# October 2025

# St. Mary's CofE Primary School

Elliott's Hill, Brixton, Devon, PL8 2AG

T: 01752 880436

Email: admin@stmarys-brixton.devon.sch.uk

Website: www.stmarys-brixton.devon.sch.uk

*'Within the love of God, working together, growing together, for all to flourish.'*

## Upcoming Events

Monday 3rd November – start of term

Monday 10th November – Odd Socks Day (Anti Bullying Week)

Friday 14th November – Children In Need Day 2025

*Rights Respecting Focus* -
ARTICLE 24 –

Every child has the right to the best possible health. Governments must work to provide good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment so that children can stay healthy.

We hope that the half term holiday has been an excellent break for you all and that the children are ready for the next few weeks as we make progress towards Christmas.

This term is always very busy and as always, when we have dates and times and further information about things coming up in the diary, we will of course, let you know as soon as possible.

Thank you for your continued support.

## Keep in Touch

admin@stmarys-brixton.devon.sch.uk

www.stmarys-brixton.devon.sch.uk

www.facebook.com/brixtonstmarys

01752 880436

Before and After School Clubs

Many of you use the before and after school club and we are happy to provide that facility for those families that need to make use of it. A couple of years ago, we had to stop the Friday afternoon session as it wasn't viable to run as we only ever had one or two people booking a place.

We are now having a similar situation of a Monday afternoon and very soon we will need to make a decision about whether we need to stop Monday afternoon too.

I will of course keep you informed but if you would like to book spaces at our before and after school clubs, please login to ParentPay as soon as you know you need the space. If you have any issues with booking, please contact Mrs. Wall in the school office and she will be happy to help you.

Occasionally, there is a need for an emergency booking and we are happy to help. Again, please contact the school office to arrange this if needed.

Christian Value – Friendship and Compassion

Our focus Christian Values for the coming half term are '**Friendship and Compassion**'.

Luke 6:31

*' Do to others as you would have them do to you.'*

Friendship and compassion link well with our school vision which reminds us that we need to work together and grow together so that we can all flourish. Showing friendship and being compassionate towards others, is a good way to work towards this vision.

***'Within the love of God, working together, growing together, for all to flourish.'***

Our website has links to all of our Christian Values and this includes links to stories which can reinforce the meaning of each value throughout the school year.

https://stmarys-brixton.devon.sch.uk/our-christian-values/

## USF Cross Country Event

How many of you remember cross country running from when you went to school? I have very clear memories of damp and cold mornings, running across the school fields and even around the local streets near to school.

Children from school recently took part in a cross-country running event which took place in the village of Christow in the Teign Valley. The children from Key Stage 2 took part in different races against the other seven schools from the United Schools Federation and it was great to see them taking part so enthusiastically.

Well done to Paisley, Everlie, Reggie, Benji Katie and Florence from the Y5/6 team, and also Evie, Kit, Dexter, Jack, Emerson and Erin from the Y3/4 team.

Well done to Emerson who managed to finish 2nd in his race.

## Children In Need – Friday 14th November

It's coming up to that time again when we support the annual BBC Children in Need campaign.

The special day takes place on Friday 14th November and we will be inviting children to dress up for Pudsey in return for donation.

We will set up an item on ParentPay for all Children In Need donations.

## Odd Socks Day – Anti Bullying Week

What is Odd Socks Day? Most importantly, Odd Socks Day is designed to be fun! It's an opportunity to encourage people to express themselves and celebrate their individuality and what makes us all unique!

There is no pressure to wear the latest fashion or to buy expensive costumes. All you have to do to take part is wear odd socks to your school, at work of at home, it couldn't be simpler! Odd Socks Day will take place on the first day of Anti-Bullying Week each year to help raise awareness of bullying.

https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/anti-bullying-week-2025/odd-socks-day

## Harvest Service

Thank you to everyone who was able to come along and share in our Harvest service at the church at the end of last half term. We hope you enjoyed it as much as we did. The children did an amazing job with their singing but also their reading. It takes courage to stand up in church and share a reading, a poem or a prayer and so they all deserve a lot of credit for this.

Thank you too for all of the donations which will be given to the church as part of their own foodbank to support people in the village.

## Mental Health Corner

Separation Anxiety – A Normal Part of Growing Up It's completely normal and very common for children to feel worried or upset when saying goodbye to a parent or carer, especially during times of change, like starting school, moving up a year group or returning to school after a holiday.

Separation anxiety happens because children feel safest when close to their loved ones, and it can take time to build confidence and trust in their own abilities.

You can help by keeping goodbyes calm and consistent, praising your child's bravery, and talking about what you'll do together later. Short, positive routines can make all the difference.

For more helpful tips, watch this short video from children's mental health charity Place2Be:

https://parentingsmart.place2be.org.uk/article/help-your-child-manage-separations-and-goodbyes

## Events and dates

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|---|---|
| Monday 3rd November | Start of the new term |
| Monday 10th November | Odd Socks Day |
| Wednesday 12th November | 2nd EYFS Open Event for September 2026 intake |
| Friday 14th November | Children In Need Day |

Don't forget that school term dates for the rest of this year and next year, can be found on the school website, especially if you are looking to book holidays and need to know when the school is closed.

Managing Screen Time

From using them for communication, work, shopping and entertainment, devices such as smartphones, laptops and the rest are now deeply ingrained into modern society. Small wonder, then, that young people – who've grown up surrounded by such gadgets – can sometimes struggle to put them down, switch them off or keep themselves occupied without them.

While limiting our screen time may require a great deal of restraint, the effort can be rewarded with significant benefits to our physical and mental health. At the end of this newsletter is a guide which has simple tips for helping to manage the amount of screen time in your household – encouraging the whole family to spend more quality time together and live in the moment.

And Finally….

You may be aware that there is a new vicar in the local area who is joining the local team. Rev Andy Atkins had his licensing service in the half term holiday and we were invited to be involved. Effie from Y6 took part by doing a reading in the service and we have received a lovely email from Rosemary Filtness (Chair, Interregnum Steering Committee) congratulating Effie on her part in that service. Here is the message from Rosemary.
Well done to Effie for representing St. Mary's so well at the service. Thank you from us all!

*Dear Effie.*

*Many congratulations on your reading the lesson at Reverend Andy Atkins licensing service on Monday. Although you had no opportunity to practise, you delivered your reading with a great deal of maturity and poise. Everyone in the congregation said they could hear every word and were very impressed with the confident way you read. The Deputy Lord Lieutenant, His Majesty the King's representative, and the Bishop of Plymouth were both sorry that they were unable to congratulate you in person after the service.*

*You are a credit to your school and family and I wish you every success in the future.*

*Yours sincerely*

*Rosemary Filtness, (Chair, Interregnum Steering Committee)*

Kind regards

Adrian Clements

Head of School

At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one of many issues which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit nationalcollege.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

# Top Tips for...
# MANAGING SCREEN TIME

According to the latest stats, people aged between 8 and 17 spend four hours on digital devices during an average day. Obviously, a new year is ideal for fresh starts and renewed efforts – so lots of families are trying to cut down their combined screen time right now, creating more moments to connect with each other and relying less on gadgets to have fun. Our top tips on reducing screen time are for everyone, so you can get your whole family involved in turning over a new leaf this year!

## GET OUT AND ABOUT

If the weather's decent, spend some time in the garden or go for a walk. Even a stroll to the local shop would do: the main thing is getting some fresh air and a break from your screen.

## TRY A TIMED TRIAL

When you're taking a screen break to do a different activity or a chore, turn it into a game by setting yourself a timer. Can you complete your task before the alarm goes off?

## GO DIGITAL DETOX

Challenge yourself and your family to take time off from screens, finding other things to do. You could start off with half a day, then build up to a full day or even an entire weekend.

## LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Let your family see you successfully managing your own screen time. You'll be showing them the way, and it might stop some of those grumbles when you *do* want to go online.

## AGREE TECH-FREE ZONES

Nominate some spots at home where devices aren't allowed. Anywhere your family gathers together, like at the table or in the living room, could become a 'no phone zone'.

## HOLD A SCREEN TIME AMNESTY

As a family, agree specific windows when it's OK to use devices. This should help everyone to balance time on phones or gaming with enjoying quality moments together.

## BE MINDFUL OF TIME

Stay aware of how long you've been on your device for. Controlling how much time you spend in potentially stressful areas of the internet – like social media platforms – can also boost your wellbeing.

## 'PARK' PHONES OVERNIGHT

Set up an overnight charging station for everyone's devices – preferably away from bedrooms. That means less temptation for late-night scrolling.

## SWITCH ON DND

Research shows that micro-distractions like message alerts and push notifications can chip away at our concentration levels. Put devices on 'do not disturb' until you're less busy.

## TAKE A FAMILY TECH BREAK

Set aside certain times when the whole family puts their gadgets away and enjoys an activity together: playing a board game, going for a walk or just having a chat.

## SOCIALISE WITHOUT SCREENS

When you're with friends, try not to automatically involve phones, TVs or other tech. Having company can be loads more fun if your attention isn't being split.

## WIND DOWN PROPERLY

Try staying off phones, consoles, tablets and so on just before you go to sleep. Reading or just getting comfy in bed for a while can give you a much more restful night.

## Meet Our Expert

Minds Ahead design and deliver the UK's only specialist postgraduate mental health qualifications. They also provide training and support to education organisations and local authorities – empowering school leaders and staff with the knowledge and tools to shape their settings into inclusive communities where the mental health of pupils and personnel is prioritised.

The National College

National Online Safety

#WakeUpWednesday

@natonlinesafety /NationalOnlineSafety @nationalonlinesafety @national_online_safety

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