

St. Nicholas News



Friday 9th January 2026

A Note from the Headteacher

Welcome back one and all to the new school term and a very happy new year to all of our families within the St. Nicholas school community. I hope you had an enjoyable festive break and didn't find the first day back alarm too upsetting!

After School Clubs

As we have staff wellbeing week from 19th-23rd January, clubs will not begin until the week of 26th January and will finish the week of 23rd March. Information on club availability will be sent out shortly via School Ping as we are currently collating the offer.

Our Relationships and Sex Education curriculum

A reminder that every Friday afternoon this term, we will be covering the Relationships and Sex Education element of our PSHCE curriculum, in all classes in school. For information on what we cover, please look at our RSE curriculum documents on our website, which can be found by clicking [here](#). If you have any further questions, then please contact your child's class teacher.

Lateness

I know that the cold, dark mornings make getting out of bed so much harder and this can lead to students being late to school. This term, we have seen an increase in the number of students arriving between 9am and 9.30am. If this applies to you, then I ask that you make a new plan from next week that will mean your child arrives punctually to school. The first half hour of the day sets the tone for the rest of the day ahead and is just as important as any other half hour in the day. Although formal lessons do not begin until 9.30am, there is much that takes place during the first slot of the day that we see as value added experiences for our students that we really do not want them to miss. This includes phonics intervention groups, assemblies, Friendship Ambassador meetings, promotion of positive social interaction time and life skills work with breakfast preparation and clearing away. Students need to be entering the school building by 9am to fully access these opportunities, so please support your child to be here on time every day from next week, if you have been struggling this week.

Snow Days

Thankfully, unlike the rest of the country, we have not been faced with such adverse weather conditions that we have had to close the school. Should we have to close at any point in the coming weeks, then we will contact you at the earliest opportunity via the School Ping messaging system. If you have changed your number or contact information recently, then please let us know immediately, so we can make sure everyone is informed of potential closures due to snow. On such days, we will be in contact with the school transport providers as it may be that they are unable to collect your child if the road conditions are unsafe. The decision to close is always a difficult one but I will endeavour to make an informed decision based on all available risk assessment information.

Wishing you all a warm weekend,

Mrs L. Fox, Headteacher.



How to contact us:

email the school at: office@st-nicholas.southend.sch.uk

Telephone: 01702 462322



KS3 HOME ECONOMICS COSTS

As part of our school's curriculum, we offer home economics to all students in KS3 (years 7, 8 & 9). This requires a small fee from parents for ingredients. Students are able to bring home their food, if a contribution is received.

The cost is **£10 per term**.

This can be paid for using our online payments system. Please contact the school office if you need help in getting set up on this system.

Thank you for your contributions.

INSET DAYS 2025-2026

23rd January, 23rd February, 29th June

TERM DATES 2025-2026:

Spring half term: 16th—20th Feb

Spring term ends: Fri 27th March

Summer term starts: Mon 13th April

Summer half term: 26th—29th May

Summer term ends: Mon 20th July

KEY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

January

15th	9:30am-12:15pm	CEOP Workshops w/ Nikki Brewster (Postponed)
19th-23rd		Staff Well-being Week
20th	9:30am-2:00pm	SESSSA Boccia Competition
21st	ALL DAY	Governor Visit Day
22nd	9:30am-12:15pm	CEOP Workshops w/ Nikki Brewster (Postponed)
23rd	ALL DAY	INSET Day—School Closed for Students
26th-30th		Functional Skills Level 1 & 2 Exam Week
29th	9:30am-12:15pm	CEOP Workshops w/ Nikki Brewster (Postponed)

February

2nd-6th		Entry Level Functional Skills Assessments
6th	10:30am-12:00pm	MP Bayo Alaba Visiting School
9th-13th		Entry Level Functional Skills Assessments
13th	2:15-3:00pm	End of Half-Term Awards Assembly
23rd	ALL DAY	INSET Day—School Closed for Students
24th-27th		Entry Level Functional Skills Speech & Language Assessments

March

16th-20th		Y11 Work Experience week 1
17th	3:30-7:00pm	KS3 Parents Evening
19th	3:30-7:00pm	KS4 Parents Evening
23rd-27th		Y11 Work Experience week 2

DATES IN **RED** ARE ADDITIONS OR EDITS SINCE LAST WEEK'S NEWSLETTER

SCHOOL MEALS

Monday 12th January will be week 2 of the menu.

WEEK 1		WEEK 2		WEEK 3	
MONDAY		MONDAY		MONDAY	
MAINS	Beef Burger in a Bun	MAINS	Shepherds Pie	MAINS	Lasagne
VEGETARIAN	Vegan Burger in a Bun	VEGETARIAN	Tomato Pasta	VEGETARIAN	Vegetarian Lasagne
SIDE	Diced Potato - Peas	SIDE	Baked Beans - Peas	SIDE	Garlic Bread - Broccoli
JACKET	Baked Beans or Cheese or Tuna Mayo	JACKET	Baked Beans or Cheese or Tuna Mayo	JACKET	Baked Beans or Cheese or Tuna Mayo
SANDWICH	Ham or Cheese or Tuna Mayo *Extras	SANDWICH	Ham or Cheese or Tuna Mayo *Extras	SANDWICH	Ham or Cheese or Tuna Mayo *Extras
DESSERT	Chocolate Sponge and Custard	DESSERT	Carrot Cake	DESSERT	Flapjack
TUESDAY		TUESDAY		TUESDAY	
MAINS	Sausages	MAINS	Chicken Nuggets	MAINS	Sausages in Tomato Sauce
VEGETARIAN	Quorn Sausages	VEGETARIAN	Quorn Nuggets	VEGETARIAN	Vegetarian Sausages
SIDE	Mash - Carrots - Gravy	SIDE	Pasta - Sweetcorn - Peas	SIDE	Pasta - Sweetcorn - Peas
JACKET	Baked Beans or Cheese or Tuna Mayo	JACKET	Baked Beans or Cheese or Tuna Mayo	JACKET	Baked Beans or Cheese or Tuna Mayo
SANDWICH	Ham or Cheese or Tuna Mayo *Extras	SANDWICH	Ham or Cheese or Tuna Mayo *Extras	SANDWICH	Ham or Cheese or Tuna Mayo *Extras
DESSERT	Fruit or Yogurt	DESSERT	Plain Sponge and Custard	DESSERT	Fruit or Yogurt
WEDNESDAY		WEDNESDAY		WEDNESDAY	
MAINS	Garmon	MAINS	Roast Chicken	MAINS	Garmon
VEGETARIAN	Quorn Fillet	VEGETARIAN	Cauliflower Cheese	VEGETARIAN	Quorn Fillet
SIDE	Roast Potatoes - Carrots - Peas	SIDE	Roast Potatoes - Carrots - Cabbage	SIDE	Roast Potatoes - Carrots - Cabbage
JACKET	Baked Beans or Cheese or Tuna Mayo	JACKET	Baked Beans or Cheese or Tuna Mayo	JACKET	Baked Beans or Cheese or Tuna Mayo
SANDWICH	Ham or Cheese or Tuna Mayo *Extras	SANDWICH	Ham or Cheese or Tuna Mayo *Extras	SANDWICH	Ham or Cheese or Tuna Mayo *Extras
DESSERT	Iced Sponge	DESSERT	Fruit or Yogurt	DESSERT	Jelly
THURSDAY		THURSDAY		THURSDAY	
MAINS	Chicken Tikka Massala	MAINS	Spaghetti Bolognese	MAINS	Cheese & Tomato Pasta
VEGETARIAN	Stir Fry Noodles	VEGETARIAN	Tomato Pasta	VEGETARIAN	Tomato Pasta
SIDE	Rice - Peas - Sweetcorn	SIDE	Garlic Bread - Peas - Sweetcorn	SIDE	Peas - Sweetcorn
JACKET	Baked Beans or Cheese or Tuna Mayo	JACKET	Baked Beans or Cheese or Tuna Mayo	JACKET	Baked Beans or Cheese or Tuna Mayo
SANDWICH	Ham or Cheese or Tuna Mayo *Extras	SANDWICH	Ham or Cheese or Tuna Mayo *Extras	SANDWICH	Ham or Cheese or Tuna Mayo *Extras
DESSERT	Ice Cream	DESSERT	Angel Delight	DESSERT	Muffin
FRIDAY		FRIDAY		FRIDAY	
MAINS	Fish Fingers	MAINS	Pepperoni Pizza	MAINS	Cod Fillets
VEGETARIAN	Fishless Fingers	VEGETARIAN	Cheese Pizza	VEGETARIAN	Fishless Fingers
SIDE	Chips - Baked Beans - Peas	SIDE	Chips - Baked Beans - Peas	SIDE	Chips - Baked Beans - Peas
JACKET	Baked Beans or Cheese or Tuna Mayo	JACKET	Baked Beans or Cheese or Tuna Mayo	JACKET	Baked Beans or Cheese or Tuna Mayo
SANDWICH	Ham or Cheese or Tuna Mayo *Extras	SANDWICH	Ham or Cheese or Tuna Mayo *Extras	SANDWICH	Ham or Cheese or Tuna Mayo *Extras
DESSERT	Fruit or Yogurt	DESSERT	Fruit or Yogurt	DESSERT	Fruit or Yogurt

***Extras - Lettuce, Cucumber, Tomatoes, Peppers or Savoury Snack**

FRESH FRUIT, YOGURTS AND WHOLEMEAL BREAD ARE AVAILABLE DAILY.

MOST DISHES ARE MADE DAILY AND ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

Ten practical and evidence-informed online safety tips to help adults guide children toward healthier and more informed digital habits.

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

ESSENTIAL ONLINE SAFETY

Children and young people use the internet every day to learn, play, and connect, but the online world is not always safe. For adults, it can be hard to keep up with the risks, including harmful content, cyberbullying and scams. These 10 tips provide clear and practical advice to support safer and healthier digital habits, helping young people to make informed, secure choices when using technology.

- 1 START EARLY CONVERSATIONS**

Begin talking about online behaviour from the moment children start using devices. Use age-appropriate language and revisit topics regularly, making it clear they can speak to you about anything that upsets or confuses them. Keeping these chats open helps build trust, so children are more likely to come to you when needed.
- 2 PROMOTE SAFER SHARING**

Children can overshare without understanding the risks. Remind them that photos, locations, or messages can be copied or shared beyond their intended audience. Explain how even private messages or group chats can be saved and/or misused. Talk about what is appropriate to post, message, and who it's safe to share with.
- 3 ENCOURAGE DIGITAL BALANCE**

Many apps and games are designed to keep users engaged through rewards, likes, or constant updates. These features can make it hard for children to switch off. Talk openly about how these systems work and help children recognise when it's time to take a break. Building in tech-free routines supports a healthier balance and awareness of their screen time.
- 4 CREATE A SAFE SPACE FOR CONCERNS**

When children come to you with a concern, respond with interest and care, rather than with alarm. Keeping your reaction measured helps them feel safe and supported. This doesn't mean ignoring serious issues; it means showing that you're there to help. When children trust that they can speak openly, they're more likely to feel supported through unpleasant online experiences, and to ask for help in future.
- 5 STAY INFORMED AND CURRENT**

With emerging technologies like AI moving and changing so quickly, it's important to stay updated on how children are using new platforms, apps and games. Ask them to show you what they use and let them take the lead as you explore together. This opens up valuable conversations and helps you stay ahead of emerging risks and trends.
- 6 TEACH CRITICAL THINKING**

Talk to children about how to recognise unreliable information or scams online. With AI-generated videos, photos, and stories becoming harder to spot, help children question what they see and encourage them to look for evidence, check sources, and ask questions. These skills will help them avoid risks, make smart choices, and develop healthy habits for the future.
- 7 SET CLEAR BOUNDARIES**

Involve children in conversations about device usage so they feel included. Agree on digital rules such as screen-time limits, age-appropriate apps, and no devices in bedrooms overnight. Use parental controls to block or filter harmful content and explain that rules are there to protect and support them, not to spoil their fun.
- 8 LEAD BY EXAMPLE**

Children often copy the behaviour of adults around them. Show them what balanced, respectful, and mindful use of technology looks like, such as avoiding scrolling during family time and speaking kindly in messages. If you expect certain behaviour from them online, make sure your own habits reflect the same standards.
- 9 EXPLORE PRIVACY SETTINGS TOGETHER**

Show children how to use privacy tools on apps, games, and websites. Teach them to use strong passwords, block or report others in response to problems, and avoid sharing personal details. Explore settings together so they feel confident and in control, and explain that these features are there to help them stay safe online.
- 10 KNOW WHERE TO GET HELP**

Familiarise yourself with tools and organisations that support online safety. The National College offers online safety guides and webinars which provide tips on staying safe. Websites like Report Harmful Content and CEOP can be used to report when something goes wrong. Show children how to report or block users, and where to go if they feel unsafe. Make sure they know that asking for help is always the right thing to do, and be prepared to support them.

Meet Our Expert

Home to the world's largest CPD library for educators, The National College has transformed the way education establishments go about developing their workforces and managing compliance. Our three memberships help all phases and types of setting raise standards, save time, reduce risk, and build a culture of improvement.

See full reference list on [our website](#)

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This guide offers advice on how to establish suitable, effective rules around the use of digital devices in your household.

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators CREATING FAMILY RULES FOR USING DEVICES

A set of family rules agreed on with children can promote the safe, responsible use of devices like tablets, smartphones, gaming consoles and computers. By developing rules around technology, it opens the conversation regarding boundaries and expectations, ensuring a healthy balance of screen time. This guide will help you to develop an age-appropriate family agreement to suit your household.

1 WORK TOGETHER

Involve your child when setting rules on devices to encourage them to take ownership.

2 AGREE TIME LIMITS AND SUITABLE TIMES

Set screen time limits. This could be 2 hours max a day. Agree times when devices must be put away and stick to it.

3 ENCOURAGE HONESTY

Encourage your child to come to you if they are upset about something they've done, so you can resolve it together.

4 CHARGING AND OVERNIGHT STORAGE

To ensure children get the downtime they need overnight, it's important that devices are kept in a common space (e.g. your bedroom or a charging box).

5 REVIEW RULES REGULARLY

Take time to regularly review the rules as a family; what's working, and what isn't. Get them to sign the rules you agree on.

6 PROTECT PERSONAL INFO

Discuss with your child about protecting their personal information. Use parental controls to block children from connecting with strangers.

7 BE RESPECTFUL

Talk to them about being respectful when using technology. Explain that if they are being unkind, they will need to stay away from their devices for a while.

8 "NO TECH" ZONES

Have spaces where technology isn't allowed (e.g. bedrooms, bathrooms and at the dinner table).

9 AGREE ON CONSEQUENCES

Agree with your child on some fair consequences if any of these rules are broken and follow them through.

10 KNOW ALL PASSWORDS

Parents should have access to all passwords. Make it clear that you will check their devices regularly.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant at iCybercare. She has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety workshops and policies for schools in Australia and the UK. Claire has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviours of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



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Download full version of this guide: nationalcollege.com/guides/tips-for-creating-family-rules-for-using-devices

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