



Newsletter September 2025

St. Michael's Middle School

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



Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome back and I hope that you have had a lovely holiday break and a chance to refresh in preparation for the year ahead.

A special welcome to all of those staff, pupils and families joining the school this term, we look forward to working with you in the coming weeks and months ahead.

Many pupils in Year 5 joined us on Monday for a special welcome service in St. Michael's Church. This is the first time we have done this and mirrors what we do as staff on the first day back after the Summer break. It was also lovely to have a chance to meet a number of parents after the service and I would like to thank the volunteers from St. Michael's Church for making this possible.

We are looking forward to our new office staff team taking up post in a few weeks. In the meantime, we have slightly less capacity in the school office than usual. Please be understanding if there is any delay in replying to any enquiry. For non-urgent enquiries, please use the office email. Please also make sure that you are signed up to both ParentMail and the Arbor Parent App to keep informed of important messages from the school. If you cannot access these platforms, please contact the school office.

Our newsletters are produced roughly monthly 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 come back this week but we will have much more news content in the coming months.

Looking forward to a great year!

Mr. Ayling

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**Term Dates
2025/2026**



Changes for 2025/2026

We are delighted to welcome a number of new staff to St. Michael's this term.



Miss Parmenter will be the tutor for class 6P and will also be teaching English in Key Stage 3.



Mrs Wadley-Scott joins us as the tutor for class 5W and will be teaching Key Stage 3 English and French.



Miss Mawdesley has joined us as a teaching assistant who will be working in classes across the school.



Mrs Stuart will be working alongside Mr Taylor as the safeguarding officer for the school.



Miss Eldridge has moved from a local middle school to join us as a teaching assistant.

During the summer holidays, we also held interviews to appoint new staff members who will work in the school office. They will start work as soon as they are able to leave their current posts.



Mrs Phelps is coming to St. Michael's to run the school office as our new office manager.



Mrs Dawson will be moving from working in the NHS to become our administration assistant with responsibility for finance. This will include payments through ParentMail and Arbor and school meals.



Mrs Humphreys will be joining the office team on the front desk each morning to work alongside Mrs Bartlett to assist with the arrival of pupils to school and early morning parental queries.

We also have a number of our staff who are undertaking different roles for this academic year.

Mrs Martin-Papp has taken over the coordination of music. She will be joined in the music department by **Mrs Yarrow** who is moving away from covering lessons to teach music. **Mrs Palombo** will now be joining the cover supervisor staff and moving away from being a teaching assistant. **Mrs Cassidy** will taking over a role in the schools pastoral team and will move away from her role in the school office.

There has also been a change in the way that we have grouped pupils for lessons in Key Stage 3. Last year, pupils spent the majority of their time in tutor groups and had limited variation in who they were in classes with across their week.

We felt that we wanted pupils to have a greater variety of pupils that they worked with across their timetable. This year, pupils will be taught in different groups depending upon the subjects grouped together. This move has also allowed us to better target our staff resources to pupils who need extra support in lessons. The subjects grouped together are:

- English, Science, RE, Music, Art, ICT, History and Geography
- French, PE, Design Subjects (Product Design, Food Technology and Textiles)
- Maths (this is taught in sets)
- Tutor periods and PSHCE

Pupils in Key Stage 2 are grouped in the same way as last year with the majority of their lessons being in tutor groups.

We have been able to renovate some of the classroom spaces around school and also improve some of the soundproofing between rooms. We have also started the much needed renovation of the school changing rooms with the boys changing rooms having been painted and repaired. The girl's changing room will be renovated at half term.

Finally, we have added some new play equipment to the playground with 4 new basketball hoops and some new fixed football goals along the fence. We hope that pupils enjoy these new playtime resources.



We were delighted once again to have been recognised with a national award for our attendance levels.

One area that we have identified as a focus are pupils who are persistently late in arriving at school.

Being late in the morning means that pupils do not get important messages about the day and any changes.

Lesson one of the school day starts at 8.40am and this is the time that we take morning registers. Please do all that you can to ensure your child is in school to start at this time.

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 Michaels (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 Michaels (over 135 lessons missed)

Every lesson counts!

Be on time!

Important Medical Reminder

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



THANK YOU
for keeping our school safe!



We have a number of pupils at St. Michael's who have a severe allergy to nuts and sesame seeds. It is vital for their health that they do not come into contact with these whilst at school. Please be vigilant in checking packed lunches and snacks.







We appreciate your cooperation on this very important issue.



Mobile Phones

The issue of mobile phone use in schools is consistently in the news. We have used the DfE guidance on phones to create our rules for bringing a mobile phone in school. As a reminder to all in the school community, these rules are set out below.

 <p>or</p>  <p>The DfE guidance gives schools the authority to take one of four actions regarding phones in school. We have chosen option C - Mobile phones kept in secure location, which the pupil does not access throughout the day. Phones are to be kept in bags, on pegs, throughout the day. If a pupil prefers, they can be handed in at the school office for safe keeping.</p>	  <p>There is never an occasion where pupil can use their phones on site to listen to music (via earbuds or headphones) or take photos of staff or pupils. Should a pupils use a phone to take pictures or sound recordings of any pupils or staff, this will be treated as a serious breach of the schools behaviour code and the pupils concerned will be sanctioned.</p>
<p>Schools are able to confiscate mobile phones if they are found on pupils during the school day, whether or not the phone is switched on. Our school policy states that on the first occasion, a phone will be confiscated and should be collected by the pupil at the end of the day. On a second occasion, the phone will be confiscated and parents will need to pick this up from the school office and a lunchtime detention issued. On the third occurrence, the phone will have to be handed in at the office every morning or a ban issued on bringing the phone to school and an after-school detention issued.</p>	<p>Pupils who refuse to hand over their phones when asked or refuse to hand in a phone at the school office if required will be sanctioned in line with the schools behaviour policy for defiant behaviour. The use of mobile phones in school is specifically covered in the Online Safety Policy, section 8.</p> <p>A single exception to a pupil being allowed a mobile phone in school is for a medical reason (for example for diabetes monitoring), and is at the discretion of the headteacher.</p>

We are pleased that the need to enforce these rules with pupils is very rare as the vast majority understand and follow the rules. We understand why parents may want their child to have a phone for safety purposes and thank you for ensuring your child follows the rules as set out above. Lastly, all phones are brought to school at your own risk.

A number of our parental community are part of a group who have voluntarily agreed to not provide their child with a phone. A useful website that you may wish to refer to is <https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/>. By creating these rules, the school does not endorse having a phone but leaves this as a decision to made by each individual parent.

Road Safety



The road system around the school is not designed for the volume of traffic using this on a daily basis. This is not something we can solve easily as it is out of the school's control. To help improve the situation, we ask that parents follow these guidelines to reduce the risk of an accident.



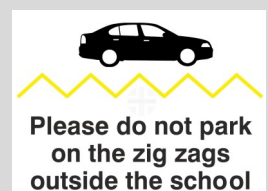
Please try to keep to a voluntary maximum speed limit of 20 miles per hour whilst travelling down this road at school drop-off and pick-up times. Dropping to 20 mph means that there is a 40% deduction in the likelihood an accident and, should a collision with a pedestrian occur, a 25% lower chance of serious injury (statistics from the Highway Agency).

If everyone were to treat the road as a one-way system during the busy drop-off and pick-up, this would really help with the flow of traffic. Cars can follow the buses, entering from the war memorial end and exiting by the church. This will stop the car to car confrontations that block the traffic on the narrow road.



No cars should be coming into the car park to drop off pupils other than by pre-arrangement. Please also never use the entrance gates to exit as cars and children are not expecting cars to come from this direction.

Please do not park on the Zig-Zag lines at the front of school as this is against the law, including for dropping off or picking up.



Dorset Council employs two crossing patrol staff to help children cross the main roads by the war memorial and St. Michael's Church. It is important that pupils wait for these staff to assist them across these busy roads.

Please be extra vigilant when passing the pedestrian exit gates towards the war memorial. Pupils coming out these gates may cross the road without looking. Please be prepared to stop quickly if required.



Lost Property

Over the last few years, we have amassed a large quantity of unnamed but useable lost property. We have decided to introduce a new way of using this spare uniform, helping the environment, reduce the cost of uniform for those it will help and support the Reef youth club. Here is how the system will work:

All of the lost property from around the school is collected up each week and put in the storage area outside the PE office in the hall. Pupils can check here for any missing items.



Once a week the lost property is sorted by our team of pupils.



If the item is named, it will be sent back to the pupils through the registers. Please make sure it is named with the correct pupil's name.

If the item is unnamed, it will be washed and donated to the Reef for their regular uniform sales. The school will keep a small amount of washed uniform and, should you need a replacement uniform item, please ask the office who may be able to help.



This system is part of our school's drive to reduce the impact of our lives on the world's environment. This is something we know is very important to our students and staff. The fashion and clothing industry is one of the biggest polluting industries and we hope that this strategy reduces the need for new uniform/clothes.



We also have a fabric bank outside of the swimming pool entrance. If you have old clothes or shoes, please donate them here. The school receives payment for the clothes donated.

★ END OF YEAR ★ ★ AWARD WINNERS ★

Congratulations to all of the pupils below who were elected for an end of year award for their hard work. Well done to you all.

	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8
Jean Watts Award for Approach to Learning	Alfie R	Daisy H	Freddie H	James W
Jackie Belvoir Award for Progress in Learning	Chanuli K	Rhys B	Alice J	Evie P

Year 8 Leavers Awards

Governors Award: Lucy T
Year 8 Award: Roman T
Helping Hands Award: Chloe H and Karla LR

Excellence in English	Evan H
Commitment to English	Jacob B
Maths	Jake M
Science	Molly B
French	Matilda P
DT Product Design	Lillian B
Art	Layla S
RE	Isabella A
French	Matilda P
Humanities	Artem B
Computer Science	Oscar D
Sports Leader of the Year	Hetty Y

Contribution to Music	Esme C
Music Singing / Performance	Lucy T
Instrumental Music	Sophia J
Music Rising Star	Harry C
Boys Sport	Toby C
Girls Sport	Ava S
Dedication to	Molly B /
Most Improved Sports Person	Chloe H / Harry H



LoveReading

4 KIDS BUY BOOKS CHANGE LIVES

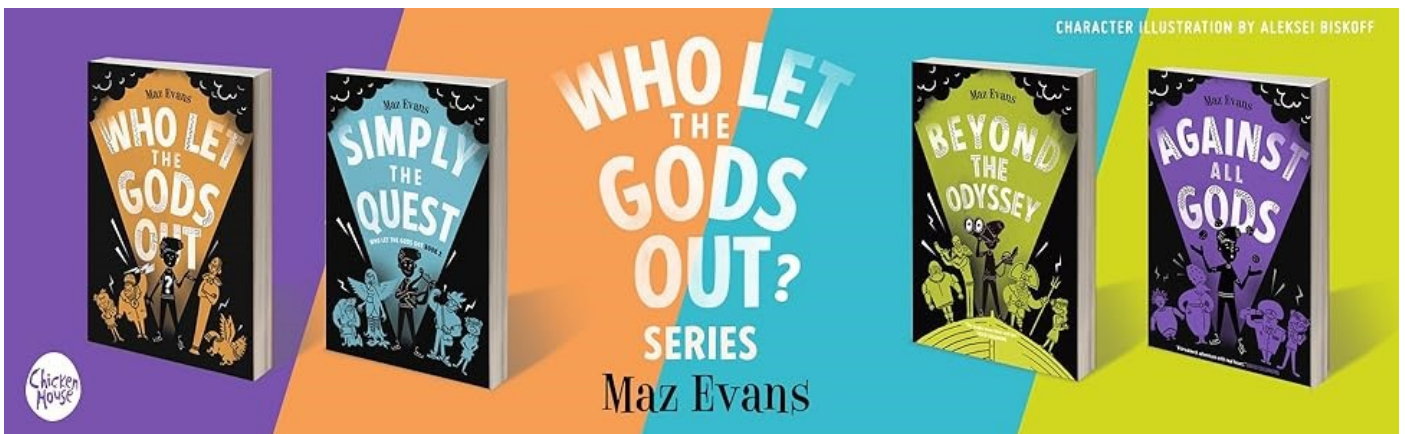
www.lovereadings4kids.co.uk

www.lovereadings.co.uk

We are delighted to introduce you to a new website for the purchase of books for you or your child that also helps support our school. LoveReading and LoveReading4Kids offer a comprehensive one-stop place to find all of the latest books for all ages, with reviews and recommendations. All books have 10% off the cover price. You can also purchase gift cards which not only make a lovely present but once cashed in also raises money for the school. Every book purchased helps towards our ongoing library redevelopment and gives our pupils the widest possible choice of quality reading materials. Please spread the word of this site friends and families, especially if they are buying books a present, and help us raise as much as possible.

Every book purchased through this website gives the school 25% of the cover price to St. Michael's!

Please select St. Michael's Middle School at checkout as your nominated school



Other titles from Maz Evans, author of 'Who Let the Gods Out' - available from www.lovereadings4kids.co.uk

 LoveReading

UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES

Monday 8th September	School Photographs (Individual)
Tuesday 9th September	School Photographs (Class)
Monday 15th September	Year 7 Holne Park Launch Evening (5.30pm-6.30pm)
Thursday 18th September	Year 8 French Trip Launch Evening (6pm)
Tuesday 23rd September	Year 8 Tall Ships Launch Evening (5pm-6pm)
Wednesday 1st October	Year 6 SATS Information Evening (6pm)
Tuesday 7th October	Open Evening (5pm-7pm)
Wednesday 8th October	Open Morning for Year 4 Parents
Wednesday 8th October	Year 8 Corfe Castle Trip
Tuesday 14th October	Tutor Based Parents Evening (in person)
Thursday 16th October	Russell Cotes Museum Trip for Arts Awards
Thursday 23rd October	Year 5 Rock Reef Trip (half of Year 5)
Friday 24th October	Year 5 Rock Reef Trip (half of Year 5)
27th October—31st October	Half Term
Monday 3rd November	INSET Day (School Closed)
Monday 10th October— Thursday 13th November	Year 6 Mock SATS Week
Thursday 13th November	Year 8 RE Many Faiths Together Talk
Tuesday 18th November	Subject Based Parents' Evening (in person)
Wednesday 19th November	Year 6 Emma Carol Virtual Author Event
Wednesday 26th November	Subject Based Parents' Evening (online)
Thursday 4th December	Wimborne Minster Carol Service (7pm)
Wednesday 17th December	Christmas Lunch (Years 5 and 7)
Thursday 18th December	Christmas Lunch (Years 6 and 8)
Thursday 18th December	Last Day of Term
Friday 19th December	INSET Day (School Closed)



Term Dates 2025/2026



Autumn Term

Wednesday 3rd September 2025	Staff Training Day (School Closed)
Thursday 4th September 2025	Staff Training Day (School Closed)
Friday 5th September 2025	Staff Training Day (School Closed)
Monday 8th September 2025	First Day of Term
Monday 27th October 2025	Half Term Starts
Friday 31st October 2025	Half Term Ends
Monday 3rd November 2025	Staff Training Day (School Closed)
Friday 18th December 2025	Last Day of Term
Friday 19th December 2024	Staff Training Day (School Closed)



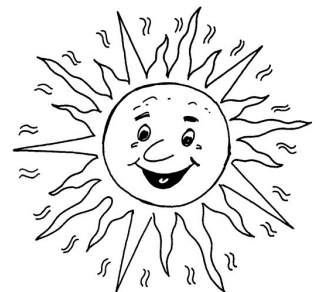
Spring Term

Monday 5th January 2026	Staff Training Day (School Closed)
Tuesday 6th January 2026	First Day of term
Monday 16th February 2026	Half Term Starts
Friday 20th February 2026	Half Term Ends
Monday 23rd February 2026	Staff Training Day (School Closed)
Friday 27th March 2026	Last day of term



Summer Term

Monday 13th April 2026	Staff Training Day (School Closed)
Tuesday 14th April 2026	First Day of Term
Monday 4th May 2026	Bank Holiday
Monday 11th May - Thursday 14th May 2026	Year 6 SATS Week
Monday 25th May 2026	Half Term Starts
Friday 29th June 2026	Half Term Ends
Wednesday 22nd July 2026	Last day of term



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What Parents & Carers Need to Know about SOCIAL MEDIA & MENTAL HEALTH

An estimated one-third of children have a social media account, so it's important that trusted adults know what content young people are consuming, what they're posting and the interactions they're having. On social media, it can be easy to go down 'rabbit holes' that aren't beneficial to our wellbeing. As platforms grapple with managing such 'legal but harmful' content, lives are being impacted – sometimes to tragic effect. We might be daunted by the scale of the tech giants and their content which so enthral young people, but we can still help children to be aware of their mental wellness: recognising when something isn't OK... and knowing what to do about content that upsets them.

1. UNDERSTAND THE ALGORITHM

❤️ 73

Algorithms rank content by user interest: someone who regularly interacts with sports news, say, will see the latest results at the top of their feed. Likewise, if a user browses content that can cause harm, that's what will be recommended to them in future. Someone who's had a bad day and looks for posts which reflect their mood will find similar content being suggested to them more and more.

2. AVOID THE MAIN FEEDS

Avoiding the default feeds on social media platforms limits the amount of recommended content that's shown. Users can opt to only scroll through the accounts they follow, use restricted modes, or highlight posts that they don't want to see more of. Explore the platform safety settings to see how you can take control of what your child's phone shows them when they open the app.

3. DISCUSS WHAT THEY'VE SEEN

Chatting about what your child's seen online keeps you aware of the content they're interacting with. Don't assume that platforms are screening out inappropriate material, or even that your child would recognise content as being harmful. Discuss who they follow, what posts they like and what comes up in their feeds: if alarm bells ring, it could be time for a more in-depth talk or to seek support.

4. LEARN HOW TO HIDE CONTENT

If your child stumbles across unsuitable content on social media, there's the option to hide that post as well as indicating you'd prefer any similar material not to be suggested in future. On some platforms, you might also be able to block posts that contain specific words, which is an excellent way to start taking control of what your child sees online.

5. SET DAILY LIMITS

Phones and most apps can tell you how much they're being used. Spending too long online can mean a child misses out on other activities that are important to all-round wellbeing. You could set some family rules – for everyone to follow – around device use, such as screen time limits and tech-free spaces: involving your child in creating this agreement makes them more likely to stick to it.

6. MONITOR THEIR ACTIVITY

Keeping a discreet eye on how your child is using social media can help ensure they're not entering potentially dangerous situations. As they grow up, of course, children need space to exercise their independence – but you can still occasionally ask to see what they're looking at. Be transparent about your own social media use and try not to sound judgemental about your child's.

7. TURN OFF PUSH NOTIFICATIONS

Even for adults, it's tempting to check an email or message as soon as the alert sound pings. Push notifications encourage people to open their apps and spend time on their device, so turning them off will help your child to practise mindful use of tech. Most of us have other things that we need to focus on as a priority – and those notifications will still be there later, when we have more time.

8. USE DEVICES TOGETHER

Giving children internet-enabled devices and complete freedom to explore platforms on their own can result in exposure to hugely damaging content. You could consider making a particular area at home a designated space to use phones, tablets and so on – making it much easier to monitor what content your child is viewing and (if necessary) steer them away from any potentially harmful paths.

9. ENCOURAGE OTHER ACTIVITIES

Mental health professionals often highlight the importance of exercise, quality time with loved ones, a balanced diet and restful sleep for our mental wellbeing. Spending hours on social media can cause us to sacrifice other activities that our brains need to feel well – so encouraging your child to put down their phone and enjoy something that doesn't involve a screen can be immensely beneficial.

10. TALK ABOUT PEER PRESSURE

Most platforms default children's accounts to private, so only people they've accepted as friends can see their posts. This reduces the risk of bullying or unkind comments, but – just like offline life – the digital world can still make children feel as if they need to act or look a certain way to fit in. Talk to your child about peer pressure, and listen to any concerns so you can provide the support they need.

Meet Our Expert

Shazia Sarwar-Azim is executive headteacher at a specialist primary school and, as an emotional therapy coach, works with school leaders to focus on the SEND, mental health and wellbeing agenda. A passionate advocate for vulnerable learners, Shazia is a Fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching and the author of *The Rainbow Within*, a book which supports children with SEMH needs.



NOS National Online Safety®

#WakeUpWednesday

Sources: <https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-58294625>
<https://prousocial.com/insights/social-media-algorithms/>