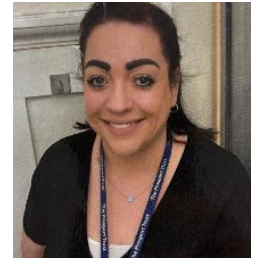


Date: 5th March 2026

Issue : 4

Dear Parents/carers,

What a fantastic Spring term it has been so far. We have enjoyed working hard and learning more about AI and how to keep safe. Later in this newsletter you will find out more about our Safety Week in school.



I have added the **term dates for 2026-27** to the school website: [St Mark's Church of England Primary School - Term Dates](#). Please note that INSET days have not yet been agreed. I will share them when they are published.

Staffing news: Congratulations to Mrs Woolley on the safe arrival of Bonnie on Wednesday 21st January. Both mum and Bonnie are doing well and we hope to be able to meet Bonnie soon.

Thank you for your support as we have all been getting used to the operating times for the school office. Just a reminder that the **school office is open from 9-4pm Monday to Friday**. Please continue to encourage your child to take messages to their teacher as this develops their independence and resilience.

Please continue to follow these procedures in order to ensure we can maximise the efficiency of the front office:

- To report absence use Studybugs: [Studybugs](#)
- Look on the school website: [St Marks CE Primary School](#) for dates, letters and information.
- Encourage your child to take any messages to their teacher
- Email the office on adminoffice@st-marks.hants.sch.uk if you need to get a message to your child's class teacher, which your child cannot deliver themselves.
- Call the office on 01252 544 155 in urgent cases- please be aware that any voice messages will not be picked up until 9am.

In school we are promoting oracy and encouraging children to talk more about themselves and their learning. Please can you support this at home. Children love to talk and tell parents/carers about all of the great things they do and speaking and listening skills are essential for the development of all children. Here is a list of questions that can help children to discuss their school day with you and to develop their confidence:

- What are you proud of?
- Whose bucket did you fill today?
- What made you smile today?
- What makes you happy?

Children also love listening to adult's answers to these questions too.

I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter.

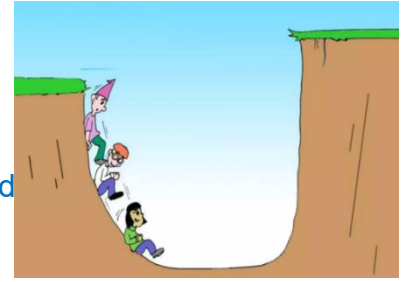
Best regards,

Rachel Jones



Learning updates

During the Spring term we are encouraging the children to face **challenges** in learning and life with confidence. The children are enjoying challenging themselves with numbers in maths, word choices in their writing and challenging themselves to learn more and to support each other more. Please keep encouraging your child/children to try things they find challenging at home too.



All of the children have been busy working very hard and learning lots- here are some of the highlights since the last newsletter:



Diamond class have thoroughly enjoyed designing, sewing and making their pivot-point puppets based on characters from the Disney version of Robin Hood. They are now ready to help with the sewing at home and persevered threading needles!

Ruby class narrated and put on an amazing puppet show for their parents/carers and families. They have also enjoyed being active in maths measuring the capacity of items and seeing how far they can throw their wellies!



Sapphire class have loved learning about the Romans and presenting the information they have learnt in pop up books. The children also enjoyed learning about and building their own Roman infrastructures.

Emerald class learnt so much about the Titanic. I loved seeing their amazing art work using pastels of the titanic. They taught me so much about the ship and its passengers. Thank you so much for all of the hard work on the shoe box rooms of the Titanic- I now spend so much time in the front of the school looking at the amazing creations.



Vision



Living and Learning together- Building Firm Foundations

Our vision is for all children to develop a lifelong love of learning and sense of belonging, within a welcoming, nurturing and inclusive Christian community. All children have the opportunity to become free thinking, responsible citizens, whilst understanding and appreciating the wonder of our world. Children leave St Mark's with the confidence to live fulfilling lives, based on the teachings and example of Jesus.

Matthew 7:24-27

Children have been selected in Celebration Worship on Friday as 'Builder of the week' where they have shown dedication to improving in one of the CIRCLE values. They have been enjoying wearing their hard hats around school and celebrating the firm foundations they are building on.

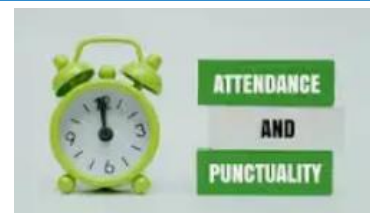


Builders of the week for Spring term:

Ruby class, Sofia, Milo, Vy, Andreas, Daisy, Katherine, Nethushi, Desna, Laiba, Lucy, Nicolas, Suleiman, Leo, Seth and Talia.

Attendance

Last year (2024-25) St Mark's attendance figure was 97% against a national figure of 93%. It is great to be above average, however we need to keep working together so that this figure is as close to 100% as possible.



Obviously, attendance at school is vital in order for children to progress and learn as much as possible. **Punctuality** is also vital in this. Being late to school, even by a few minutes, has a negative impact on a child's academic, social, and emotional development. Regular lateness disrupts the learning process for the individual child and for their classmates, often leading to a "disadvantage" where the child can struggle to keep up with the curriculum and school routines.

If you, or your child, are concerned about your child's attendance or punctuality, please contact Rachel Jones (Attendance Leader) in school to discuss this further. There is also support and guidance for parents about attendance at: [Attendance guidance for parents | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk)

Reminders about Penalty Notices:

The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Where a child is taken out of school for 10 sessions (1 session is a morning or afternoon) or more, within a 10 week period, and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of Mrs Wright, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent. This also includes children being late to school on 10 or more occasions after registers close at 9am, without good reason.

The Saint George Foundation



On Monday 9th February 2026, Philip Dean, from the St George Foundation in Sierra Leone, visited St Mark's to collect the gifts which our families put together for them. The Spirituality team went to help Phillip load the gifts into Phillip's car. Phillip spoke to us about the everyday lives of the children in the St George Foundation home and activities they enjoy. Phillip also told us how hard their lives were before they came to the St George's Foundation. Because of Phillip, the charity and the workers at the foundation, more than a thousand children have had access to shelter, food and water (when before many of the children were living on the streets of Sierra Leone). St Mark's has been supporting the charity for over 20 years by giving the children gifts annually, exchanging letters and making the children feel like they have friends in England.

Sadly, many of the children were found on the streets of Sierra Leone before they were taken to St George's Foundation. Phillip and his amazing team took them into care. Since then, many things have changed for the children and they now have an educated life with a loving, caring, community. When these gifts arrive at the foundation, the children have a big celebration with their favourite meal- rice and chicken- and other treats.

By Lynnette and Nethushi

To find out more about The St George Foundation click on the link: [Home - St George Foundation](#)

Thank you to all of the families and staff who donated a gift (box) to be sent to Sierra Leone. Phillip is hoping to be able to transport the gifts over to the children in April in time for them to be Easter gifts.



Safety Week

We enjoyed a week of focusing on how to make ourselves and others safe. During the week, we learned about and reflected on safeguarding, online safety, mental health and road safety- what busy week!

JRSO worship and Be Bright Be Seen Day

Thank you to Ava, Kezia and Lyra for leading the school in a worship about being safe on the roads and for launching competitions in order to make everyone think about how to keep themselves safe.

Winner of the Mascot competition- Arlo and Lyra

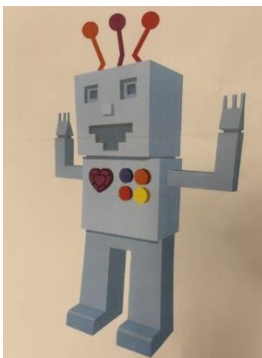
Poster winner- Mineva

Song/poem winners- Freya and Mineva, Arthur and Naitik

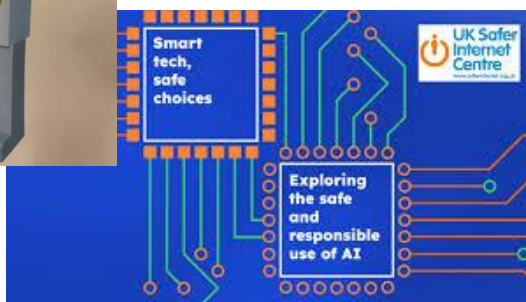
Well done to everyone who took part- and well done to the best outfits too- it was a very colourful day!



Online Safety Day



The Digital Leaders led a worship to remind all of the children about the SMART rules for internet safety. They also helped Mrs Jones to launch Internet Safety Day on February 10th. The focus of Internet Safety Day this year was about the safe and responsible use of AI.



On Monday 23rd February some volunteers from Discover ([Discover - Personal Banking, Credit Cards & Loans](#)) visited Emerald, Sapphire and Diamond classes to deliver Internet Safety Workshops. The visitors were trained by Childnet to use the UK Safer Internet Centre resources and to support the children to develop further their internet safety skills.

Please see attached support guides for parents about setting up **parental controls** on **smart TVs** ensuring that Apps on your TV are safe for children to view.

Lockdown Practice

We practiced our lockdown procedures in school on Wednesday 25th February so that the children and staff are fully aware of what they need to do in case of an emergency. Can I please remind you that if school is ever under a lockdown you will be informed via email and a message will be posted on the school website. We understand that you would naturally be concerned for your child's welfare but the school would be doing everything possible to ensure your child's safety. In the event that you are notified of a lockdown, parents should not call the school – this could tie up telephone lines that are required for emergency support providers

Also, parents should not come into school as this could interfere with emergency support providers' access to the school and may put themselves or others in danger. If we are still in lockdown at the end of the school day, you should wait for the school to contact you about when it is safe to collect your child/children – this will usually be from the main hall.

World Thinking Day & Founder's Day



On 22nd February each year, globally millions of Girl Guiding members celebrate World Thinking Day and members of the Scout Association celebrate Founder's Day. It is a day to celebrate international friendships, learn about members of both organisations in other countries, and take action to make the world a better place. 2026 also marks the 100th anniversary of the very first World Thinking Day.

Members of our school community proudly wore their Girl Guiding or Scouting uniforms in school on Monday 23rd February to mark the occasion.

Dates for your diaries

Spring Term	Event
Tuesday 17 th March and Wednesday 18 th March	Year 5/6 Bikeability
Tuesday 17 th March 3.30-6pm	Parents Evening
Wednesday 18 th March 4.30-7pm	Parents Evening
Friday 20 th March	Red Nose Day – wear a red accessory (e.g. hair bobble, socks, red nose) to school for a donation to the charity
Thursday 26 th March	Am-Pause Day in school Pm- Easter Service at St Mark's Church Led by Sapphire Class
Friday 27 th March 1.30pm	End of term

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about SMART TVs

Smart TVs connect to the internet without the need for a set-top box or streaming device, letting users access a range of features through the TV set itself, from on-demand content apps like BBC iPlayer to streaming services such as Netflix, as well as connecting to smartphones and other wireless devices. Most new televisions are internet enabled – so whether you're thinking of upgrading your home viewing system or buying an additional TV for your child's room, it's now even more important to consider the online safety aspects.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

From Netflix to Disney+ to Prime Video, there is a plethora of streaming services available. While these services offer content catering for younger viewers, they also provide material for more mature audiences. If you don't have parental controls set up on your accounts, your child could find themselves being exposed to shows and movies with adult themes, strong language and violence.

CENSORED

INCREASED SCREEN TIME

The array of content available through smart TVs could lead to your child spending excessive amounts of time in front of the screen. Not only can prolonged screen time distract from important activities such as schoolwork or exercise, but experts have also warned that endless hours in front of the box can lead to health problems including obesity, poor sleeping patterns and depression.

REMOTE-CONTROL RETAIL

Like many online devices, smart TVs facilitate digital purchases: buying a new app or the latest season of a favourite show, for example. If your child has access to a bank card and isn't restricted by spending controls on the system, they could run up a sizeable bill through a smart TV fairly quickly – especially if they're not quite old enough to fully appreciate the value of money.

UNCONVINCING SECURITY

As Internet of Things (IoT) devices, smart TVs can be uniquely vulnerable to attack. Experts warn that internet-enabled TVs tend not to support high-level security software, so you won't always be able to download strong antivirus programmes like you would on a phone or computer. Being targeted by hackers could be deeply upsetting for your child, as well as putting their personal data at risk.

A SILENT SPY?

Some smart TVs already collect data on users' viewing habits and then display targeted advertising based on that personal information – while there have also been reports of internet-enabled TVs (and the apps installed on them) being used to 'eavesdrop' on owners. In models with a built-in microphone (for voice activation), third parties could potentially listen in on someone's home life.

CONTACT FROM STRANGERS

Many smart TVs can be used for web browsing, social media and live streaming – all of which could allow unknown users to contact your child (or vice versa). If your child engages with these functions of the TV, a stranger could potentially discover their contact information and potentially then use it to obtain even more sensitive personal details, such as your home address.

Advice for Parents & Carers

MAKE IT A FAMILY THING

Family TV time is a great way to model the responsible enjoyment of technology – showing your child how to use the smart TV safely for when they're old enough to watch it independently. You could also take this opportunity to establish some healthy TV boundaries, such as time limits on their daily viewing or how to make sure they're only watching content that's appropriate for their age.



CREATE CHILD PROFILES

Much like with smartphones and tablets, apps can be downloaded onto smart TVs: from free content platforms such as BBC iPlayer to paid-for services like Prime Video. Most of these apps allow you to create a separate account for your child which has different settings to your own – suggesting more child-friendly material and reducing the possibility of them viewing explicit content.



SET UP PARENTAL CONTROLS

It's likely that your smart TV has built-in parental controls, which not only let you filter out age-inappropriate shows, movies and games but can also restrict in-app purchasing, so your child can't accidentally spend money through the device. When you've enabled these safeguards, have an open conversation with your child about the reasons, helping them to understand the potential risks.



CONSIDER THE LOCATION

If you're concerned about the online safety hazards that a smart TV might pose to your child, you could consider where in your home you put the device. The safest option would be to place the smart TV in a shared family space – so that an adult is usually nearby and able to supervise while your child's watching it – rather than in the relative privacy of a bedroom.



Meet Our Expert

Carly Page is an experienced technology journalist with a track record of more than 10 years in the industry. Previously the editor of techtabloid The Inquirer, Carly is now a freelance technology journalist, editor and consultant.



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Thanks to the internet, there are now many ways for your children to watch TV, both the old fashioned way on a big screen and via the internet with on-demand programming. Restricting and controlling what your kids can watch is harder than ever, but with our help you can make TV safer for your kids and limit the amount that they can watch.

How to manage what your children WATCH ON TV

TRADITIONAL TV

Traditional TV covers programmes broadcast directly to your TV without having to use the internet. This is the standard way that most of us watch television programmes.

BROADCAST TV

Free-to-air broadcast television is delivered via an aerial or satellite to your TV directly or through a PVR that also handles recordings. Most modern TVs and PVRs sold in the last few years will have parental controls, which restrict the content available, requiring a PIN for unsuitable programmes. The exact settings vary by manufacturer, so check your TV or PVRs manual for full details. Parental locks work by checking the rating of a programme as it's broadcast. If a show is unrated or has an incorrect rating, some content may not be blocked.

SKY TV

The version of Sky that you have defines the options available to you. If you have a Sky+ HD box, you'll need to press the Services button and select Parental Control & PIN. From here, you can turn on the Family Setting, which gives you the option to remove Adult Channels and content, and requires a PIN to be entered to buy anything or for pre-watershed playback. More granular control allows you to block specific channels, either completely or only after 8pm, requiring a PIN to watch. You can also block programmes based on ratings, although this feature only works for programmes with correct ratings, so some shows may slip through. Sky Q owners have the more powerful Kids Safe Mode, which locks the system to show only kid-safe material. This includes locking the list of viewable channels and filtering recordings to only those suitable for children. Kids Safe Mode can be enabled either on the main box or on the Sky Q Mini boxes that you might have elsewhere in your home.

INTERNET TV

There are plenty of ways to watch TV online, whether that's via the likes of iPlayer or with streaming video services, such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Instant video. Here, we'll show you how to control each.

AMAZON PRIME VIDEO

Amazon Prime Video has Parental Controls available in the Settings section of the Prime Video website. The settings let you set the age range of content that can be watched without entering a PIN: U, PG, 12, 15 and 18. Settings apply to all devices (bar the Xbox 360, Wii U and Fire TV, which have their own settings), but you can opt-out devices of your choosing in the settings. For example, you may not want to have any restrictions on your iPad, which only you use. PINs can also be used to block purchases.

NETFLIX

Netflix lets you create profiles for everyone in your house. On the Netflix home screen, if you select Manage Profiles, you can change each one to show different content, defined by age group. Children should be encouraged to use their profiles only, particularly as there's no way to PIN protect adult profiles. However, you can PIN-protect content globally, so if a child does use your profile, they're blocked from watching inappropriate content. Go to Netflix, select Account from the drop-down menu by your name and select Parental Controls. You'll be prompted to enter a PIN, but then can select which content is PIN protected by age range: Toddlers, Older Children, Teens and Adults. You can also PIN protect specific programmes by typing their name in, which could be handy if you feel a programme is unsuitable or a child has been watching it too much.

ON-DEMAND PLAYERS

If your children are watching content from on-demand services, such as BBC iPlayer or All 4, you can turn on parental controls for each via the main websites. Controls work across all devices signed into your account. Controls vary by platform. With BBC iPlayer, the parental lock requires a PIN for anything marked as requiring Guidance by the BBC. ITV Hub parental controls let you PIN protect for content with a G-rating (a guidance rating). For All 4, you can choose to protect programmes rated 16+ or 18+. If you use My5, you can set up a PIN to protect against anyone watching G-rated content. For UKTV Play, you can add a PIN to restrict content selecting one of two levels: all content that's rated 15+ or all content that's rated 18+.

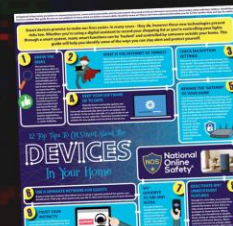
HOW CAN PARENTS MANAGE THEIR CHILDREN'S TV TIME?

Particularly with on-demand content, it can be hard to restrict how much viewing time a child has. However, you can restrict internet time with parental control software, restricting how much time a child can spend online, whether they're using the internet or watching TV shows. Parental control software will generally only work on laptops, computer, tablets and phones. However, if you have parental control software that runs on the router, you can manage other devices, such as a child's smart TV and games console, and restrict time usage on these, too.



Meet our expert

This guide has been written by David Ludlow. David has been a technology journalist for more than 20 years, covering everything from internet security to the latest computing trends and the smart home. A father of two (a nine-year-old and a six-year-old), he's had to control and manage how his children access online services and use apps.



You may also be interested in our smart home devices guide!

www.nationalonlinesafety.com

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