

St Martin's Newsletter



AUTUMN TERM - Friday 17th November

Open Day

On **Thursday (23rd November)** the school will be holding an **open day** for any new prospective parents for Nursery or Reception next year. Appointments are not necessary as tours will be available throughout the day (except lunchtime 12-1pm). If you know anyone who has a child aged **2-4 years** please let them know.



Well done to everyone who got a certificate this week.

Purple Tie certificates are given for children who embody our rules of being Kind Respectful and Responsible.

Year R – Carolyn J

Isla S

Year 1 – Mabel R & Hannah N

Olivia HG

Year 2 – Harvey P & Demi-Rose W

Rosalie C

Year 3 – Pennie S & Tommy H

Imogen T

Year 4 – Patrick D & Penelope J

Zachary G

Year 5 – Ella R & Ethan G

Erin H

Year 6 – Halle F & George F

Phoebe-Rose M

Bags

Even though the bags are now stored in a cupboard children are still bringing them to school. Please **do not send** your children into school with bags other than their book bag. All equipment is provided by school and they are unable to use own felt tips etc during the school day, so there is no need to bring them. Children collecting them at the end of the day is causing much disruption, so **from Monday** any bags stored in the cupboard will need to be collected from the front office by parents.



Assembly

Today, in assembly some children spoke about what they had learned during anti-bullying week. The next assembly will be on **Friday 2nd December** for Y1's class assembly.



Online Safety

This week's safety advice is about Microtransactions
<https://nationalcollege.com/guides/microtransactions> and is attached with this newsletter.

Attendance

Year R – 91% 4 Lates

Year 1 – 90% 9 Lates

Year 2 – 95%

Year 3 – 94% 3 Lates

Year 4 – 95%

Year 5 – 98% 9 Lates

Year 6 – 96%

4 classes with less than 10 lates

Well done to year ?, this weeks Dojo Champs

Anyone who comes into school after 8:50am is marked as late.

Please try to be an attendance



First Holy Communion Enrolment Mass

The children will be enrolling for their sacramental preparation at any of the masses on **Saturday 25th and Sunday 26th November**. The children must attend one of these masses if they want to make their First Holy Communion in June.



Communication

Thank you to the parents that provided **feedback about communication**. Details of where you can find information about what is going on in school is below.

Currently:

- * The school uses Facebook and the School Spider app, to communicate with parents.
- * The school gateway app conveys messages regarding finance and money.
- * A newsletter is emailed out to all parents weekly and a spider message with it attached is sent. The newsletter is put on the website also. This contains all the information for the upcoming week/fortnight.
- * Twitter and Instagram share some communication and we are beginning to use these more as tools to share the learning and activities children have done throughout the week.
- * We send a list of key dates in the first week of term in order, that time off work may be booked. Further reminders are attached to every newsletter and reminders are usually given closer to the time either in the newsletter or by spider message/ email.
- * After the parent focus meeting we have a template to be used for all activities. Hopefully this standard template will mean that all messages are clear. Any feedback on the new style messages would be welcome.

Autumn Term Key Dates

Thursday 23 rd Nov:	School Open day for Reception 2024
25 th & 26 th Nov:	Enrolment Mass for First Holy Communions
Wednesday 29 th Nov:	KS1 & EYFS Mass at 10am
Wednesday 6 th Dec:	Whole school Mass
Friday 8 th Dec:	EYFS Christmas performance 10am
Tuesday 12 th Dec:	KS2 Christmas performance 1.30pm
Thursday 14 th Dec:	KS1 Christmas performance 1.30pm
Friday 15 th Dec:	Christmas dinner day
Tuesday 19 th Dec:	Christmas fayre morning
Wednesday 20 th Dec:	Christmas Mass at 10am

Class parties/Finish for Christmas at 1.30pm



Children In Need

Pictures of the children raising money for **Children in Need** are available on school socials. Thank you to everyone we have raised **£120.50** so far, donations can still be made via gateway up until midnight on **20th November**.



What Parents & Carers Need to Know about MICROTRANSACTIONS

Microtransactions (often abbreviated as "MTX") are digital purchases made within an app or game to unlock extra features or additional content such as new levels. A popular sub-set of these are loot boxes, which contain a selection (usually random) of virtual items: from character skins to game-changing equipment like better weapons. Microtransactions (and loot boxes in particular) are now widespread in apps and games, but concerns persist that they normalise gambling and can foster addictive behaviours – especially among younger players.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

GATEWAY TO GAMBLING?

Microtransactions have been criticised for promoting gambling-adjacent behaviour in children. Research has also suggested that exposure to the loot box system could affect the likelihood of a young person suffering gambling harms later in life: children who purchased or used loot boxes in the last 12 months were found to be more likely to have gambled during the same period, as well.

ADDICTIVE NATURE

Microtransactions (and loot boxes especially) could lead to young people displaying compulsive behaviours. Loot boxes are designed to be addictive, and the sought-after prizes they contain are dispensed at random. This means that young gamers might not get what they want straight away, causing them to spend more money as well as additional time gaming.

PAYING TO WIN

In many popular games (the FIFA series being a notable example), microtransactions make it far easier to succeed – which is a concern because children can often find it difficult to keep track of their spending. Once a child starts making in-game purchases, they may continue buying to keep up with their friends and other players – sometimes without recognising the mounting real-world cost.

EXCLUSIVE CONTENT

DATA COLLECTION

To allow a young person to complete microtransactions, many app and game developers collect personal data such as their name, address, email, geolocation information, photos, payment details and so on. Even if this data remains secure (which is by no means guaranteed), there's always the chance that it will be used – and possibly sold on to third parties – for marketing purposes.

AFFECTING DAILY ROUTINE

Online games tend to revolve around repeated loops of activity that can affect purchasing decisions and potentially influence children's spending patterns. This could lead to your child not only handing over more money but also adjusting their daily routine to match the game's schedule – potentially impacting more important elements of their day, such as homework and family time.

SATELLITE SPENDING

If you've linked a payment method like a debit card or a PayPal account to your child's game or app, it's wise to keep a close eye on their microtransactions to ensure they aren't racking up a large bill. Letting a child have access to your card (if they're still too young to have their own) or other means of payment could also lead to them spending beyond the apps and games they normally use.

Advice for Parents & Carers

DO YOUR RESEARCH

It's important to have a serviceable idea of whether the games your child plays use the loot box system (even if it goes by a different name) or include the option of buying items, equipment and so forth. If so, it's crucial to help your child understand that this costs actual money, and that they shouldn't feel pressured into making any purchases.

CHAT ABOUT 'CHANCE'

It may help to explain to your child that many microtransactions involve an element of chance: they could pay money and still not get what they want in return. Emphasise that – while not usually costing much individually – these in-app and in-game purchases can soon add up. Talk to your child about how spending their money in a game or app means they have less to use in the real world.

(GIFT) CARDS ON THE TABLE

Investing in an in-game currency gift card can be a useful way of helping your child get to grips with budgeting. If you buy, say, a £10 V-bucks Fortnite gift card, monitor how long it takes them to spend it. When they come to you asking for more, you could make it the starting point for a conversation about how quickly that money went and how they could earn their next gift card.

STOP SPENDING AT SOURCE

You might decide that the wisest strategy is to remove the potential for spending money on microtransactions. If so, most games, apps and devices have options in their settings to help you manage what your child can spend – or to disable that function altogether, preventing them from buying additional items for their games or boosted functionality for certain apps.

WATCH FOR THE SIGNS

If you're worried that your child's passion for a particular game or app may tempt them into habitual spending on microtransactions, it's important to remember the indicators of addictive behaviour. Irritability, a lack of concentration and prioritising recreational screen time ahead of homework or mealtimes could all be signs that you need to have a conversation about a more balanced routine.

Meet Our Expert

Caryn Page is an experienced technology journalist with a track record of more than 10 years in the industry. Previously the editor of tech website The Inquirer, Caryn is now a freelance technology journalist, editor and consultant.



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