at the school gate.

The school is unable to provide general supervision before the school day begins. We understand that work and family commitments can make mornings challenging, and to support families we offer our popular Breakfast Club and Morning Club. These provide a safe, supervised environment in the school hall where children can enjoy games and activities with their peers.

For more information about our Breakfast Club and/or Morning Club, please click here:

[Breakfast Club Information](#)



Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in helping us ensure a safe, calm, and well-organised start to the school day.

World Book Day 2026

World Book Day 2026 will be celebrated on Thursday 5th March. We are asking all children at Holy Rood Primary to come to school dressed as a word of their choice – for example: vibrant, athletic, artistic - the list is endless!

Please see below pictures for some inspiration. You do not need to purchase anything additional for the day, however, if your child already has a book character in mind, they can still wear this and pick a word that links to their character – For example – Harry Potter could be magical.

We look forward to seeing all of the children's ideas and to a fun day celebrating reading!



Online Safety – JusTalk Kids

JusTalk Kids is an application that is designed for children under the age of 13 to use for video calling and messaging family and friends. Whilst the app is a safer alternative to mainstream apps due to its parental controls and limited accessibility, as with all online applications there are some risks that parents should be aware of. Please refer to the handy information sheet at the end of this newsletter for more information. Thank you.





After School Clubs

We are very fortunate to be able to offer a range of high-quality after school clubs led by professional providers. Currently, our pupils can take part in sessions run by Soccer Excellence, Fortius PE, Success Martial Arts, and Swindon Town Ladies — giving children exciting opportunities to stay active, build skills, and enjoy learning in a fun environment.

After school clubs are a great way for children to develop confidence, teamwork, and healthy habits while spending time with their friends.

If you would like more information about any of the clubs, or if you would like your child to try a session to see if they enjoy it before fully signing up, please let the school office know and we will be happy to help.

Dates for your Diary

Thursday 5th February 2026 – Reception Height and Weight Screening

Monday 9th February 2026 – KS1 Phonics meeting for parents

Tuesday 10th February 2026 – Squirrels class visit to Swindon Art Museum

Thursday 12th February 2026 – Hedgehogs class visit to Swindon Art Museum

Friday 13th February 2026 – Last day of term 3

Monday 23rd February 2026 – Children return to school for Term 4

Monday 23rd February 2026 – Year 6 school trip to Bletchley Park

Monday 23rd February 2026 – Hedgehogs Class Parents Evening

Tuesday 24th February 2026 – Hedgehogs Class Parents Evening

Thursday 5th March 2026 – World Book Day

Monday 16th March 2026 – EYFS, Year 1 and Squirrels Class – Parents Evening

Tuesday 17th March 2026 – KS2 Parents Evening

Tuesday 17th March – Junior Voice Festival at the Wyvern Theatre

Wednesday 18th March 2026 – EYFS, Year 1 and Squirrels Class – Parents Evening

Thursday 19th March 2026 – KS2 Parents Evening

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about JUSTALK KIDS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

JusTalk Kids is a child's version of the JusTalk app – a highly popular social networking platform – designed for users up to 13 years of age, allowing them to video call, message and participate in group chats. While adults can link their own JusTalk account to their child's and make use of parental controls, it's important to understand the risks associated with the app.

SUBSCRIPTION FOR PREMIUM ACCESS

While JusTalk Kids is free, there's the option to subscribe to a kids' premium account or a premium family account. At a cost, this feature allows children to have access to more fun features such as games they can play with others in a call; exclusive stickers; a badge denoting them as a premium subscriber; and exclusive ringtones and themes.

RESISTANCE TO CONTROLS

JusTalk Kids endeavours to allow children the sense of having a chat-based app while allowing parents to set controls (within the app or from their own adult JusTalk account). The basis behind this is positive; however, some children are challenging their parents by refusing to use JusTalk Kids, preferring to use the adult version without any restrictions in place.

KNOWING THE PARENT PASSCODE

After downloading JusTalk Kids, parents can set a passcode which users must enter to add contacts. The parental controls help to manage which content can be viewed and who children can add as a contact: this then allows children to chat with friends in a controlled environment. However, prospective contacts don't have to know a specific username. In theory, someone could type in a random name and then add them as a friend.

POTENTIAL DATA LEAKS

JusTalk and JusTalk Kids claim to be secure and encrypted, going so far as to state that even the developers themselves won't access your data. However, a security lapse in 2022 highlighted that messages were not in fact encrypted – leading to concerns around the security of the app and the transparency of the development team.

CYBERBULLYING

Online chats can provide a sense of anonymity, leading some users to post things which they wouldn't normally say in person. Combined with the option of group chats, there's a risk that young people might join in with this kind of behaviour, escalating it further and potentially turning what should be a fun experience into something deeply negative.

TOO MUCH SCREENTIME

A report by the UK Parliament Education Committee highlighted a 52% increase in children's screen time between 2020 and 2022 – as well as finding that 25% of children used their smartphones in a manner consistent with screen addiction. Introducing children to social networking apps when they're too young can lead to bad digital habits and a reliance on technology from an early age.

Advice for Parents & Educators

JUSTIFY THE CONTROLS

If parents allow their child to use JusTalk Kids, they should explain that they're putting parental controls in place to make the app safer. Make sure the child knows not to put their full name on the account and doesn't use a photo of themselves as their profile picture. This type of open discussion will help to ensure that a child is aware of the app's potential risks and knows how to reduce them.

TALK ABOUT ONLINE FRIENDSHIPS

Young children could be excited to use this app. However, highlight that they must do so in a positive, respectful and responsible manner. While it can be easy to get caught up in a group chat, it's important to talk to others politely and call out any unpleasant behaviour. Discuss the importance of limiting their contacts to people they know in real life and use parental controls to enforce this.

DOS AND DON'TS OF SHARING

Some children might not understand the potential dangers of oversharing online. Set clear guidelines around what *is* and *isn't* safe to share on the internet, and discuss the concept of a digital footprint. Children need to understand that the things they say and share online can never be completely erased. Even if they delete it themselves, it can be saved and distributed by others.

ENCOURAGE OPEN COMMUNICATION

Apps like JusTalk can sometimes lend themselves to bullying behaviours. Parents should monitor what their child is sending and receiving, check in with them regularly and encourage them to share their feelings (both positive and negative) at home. Remind them that they can block a contact if someone is treating them disrespectfully.

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

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