

# **St Thomas' CofE Academy**



**Dear Parents,**

**It was so lovely to welcome so many of you to our Macmillan coffee morning this morning. Thank you to everyone for your donations, it is very much appreciated and helps towards a very special cause.**

**Within this newsletter there are important dates and details including special Christmas events. Please make a note of key dates that are relevant to your children.**

**As we are now half way through Autumn 1, it is fantastic to see children wearing their uniform with pride, turning up school ready and engaging so well with their learning.**

**Have a lovely weekend,  
Mrs Pierpoint**

**Friday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2025**

# ‘Learning for life with Jesus’

## Dates for your diary:

Mon 15 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Year 6 visiting The Kings to watch Shakespeare Rocks!
Tues 23 <sup>rd</sup> Sept	K52 Road safety day
Tues 23 <sup>rd</sup> Sept	Year 6 visiting The Kings - National coding week
Fri 26 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Macmillan coffee morning 9am
Tues 30 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Year 6 visiting The Kings - Science show
Tues 30 <sup>th</sup> Sept	School streets event
Fri 3 <sup>rd</sup> Oct	National Poetry Day workshops
Tues 7 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Tempest Photography - Individual and group photos
Tues 7 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Reception phonics information evening 6pm
Mon 13 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Time4sport swimming pool arrives (Info to follow)
Mon 13 <sup>th</sup> Oct - Wed 15 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Year 6 Standan Bowers residential
Mon 20 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Parents evening 15:30 - 18:30 Appointment only
Tues 21 <sup>st</sup> Oct	Parents evening 15:30 - 18:30 Appointment only
Wed 22 <sup>nd</sup> Oct	PSA Glow disco 5:45-6:45 Rec, Y1 Y2 <u>7</u> -8pm Y3,4,5,6
Fri 24 <sup>th</sup> Oct	School closes for half term
<b>Half term Mon 27<sup>th</sup> Oct - Fri 31<sup>st</sup> Oct</b>	
Mon 3 <sup>rd</sup> Nov	School reopens for staff and children
Mon 3 <sup>rd</sup> Nov	Reception and Y6 height and weight checks
Tues 4 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Visit from Author Alan Blank
Mon 10 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Barclays roadshow - Year 3 and 4
Tues 11 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Year 6 outdoor learning day - WW2
Fri 14 <sup>th</sup> Nov	INSET DAY - School closed for children
Fri 21 <sup>st</sup> Nov	Year 2 visit to Ford Green Hall
Wed 10 <sup>th</sup> Dec	K51 Nativity 1:30pm
Thurs 11 <sup>th</sup> Dec	K51 Nativity 5:30pm
Mon 15 <sup>th</sup> Dec	EYFS Nativity 2pm
Wed 17 <sup>th</sup> Dec	EYFS Nativity 9:30am
Wed 17 <sup>th</sup> Dec	K52 Carol service at St Thomas' Church 6pm

# SHINE workshops

We would warmly like to invite parents and carers into school to learn alongside your child. Following the success of our SHINES we would like to launch our Autumn term SHINE workshops - all of our autumn terms events will have a UNICEF - Rights Respecting Schools Focus

Please come into school for a fun filled and creative afternoon, where you can work alongside your child and learn new skills. This is also an opportunity to look at the different areas of our Rights Respecting Schools and how we teach and use this in school.

All of these sessions will start at 2:00pm and finish at 3:15pm. All sessions will be held in school.

## Dates:

Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup> September	Year 6
Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> October	Year 2
Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> October	Year 4
Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> October	Year 5
TUESDAY 11 <sup>th</sup> November	Year 3
Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> November	Year 1
Monday 24 <sup>th</sup> November	Reception
Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> December	Nursery

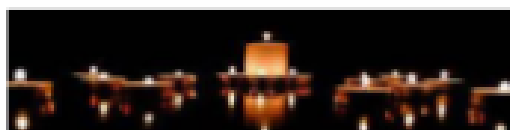


# Inspire sessions at St Thomas' Church.

2:00pm - 3:00pm at St Thomas' Church

## Dates:

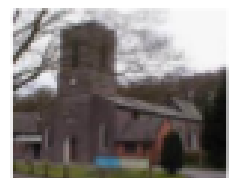
Tuesday 4 <sup>th</sup> November	Year 3
Tuesday 25 <sup>th</sup> November	Year 5
Tuesday 27 <sup>th</sup> January	Year 6
Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> March	Year 4
Tuesday 28 <sup>th</sup> April	Year 2
Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> June	Year 1
Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> July	Nursery
& Reception together in school	



We are really delighted to be continuing to work alongside Reverend Baker from St Thomas' church. We want to support children in their spiritual development and continue 'Learning for Life with Jesus.'

Following the great success of our Inspire workshops last year, each class will be spending an afternoon at St Thomas' to deepen their spiritual understanding and engage in fun craft-based activities around scripture lead by Reverend Baker and their class teacher.

We would love parents/ carers/ grandparents to join us for our Inspire workshop. Please come and work alongside us as we follow Jesus' path.



# 'Learning for life with Jesus'

## Friday worship & coffee



morning



Every Friday morning at 9am we have a worship in school led by Reverend Iain or Tom from St Thomas' Church. We warmly invite all parents/grandparents/ carers/ parish members to join us every week.

Each week a different class or school group will also be joining the coffee morning to show you some of their learning and share things they are proud of.

Everyone is welcome to every worship and coffee morning - we hope to see everyone soon.

### Dates: Autumn 1

Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Everyone welcome - start of new term
Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Year 3
Friday 26 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Pupil leaders leading <i>MacMillian Coffee Morning</i>
Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> Oct	Year 5
Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> Oct	<u>No Worship and Coffee morning today.</u>
Friday 17 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Reception
Friday 24 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Year 6

### Dates: Autumn 2

Friday 7 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Year 1
Friday 14 <sup>th</sup> Nov	<u>INSET DAY</u>
Friday 21 <sup>st</sup> Nov	Nursery
Friday 28 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Year 2
Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Year 4
Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Eco and School Council
Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Everyone welcome - end of term, coffee and mince pies



St. Thomas'  
CofE PRIMARY ACADEMY  
Learning for life with Jesus

# Term dates 2025/2026

## Autumn Term 2025

<b>INSET DAYS</b>	<b>Monday 1<sup>st</sup> and Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2025</b>
Autumn Term One	Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> September – Friday 24 <sup>th</sup> October 2025
<b>Half Term</b>	<b>Monday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2025– Friday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2025</b>
Autumn Term Two	Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> November 2025 – Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> December 2025
<b>INSET DAY</b>	<b>Friday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2025</b>
<b>Holiday</b>	<b>Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2025 – Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2026</b>

## Spring Term 2026

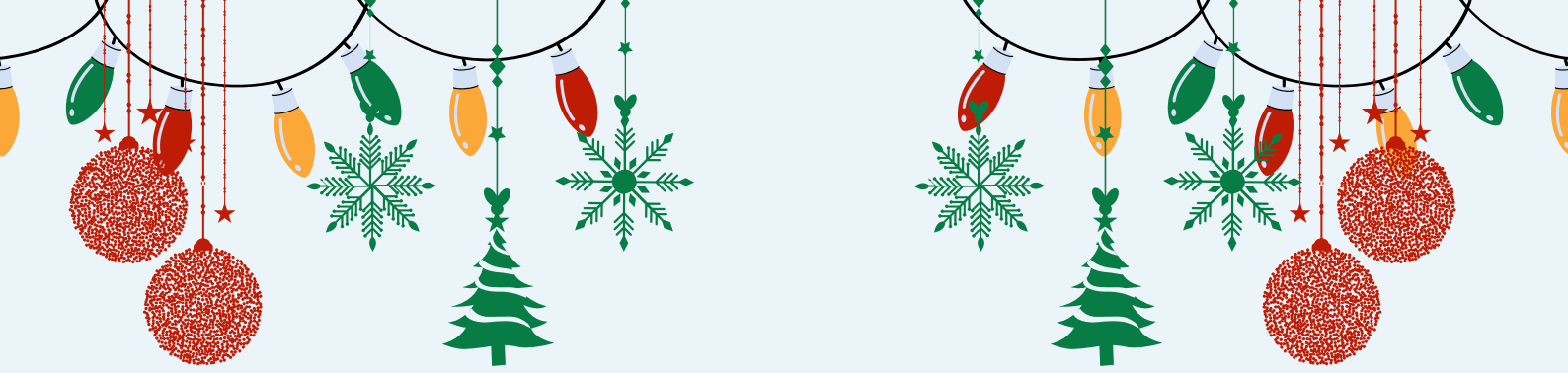
Spring Term One	Monday 5 <sup>th</sup> January 2026 – Friday 13 <sup>th</sup> February 2026
<b>Half Term</b>	<b>Monday 16<sup>th</sup> February – Friday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2026</b>
<b>INSET</b>	<b>Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2026</b>
Spring Term Two	Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2026 – Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> March 2026
<b>INSET</b>	<b>Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2026</b>
<b>Holiday</b>	<b>Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2026 – Friday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2026</b>

# Term dates 2025/2026

## Summer Term 2026

Summer term one	Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> April 2026 – Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2026
May Day	Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2026
Half Term	Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> May 2026 – Friday 29 <sup>th</sup> May 2026
Summer term two	Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> June 2026 – Friday 17 <sup>th</sup> July 2026
<i>INSET DAY</i>	<i>Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2026 (Twilights)</i>
Summer Holiday	Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup> July 2026 – Monday 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2026

*(2026/2027 academic year commences on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2026)*



# **Christmas at St Thomas'**

**You are warmly invited to celebrate with us**

**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December**

**KS1 Nativity 13:30**

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> Dec**

**KS1 Nativity 17:30**

**Monday 15<sup>th</sup> Dec**

**EYFS Nativity 2pm**

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> Dec**

**EYFS Nativity 9:30am**

**KS2 Carol Service at St Thomas' Church**

**6pm**





**Thank you for joining us today for  
the Macmillan coffee morning.  
Your generosity is very much  
appreciated.**

**WORLD'S BIGGEST  
COFFEE  
MORNING**

**MACMILLAN  
CANCER SUPPORT**



**Autumn term parents evenings will be Monday 20th and Tuesday 21st October. Appointments will be available between 3:30 and 6:45pm.**

**We will be following the same format as last year with longer appointments over 2 evenings. School will again be open for you to walk around and books available in the classrooms.**

**Appointments will be bookable via Arbor and these will go live at 8pm on Thursday 2nd October.**



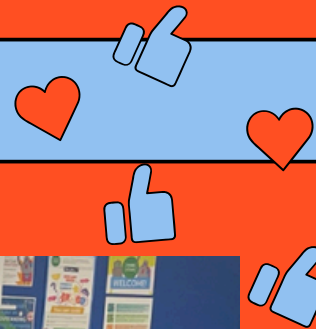
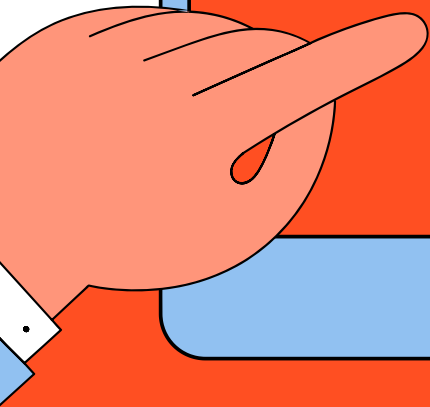
# KS2 Road Safety

Children in KS2 had lots of fun on Tuesday learning how to cross the road safely as part of the Stepping Out programme. They had a chat in class about the rules of the road and how to stay safe. They then went out and practiced how to cross the road in different places near the school and what to do in different scenarios.



# Year 6 visit The Kings


To celebrate coding week, Year 6 were invited to visit The Kings and take part in many hands on activities. They had a brilliant day and were a credit to St Thomas' with their behaviour, listening skills and enthusiasm!



# **SWIMMING**



# **LESSONS**

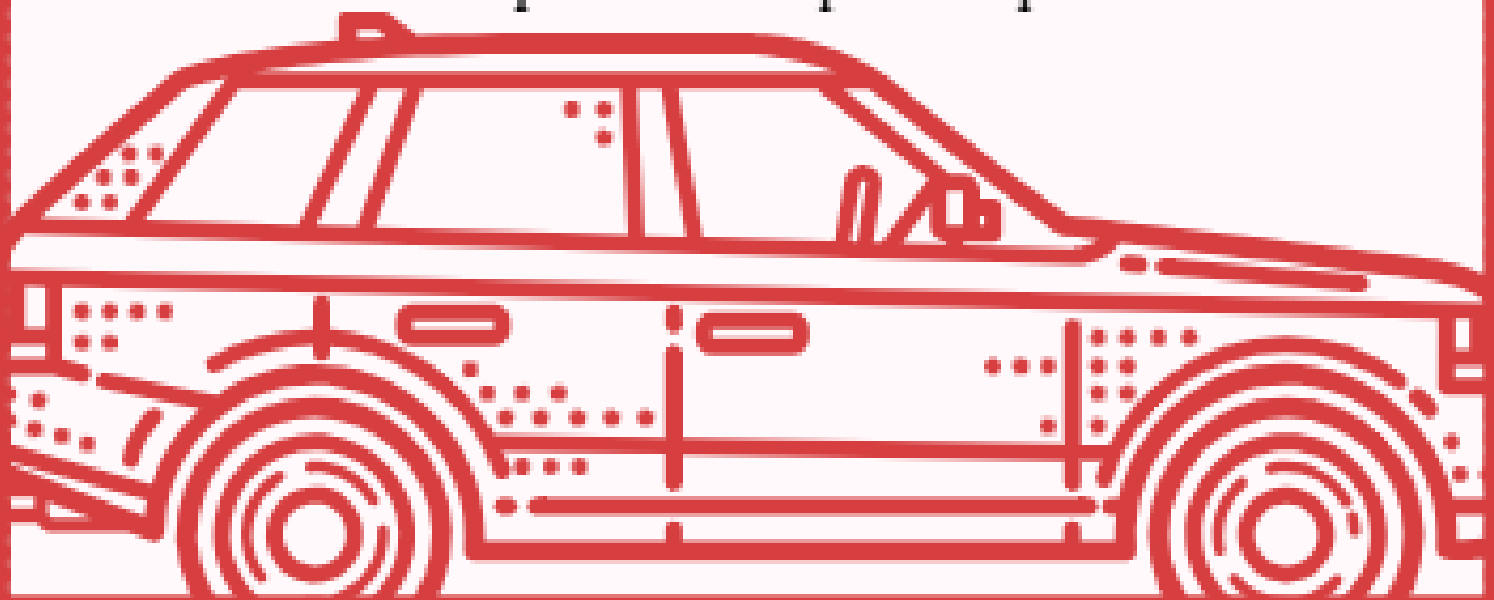


**We're excited to announce the return of our on-site swimming pool from 13th–24th October! All children in Years 2–6 will have the chance to swim during this time. Children will be assigned a group number, and letters will be sent out with the timetable showing when each group is swimming and when kits are needed. Swimming is a key part of the PE curriculum, and we're thrilled to offer this opportunity once again!**

# Safer streets for our children!

We're excited to be taking part in a School Streets trial on Tuesday 30th September, supported by Staffordshire County Council.

This initiative aims to make the roads around school safer and less congested by temporarily restricting vehicle access to Poplar Drive and Tilstone Close during key times: 8:15–10:00am and 2:00–3:45pm. A letter with full details has been sent out. Please contact the school office if you'd like more information. Let's work together to create a calmer, healthier environment at drop-off and pick-up!



# Stronger Starts

Our recent application to the Tesco Stronger Starts programme has been successful and our project has been selected to go forward for the customer vote in local Tesco stores.

Voting will take place in store from the first week of October 2025 until mid-January 2026. If our project receives the most votes in the region, we could be awarded up to £1,500 in funding! Second place could receive up to £1,000 and third place £500 – all of which would make a huge difference to our school and pupils.

How you can help:

We would love your support in spreading the word and encouraging friends and family to vote for our project when shopping at any of the following Tesco stores:

- Sandyford Express – ST6 5EL
- Kidsgrove Superstore – ST7 1DX
- Audley Express – ST7 8EE
- Fegg Hayes Express – ST6 6SH

# Sip and support drop ins

St Thomas' now offer drop in sessions in school where parents and carers can speak to our Education Mental Health Practitioner about any concerns or questions they have. This may include questions around diet, sleep, routines, mental health and support services available.

**When:**

**Fri 3<sup>rd</sup> Oct 09:30am**

**Fri 28<sup>th</sup> Nov 09:30am**

**Fri 9<sup>th</sup> Jan 09:30am**

Hannah will be available in the Haven for a chat during the coffee morning on the above dates. Everyone welcome!



# SUPERSONIC

## Phonic Friends

### Your Enchanted Adventure

Reception parents are warmly  
invited to a phonics  
information evening on:

**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> October 6pm**

Please join us to find out more  
about your child's phonics  
learning journey!

# GLOW

PARTY

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE NEXT FANTASTIC  
PSA EVENT!

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October

Reception, Year 1 & 2

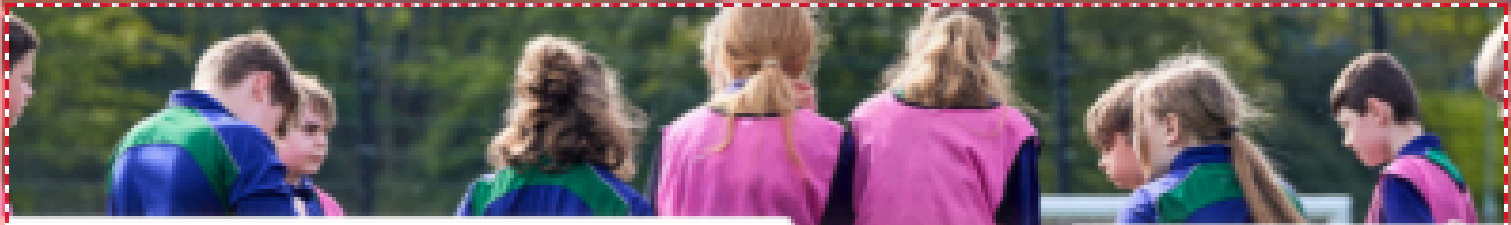
5:45-6:45

Year 3,4,5,6

7-8pm



More details to follow!



# FREE SCHOOL MEALS ELIGIBILITY

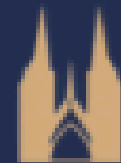


Your child may be eligible for FREE SCHOOL MEALS if you receive any of the following:

- Income support
- Jobseeker's Allowance
- Child tax credit
- Working tax credit run-on
- ESA
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Universal Credit

If you believe that you are eligible, please tell the school!

**DID YOU KNOW?** The school receives additional funding for children who are in receipt of free school meals.



Three  
Spires  
TRUST

*"Life in all its fullness"*

**Could you be for eligible for free school meals? We would encourage all eligible parents to apply, even if your child is in reception/ year 1/ year 2 or prefers to bring a packed lunch. By applying, not only could your child receive a free meal every day, but the school also receives additional funding.**

**To check if you are eligible or to apply please follow this link**

**<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/educational-awards-benefits/freeschoolmeals/apply-online.aspx>**

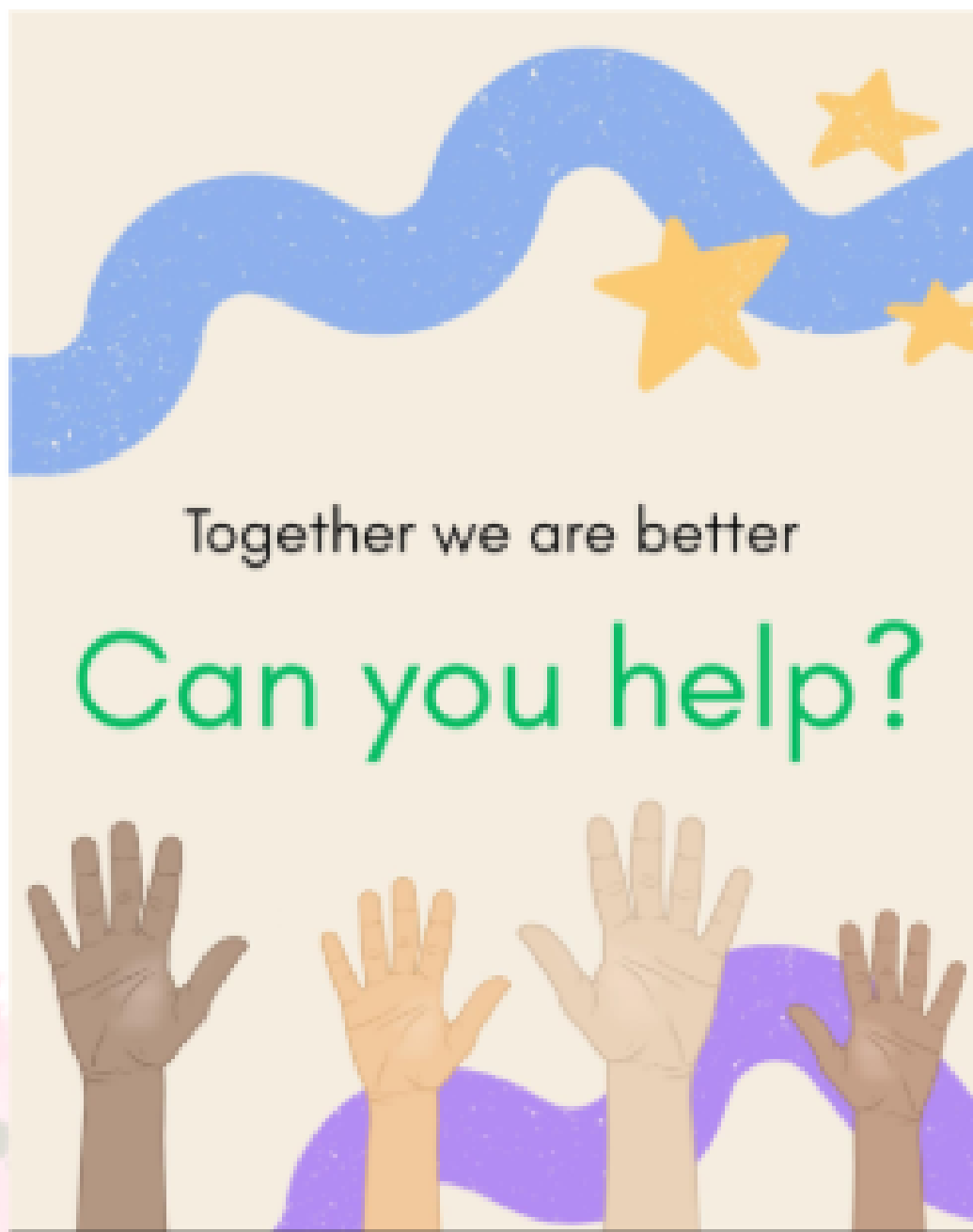
**Our PSA needs new members to be the best it can be  
for the children at our school...**

**Can you spare some time to see what it's all about?**

**You don't need to be a part of every event, volunteer  
as much or as little as works for you & your family.**

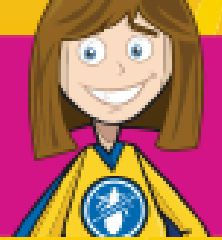
**Join our facebook page for more info**

**[https://www.facebook.com/share/197nL3fwmW/?  
mibextid=wwXlfr](https://www.facebook.com/share/197nL3fwmW/?mibextid=wwXlfr)**



# CHECK

You should check your children's hair regularly, ideally once a week – a good way to remember this is **ONCE A WEEK, TAKE A PEEK**



## How Do You Find Head Lice?

To diagnose a case of head lice you need to find them alive. This is when you need to use a treatment. They move fast and are small – so they can be hard to find!

## Sizing Up Head Lice

Head lice range in size from a full stop to a sesame seed.



Actual size in stages of growth.



### Where to Peek

- Close to the scalp
- Behind the ears
- The back of the neck
- The top of the head
- Under the fringe

### What to Peek for

- Adult lice are 2-4 mm long  
Immature lice are even smaller
- Live lice remain close to the scalp
- Nits are dead or empty egg shells - simply remove these by hand or by combing

## How to Check

- Checking for head lice shouldn't be considered a big deal, it is just a normal part of a family's personal hygiene routine like brushing teeth or washing hair
- It is best to check for head lice using a comb made for the purpose, ideally white so they can be easily seen and with teeth no more than 0.3mm apart in order to trap head lice
- Combing through the hair when wet, or after applying a conditioner, may make the process more comfortable
- Good lighting is important and so is comfort

### CHECK...

If head lice are spotted, take a close look at all the family, including yourself, and ask close family and friends to check as well

Consult a pharmacist for treatment advice

### Advertisement

The Hedrin Head Lice Detection Comb is ideal for effective checking.



# TREAT

If you find live lice, firstly, don't worry. Head lice are a normal part of life and are nothing to be embarrassed, panicked or ashamed about.

## How to get rid of head lice?

There are **FOUR** types of head lice treatment:

- Non-pesticide treatments
- Pesticide lotions and liquids
- Wet combing with conditioner
- Alternative treatments

**NON-PESTICIDE** treatments work in a different way from conventional pesticide treatments. They kill the lice by coating and either stripping away their waxy coating, causing them to dehydrate or blocking the opening to their air tubes, disrupting their ability to manage water. These physical mode of actions mean there is theoretically no chance for the lice to build up a resistance. There are three main active ingredients currently in use, dimeticone, isopropyl and activediol.

**PESTICIDE** based treatments have been around for many years but there is now evidence that head lice already have, and continue to, develop resistance to some of them. There are two main types which work by poisoning the lice but evidence suggests that levels of resistance to these treatments are rising.

**WET COMBING** removes lice and nits but does take time and patience to ensure a thorough job is done. It's quite easy to miss a few and needs to be done twice a week for at least two weeks.

**ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS** and herbal options are available – although their effectiveness varies.

Go to your local pharmacy for information and advice on which treatment is right for you.

## Applying treatment

- Treatment should only be applied if a living, moving louse is found – never 'just in case'
- When applying treatment, cover the full length of hair and ensure treatment is left on for the recommended time – following on-pack instructions carefully
- Keep lotion out of eyes and off the face – do not use the hair dryer and keep away from flames, stoves, cigarettes and other sources of heat



# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

# SNAPCHAT

AGE RESTRICTION  
**13+**

SNAP STREAK

**97**

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

With over 900 million active monthly users and billions of 'snaps' sent each month, Snapchat is a popular messaging app among children and young people. It allows users to share fun, spontaneous pictures and videos with friends and family while using playful filters. One of Snapchat's unique features is that pictures, videos and messages are only viewable for a short period of time.

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



Snapchat's use of artificial intelligence (AI) includes features like the 'My AI' chatbot and AI-powered filters, offering interactive experiences that can be fun but also pose risks. These tools may show unfiltered or inaccurate responses, promote unrealistic beauty standards, and collect personal data. Advanced filters and deepfake-style lenses can distort reality, potentially leading to manipulation, impersonation, or inappropriate content.

## SCREEN ADDICTION



Snapchat boosts user engagement and daily use with features like streaks (daily Snapchat exchanges between you and a friend). When a streak's been going for a few days, users will see a 🔥 emoji. The number alongside it shows the number of days, but if users miss a day and break the streak, the only way to restore it is to pay. This encourages daily use habits, and frequent notifications can keep users returning to the app even more often.

## SEXTORTION



Because Snapchat's disappearing messages feature may foster a sense of safety, users may become targets of sextortion. For example, a predator may pressure someone into sending nude images, then someone captures those images to threaten and intimidate the victim. This might involve claiming they will share the images with friends or family unless money is paid.

## SNAPCHAT+



Snapchat+ is the platform's premium subscription service, offering early access to new and exclusive features. In June 2025, Snapchat introduced a new tier called Lense+, giving subscribers access to hundreds of lenses and AR experiences for playing, creating, and sharing snaps. These paid features may encourage young users to spend money to access exclusive content, increasing the risk of overspending or feeling pressured to make in-app purchases.

## ACCESSIBILITY



Snapchat is now accessible from a web browser, meaning children can use it on a laptop or tablet without downloading the app. This can make activity harder to monitor, reduce the effectiveness of parental controls, and increase the risk of unsupervised communication or exposure to inappropriate content.

## INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT



Some content on Snapchat isn't suitable for children. The footage used to group content are determined by the poster, so even an innocent search term could still yield age-inappropriate results. The app's always-on-key messages feature also makes it easy for young people to share explicit images on impulse – so posting continues to be a risk associated with Snapchat.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### ACCESS THE SNAPCHAT FAMILY SAFETY HUB

Created with guidance from common sense media, Snapchat has developed a Family Safety Hub that explains how the app works and how to use its in-app protections for teens. It's recommended that you review this guidance before allowing a child to download Snapchat. Remember, the app is only intended for children aged 13 and over.



### ENCOURAGE OPEN DISCUSSIONS

Snapchat's risks can be easier to handle if you nurture an open dialogue. Talk about norms and boundaries before letting children sign up. If they're turned into a scam, encourage them to tell you immediately, talk openly and non-judgementally about posting, emphasising its inherent risks. Furthermore, explain how popular 'challenges' on the platform can have harmful consequences.

### BLOCK AND REPORT

If a stranger connects with a child on Snapchat and makes them feel uncomfortable by pressuring them to send or receive unwanted or inappropriate images, the child can tap the three dots on that person's profile to report or block them. There are options to state why they're reporting that user, with a tailored reporting section under the 'nudity and sexual content' category. In this category, there is the option to report somebody for threatening to leak sexually explicit images, or 'ruddy'.



### USE PRIVACY SETTINGS TOGETHER

Sit down with the children in your care and explore Snapchat's privacy settings as a shared activity. You can help them adjust who can contact them, view their stories, or see their location on Snap Map. It's a good opportunity to explain why some settings are safer than others, reinforcing their understanding of online boundaries. Encourage them to regularly review these settings, especially after app updates or changes in their friendship groups.



### 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 posting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



The National College

Source: see full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/snapchat>



# Fairtrade Fortnight

**How does Fairtrade work?**

**Fairtrade makes sure that farmers and workers have a say in important decisions that affect them.**

**Fairtrade sets a minimum price for things like tea, coffee, and chocolate. This helps make sure farmers get paid fairly, even if prices go up and down.**

**The Fairtrade Premium is extra money that farmers and workers can use to help their community, protect the environment, or improve their businesses.**

**Fairtrade has strong rules to help farmers and workers take care of their land, health, and jobs.**





**Dear Lord,  
Give us courage to challenge unfair  
trade rules and pray for those who  
have the power to make far reaching  
decisions affecting the world's poor.  
As we eat and drink, help us to pray  
for those who have laboured to bring  
the food to our table.**

**Amen**

