



Newsletter October 2023

St. Michael's Middle School

"Each person, uniquely made in God's image, merits the best we can give"



Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to our first newsletter of the new school year. We have been very impressed by how quickly our pupils have settled back into the routine of regular school life. A special mention to Year 5 and how well they have adapted to be middle school pupils.

The positive attitudes and behaviour of pupils has been very pleasing to see. Pupils earn ePraise points for showing behaviour that either reflects our school values of aspiration, belief and creativity or by demonstrating our core learning behaviours:

- Readiness to Learn (Presentation, Equipment and Time Keeping)
- Respectful Relationships (Staff, Peers and Free Time)
- Engagement (Following Instructions, Attitude and Homework)

We want to have positive engagements with pupils, and do so most of the time. However, small issues such as uniform mean that staff sometimes have to start off lessons and conversations on a negative. I would be most grateful if you can support us by ensuring that all uniform is as per the school uniform rules. A reminder that socks should be grey or black and not white sports socks.

Our newsletters are produced every few weeks and are used to communicate key successes of the school and also to give gentle reminders of important information. This edition is quite heavy on reminders as we have only been back a month but we will have much more news in the coming months. We look forward to sharing information with you as the sporting fixtures and other activities in school gather pace.

Looking forward to a great year!

Mr Ayling

In this issue:

Pupils for Praise

School Production

Sporting News

Could you be a school governor?

Music Mark Award

Upcoming Dates

Term Dates 2024/2025

St. Michael's Church of England Middle School

Colehill Lane, Wimborne, Dorset. BH21 7AB

Tel: 01202 883433

office@stmichaelsmiddle.org

Headteacher: Mr D. Ayling BSc/Ed (Hons) NPQH

Deputy Headteacher: Mr P. Andrews BSc (Hons) PGCE



Sports News

The sporting season at St. Michael's is well and truly under way.

Both the U13 boys and U12 girls have progressed into the next round of the ESFA (English Schools Football Association) national cup beating Blandford and Emmanuel respectively.

It has also been amazing to see so many pupils taking part in the extra-curricular clubs. Each Monday, Wednesday and Thursday there are over 120 pupils attending various clubs. We are also delighted to offer new clubs this year such as parkour, handball, water polo and health and fitness.



Our New Spin Bikes in our Studio Gym



**PROUD TO BE A
MUSIC MARK
SCHOOL**

We are delighted to have been awarded the distinction of being a Music Mark School by the UK Association of Music Education. This was given in recognition of the high priority we put on music education and for the standards the pupils achieve. A huge well done to all of the music department for their hard work being recognised in this way.



The theme for this year's service in Wimborne Minster is 'Christmas Around the World'. We would like to hear from any families that have different traditions at Christmas taken from their cultural heritage.

If you have anything that you could contribute to this project, please email Mrs Thompson-Brown via the school office and she will get back in contact with you.

The service takes place on Wednesday 6th December. Further details to follow.

Have you considered being a school governor?

Are you interested in helping shape the future of the next generation? Would you like to be involved in making St. Michael's Middle School the best school it can be? Are you committed to contributing to the local community? If the answer to any of these questions is yes, read on!

We have a vacancy on our Local School Committee for a parent governor. We welcome anyone who is interested in this governance role who feels that they have something to offer our school.

If you would like more information, please contact Mr. Ayling through the school office to arrange a discussion. The deadline for an expression of interest is 3.30pm on Friday 6th October.



We are hugely excited to announce that our next biennial musical extravaganza is going to be Peter Pan. The exciting announcement was made in a whole school assembly last week.

St. Michael's perform a new show every two years and we are looking to build on the success of the last production, Mary Poppins. The show is performed by pupils in Years 7 and 8 and auditions are underway!

The show will be performed at the Layard Theatre on 26th-28th March 2024 so keep the dates free!



We had a request from our team of road crossing patrol staff to make it clear to pupils that they need to wait until they have stopped traffic before crossing the road.

This is particularly important for the crossing patrol outside the church that covers both Colehill Lane and Smugglers Lane.

We would also request that parents with their children wait and use the crossing patrol.

Pupils for Praise

Every Friday, at least two pupils from each year group are selected to go and see Mr Ayling to receive praise and a reward for their hard work. All the pupils below have been selected since the last newsletter.

Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8
Richard L	Alfie P	George R	Dan K
Leo B	Kai L	Dexter V	Zach M
Lucy S	Tobias N	Darcie C	Chloe N
Oscar J	Toby S	Isabella S	Isla C
Sebastian B	Oliver H	Jake B	Sam E
Riley E	Alyssa C	Roman T	Eathan H
Josh B	Constance H		Noah S
Florence L	Bethany D		Celia D
Emily E	Ava S		
Noah T	Alfie P		
Jasper B			
India W-R			
Lottie C			

Congratulations!

St. Michael's is a Nut and Sesame Seed Free School



THANK YOU
for keeping our school safe!



We would be very grateful if you could do your best to avoid giving your child any foods containing nuts or sesame seeds in their lunches or for snacks. We do have a number of pupils with severe allergies to these foods and we want school to be a safe place for all.

Below are some popular products that we would ask you to avoid:



We appreciate your cooperation.

Attendance

We are delighted that attendance at school has made a very positive start although we have just last week dipped below the government target of 97%. Thank you for continuing to make this a priority.

We have a new webpage that gives further information about school attendance including advice on what to do if your child is ill, has an ongoing health condition or is anxious about attending school. You can find the webpage by clicking [here](#) or going to the attendance section of the school website.

Here is the current attendance for each house:

Paget	95.4%
Bankes	96.6%
Gulliver	96%
Hanham	96.1%

The Impact of Lateness

If you are 5 minutes late every day that equates to:

- 25 minutes per week (half a lesson missed)
- 15.8 hours of missed school per year (over 17 lessons missed)
- 63 hours of missed school over the 4 years you are at St. Michael's (over 68 lessons missed)

If you are 10 minutes late every day that equates to:

- 50 minutes per week (1 lesson missed)
- 31.6 hours of missed school per year (over 34 lessons missed)
- 124 hours of missed school over the 4 years you are at St. Michael's (over 135 lessons missed)

Every lesson counts!

Be on time!

House Point Totals

Here are the final house point totals for the year. Pupils earn 'ePraise' points and these are added together to make their house point totals.

Hanham

Bankes

Gulliver

Paget

4610

4329

4305

4549

You can check your child's ePraise points total by going to www.epraise.co.uk and logging into the parents page.

These are the 5 students with the most house points in each house. Well done, a great effort!

Oliver H

Thomas A

Olivia A

Oscar J

Alfie H

Joshua B

Layton P

Sophia H

Jake B

Bela D

Sophie C

Bethany P

Freya W

Freddie H

Jasper B

Heidi C

Jessie M

Monika L

Lizzy H

Ivy B

UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES

Monday 2nd October	Year 7 Holne Park Information Evening
Wednesday 4th October	Year 6 SATS Information Evening
Monday 9th—Friday 13th October	Year 5 Activities Week
Tuesday 10th October	Open Evening for Year 4 Parents
Thursday 12th October	Open Morning for Year 4 Parents
Friday 6th October	Year 8 Trip to Corfe Castle
Wednesday 18th October	Year 3,4 and 5 East Dorset Fun Run at St. Michael's
Wednesday 18th October	Twinning Event at the Allendale Centre
Friday 20th October	Year 6 Ukulele Concert to Parents
Monday 23rd October - Friday 27th October	Half Term Break
Monday 30 October	INSET Day (School Closed to pupils)
Tuesday 7th November	Subject Based Parents' Evening for all Year Groups (in school)
Tuesday 21st November	Year 7 AUB Arts Award (Visit 1)
Wednesday 22nd November	Year 7 AUB Arts Award (Visit 2)
Wednesday 22nd November	Year 5-8 Flu Vaccinations
Wednesday 22nd November	Subject Based Parents' Evening for all Year Groups (online)
Wednesday 6th December	Christmas Service at Wimborne Minster
Thursday 14th December	Last Day of Term
Friday 15th December	INSET Day (School Closed to pupils)
Tuesday 2nd January 2024	INSET Day (School Closed to pupils)
Wednesday 3rd January	Pupils return to school
Monday 12th February - Friday 17th February	Half Term Break
Monday 19th February	INSET Day (School Closed to pupils)



St. Michael's Middle School

Term Dates 2024/2025



Autumn Term

Tuesday 3rd September 2024
Wednesday 4th September 2024
Thursday 5th September 2024
Monday 28th October 2024
Friday 1st November 2024
Monday 4th November 2024
Thursday 19th December 2024
Friday 20th December 2024

Staff Training Day (School Closed)
Staff Training Day (School Closed)
First Day of Term
Half Term Starts
Half Term Ends
Pupils return to school
Last Day of Term
Staff Training Day (School Closed)



Spring Term

Monday 6th January 2025
Tuesday 7th January 2025
Monday 17th February 2025
Friday 21st February 2025
Monday 24th February 2025
Friday 4th April 2025

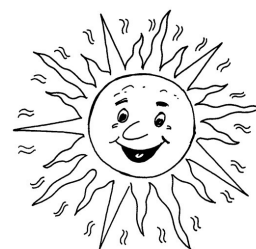
Staff Training Day (School Closed)
First day of term
Half Term Starts
Half Term Ends
Pupils return to school
Last day of term



Summer Term

Tuesday 22nd April 2025
Monday 5th May 2025
Monday 26th May 2025
Friday 30th June 2025
Monday 3rd June 2025
Wednesday 23rd July 2025

First Day of Term
Bank Holiday
Half Term Starts
Half Term Ends
Pupils return to school
Last day of term



Please Note: There are additional training days to be added to these dates which have yet to be set by the Initio Learning Trust. The staff training days listed are subject to change but have been traditional INSET days in the past and so have been listed.



Colehill Lane, Wimborne, Dorset. BH21 7AB
Tel: (01202) 883433
office@stmichaelsmiddle.org

initio
Learning Trust

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about WHATSAPP

AGE RESTRICTION
16+

In UK and Europe:
rest of the world 13+

With more than two billion active users exchanging texts, photos, videos and documents, as well as making voice and video calls, WhatsApp is the world's most popular messaging service. Its end-to-end encryption only allows messages to be viewed by the sender and any recipients: not even WhatsApp itself can read them. This privacy issue has been in the spotlight recently, as the UK's Online Safety Bill proposes to end such encryption on private messaging; WhatsApp is unwilling to do so and has reportedly considered withdrawing its service in the UK should this legislation go ahead.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

EVOLVING SCAMS

WhatsApp's popularity makes it a lucrative hunting ground for scammers. Recent examples include posing as the target's child, requesting a money transfer because of a spurious 'emergency'. Plus a scam where fraudsters trigger a verification message by attempting to log in to your account, then (posing as WhatsApp) call or text to ask you to repeat the code back to them, giving them access.

CONTACT FROM STRANGERS

To start a chat, someone only needs the mobile number of the WhatsApp user that they want to message. If your child has ever given their number out to someone they don't know, that person could then contact them via WhatsApp. It's also possible that your child might be added to a group chat (by one of their friends, for example) containing other people that they don't know.

FAKE NEWS

WhatsApp's connectivity and ease of use allows news to be shared rapidly – whether it's true or not. To combat the spread of misinformation, messages forwarded more than five times on the app now display a 'Forwarded many times' label and a double arrow icon. This makes users aware that the message they've just received is far from an original – and might not be entirely factual, either.

ONLINE

'VIEW ONCE' CONTENT

The facility to send images or messages that can only be viewed once has led to some WhatsApp users sharing inappropriate images or abusive texts, knowing that the recipient can't re-open them later to use as evidence of misconduct. People used to be able to screenshot this 'disappearing' content – but a recently added WhatsApp feature now blocks this, citing increased privacy.

CHAT LOCK

Another new option allows users to store certain messages or chats in a separate 'locked chats' folder, saved behind a passcode, fingerprint or face ID authentication. The risk here is that this function creates the potential for young people to hide conversations and content that they suspect their parents wouldn't approve of (such as age-inappropriate material).

VISIBLE LOCATION

WhatsApp's 'live location' feature lets users share their current whereabouts, which can be helpful for friends meeting up or parents checking that their child's safely on the way home, for example. However, anyone in your child's contacts list or in a mutual group chat can also track their location – potentially letting strangers identify a child's home address or journeys that they make regularly.

Advice for Parents & Carers

...TYPING...

EMPHASISE CAUTION

Encourage your child to treat unexpected messages with caution: get them to consider, for example, whether the message sounds like something a friend or relative would really send them. Make sure they know never to share personal details over WhatsApp, and to be wary of clicking on any links in messages. Setting up two-step verification adds a further layer of protection to their WhatsApp account.

ADJUST THE SETTINGS

It's wise to change your child's WhatsApp settings (go to 'Privacy', then 'Groups') to specify which of their contacts can add them to group chats without needing approval; you can give permission to 'My Contacts' or 'My Contacts Except ...'. Additionally, if your child needs to use 'live location', emphasise that they should enable this function for only as long as they need – and then turn it off.

THINKING BEFORE SHARING

Help your child to understand why it's important to stop and think before posting or forwarding something on WhatsApp. It's easy – and all too common – for content to then be shared more widely (even publicly on social media). Encourage your child to consider how an ill-judged message might damage their reputation or upset a friend who sent something to them in confidence.

CHAT ABOUT PRIVACY

Some parents like to check in with their child about how they're using WhatsApp, explaining that it will help to keep them safe. If you spot a 'Locked Chats' folder, you might want to talk about the sort of chats that are in there, who they're with and why your child wants to keep them hidden. Also, if your child has sent any 'view once' content, you could discuss their reasons for using this feature.

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



...HEY OSCAR...



National Online Safety®

#WakeUpWednesday

Source: <https://blog.whatsapp.com/an-open-letter> | <https://laq.whatsapp.com/10770/8839582332> | https://laq.whatsapp.com/36/005896169245/?helpref=hc_fnav | <https://www.whatsapp.com/security> | <https://blog.whatsapp.com/chat-lock-making-your-most-intimate-conversations-even-more-private> | <https://www.aura.com/learn/whatsapp-scams>

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about THE DANGERS OF VAPING

Data collected for ASH (Action on Smoking and Health) shows an increase in 11 to 17-year-olds experimenting with vaping: from 7.7% in 2022 to 11.6% in 2023. It's concerning that these age-restricted products are getting into the hands of under 18s as most contain nicotine, which can be detrimental to brain development and cause long-term addiction. Some schools have reported students having their focus in lessons affected by nicotine cravings; vaping in school toilets; and even trying vapes found in their local park. Raising awareness of the risks among young people could help to prevent these problems from escalating and reduce the number of young vapers.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

NICOTINE ADDICTION

Since they were initially developed to help people stop smoking, the vast majority of vape liquids contain nicotine. Not only is this a highly addictive stimulant, but it can also have detrimental effects on brain development in the under-25s. Nicotine can decrease the ability to pay attention, weaken impulse control, affect mood and increase the likelihood of substance addiction as an adult.

WHAT IS VAPING?

Vapes contain a liquid (vape juice/e-liquid) that is heated by a battery and evaporates, creating a chemical vapour which the user inhales. They can be **disposable** (once the liquid or battery runs out, the vape is thrown away) or **rechargeable** (the user replaces the liquid and recharges the battery on demand). Most vape liquids contain nicotine and other chemicals.

LACK OF AWARENESS

A proportion of young people tend to view vapes as harmless, mainly because of the products' appearance and the perception (often strengthened on social media) that "vaping is cool" and on trend. In many instances, young people don't fully appreciate the concept of addiction: that is, they aren't adequately aware of the risk of becoming hooked on nicotine before trying a vape.

POTENTIAL TOXICITY

Many vape liquids have been found to contain 'heavy' metals such as lead, tin, nickel and (in some cases) mercury – all of which are toxic. These metals often take the form of tiny shards inside a device's liquid tank, which are then inhaled into the body. Some media reports have suggested these metals are particularly prevalent in illegally imported vapes which don't comply with UK regulations.

UNCLEAR LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES

The liquids in vapes also contain solvents, which can create carcinogens at the point of evaporation. Vapes were only introduced into the UK in 2005 – and, because of the relatively short timeframe involved, there is insufficient medical evidence to assess the long-term harms that regular inhalation of these chemical fluids might have on the human body.

ATTRACTIVE PACKAGING

The packaging of many disposable vapes is very appealing to young people, frequently echoing the colours and flavours of the sweets or fizzy drinks they're used to buying. There's a relative lack of regulation around vape marketing, and vaping is often depicted positively on social media – which can lead young people to develop favourable views of vaping and overlook the possible harms.

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

In the UK alone, around 1.3 million disposable vapes go to landfill every week. Due to such significant numbers of these products not being recycled, their components – a lithium battery and a chemical liquid – pose a toxic risk to the environment, the ecosystem and wildlife. Vapes are also predominantly made of plastic and metal; materials that, of course, do not naturally decompose.

WIDER HEALTH CONCERNS

Studies are already showing a link between vaping and oral health problems such as tooth decay and gum disease. This is because vaping reduces the amount of saliva in the mouth, while increasing bacteria – resulting in bad breath and a build-up of plaque. There are also concerns that, in some users, vaping could lead to the development of asthma, a persistent cough and breathing difficulties.

UNREGULATED VAPING PRODUCTS

The number of retailers willing to sell vapes to under-18s is a worry, as the chance of these products being unregulated (and therefore containing illegal chemicals and higher levels of nicotine) is high. A related concern is that the mechanisms inside unregulated products are unlikely to have been tested and safety checked – presenting a possible fire risk if the liquid and battery come into contact.

SCARCE INFORMATION

The lack of information about the ingredients and potentially harmful chemicals in a vape is troubling. Some vape fluids (unregulated in the UK) contain traces of nuts, which can cause an allergic reaction or anaphylactic shock. To date, medical warnings aren't required on vape packaging – with only medical disclaimers being found on the websites of the various brands.

VAGUE INGREDIENTS LISTS

Early research has suggested that the chemicals used to produce some strawberry and banana flavour e-liquids can kill cells in the blood vessels and heart. These ingredients aren't identified on the packaging, instead falling under the umbrella term 'natural and artificial flavourings'. Such vague listings mean that consumers aren't aware of the liquid's content so can't identify potential risks.

Meet Our Expert

Run by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Healthy Schools Service (commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council), Catch Your Breath is a school-based project aimed at young people. Its goal is to embed a proactive, coordinated approach among both primary and secondary schools in discouraging smoking and vaping behaviours.



HEALTHY SCHOOLS
CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH

The National College

Source: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-65809924>



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