

## Dear Parents and Carers

It is hard to believe that we are at the end of the half term and Christmas seems a distant memory. It is lovely being able to welcome so many of you into school this week for parent, teacher discussions. If you are not able to attend, please speak to your child's class teacher or the school office to make an alternative appointment.

This term in Collective Worship we have been focusing on our value of self-belief and how we persevere when things are challenging. Across the school this has been a focus, helping children to build greater resilience. We have talked about why feeling 'uncomfortable' in new or tricky situations can be a positive thing because it helps us to learn and try out strategies to overcome the difficulties we may face in life.

Last week our Year 5 conducted Geography fieldwork in Carterton town centre. It was lovely to receive feedback from members of the general public regarding the children's incredible behaviour and manners. Well done Year 5.



Last week we promoted Children's Mental Health Week. This year the theme was Know Yourself, Grow Yourself. The week started with an assembly on Monday and then our Wellbeing Champions led workshops across the classes on Thursday. Resources for families can be found here: [Families - Children's Mental Health Week](#)



Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> February is Safer Internet Day with the theme this year: Too good to be true? Our Digital Leaders are leading events across the school to support our children to be safe online. Resources for parents: [Parents and Carers - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)

Newsletters are published to the school website. The easiest way to receive newsletters is to subscribe to the newsletter through the school website, <http://www.st-john.oxon.sch.uk/news/newsletters> - this way you will be notified when a new letter is uploaded. In addition, our school website has all the recent newsletters and class letters on it, as well as lots of other information such as dinner menus. Add us to your favourites: [www.st-john.oxon.sch.uk](http://www.st-john.oxon.sch.uk)

We also use a text message service to send reminders to parents and Facebook to communicate school events and notices.



Find us on Facebook at: @stjohnsschoolcarterton

My colleagues and I wish you a restful half term break and look forward to seeing all the children on 24<sup>th</sup> February.

Best Wishes  
*Mark Smith*  
Headteacher

## General Reminders

### Beach Club says Thank you and Goodbye!

Mrs Barwood will be leaving the St John's family at the end of this term. She will be sorely missed by all the staff and the children who attend Beach Club. We all wish Mrs Barwood all the best for the future. We pleased to announce Miss Meeks from Hazel class has agreed to step into this role going forward.

### After School Clubs

Clubs are now open for booking and will be closing on 25<sup>th</sup> February at 1pm. If you would like to book your child onto a club please visit [SchoolCloud - St John the Evangelist CE VA Primary School](#). Please ensure you type the class exactly as it appears below:

Nursery AM: NURSERY AM  
Beech Class: Beech  
Horse Chestnut Class: HSCH

Nursery All Day: NURSERY ALL DAY  
Oak Class: OAK  
Ash Class: Ash

Nursery PM: NURSERY PM  
Elm Class: ELM  
Hazel Class: HAZEL

## Attendance and Punctuality

Thank you to parents for getting your children into school on time so that they do not miss any learning or feel unsettled because they have arrived after routines have been established for the day.

In line with our school policies, please remember to communication your child's absence everyday by 9am at the latest. If your child is absence and has a school lunch booked, please remember to cancel their lunch via SchoolGrid. This saves on wasted food and a unnecessary charge.



We do not authorise family holidays in term time, long weekends, or special visits/trips/half days for example. At the end of the school year we have blocked INSET days to support families in booking holidays before other schools across the country break up. As you may have seen on the news at the start of term, the government have tightened regulations on persistent absence and the use of penalty notices for term time holidays.



### Attendance this term:

Whole school target: Each child to have attendance above 96%

| Class                            | w/b: 13/01   | w/b: 20/01   | w/b: 27/01   | w/b: 03/02   |
|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Oak                              | 95.2%        | 94.1%        | 93.4%        | 92.8%        |
| Beech                            | 94.6%        | 94.9%        | 94.8%        | 92.6%        |
| Elm                              | 92.7%        | 92.3%        | 98.3%        | 98%          |
| H Chestnut                       | 97.7%        | 98.3%        | 97.3%        | 98%          |
| Ash                              | 95.3%        | 96.7%        | 94.3%        | 96%          |
| Hazel                            | 96.6%        | 95.3%        | 99%          | 100%         |
| Cedar                            | 94.1%        | 94.1%        | 99.3%        | 97.2%        |
| Rowan                            | 99.6%        | 96.1%        | 98.6%        | 96.4%        |
| Holly                            | 94.5%        | 96.8%        | 96.8%        | 97.7%        |
| Silver Birch                     | 95.9%        | 94.5%        | 94.5%        | 93.8%        |
| Sycamore                         | 100%         | 100%         | 91.3%        | 94.7%        |
| Maple                            | 96.3%        | 96.7%        | 98%          | 95.7%        |
| Walnut                           | 97.9%        | 98.6%        | 97.9%        | 94.5%        |
| Willow                           | 99.6%        | 99.3%        | 98.6%        | 98.2%        |
| <b>% Attendance Whole School</b> | <b>96.4%</b> | <b>96.3%</b> | <b>96.5%</b> | <b>96.1%</b> |

## Pastoral Team News

### Safeguarding Children

If you have any concerns about a child relating to Safeguarding, please get in touch with one of our Safeguarding Leads immediately by contacting the school directly on 01993 843124.

If you are unable to speak to a member of our Designated Safeguarding Team at school and have a safeguarding concern, please contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) directly who will be able to advise you. If you have a concern about a child, please call MASH on 0345 050 7666.

**Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is Joanna Stainer (Deputy Headteacher)**

St John's Pastoral Team

Book Recommendation: The Anxious Generation

By: Jonathan Haidt

Some parents may have seen this book in the news recently as the subject is very topical. The author has researched and explored how anxiety and other mental health problems have dramatically increased in children and teenagers over the past 10 years.

As much as the book is geared more towards pre-teen and teen children, it is ever more important to think about as children are exposed to technology and social media from such young ages.

Parents might not agree with all of the ideas presented in the book, but it definitely provides food for thought.

Key Ideas presented in the book:

**Play-based childhood**

Children need play and independent exploration to mature into competent adults.

**Phone-based childhood**

The arrival of smartphones in the early 2010s changed the way children play and has made opportunities for play more limited.

**Mental illness**

The "rewiring" of childhood has led to an epidemic of mental illness.

**Social media**

Social media is damaging and can lead to social comparison, perfectionism, and addiction.

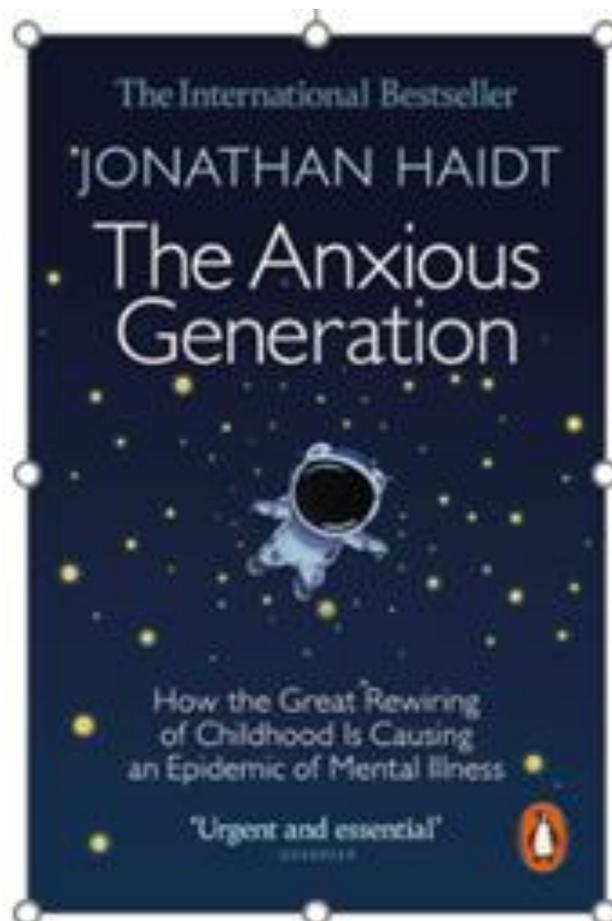
**Overprotective parenting**

The trend towards overprotective parenting and limiting independence in children has also contributed to the "rewiring" of childhood.

**Call to action**

The author suggests ideas that could help address the crisis, including phone-free schools and raising the age of internet adulthood to 16.

Where to buy: Amazon (<https://amzn.eu/d/heT8z0l>)



At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit [nationalcollege.com](https://nationalcollege.com).

## What Parents & Educators Need to Know about GROUP CHATS

On messaging apps, social media and online games, group chats are among the most popular ways that young people engage with their peers online. Involving three or more individuals, these groups allow users to send messages, images and videos to everyone in one place. While they can be great for connecting with others, there are several risks posed by these tools.

### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

#### BULLYING

Teens are often trying to find their place in their social group. Unfortunately, group chats can sometimes lend themselves to unkind comments being shared freely, putting people down to make their peers laugh – often creating a vicious circle that encourages others to join in. Being bullied so publicly – in front of friends and acquaintances – can also amplify the hurt, embarrassment and anxiety that the victim feels.

#### EXCLUSION AND ISOLATION

This common issue with group chats can happen in several ways: for instance, starting a new group, but deliberately excluding a certain child. Likewise, the chat may take place on an app which one person doesn't have access to, meaning they can't be involved. A child can also feel isolated when a group chat is used to discuss events that exclude them – for example, sharing photos from a day out that they didn't attend.

#### INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some discussions in group chats may include inappropriate words, swearing and unsuitable images or videos. These could be viewed by a child if they are part of that group, whether they actively engage in it or not. Some apps have features that cause messages to disappear after they're viewed, so children may be unable to report something they've seen, as it can only be viewed once or for a short time.

#### SHARING GROUP CONTENT

Group chats can feel more private and protected, allowing children to share inside jokes and video calls with a smaller group of friends. It's important to remember that while the chat's content is private between those in the group, individual users can easily share material with others outside of the group, or screenshot what's been posted. The risk of something a child intended as private becoming public is higher if there are strangers in the chat.

#### UNKNOWN MEMBERS

Within larger group chats, it's more likely for children to communicate with people they don't know. These strangers may be friends of the host, but not necessarily friendly towards everyone present. It's wise for young people to avoid sharing personal details and remember that they have no control over what others do with the material they send into the chat.

#### NOTIFICATIONS AND FOMO

A drawback of large group chats is the sheer number of notifications they tend to generate. Every time someone sends a message, each member's device will be 'pinged' with an alert. This could result in hundreds of notifications a day. This is often highly distracting, and young people's fear of missing out (FOMO) can cause increased screen time as they try to keep up with the conversation.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

#### CONSIDER OTHERS' FEELINGS

Group chats can become an arena for young people to compete for social status. This could cause them to do or say things on impulse which could upset others. Help children consider how people might feel if they behave in this way. If the child does upset someone, encourage them to reach out, show empathy and apologise for their mistake.

#### GIVE SUPPORT, NOT JUDGEMENT

Group chats are an excellent way for children to connect and feel like they belong. However, remind them that they can confide in you if they feel bullied or excluded, instead of responding to the person who's upset them. Validate their feelings and empower them by discussing how they'd like to handle the situation. You can also encourage children to speak up if they witness others being picked on.

#### BLOCK, REPORT AND LEAVE

If a child is in a chat where inappropriate content is being shared, advise them to block whoever sent the material, report that person to the host app or platform and exit the group. If any of this content could put a minor at risk, contact the police. Emphasise that it's OK for children to simply leave any group chat that makes them feel uncomfortable.

#### PRACTISE SAFE SHARING

In any online communication, it's vital for young people to be aware of what they're sharing and who might potentially see it. Ensure children understand the importance of not revealing identifiable details like their address, their school, or photos that they wouldn't like to be seen widely. Remind them that once something is shared in a group, they can't be certain where it might end up and how it might be used.

#### AVOID INVITING STRANGERS

Sadly, many individuals online hide their identity to gain a child's trust and serve their own ends – for example, to gather information on them, to exchange inappropriate content or to coax them into doing things they aren't comfortable with. Ensure the child understands why they shouldn't add people they don't know to a group chat – and why they should never accept a group chat invitation from a stranger.

#### SILENCE NOTIFICATIONS

Having a device bombarded with notifications from a group chat can be an irritating distraction – especially if it's happening late in the evening. Explain to children that they can still be part of the group chat while disabling notifications – and that it would be healthier for them to do so, avoiding a situation where they could feel pressured to respond.

### 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

Sources: <https://www.thecybertrust.org.uk/what-are-online-groups/>, <https://www.nps.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/social-media/dating-apps/>

## PTA News

### PTA Diary Dates

The PTA have planned many events for the year for children and families. We hope you will be able to support these:

#### March

Spring Discos – Weds 5<sup>th</sup> March Y1-6 (3 discos Y1&2 4.30-5.30pm, Y3&4 6-7pm, Y5&6 7.30-8.30pm)

Someone Special Sale (Mother's Day) - Thurs 27<sup>th</sup> March during the school day

#### June

Someone Special Sale (Father's Day) - Thurs 12<sup>th</sup> June during the school day

Summer Discos – Weds 18<sup>th</sup> June R-Y6 (3 discos R&Y1 4.30-5.30pm, Y2,3&4 6-7pm, Y5&6 7.30-8.30pm)

#### July

Summer Fun Day - Sun 6<sup>th</sup> July

Open Evening - Thurs 10<sup>th</sup> July

Leaver's party Thurs 17<sup>th</sup> July

## DIARY DATES

### Term Dates for 2024 – 2025

#### Term 1

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> September to Friday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2024

#### Term 2

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November to Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2024

#### Term 3

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> January to Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2025

#### Term 4

Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February to Friday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2025

#### Term 5

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April to Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2025

#### Term 6

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> June to Friday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2025

INSET Days: Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> and Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September,  
Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January, Monday 21<sup>st</sup> and Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> July

May Day Bank Holiday (school closed): Monday 5<sup>th</sup> May  
2025

### Term Dates for 2025-2026

#### Term 1

Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September to Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2025

#### Term 2

Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> November to Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2025

#### Term 3

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> January to Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2026

#### Term 4

Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February to Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2026

#### Term 5

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April to Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2026

#### Term 6

Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June to Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2026

INSET Days: Monday 1<sup>st</sup> and Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September, Friday  
24<sup>th</sup> October, Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January, Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July

May Day Bank Holiday (school closed): Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May  
2026

We may add to the following dates as school and community events are confirmed.

#### 2025

Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> February: Parent's Evening 3.40pm-7.30pm

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February: Nursery walk to the Country Park

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February: Year 4 Volcanoes and Earthquakes Workshop

Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> February:  
Reception Parents Teddy  
Bears Picnic 2.30pm

Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> February:  
Parent's evening 3.40pm-  
5.30pm

Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February: Year 3 Multi-Skills Festival at Carterton Community College

Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February: Year 5 Sycamore start brass lessons

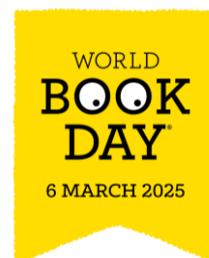
Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> February: Year 4 start swimming

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> March: World Book Day

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> March to Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> March: Travelling Bookfair



Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> April: Reception Vision Screening



Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March: Class Photos

Monday 31<sup>st</sup> March: Year 3 Trip to Hill End