



Welwyn St Mary's Primary School



Newsletter – January 2025

Value

Our value for this half term is: **Courage**

“No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.”
Aesop

Welcome back

A very warm welcome back! I hope you all had a restful break and are feeling excited for the new term ahead. We've got a packed and thrilling term lined up, and I'm looking forward to seeing what our children will achieve.

There are so many exciting things to look forward to this term, including school trips, numerous sporting events and the much-loved World Book Day celebrations. We'll also be holding parent consultations to keep everyone updated on progress, and our Year 3 & 4 show promises to be a highlight of the term.

Here's to a fantastic term ahead!

Mr Whiteland
Headteacher

Governor day visit

Recently, we had the pleasure of welcoming our school governors into the classrooms for a special Governors' Day visit. This was an opportunity for them to see firsthand the incredible work being done across the school, and we're proud to share some of the positive feedback they provided.

Governors were impressed by the calm and purposeful atmosphere in each classroom. The children were fully engaged in their learning, and it was clear to the Governors that everyone was not only happy but thoroughly enjoying their lessons.

The Governors also noted the excellent behaviour for learning displayed by all children. They remarked on the children's enthusiasm to participate and their eagerness to contribute to class discussions and activities. This positive attitude toward learning truly stood out and highlighted the dedication of both our staff and students.

It was a wonderful day, and we are so grateful for the continued support of our Governors as we strive to create an environment where every child thrives.

Upcoming events

Year 3 and 4 Production

We look forward to welcoming families to the Year 3 and 4 production of Dragon Days on **Wednesday 5th and Thursday 6th February**. Please make sure you have made your ticket requests via Parentmail.

Year 3 Cake Sale

The Year 3 cake sale will take place on the KS1 playground after school on **Friday 7th February**. Please pop by to purchase some yummy treats.

Parent Consults

Our Spring term parent consultations will take place on **Wednesday 12th and Thursday 13th February**. Please book your slot via Parentmail.

Year 5 Viking Workshop

The year 5 Viking workshop will take place in school on **Monday 3rd March**. Please make a contribution via Parentmail and complete the volunteering form if you are able to help on the day.

Year 4 Faith Tour

To support and enhance their learning of RE, Year 4 will visit Sikh, Christian and Muslim places of worship in Bedford on **Tuesday 4th March**. Please complete the consent form and make a contribution via Parentmail.

World book day

We look forward to celebrating World Book Day in school on **Thursday 6th March**. Full details on how we will be celebrating will be sent via Parentmail nearer the day.





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Staff changes

It is with sadness that we announce Mrs Howard, Miss Gordon and Mrs Singer-Yousef will be leaving Welwyn St Mary's. We want to thank them for everything they have done for the school and the children during their time with us. We wish them all the very best for the future.

At the same time, we are pleased to welcome Miss Rayner and Miss Smith, who will both be joining the school as SEN 1:1 Teaching Assistants. We look forward to having them as part of our team and are excited for the support they will bring to our children.

Termly leaflets

Our Spring term class leaflets are now available on our website. Leaflets contain useful information about topics classes will be studying this term, class routines and upcoming events.

www.welwynst-marys.herts.sch.uk/curriculum/curriculum-overview

Mindful Moments with Mrs Jackson

As part of our nurture provision here at Welwyn St Mary's, Mrs Jackson has created a special folder in each class Google Classroom called 'Mindful Moments with Mrs Jackson'. In each folder there will be mindfulness sessions that Mrs Jackson has put together along with some helpful nurture and mental health resources which families may find useful and be able to access. The mindfulness sessions range from 3 minutes long to longer sessions and cover a variety of mindfulness topics from simple breathing sessions, to letting go, to sleep sessions. They are available for families to be able to use at home to support their child, family and themselves!

Mrs Jackson will aim to upload new sessions weekly so keep checking in to see what is new and what could help support your child.

The mental health resources will cover a range of issues from worries and anxiety, sleeping, managing time and more. All will be at a level for families to access and for parents and carers to be able to put in place by themselves. All resources will take time to see the benefits of once tried, so they may need to be given several weeks to see their effectiveness. Do keep heart and try not to give up after a week if it seems as though the strategies are not working, changing patterns of behaviour takes time!

This is to empower parents to be able to have some tools and resources to help their children and to complement the school's existing nurture provision. So do have a browse and give some sessions a try! Log on to your child's Google Classroom today!

If you have any problems accessing your Google Classroom account, please contact the school office.





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Uniform Policy

Thank you very much to the majority of our parents who are sending children into school wearing correct, smart uniform. Our school uniform is simple and practical to keep the children looking smart and contribute to the feeling of belonging to the school. The full uniform policy is available on the school website www.welwynst-marys.herts.sch.uk/parents/school-uniform.

Please ensure that all items of clothing are labelled with your child's name. This includes coats which are often taken off in the playground during break times and are very difficult to reunite with their owners without a name. Thank you.

School Meals

We have been notified by Herts Catering Ltd that, due to the changes in National Living Wage and National Insurance, the cost of school meals is increasing at the end of this term. As of 1st April 2025, the price of a meal will be £3.55.

All children in Reception and Key Stage 1 will remain eligible to receive meals for free under the Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) initiative. For children in Key Stage 2, if you are entitled to certain benefits, then you may be entitled to Free School Meals (FSM). To find out more and to register, please visit www.hertsdirect.org/freeschoolmeals.

If your child would like to have school lunches, please remember to order these via www.schoolgrid.co.uk before 8.55am on the day that your child wishes to have lunch.

Book recommendation

This month's book recommendations:

Next week is National Story Telling Week. This is a week where we celebrate the power of telling and sharing stories. The theme this year is **'Reimagine your world.'**

Why not have a go at telling your own stories at home. The most extraordinary story can come from the most ordinary place: it just needs someone to find it. Look around you for inspiration... a picture, a prop, something unexpected you spot on your way to school, odd sounds you hear at night, or a path you've never followed, the world around us is full of secret lives, places and possibilities.

We would love to hear your amazing stories!

Online Safety

In today's digital age, ensuring children's online safety is more important than ever. We encourage all parents to actively monitor their child's online activity and have appropriate parental controls in place on all devices. This helps protect them from inappropriate content, cyberbullying, and other online risks. Open conversations about responsible internet use are key to fostering a safe and healthy digital environment. By staying informed and engaged, we can work together to keep our children safe online.



10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators USING AND REVIEWING PARENTAL CONTROLS

Phones and computers are essential parts of children's lives, but with unfettered internet access comes a multitude of risks. While not foolproof, parental controls can help with this; filtering out inappropriate content, limiting the ability to spend real money, capping screen time and generally making devices safer for young people.

1 KNOW THE TYPES



While parental control software can apply to an entire device, it also pays to know about options on individual apps and websites. TikTok, for example, has Restricted Mode for limiting unsuitable videos, while Snapchat lets you keep an eye on who a child has been talking to. Check the settings of any new app young users want and review your options.

2 COVER ALL DEVICES



Knowing what parental controls cover is crucial, as remaining unaware can run the risk of 'blind spots' in the device's safety measures. Controls on a phone will apply whenever a child's on that device, for instance – but you'll want to ensure that parental controls are set up across any laptops, tablets and potentially other phones, too. Remember, buying a new device may require you to set everything up again.

3 DON'T NEGLECT SHARED TECH



While children often have their own devices, if you have a shared family computer or tablet, for example, you'll need to make sure that's not a weak point in your safety measures. Parental controls for your router, that cover everything connected to your Wi-Fi, are one option – or you can just be thorough with each device and online account. Just ensure that unprotected laptops, phones and tablets are password locked.

4 CONSIDER TIME CONTROLS



Even safe internet content can be harmful if it's viewed in excess. Not only are certain apps addictive enough to distract from other duties, but late-night usage can badly disrupt sleep, which is vital for adolescent brain development. Most parental controls offer some kind of time limit – either blocking access at certain hours or capping the number of minutes it can be used per day – so be sure to consider these.

5 BLOCK APP SPENDING



Seemingly free apps can sometimes include microtransactions: purchases that can be made using real money. While plenty of developers implement these fairly, some companies attempt to manipulate children into paying for additional features or content, which can soon add up to hundreds of pounds if a child gets carried away. Thankfully, iOS and Android's settings allow you to block in-app purchases, preventing any huge bills.

6 NO CONTROLS ARE PERFECT



Parental controls can be very useful, but they're far from infallible. Some unpleasant content can and unfortunately will slip through the net, so remember that setting up these measures isn't a substitute for taking an active interest in young people's digital lives. Talk to them, and make sure they're aware of the risks of the internet as well as its benefits.

7 MIND THE GAPS



There'll undoubtedly be some gaps in parental controls, no matter how thorough you intend to be. For example, if you use router-level parental controls, bear in mind that these won't cover WiFi outside the home. For that reason, it's important to keep an open dialogue with children about the many unpalatable aspects of social media and the web.

8 KEEP THINGS SECURE



Some children can react poorly to parental controls and feel tempted to circumvent them. It's important to ensure that the passwords to these settings remain unknown to children, otherwise they can easily modify the restrictions without you knowing. Similarly, make sure your phone isn't left unlocked and unattended.

9 REVIEW CONTROLS REGULARLY



Parental controls shouldn't be a 'set and forget' deal. Not only can parental summaries provide you with a frequent overview of a child's digital life – to let you spot any warning signs – but companies often add new features, and some of these may be useful to enable (or disable). Regularly checking in ensures that if a child has found a way to wiggle out of the controls, you'll be the first to know.

10 KNOW WHEN TO LET UP



The parental controls you install on a computer for a seven-year-old probably wouldn't be appropriate for a child of 16 – and as young people approach adulthood, bubble wrapping the internet can do more harm than good. Consider relaxing parental controls as children get older, so they can learn to manage the risks of the internet themselves, without so many training wheels.

Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist and the former deputy editor of technology and internet culture website Alphr. Now freelance, he has contributed articles to publications including the New Statesman, CNET, the Evening Standard, Wired, Rock Paper Shotgun, Gizmodo, Pocket Gamer, Stuff, T3, PC Pro, Macworld, TechRadar and Trusted Reviews.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College



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Year 6 Archery Experience – 4th December

Team names: Ashley, Jesse, Tommy C, Toby, Lewis, Isla, Nicole S, Tiffany, Charlotte, Poppy T

Star Players: Toby

On Thursday 4th December, a group of Year 6s went to an archery tournament. The main focus was to do the very best that we could and try to beat our previous score. We had the opportunity to develop our archery skills in a gently competitive situation. The star player was Toby. We all had fun, and we would like to thank our parents for taking us and Miss Veasey and Mrs Soppett-Moss for cheering us on.

- Nicole

Chess Festival – 9th December

Team names: Eddie N, Violet C, Elsie B, Jacob M

On the 9th December we went to a chess festival at Mill Green Golf Club. First, we played some practice games against our own school to warm us up. Next, we started playing against other schools that were in the area. We had lots of fun and would like to thank Mrs Phillips and our parents for taking us.

- Violet

District Archery – Wednesday 15th January

Team names: Isla, Ivy, Neave, Orla, Arabella, Charlie W, Fred, Jack, Max, Teddy

Star Players: Ivy

We started off with a practice of two arrows before the competition began. Everyone did their best and a few people got 10s on their first go. When the competition started everyone got excited. The first round we had to work together as a team and try to get the most points. Everyone was amazing. Next was the second round where we worked individually to score our own points. With several minutes scoring tens and eights the third round commenced. In this round, the person with the highest score got to compete. Overall, we came second out of the teams. Orla and Ivy got first and second in the individual rounds. We'd like to say a special thank you to Miss Veasey and Mrs Moate for taking us.

- Ivy & Arabella

League Football fixture Vs Templewood – Tuesday 28th January

Team names: Fred, Charlie B, Charlie W, Faris, Jake, Freddie, Jack, Edward, Bailey

On 28th January, the Year 6 league team went to Monk's Walk to play football. The first game was a league game against Templewood school. It was a tough game, but we used our determination and team work to win 5-0. Fred scored twice and Charlie B, Faris and Edward each scored once. Our second game was a friendly against St John's. We had to play 9 a side so we had no substitutes but we came out to win 3-1. Fred, Edward and Jake each scored. We would like to thank Miss Veasey, Mrs Southall and Mr Murphy.

- Jack and Edward





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January Birthdays

Happy Birthday to all who celebrated in January:

Tommaso, Scarlett, Archie, Bo, Gabriela, Bailey, Harriet, Amelie, Oli, Joshua, Penelope, Clara, Juno, Florence, Emani, Cameron, Gael, Roman, Luna Blu, Kleo, Molly, Elsie-Mae, Joseph, Eva, Danny, Chester, Freya, Amara, Tyler, Riaan, William, Nancy, Darcey, Florence, Mia, Edward, Harriet, Orla, Mrs Soppett-Moss, Mrs Moate, Mr Whiteland, Miss Veasey

Foodbanks help

We have links with local foodbanks so, if you are struggling financially at the moment, please contact the school office in confidence and we can refer you.

Term Time Absence and Penalty Notices

A new National Framework for Penalty Notices for school absence, including unauthorised holiday absence, has now been introduced following changes to the law.

Per Parent, Per Child

Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent, for each child that was absent. For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines. Parent refers to anyone with parental responsibility and may include carers, step-parents, grandparents or any other adult with parental responsibility.

National Threshold

There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave of absence or unauthorised absence the amount will be:

- £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days
- Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days

Second Offence (within 3 years)

The Second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:

- £160 per parent, per child within 28 days

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court.

- Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines up to £2.500
- Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'

[Click here](#) for further information.

So that parents are aware of the risk of receiving a Fixed Penalty Notice, Welwyn St Mary's will issue warning letters to all parents who request term time holiday, regardless of the length of holiday.





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Diary Dates

Diary dates are regularly updated on the school website:
www.welwynst-marys.herts.sch.uk/news-dates/diary-dates

Spring Term 2025	
Wed 5th February 2025	Yr 3 & 4 production
Thu 6th February 2025	Yr 3 & 4 production
Fri 7th February 2025	Year 3 Cake Sale
Mon 17th February 2025 - Fri 21st February 2025	Half term
Wed 26th February 2025	Year 6 RAF Hendon
Mon 3rd March 2025	Year 5 Viking Workshop
Tue 4th March 2025	Year 4 Faith Tour
Thu 6th March 2025	World Book Day
Tue 11th March 2025	Year 6 Go Construct Knex Challenge
Wed 12th March 2025	Year 2 Great Fire of London
Fri 14th March 2025	Year 2 Cake Sale
Thu 20th March 2025	Book Fair – Next Page books
w/c Mon 24th March 2025	PTFA Mother's Day Gift Shop
Wed 2nd April 2025	PTFA Easter Egg Scavenger Hunt
Thu 3rd April 2025	Easter Service [St Mary's Church]
Fri 4th April 2025	Terms ends – Rec & KS1 1.15pm, KS2 1.20pm

