

School Newsletter



Parent Update

Dear Parents/Carers,

Happy New Year!!! I hope 2026 has started in a positive manner for you and your family and I can't wait to see all the joy and opportunity it has to offer all of our children at St. Michael's CofE!

We began Term 3 with an INSET day where the majority of our teaching staff focused on ways of improving reading and spelling skills. Our reading leaders (Mrs. Port-Louis and Mrs. Davis) led a great session on how to teach fluency in reading lessons and Mr. Byrne has enabled all the children from Y1-Y6 to be able to use a new online spelling programme called 'Spelling Frame'. It has gone down really well with the children who have already started to use it in school so please look out for your child's log in details and more information on it via Class Dojo.

There are several important dates this term but can I draw your attention to a couple in particular. January 15th is the deadline for families to apply for their Reception school place. If you have any younger children who are starting school in September then you must have registered for their place on the South Glos. Admissions website (you'll find the link on the next page!). We always get a family or two who forget and then have a nervous wait so please make sure you'd done that by next Thursday. Also on the 15th is our Census day. It is important every family in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 take up their chance to have a school meal on that day as our funding for meals for the whole year is based on how many children are recorded as choosing a school meal. I know Mrs. Orchard in the kitchen has put on a fun menu for the day so I'm sure it'll be a hit!

I'd also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mrs. Stell on the safe arrival of baby Ivy! Both are doing incredibly well and we're so pleased to add another member to our St. Michael's family!

Please look out for the opportunity to apply to be a parent Governor at our school. We have two vacancies available over the next few months and we would really like to have applications which reflect the wonderful community we live in. Please don't hesitate to contact the school Governors (via the office email) if you'd like to know more about the role and we'll send out the application process in the next few weeks.

Mr. Barnard

Upcoming Events

Date	Details
Monday 5 th January	INSET DAY
Tuesday 6 th January	First Day term 3
Tuesday 13 th January	5.1 Family Lunches
Tuesday 13 th January	Full Governing Board meeting
Wednesday 14 th January	5.2 Family Lunches
Thursday 15 th January	5.3 Family Lunches
Thursday 15 th January	Census Day
Thursday 15 th January	Deadline for Reception applications intake Sept 26/27
Monday 2 nd Feb	Parents' Evening Week
Monday 9 th Feb	Parents' Evening Week
Monday 9 th – Friday 13 th February	Children's Mental Health Week
Tuesday 10 th February	Safer Internet Day
Tuesday 10 th February	4.1 family lunches
Wednesday 11 th February	4.2 family lunches
Thursday 12 th February	4.3 Family Lunches
Thursday 12 th February	Reception Family Phonics 2.45pm
Friday 13 th February	Reception – "People who help us" Dress up day
Friday 13 th February	Last Day Term 3

Thought of the Term

The theme for this term, and one of our school values, is joy (a deep sense of happiness and wellbeing). Joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit so it grows naturally in our lives and is present no matter what we are going through. Joy bubbled up in the shepherd who found his lost sheep, the lame man who was healed by Jesus and the guests at the wedding, for whom Jesus turned water into wine. We will be thinking about how we can nurture joy in our lives.



Achievements

• Lucy, Izzy, Abigail and Jeeva's wonderful winter writing • Bernardo and Amir's fantastic attitudes and being so helpful to Miss. Brown • Julian, James and Immy's magnificent maths • Elijah and Blake's amazing handwriting • Elizabeth and Ayo's impressive writing • Dougie's unbelievable handwriting improvements • Harriet's fabulous perseverance and writing during busy time.	• Amelia's awesome instructions on how to get ready for school • Isla and Jessica's impressive maths learning • Chloe being a brilliant big sister during running club • Ethan's endless levels of encouragement and enthusiasm when supporting younger children • Megan's delightful work ethic and manners • Grace's monumental reading over the Christmas period!
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Spelling Frame

We have some exciting news in the world of spelling to share with you all. Our school has just introduced an amazing website called Spelling Frame to all of the children from Year 1 to Year 6. Spelling Frame is a website full of fun games that supports the children with learning and retaining their spellings. Each week, the children will have the spellings that they are learning in school set for them on the website. The children each have their own login which will be sent home so that children can do some all-important practising at home as well as the session they get in school.

Most children in the school have had a go in their classes this week and the buzz around Spelling Frame has been amazing. Thank you all for your support in helping the children improve their spellings.

The link for the website is below:

<https://spellingframe.co.uk/>

Reading Challenge

Congratulations to everyone who took on the Christmas Reading Challenge. It has been lovely seeing all the winners at Hot Chocolate Friday and a special mention has to go to Grace who managed to read 142 times between the 1st December and the 9th January!!!!

We've also had the Term 2 Reading at Home results in and I can confirm Year 4 (for the second term running!) have the highest year group percentage of children reading 5x per week at home. They'll get extra play time as a reward with Class 3.2 achieving the highest percentage as a class to earn a class treat.

Reception Places for 2026-27 Apply by January 15th!

Just a reminder to make sure anyone who has a sibling starting school in September has applied for their Reception space. You have until the 15th January to do so and can use the link below to access the admissions website:

[South Glos LIFE | Primary school admissions](#)



Hi! My name is Ruth and I'm the Education Mental Health Practitioner based at St Michael's on a Tuesday. I work for a partnership project between the NHS and Off the Record called the Mental Health Support Team (MHST- [Mental Health Support Team - OTR](#)), providing early intervention support for emerging mental health needs and support the wider school community with things wellbeing-related. Hopefully, I'll be running some coffee mornings later in the year, but for now I wanted to re-introduce myself and let you know of some great resources out there for supporting your child with their wellbeing:

- Happy Maps- this website is full of articles, advice and storybook recommendations to help children explore things like their emotions, managing change, self esteem and much more. <https://www.happymaps.co.uk/>
- Place2Be 'Parent Smart' – short articles and videos from trained therapists about supporting your child's mental health and wellbeing. <https://parentingsmart.place2be.org.uk/>
- 'Togetherness'- The Solihull Approach – All parents in South Glous have access to online parenting courses on topic such as understanding child development and mental health and wellbeing. The access code for South Glous residents is 'CONCORDE' - <https://togetherness.co.uk/mul/south-gloucestershire/>
- Young Minds- Lots of resources and advice on different topics including a parent helpline (0808 802 5544.) or webchat. <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/>
- Sometimes the most powerful thing we can do for children is to look after our own mental health- if you are struggling with anxiety or low mood, you can speak to your GP or make a self-referral directly to NHS Talking Therapies - <https://vitahealthgroup.co.uk/nhs-talking-therapies/bristol-north-somerset-and-south-gloucestershire/> . If you are worried about your child then speak to their GP or let someone at school know.

Attendance at St. Michael's

As you'll all be aware, school attendance is incredibly important and can be directly linked to higher attainment and progress levels within children. Please support us in further raising attendance levels by being on time (you are late if you are not in class by 8.50am), prioritising your child's education and avoiding holidays during term time (the Local Authority have issued several fines to our parents in the past two months for taking holidays when children should be in school). Our attendance figures so far for this year are as follows:

Reception= 95.4%	Year 1= 94.1%
Year 2= 97.1%	Year 3= 96.3%
Year 4= 96.4%	Year 5= 96.8%
Year 6= 95.5%	School Average= 95.9%

School attendance is so important, not just for academic achievement but also for social and personal development. As I mentioned at the beginning of this newsletter, only 21% of children who are classed as persistently absent reach the expected levels for reading, writing and maths. To put that another way, if you are absent for 10% of school across an academic year, that is the equivalent of your child missing 114 lessons! This is a horrifying statistic and I know everyone will do their best to make sure their children don't have any unnecessary absences during term time.

Clubs/Activities

For more information on Clubs and Activities coming up please use the link below.

[St Michael's CofE Primary School - Clubs & Activities](#)



DISCOVERY DAYS

at WEMA Music Centres

Our free-of-charge Discovery Days are the perfect chance to try out our Music Centres, meet new friends, and experience the fun of playing in an ensemble. Bring your enthusiasm and see where music can take you!

Ensembles available for a wide variety of instruments, ages and playing levels.



Sign up using the QR code or visit:
wema.org.uk/wema-music-centres



ST MICHAEL'S
BALLET CLUB!

with professional ballet dancer Miss Georgia

Wednesday afterschool
3.20-4.10pm

All years welcome for a
FREE TRIAL

Contact
georgiarsmart@yahoo.co.uk
07751812701

The poster for St Michael's Ballet Club features a central image of a young ballerina in a light blue tutu performing a high leg extension. To her right is a large teal circle containing a white silhouette of a ballerina in a similar pose, with the letters "SMB" inside. The background is a light teal color with decorative orange dots and a wavy orange line on the right side.

Attendance Guide

Absences

Please report all absences via the Arbor app before 9am on the day of absence.

Medical Appointments

Please report these via dojo, the Arbor app or phone the school office prior to the appointment.

Holiday/Absence Requests

Please complete an Absence request form for your child. The form is on the school website to download and complete and can be emailed to the admin@stmichaelssg.org.uk

Guidance for Penalty Notices

There will be a national threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions for any reason (equivalent to 5 school days) within a rolling 10 school week period for when a penalty notice must be considered.

The rules mean you will no longer be able to take your child out of school for one week's holiday without a penalty notice being issued.

The penalty notice is a fine of £160 per parent per child. Penalty notices are issued by the local authority and must be paid within 28 days of the date of issue. The date that the payment is due by is recorded on the Notice.

For a first offence within a rolling 3-year period (beginning after 19th August 2024), the amount is reduced to £80 per parent per child, if it is paid within 21 days of issue.

If a second penalty notice is issued within a rolling 3-year period, there is no reduction for early payment, meaning that the amount will be £160 per parent per child.

If a parent then commits a third offence in a 3-year rolling period, the local authority will need to consider other enforcement options available to them.

Granting approval for term-time absence

Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Examples of what we define as 'exceptional circumstances' are listed below:

- Forces Personnel on leave from a foreign posting.
- Exceptional significant family events or circumstances – these will be considered on an individual basis with you (an example might be the wedding or funeral of a family member living abroad however only the days of travel and the day of the wedding would be considered to be authorised).
- It may also be appropriate to make allowances for parents who work for the emergency services and are only granted leave at certain times.

One of our key focuses as a school this year is reaching our attendance target of **97%**. We consider establishing good attendance habits as an important part of pupils' development and this can help them greatly in later life. Research shows that low attendance has a negative impact on children's learning as they miss key teaching opportunities during the week.



Below 90%

This is equivalent to more than 19 days absent in the school year. This will have a significant impact on their learning. In the last academic year, 87 children (13.9%) had attendance below 90%.

90% - 95%

A 95% attendance is equivalent to 9 days absent in the school year. This is a cause for concern as a child's learning will be negatively impacted.

Above 95%

This is equivalent to 8 or less days absent in the school year. This is providing the children the very best chances of success in their learning.

It is also really important for all children to be on time for school each day. All doors open at 8.40am with the register opening at 8.50am. Arrival after this time will result in a late mark. Additionally, they will miss out on important learning and social opportunities.

Polite Notices about Parking and Playground

Please DO NOT park in the school car park in the morning or at home-time. The car park is for staff, visitors, taxi and parents with disabled badges only. This is for the safety of our pupils and adults. We really appreciate everyone's co-operation on this and the gate will remain closed from 8.35-8.55am each day as well from 3.15-3.30pm in order to keep our children safe. This will be reviewed by the Property Governors at the end of September. Stewart, our site manager, will be on hand to assist so please remember to be kind and respectful as he is there to keep our children safe.

Please DO NOT park in the doctor's surgery car park and ensure you are parking responsibly on the neighbouring roads (particularly Beaufort Crescent as there have been residents concerned for the safety of our children).

We have also had several residents and parents concerned about the parking on the yellow and double yellow lines along Ratcliffe Drive. Please park with consideration for the safety of others.



Please note that NO dogs are allowed in the school grounds.

Please could children NOT ride their scooters or bikes in the playground.

Please could children NOT go into playground sheds after school.