



Dear Parents & Carers,

What a busy last week of term!

Our Year 1&2 children showed us that we could **trust** them and demonstrated their resilience and **courage**, performing Nativity plays, following the wonderful example of our Reception classes last week (see right!). Our older children finished learning journeys- working right up to the end of a very long term!

Today, our wonderful teaching staff worked hard on teaching & learning, whilst the support staff and admin team tidied, sorted and organised school resources, ready for the New Year. Thank you, everyone, for the **love** you showed.



Last night was a lovely occasion for the wider community, singing carols round the Picket Twenty development, returning for hot chocolate in the school hall! Oh, and **Earth** won the House Treat for this term- well done, children in **Earth**!

It has been a very long term, but so much has been accomplished! Thank you, parents & carers for your unwavering support of the school and your children.

I wish you all a very happy Christmas break & all the best for 2025.

*Jim Cascarini – Headteacher*

[headteacher@pilgrimscross.co.uk](mailto:headteacher@pilgrimscross.co.uk)

*Who's on the good list?*

**78%** of parents/carers will be visited by Santa, as they have now signed up to the Arbor Parent App- well done!

For those of you not wanting a lump of coal in your stockings, please download the app from your app store and put in your email address which is associated with the current details that we have for you in school.

Click 'forgotten password' and you'll receive an email to set up a password.

Once you have done this, have a look around the app. You should be able to see your child(ren)'s details.

In the spring, we will begin using this for communications, trips, bookings and payments.



## *What we have been learning this week...*

### **Willow & Oak**

WOW. What an exciting first term we have had in Year R. We could not be more proud of the progress that all of the children have made.

We have had Christmas, Diwali, maths, phonics, reading, science, geography, history, DT and art and the children didn't even know that's what they were doing! That's the joy of our curriculum. We are all very excited that Santa will be visiting us soon and all of the children deserve every gift they receive this year. They have worked so hard and shown every value that we wish for them to be successful learners.

Well done everyone on an amazing start to your learning journey!!

The Year R team

### **Sycamore & Maple**

What a wonderful week it has been in Year One! We have had so much festive fun together. The children performed brilliantly in the Nativity and we hope you feel as proud of them as we do! We have also enjoyed some Christmas themed maths, making Christmas cards, writing the Nativity story and enjoying many Christmas stories together. On Thursday the children have enjoyed a Christmas movie afternoon as a treat as a result of earning all of their vision balls.

Well done Sycamore Class and Maple Class, you have been fantastic all term and we are extremely proud of all of the progress you have made.

Enjoy a wonderful Christmas break with your families and we will see you in the new year!

Miss Miners and Mrs Edgington

### **Lime & Hazel**

What a week to round out our Autumn term! All of our Year 2s did amazingly well in the nativity, we were certainly very proud! In amongst our nativity performances, the children worked on their alternative endings for our story of Little Red and the Very Hungry Lion. We saw lots of use of adverbs, conjunctions and the past tense suffix -ed to clearly deliver their imaginative ideas. We have also learnt about another Festival of Light this week - Hannukah, with the children learning the story behind these celebrations. In DT, we finally made Baby Bear's chair with the use of some stable cylinders and masking tape - everyone was able to experience success when testing by using our teddy bears. We have had such fun making decorations and cards in the last few days, we hope you all have a wonderful Christmas time!

Miss Samuel & Miss Lavin

### **Chestnut & Elm**

It's been another busy week in year 3 with lots of learning and festive activities! In English, the children wrote their own instructions about washing different stone-age animals; so if you happen to have a 'wild horse' or 'woolly rhino' then you may need to read some of these. In maths, they have been working on counting in threes and the three times table including looking at repeated addition and arrays. Do keep up with TT-rock stars over the school holidays. As part of our D.T. learning journey the children tasted different fruits and vegetables, thinking about their flavours and textures; and explored whether they needed peeling by hand or with a peeler before eating.

Thank you for all your support over this term and we wish you all 'A Very Merry Christmas!'

Miss Plaw & Miss Boyce



## Beech & Ash

We have had a fabulous week in year 4 this week! We finished writing our persuasive letters as a Victorian maid asking for a day off. We were so impressed with the use of flattery, bribery and emotive language. We spent time using the computers to develop our own games on Scratch and worked out how to keep a running score. We put on our investigative hats in Science and explored the link between how many bulbs are in a circuit and how bright the bulbs shine. We found that the fewer bulbs there were, the brighter they shone. We also looked at how we can be safe with electricity in our homes. We finished the week with a Christmas film and hot chocolate.

Have a very merry Christmas and happy New Year,  
Miss Collier and Mrs Allison

## Pine & Hawthorn

In Year 5 this week we have finished our Maths learning journey into multiplication and division. We have mastered dividing using short division which has helped us to problem-solve and provide reasoning for our answers. The children have also finished their descriptive scenes depicting Grendel approaching the Great Hall in Beowulf. Finally, we have finished off our final week with vision time for each class as reward for all their hard work this half term. We wish everyone in Year 5 a very Happy Christmas!

Mr Dookheran & Mr Childs



## Aspen & Juniper

We've crammed lots of learning in to the final days of this term in Year 6! On Monday and Tuesday we designed a new playground for Pilgrims' Cross, based on a brief given by Mr Cascarini. We brought our ideas to life by creating models, using a range of materials including wooden dowelling, lollipop sticks and cardboard. The design had to meet a range of criteria including being safe, inclusive, fun and suitable for 4-11 year olds. We measured, cut and used hot glue guns during the making process. Our teachers were very proud of the team-work, communication, problem-solving and creativity which were in abundance throughout this DT project! In science, we learnt about how periscopes were used in the trenches during WW1, allowing soldiers to safely look out on to the battlefield. We learnt about how they work (the light reflects off two mirrors angled at 45 degrees allowing the user to see) by making one ourselves, and what better way to test them out than a spot of trench warfare!

Mrs Cocks, Miss Howick and Mr Osmond



## Christmas Carol Singing

On Thursday night, we enjoyed some Christmas Carol Singing around the Picket Twenty development. It was an enjoyable time- we were also joined by Reverend Lauren, dressed as a host of characters from the Nativity story!



## Family Support



My name is Mrs Hathaway and after nearly 8 years of working in the school and being lucky enough to work with so many children and families I am thrilled to be moving into an area I am passionate about as the new Child and Family Support Worker.

We understand that life can be challenging at times and recognise the affects this can have on children and parents.

My role is based around offering support and information with the aim of enabling all our children at Pilgrims' Cross the opportunity to thrive and be succesful.

I will be around the school grounds in the mornings and afternoons as well as being contactable via the email address below should you wish to arrange a time for a chat.

Email – [familysupport@pilgrimscross.co.uk](mailto:familysupport@pilgrimscross.co.uk)

Tel – 01264 369523

## Little Troopers

On Monday afternoon the service group and their families came together for a Christmas party. It was lovely to see so many families enjoying themselves and even the adults made some new friends. A massive thank you to you all for coming.

I would like to wish all of my service children and families a very Happy Christmas and a Happy New year.



## Parents'/carers' evenings-

We are delighted to let you know that we are holding parent/carer consultations on **Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> & Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January**, from **3.00pm-6.00pm**. These consultations will focus on academic progress, gaps in learning and next-step targets.

The link for booking is: <https://pilgrimscrossce.schoolcloud.co.uk/>

## Lunchtime helpers needed!

Do you have an hour to spare at lunchtimes? We desperately need some volunteers to help wipe tables & pour water in the hall between 12.00-1.00pm. Please contact the office if you could help with this.

## Staffing news

Miss Boyce will be leaving us at the end of this term. I want to thank her for her hard work, covering Chestnut Class this autumn term. Miss Dewsbury will be the Chestnut Class teacher in January. Last Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December, the class will had an opportunity to meet her.

Also, we are saying 'thank you and farewell' to Mrs Timbrell & Mrs Tivey, who finish at Christmas. They have been with us for many years and have provided a great start to our youngest learners. I am sure you will want to say 'thank you' to them too. I am excited to remind you that Mr Edgington will be the Willow Class teacher in January. He was also in this Wednesday and spent time with the children & to hand over from the team in Willow Class.

## Attendance

Our school attendance this year stands at 96%- above the current national average of 94.5%. Children need to be in school every day to make the best progress.

Congratulations to the **83 children with a perfect 100% attendance so far this academic year!**

## Christmas lunch

We had a fantastic Christmas lunch, cooked by our wonderful school cooks- thank you!



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](https://nationalcollege.com).

## 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators SAFETY OVER THE FESTIVE SEASON

The holiday season, marked by Christmas and New Year, brings joy and togetherness but also presents unique safety challenges for children, families and educators. From busy holiday shopping, traveling and family gatherings to managing digital activity during school breaks, staying safe during this period requires heightened awareness. This guide offers practical tips to help families and educators maintain a more secure and fulfilling festive period.

### 1 MONITOR DIGITAL ACTIVITY

Children spend more time online during school holidays, increasing exposure to potential dangers such as cyberbullying, inappropriate content and online predators. Balancing screen time, avoiding harmful websites and ensuring children engage positively online can be difficult without proper monitoring tools. Set clear boundaries, encourage open discussions about online safety and use parental controls to manage content exposure and screen time effectively. Regular check-ins and positive reinforcement around digital habits encourage safe online behaviour.

### 2 PRACTICE FIRE SAFETY PROTOCOLS

The incidence of house fires increases during Christmas due to greater use of candles, cookers and electrical decorations. Open flames, electrical overloads and the need for quick response plans can make fire safety challenging. Ensure smoke detectors are operational, keep fire extinguishers on hand and teach children how to respond in case of a fire emergency. Avoid leaving cooking unattended and use fire-safe candles to prevent mishaps.

### 3 CREATE TRAVEL SAFETY PLANS

More families tend to travel during the holidays, resulting in busier roads, increased traffic accidents and weather-related hazards. Weather conditions, road rage, fatigue and busy airports can all compromise travel safety. Pack emergency kits and adhere to seatbelt laws. Plan routes in advance and allow extra travel time to avoid rushing and mitigate risks on busy roads.

### 4 BEWARE OF ALLERGIES

Holiday meals often involve many foods that may contain allergens. Cross contamination, unclear labelling and lack of allergy-friendly options can lead to severe reactions. Communicate any allergy needs to hosts, provide safe food alternatives and carry necessary medications like antihistamines or EpiPens. Teaching children how to advocate for themselves and recognise dangerous foods also contributes to safer celebrations.

### 5 PREVENT THE SPREAD OF ILLNESS

Cold weather and seasonal socialising can increase the spread of viruses like flu and COVID-19. Crowded gatherings, schools out of session and frequent travel can lead to higher infection risks. Emphasise hygiene, encourage vaccination, disinfect surfaces and isolate symptomatic individuals. Communication with children about proper hygiene practices is essential to reduce the spread of illness.

### 6 STAY VIGILANT ON THE ROAD

Increased holiday traffic heightens the risk of accidents for both drivers and pedestrians. Distracted driving, pedestrian safety and inclement weather can complicate road safety. Encourage pedestrian safety practices, avoid distracted driving and never drive under the influence.

### 7 MAINTAIN SAFE DECORATIONS

Festive decorations such as Christmas lights and candles can pose electrical, fire and choking hazards if mishandled. Frayed wires, toppling Christmas trees, small ornaments and open flames can be difficult to control, especially in busy households with children. Inspect and maintain decorations, secure Christmas trees, place fragile or small items out of reach and ensure candles are never left unattended. Testing smoke alarms and using flame-retardant decorations can significantly reduce risks.

### 8 SET BOUNDARIES FOR GIFTS

Some toys and gadgets can present choking, sharp-edge or safety risks, particularly for young children. Ensuring that gifts meet safety standards and are age appropriate can be complex with so many options available. Inspect all toys carefully and ensure any tech devices have parental controls. Setting expectations around safe gift use and discarding packaging that poses a risk also helps to prevent accidents.

### 9 ADDRESS STRESS & FATIGUE

Holiday pressures can lead to burnout, which affects both physical and mental health. Overpacked schedules and a lack of downtime can cause stress and fatigue, leading to accidents or poor decision making. Incorporate rest, maintain regular routines and seek support to reduce stress. Encourage activities that promote relaxation to create a healthier, happier holiday experience for everyone.

### 10 DRINK RESPONSIBLY

Alcohol is commonly present at holiday events, raising concerns about safety and supervision. Excessive alcohol consumption can lead to accidents, impaired judgment and lack of supervision for children. Designate responsible adults, limit consumption and provide transportation alternatives for guests. Teaching moderation and modelling responsible behaviour in front of children ensures that celebrations remain positive and secure.

### Meet Our Expert

James Whelan is a chartered health and safety consultant with 10 years of experience in promoting family and community safety. Specialising in risk assessment and preventative strategies, he has worked with educational institutions, public health agencies and community groups to deliver safety education and training.



# #WakeUpWednesday

The National College

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/safety-over-the-festive-season>

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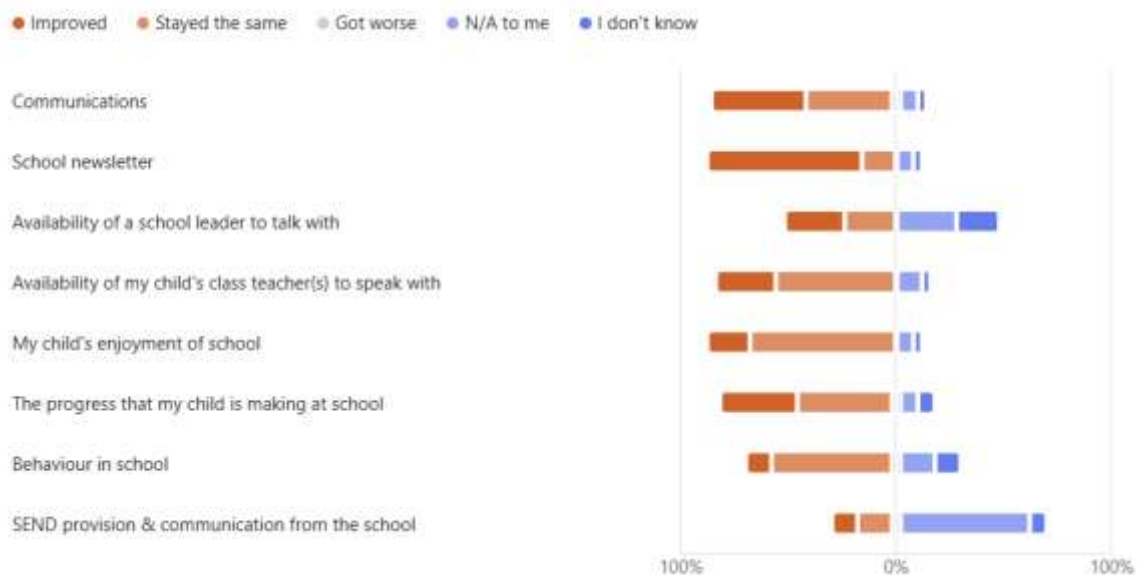
## Safeguarding- walking to school

Children in Year 5 and below should not be walking to school on their own. Parents/carers, please ensure that you accompany your children to the school premises.

## Survey feedback

Here are some headlines from the recent parent/carer survey...

You said...	We did...
<i>We preferred the new format of the parent/carer consultations (76%)</i>	We will continue with this format for the January consultations
<i>The hall was quite loud, however (20%)</i>	The next appointments will have a supervised children's area in the music room, next door
<i>There have been improvements this term in communications (44%), the newsletter (72%), availability of a school leader to talk to (28%), my child's enjoyment of school (28%), the progress that my child is making (36%), behaviour (12%) and SEND provision (12%)</i>	



## Key dates

- Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025- INSET Day 4
- Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> January- Parent/carer learning consultations (3.00pm-6.00pm)**
- Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January- Parent/carer learning consultations (3.00pm-6.00pm)**
- Year 6 *Bikeability* 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> February
- w/b Monday 16<sup>th</sup> June- Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> June-Year 6 residential, Hooke Court

Please check out our website calendar for all relevant dates:

<https://www.pilgrimscross.co.uk/calendar/?calid=1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8&pid=8&viewid=1>