

# St. Michael's C. of E. Primary School

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2023

[www.stmichaelscofe.co.uk](http://www.stmichaelscofe.co.uk)

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down  
from the Father of lights..." James 1:17



## Special performances

**Week B**

It was a special moment for our Foundation Stage parents this week as they saw their children on stage for the first time performing their Nativity. I joined them in these wonderful moments and for many parents, tears of pride and joy flowed. What a brilliant effort the children all made in their singing, speaking parts and the costumes – it made the mornings very special to watch.

The same afternoons, the Hall was filled again as KS1 parents arrived to see their children. This time, the narration from the children as well as the speaking parts, dancing and singing were great and a few cameo performances (whether scripted or not) again left the audience in a positive mood.

Both days, the FOSM were on hand to serve teas, coffees and mince pies as well as a few raffle tickets and my thanks to them for their help also with setting out the chairs before the afternoon sessions – tricky to get this sorted in such a short space of time alone.



At the beginning and end of the week, I posed the children some Christmas challenges: "**Think of ways of including people who may be lonely in the things that you are doing.**" and "**Think of one piece of good news this week and share it with a friend, a parent or a grandparent this weekend**" as we have looked at the Christmas story through the traditional carol "The First Nowell".

The next four days are our last before 17 days of much needed rest for staff and children, but are as busy as always. KS2 are finalising their pieces for the Church on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings and I've seen many classes doing read-throughs in classrooms this week as I've passed so that their lines can be delivered clearly on the night.

Christmas lunches take place next week too, and sadly for us, Mrs Ritson who works in the kitchen and has a great rapport with the children finishes with us at the end of the week. This was a blow to Chef and the rest of the team but she goes with our best wishes and I'm sure will be sent off in style by Y6 who have often benefitted by her serving extra portions at the end of certain services.



**Andrew Cumpstey**

## The week ahead – Week B

Monday 18 <sup>th</sup>	Breakfast Club 07:45 – 08:45 <b>Christmas Fair</b> 15:15 onwards in the Hall
Tuesday 19 <sup>th</sup>	Breakfast Club 07:45 – 08:45 <b>FS &amp; KS1 Christmas lunch</b> ; Y3 & Y4 Carol Service 18:00 @ Church
Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup>	Breakfast Club 07:45 – 08:45 <b>KS2 Christmas lunch</b> ; Yoga; Y5 & Y6 Carol Service 18:00 @ Church
Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup>	Breakfast Club 07:45 – 08:45 Christmas film morning
Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>School Closed</b> <b>Christmas holidays begin, back on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024</b>

## Achievements

Helen's Braintree Childcare have been visiting Bradbury House care home after school and recently enjoyed making a pine cone Christmas tree craft with the residents. They took handmade cards with a tree decoration inside and had a collection of Christmas presents – every resident received one; she was really proud of them, and rightly so.

Congratulations to the whole of  
**Edison**

who won this week's  
House Point competition.

**Emily Dixon & Chimamanda Ugwu**  
proudly collected the trophy on behalf of  
their whole team

All of the children were so polite and the residents really appreciated their visits

Ida (4M), Kensi (4M), Emily (3H), Finlay (2FW), Theo (2FW), Nina (1M) and Imogen (RR) pictured.



This week, both Y6 classes were able to attend an event at St. Michael's Church called "Experience Christmas" and the following is from **Bailey, Elena, Elise and Joshua**

Just yesterday, Year 6 visited the church for a very special Christmas experience. After watching a short animation (created using Lego), we were split into small groups in order to complete five fun and unique activities all led by members of the church. During these times we delved deeper into the Christmas Story to really think about the various characters which included: the shepherds, the wise magi and of course... Mary and Joseph. At the end, just before we left, we gathered together where we learnt about how the Christmas trees in our houses can also remind us of the story.

We thoroughly enjoyed the experience and would like to thank Mrs Grove-Smith and the rest of the team who helped us.





FOSM



## Present Room

Although the FOSM team are here to raise money for the children and school, the Present Room is more about giving the children the opportunity of handling money and choosing a present of their choice for someone they care for. With your help we raised **£226.00**, a good amount over the week. There are still a few presents to buy, which you can do at the Christmas fair on Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> December in the school hall.

### Bike and Scooter Rack



For those of you who use the Flitch Way gate coming in and out of school, you will have seen the new bike and scooter rack area. The flooring is being put down by the Friends over the Christmas break, so the area will be ready and available to use when we return to school in the New Year. Mr Moss will be locking and unlocking the gate at drop off and pick up times each day. However, we ask that you please lock individual items to the racks for extra security.

Now that the Bike and Scooter Rack is nearly complete,  
The Friends are now raising money for  
outdoor seating to be placed in the playgrounds.



It was lovely to see so many parents and have a chance to chat at the school Nativity performances this week. Thank you for your kind donations towards the mince pies and refreshments. Special thanks goes to **Braintree Lidl, Tesco Great Notley and Tesco Braintree Centre** who very kindly donated the mince pies.



## Hamper Raffle Tickets



If you haven't bought your hamper raffle tickets yet, don't worry, there is still time.

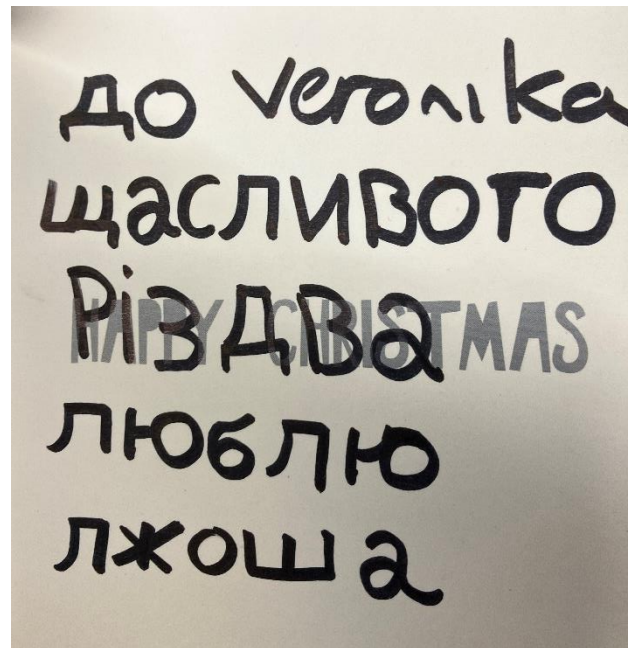
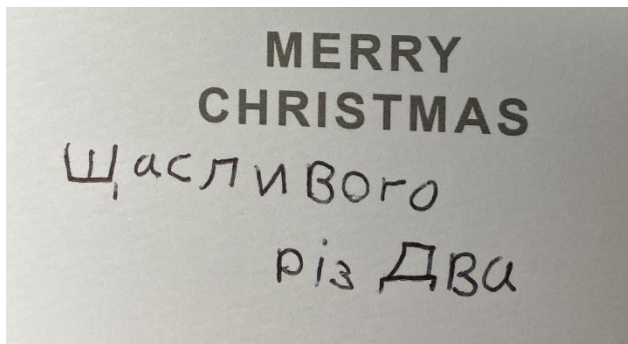
Tickets are still available via ParentMail until Midnight on Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> December. The draw will take place on the evening of Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> December, ready for winners to collect their hampers before the Christmas holiday begins.

The FOSM team will be at the Christmas Fair on Monday, 18<sup>th</sup>. We will be selling Hamper tickets, the last of the Present Room Presents and the school uniform clothes swap will be available to help yourself to. We look forward to seeing you there.



## Notices

Monday's Christmas challenge was to notice and help people feel included. Two children in 6LM thought about how to make their friend, Veronika, feel included even more and therefore researched and wrote their cards in Ukrainian. **Joshua** and **Eliza** both received a mention in Worship this morning for that very thoughtful act.



At the beginning of the week, Mrs Bruce shared with me a card that she had received from one of the parents:



“To RBR,

**I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart! When my child started, he was so nervous he took an acorn to school for luck. After a while, he realised he didn't need to as his teachers were his lucky acorn!**

**As a gift for future nervous / scared children, I bought a 'Confidence Conker' which children years from now can cuddle and get comfort.”**



# Safety above convenience

One of our parents, who is a police officer, sent in these photos this week of some exceptionally inconsiderate parking on Clare Road.

In the first one, amazingly, the car right at the junction was parked, not turning out, while the other two show that some parents feel that the “**Keep Clear**” sign is not relevant to them.



The parent has witnessed this week a child and adult nearly hit as someone reversed from a space and tried to speak to the driver of one of the parked vehicles but to no avail.

We know that no-one wants the worst to happen but this is not a new problem; some parents are parking inconsiderately because of their desire to get their children in to school but all of you are in the same position and most are careful / sensible and understand the potential risks to children.

At the last Parent Forum meeting, this issue was brought up and all members share the concerns. We are looking at ways that parents can share concerns like this with the police directly, who may be able to issue fines / warnings, (this is known as Section 59 ‘**Vehicles used in manner causing alarm, distress or annoyance**’) in the meantime, The Highway Code advises drivers not to stop or park opposite or within 10 metres (32 feet) of a junction, except in an authorised parking space.





**NEW DATE ADDED**

Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 13:30-15:30

Due to the increase in numbers on the waiting list, I am pleased to announce another date for the Yoga Christmas and New Years Party!

If you did not manage to book on in time then this new date is the one for your child, or if your child wishes to attend both they are more than welcome as both parties' will be slightly different.

This Yoga Christmas and New Year's party is perfect to get those last-minute preparations done and take some time for yourself before Christmas.

As always, we shall go on a yoga journey through various poses, breathing exercises, teamwork, confidence building in a supported group setting, snack decorating, and some fun yoga games, all with the wonderful fun theme of Christmas and New Year.

Our main aim is FUN through yoga!

As it is Christmas festive dress is welcome (appropriate for yoga) and each child will receive a gift.

Please provide water for your child, Nikki will provide a snack.



info@yogawithnikki.net      www.yogawithnikki.net

Essex County Council  
Libraries

**Essex Library Service**

**Winter Reading Challenge**

Saturday 25 November to Saturday 3 February



Travel around the world with Lyra this winter and meet lots of new animal friends!

Collect your booklet from any Essex library.










@essexlibraries



Toucan Events  
presents

SCAN FOR TICKETS

**Cinderella**

A Magical Pantomime!

**14-24 Dec**

The Institute, Braintree

★★★★★ 'Highly recommended - You won't be disappointed' ★★★★★  
★★★★★ 'Best thing we've seen for ages - first class' ★★★★★

This enchanting tale provides a world of magic, combining the classic narrative with a seasonal touch of Christmas spirit. Full of audience interactions, toe-tapping songs, heartwarming moments, and barrels of laughter, this pantomime promises an experience like no other!

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> Dec - 6pm  
 Friday 15<sup>th</sup> Dec - 6pm  
 Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> Dec - 1pm & 5pm  
 Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> Dec - 1pm & 5pm  
 Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> Dec - 1pm & 5pm  
 Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec - 1pm & 5pm  
 Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> Dec - 1pm & 5pm  
 Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> Dec - 11am & 5pm

Doors open 45 minutes before each show  
Ticket prices are per seat  
Under 2s on laps go free.



Amy Ansell as Cinderella  
 Nick Bright as Prince Charming  
 Frances Styles as Chardonnay  
 Patrick Seymour as Shiraz  
 Georgie King as Fairy Godmother  
 James Beatty as Buttons (left)  
 and Star Struck Theatre School

Tickets on sale at  
[www.BockingArtsTheatre.com](http://www.BockingArtsTheatre.com)

Institute, 15 Bocking End, Braintree, Essex, CM7 9AE  
Registered Charity Number 1145115





# SMILES FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT

THE PERFECT MIDWEEK SESSION TO KEEP YOUR KIDS ENGAGED AND ACTIVE. EXPECT A HIGH ENERGY, INCLUSIVE AND MOST IMPORTANTLY FUN SKILL-BASED HOUR OF FOOTBALL.

- ✓ CO-LED BY EX PROFESSIONAL – PAUL BRUSH
- ✓ BALL SKILLS, FUN GAMES & MATCHES
- ✓ £7 PER SESSION
- ✓ ALL ABILITIES WELCOME

EVERY WEDNESDAY  
EYFS – YR 2  
(5:30–6:30PM)

EVERY WEDNESDAY  
YR 3 – YR 6  
(6:30–7:30PM)

NOTLEY HIGH SCHOOL (FITNESS CENTRE)

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
07776 300 242 SMILES.SPORT1@GMAIL.COM

@SMILES\_SPORT



# MINI SMILES DEVELOPMENT

THE PERFECT START TO YOUR SATURDAY MORNING! BE READY FOR A HIGH ENERGY, FRIENDLY AND MOST IMPORTANTLY FUN 45 MINUTES OF ALL THINGS SPORT – YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS IT!

- ✓ MULTI SPORT SESSION
- ✓ LED BY A SMILES SPORT COACH
- ✓ £6 PER SESSION
- ✓ ALL ABILITIES WELCOME

EVERY SATURDAY  
UP TO 5 YEARS OLD  
9 AM – 9:45 AM

JOHN RAY INFANT SCHOOL (SPORTS HALL)  
NOTLEY ROAD, BRAINTREE CM7 1HL

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
07776 300 242 SMILES.SPORT1@GMAIL.COM

@SMILES\_SPORT

Click the images below to access the material if interested

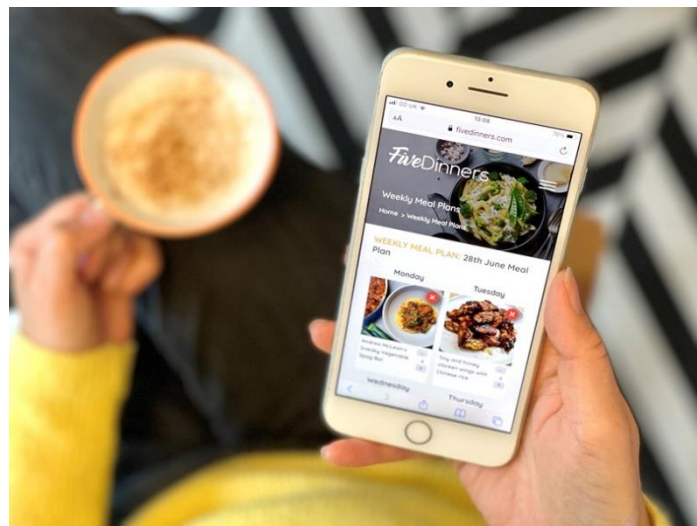


explore-essex.com

Essex Year of  
**NUMBERS**

ESSEX  
COUNTRY  
PARKS

Explore  
Essex  
Part of Essex County Council




Let's talk  
online safety  
with The 2 Johns

Every Family  
Matters

The 2 Johns Online Safety session – Sunday 10 December 7pm

The 2 Johns are running a session on Sunday evening (10 December) at 7pm to launch the ESCB online safety week. The virtual session and Q&A will be hosted on Zoom and also [The 2 Johns Facebook page](#). This will be followed by a week of online safety messages and advice on the ESCB social media accounts. [Find out more about the campaign.](#)



St Michael's C of E Primary School



Knowsley  
City Learning Centres

# Online Safety Newsletter

## December 2023

### Minecraft

Minecraft remains ever popular and with Christmas ahead of us, maybe your child will be receiving this game as one of their presents. Minecraft Legends is rated as PEGI 7 meaning it is suitable for those over 7 years of age. The App store rate Minecraft as 9+.

You should be aware that there is a multiplayer option so players can chat to each other, and in-app purchases are available. Parental controls are available, either within Minecraft or on the console itself e.g. Nintendo Switch or PlayStation. Find out more here:

<https://www.minecraft.net/en-us/article/parental-controls>

### Toxicity in game play

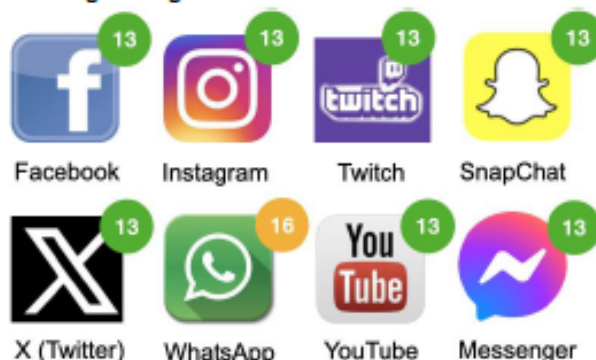
Safe In Our World and Ubisoft (creators of games such as Assassins Creed) have co-developed the 'Good Game Playbook'. The playbook will be sent to players reporting disruptive behaviour as well as the individual reported. This is to support the person affected as well as to try and educate the person reported about the harm their behaviour might have on others.

You can read the handbook here:

<https://safeinourworld.org/news/ubisoft-safe-in-our-world-partner-to-combat-in-game-toxicity/>

### Get to know Age Ratings

Age ratings are in place to help protect your child, so we thought we'd provide you with a little reminder of how important it is to check the age ratings of what your child is accessing online. Here are the age ratings of some of the more popular apps that young people are accessing. Did you know that WhatsApp has an age rating of 16?



Whether your child is viewing films, accessing apps, playing games online, using social media or downloading other apps – check the age rating first to see if your child is old enough. In addition, the likes of PEGI include further content descriptors, which will give you an indication of the type of content that your child might view e.g. violence, if accessing the app/game etc.

It is important to note that whilst age ratings do allow you to see if something may be appropriate for your child, it is also important to review the content yourself. This will allow you to make an informed decision as to whether it is suitable for your child to access and if it would be beneficial to apply further parental controls.

#### Further information

Parent Zone have published this article about why age ratings matter:

<https://parentzone.org.uk/article/age-ratings>

### Artificial Intelligence (AI)

It can be difficult to keep up to date with new technologies and to know if there are any related risks that we need to be aware of when using new technologies. AI is being talked about a lot, so it is worthwhile learning more about it now to help support/answer questions if our children show an interest. Twinkl provide a brilliant overview of AI here:

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/blog/parents-guide-top-tips-for-navigating-generative-ai-safely-with-kids>

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into.  
Current as of the date released 1.12.23.



# Snapchat

## What is Snapchat?

Snapchat is a social media app used for messaging and sharing photos and videos. You must be 13+ to sign up. Users can send messages (snaps)

to others that can only be seen for a set time e.g. 10 seconds and users can also upload snaps to stories, which disappear after 24 hours.



## What should I be concerned about?

There are risks to using Snapchat, including the risk of your child viewing content that is not appropriate for them, location sharing and contact from strangers.

## Family Centre features

Family Centre includes features such as allowing you to see who your child is friends with, who they are communicating with (not the contents of conversations though) and who your child has sent messages, photos or videos to in the last week. You will also be able to report any accounts that you are concerned about as well as restrict sensitive content. Snapchat have also published a safety checklist to help support conversations about how to use Snapchat safely:

- <https://parents.snapchat.com/en-GB/parental-controls?lang=en-GB>

## New safeguarding features

Snapchat have recently announced their newest features to help protect 13-17-year-olds. The first feature is in-app warnings so a pop-up warning will now be displayed if someone tries to add them as a friend that they don't have mutual contacts with, or the person isn't in their contacts.

The second feature is 'stronger friending protections.' Currently 13-17-year-olds must have several mutual friends in common for that user to show up in search results or as a friend suggestion, but this number has been increased. These two features are available to users aged 13-17-year-olds, this is one of the reasons why it is always important for your child to sign up with their correct date of birth, so they can benefit from any such features.

- <https://values.snap.com/en-GB/news/new-safeguards-for-snapchatters-2023>

## Safety tips

Please make sure the appropriate privacy settings are set up on Snapchat and your child knows how to block and report other users if necessary:

- <https://support.snapchat.com/en-GB/article/privacy-settings2>

## More information

- <https://www.virginmedia.com/blog/parental-controls/snapchat>

## Fake Profiles and Cyberbullying

Setting up a profile impersonating somebody else with the intention of being unkind to others/to cause embarrassment to the individual is a form of cyberbullying.

If your child has set up a fake profile, talk to them about how this is a form of bullying and therefore not acceptable.

It is important that we talk to our children about the issue of cyberbullying and let them know that if they are ever a victim of it then it is not their fault, and they should tell you (or a trusted adult) straightaway. Talk to your child about reporting and blocking tools on social media or online games and show them how to use them to report any form of bullying.

You can read more about cyberbullying here:

- <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/types-bullying/bullying-cyberbullying/>
- <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/>

Additionally, Report Harmful Content have listed how you can report impersonation accounts on the different social media networks here:

<https://reportharmfulcontent.com/advice/impersonation/>

