

St Michael's Church of England High School

A Church of England Academy

Headteacher: Mrs Rachel Rongong BA (Hons) PGCE NPQH

Growing in Body, Mind and Spirit



Therefore, choose

14th November 2025

Dear Parents / Carers,

Even before the school week began, Team St Michael's were getting involved in events in the local area. On Saturday, a group of staff donned Santa costumes to walk up Rivington Pike, raising money for Derian House; I believe pupils were there in number too. Mrs McDermott sent the following report,

Taking part in the Derian House, 'Jingle all the Way', Santa Dash fund raiser 2025 and walking the 15 miles with 1,959 participants, were seven members of St Michael's staff – Mrs Burrow, Miss Callander, Mrs McDermott, Miss McLachlan, Mrs Nicholson, Miss Simons, Mrs Williams. We had already raised £165 with donations from a staff bake sale the week prior to the walk but our total could be much higher! We set off at 10am from Chorley Theatre in very good spirits, a sea of red Santas, jingling collection buckets, all while singing Christmas songs.

As a staff group, we powered through the 15 miles but it's safe to say we all underestimated the effort the climb up Rivington Pike would take when completely clad in a polyester Santa suit. Hot! was the collective word used. We were very blessed with a warm, sunny, dry day and an unbelievable amount of support and kindness from the people of Chorley. Derian House's target was £15,000 and by the end of the Santa dash on Saturday, that total stood at just over £16,000. Currently the total is over £42,000. Since its inception 9 years ago, the event has raised over £300,000. Please click the link to support us:

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/jingleallthewayderianhouse25>



Then, on Sunday, I had the privilege of attending the Remembrance Service at the Cenotaph in Astley Park with James and Evelyn, our Head Boy and Head Girl. I have been to numerous such events in the past, but I found this one particularly moving. Despite the weather, there was phenomenal support from the public, uniformed service and local brass bands. Our pupils were represented in many of the groups in attendance, showing such composure and respect. One of our parents kindly shared the following,

Many St Michael's pupils demonstrate commitment and dedication to extracurricular activities each week, RAF cadets being one of them. My son has been an RAF cadet for over 2 years along with a

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number of other current and past St Michael's pupils. All proudly attended the Remembrance Service in Chorley on Sunday to remember the dedication and service of others during the war.

Canon Neil Kelley, from St Laurence's led the service wonderfully, and when the last post was played at 11am, it really was a poignant moment.



Remembrance remained in the spotlight for Worship this week, as our Head Pupils and Deputies led us in a moving time of reflection. They spoke of the definition of sacrifice - giving up something valued for something or someone else. Drawing a parallel with God and the sacrifice of His son, Jesus for us, they talked about the verse in John 15:13, 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' After watching a performance by some members of our dance academy and hearing a wonderful story of a pupil's great grandmother, we were reminded that in the Bible, Paul encourages us to live lives of love, remembering those who gave everything for peace.



On Tuesday, 11/11, it was officially Remembrance Day. As those of you who follow us on social media will know, Eliza in Year 7 played the last post near the main entrance to school, as premises staff, the catering team, support and admin staff and some teachers gathered to pause and reflect. Across the other side of school, Mrs Palfrey shared her talents with others, playing for us in our outdoor worship space. Most of our school community were in classrooms at this



time, and teachers guided pupils in a time of silence, before sharing a prayer. It is so important that we remember, and the respect shown by all as we did so, was tangible.

Later in the day on Tuesday, I was delighted to join some of the Chorley Primary Headteachers for one of their regular meetings. As you will know, I am so keen that we work in partnership and it was wonderful to spend some time getting to know them better and talking through how we can work even more closely together. We are so blessed with our school leaders in Chorley; they really are a fabulous group of people.

This week has been Anti-Bullying Week, and our assemblies have focused on the theme, 'Power for Good'. We explored how children can take on different roles in situations involving bullying, paying particular attention to the role of the bystander. We discussed how choosing to do nothing can unintentionally support the actions of the bully and how using our 'power for good' means speaking up, showing kindness, and helping to create a safe and respectful environment for everyone.

On Tuesday evening Miss Forrest took a group of Year 11 drama pupils to the Lowry to see *Lost Atoms* by Anna Jordan. It was a fantastic evening and pupils enjoyed exploring the play and its complex and emotional themes of love and memory.

It was fabulous to have Fr Paul Robinson, who is one of our governors, back in school on Wednesday, another visitor to the RE department! He fielded some excellent questions and shared his faith in his usual accessible manner. How blessed we are to partner with our local clergy!



On Thursday some of our Year 7 pupils had an exciting opportunity to attend a Cyber Event at Runshaw College, where they immersed themselves in the world of technology and coding. Miss Williams sent the following report,

The day began with students programming Sphero Bolts, bringing them to life by changing colours, displaying fun facts, and navigating across a map of the universe. In the second session, students explored creativity and logic by designing

interactive games using MicroBits. To round off the day, they tackled a cybersecurity challenge, decoding clues and solving puzzles in a thrilling quiz. Throughout the event, pupils demonstrated outstanding teamwork, sharpened their problem-solving skills, and gained invaluable programming experience. It was a fantastic day of learning, innovation, and fun—well done to all our budding tech stars!

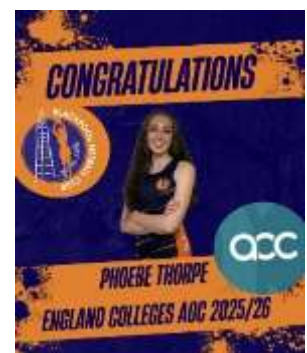


Today I have met with some of our pupil leadership team to plan for the school council meetings next week. Each year tutorials elect school council representatives to attend and contribute to the termly meetings and report back to their tutorial. We look forward to the meetings next week.

Thank you to all who contributed to our harvest appeal this year with donations of food items. These generous donations have now been passed on to St Laurence's Church who provide Christmas hampers to the those in need at Christmas as part of the work they do with Christians against poverty.



Of course, we have some sporting news to report. A huge congratulations to Lyra in Year 11 who finished 8th in the U17 women's race at the European Biathlon Championships in Antalya in Turkey. This was a challenging race with another athlete running into her during transition sending her shoe flying! The GB team came 2nd overall. We are all so proud of her; a massive well done. Congratulations, also this week to one of our previous pupils, Phoebe, who has been selected for the England Colleges Netball Team – what an achievement.



Gold Stamps this week have gone to a group of pupils in Year 8 for their gothic creative writing in English, as well as a young lady in Year 10 for her fabulous gâteau. At break today, further Gold Stamps were awarded to Year 9 science pupils for their incredible posters and models on the topic of endangered species, a Year 7 pupil for her fantastic oracy skills in a Q&A session in English and

some Year 9 pupils for their hard work in the garden during enrichment yesterday. It is great to be able to celebrate with pupils; these moments are always a highlight of my week.

Another highlight this week has been welcoming Mrs Soper back to school following her maternity leave; I've no doubt pupils will enjoy having her back in the classroom too.

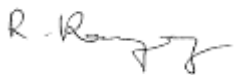
In more serious news, I want to remind you how committed we are at St Michael's to helping families stay informed about online safety. One way we do this is by subscribing to Knowsley City Learning Centres, who provide expert guidance on this ever-changing landscape. They produce a monthly newsletter packed with practical advice and updates and often run presentations that parents can join to learn more about all aspects of online safety. We've attached the November newsletter for your information, please take a moment to read it and look out for upcoming sessions you may find useful.

As you may have seen already, we've sent you a separate letter today, updating you on the situation with the PE kit that has now been discontinued. I think we have come up with a solution that is both cost effective, as well as being practical; I do hope you agree. Pupils can have their say on the proposed new PE kit, which is on display in school, but if you do have any thoughts or questions, feel free to get in touch.

It's been an incredibly busy week but the one thing that unites all that we do at St Michael's is our pursuit of excellence as we strive to become all that God has called us to be. I will leave you with these verses from Philippians 3:12-14;

But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

With kind regards,



Mrs Rachel Rongong
Headteacher

Important Dates

Wednesday 19 th November	Year 11 mock exams commence
Tuesday 2 nd December	Careers Fair in school 11.45am-5pm (parents invited after 3.25pm)
Wednesday 10 th December	Community Carol Service at St Peter's Church 6.30pm
Tuesday 16 th December	Community Christmas Party - 12-1.15pm in school
Wednesday 24 th June 2026	GCSE contingency date – Year 11 pupils to be available up to and including this date.
Thursday 2 nd July 2026	Year 11 Prom at Rivington Hall Barn

Online Safety Newsletter

Nov 2025

CapCut

CapCut is a video editing app. Their services are intended for those over the age of 13 (those under the age of 18 must have consent from their parent/legal guardian). It is rated as 13+ on the App store.

What can I do on CapCut?

CapCut is used as a video and image editing tool allowing users to edit their videos/ images as well as add music, sound effects, text and stickers.

What should I be aware of?

- The templates are user generated, therefore they may not always be appropriate for your child to view, for example may contain adult themes.
- CapCut includes access to a library of music that can be used within videos that may include explicit lyrics.
- Premium content – CapCut does include in-app purchases/monthly subscriptions to allow users access to premium content.

Further information

Internet Matters have created this useful guide:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/advice/apps-and-platforms/skills-building/capcut/>

Would you like to read this newsletter in a different language? You can use the translate tool on our web version: <https://www.knowsleyclcs.org.uk/november-2025-secondary>

WhatsApp Channels

Users should be at least 13 years old to use

WhatsApp. If your child is using WhatsApp, then you should be aware of WhatsApp Channels. Channels are a one-way broadcast tool used by companies and individuals to send updates to followers. WhatsApp Channels can be found on the Updates tab. From here you can view a whole host of channels, including channels that will not be age appropriate and may include adult content.



You cannot switch off access to channels and there is no age rating associated with the channels so you would have to access them to know what the content truly is. Klicksafe highlight what you should be aware of: <https://www.klicksafe.eu/en/news/was-sind-whatsapp-kanaele-und-was-muessen-eltern-beachten>

Find out more about WhatsApp channels in general here:

<https://faq.whatsapp.com/549900560675125>

AI chatbots and companions

A simple search of “AI Chat” within the App store highlights the number of AI apps already available, many are rated as 18+ so it is important to speak to our children about them and the risks associated with them. Examples of AI chatbots that your child may have heard of are Character.AI (18+) and My AI from Snapchat (13+).

What are the risks?

- Over reliance on AI companions, for example they may replace ‘real life’ friendships or reliance on using them for homework or problem solving.
- Exposure to inappropriate content.
- Privacy/data risks.
- Misinformation as not all information shared is correct and can be biased.

How can I protect my child?

- Check age ratings of any apps or websites that your child accesses.
- Discuss the risks of AI chatbots with them and have open conversations about why they may be using them.
- Set up appropriate parental controls on their devices/ broadband.
- Chat to your child regularly and ensure your child knows that they should talk to you or another trusted adult if anything concerns them.

Further information

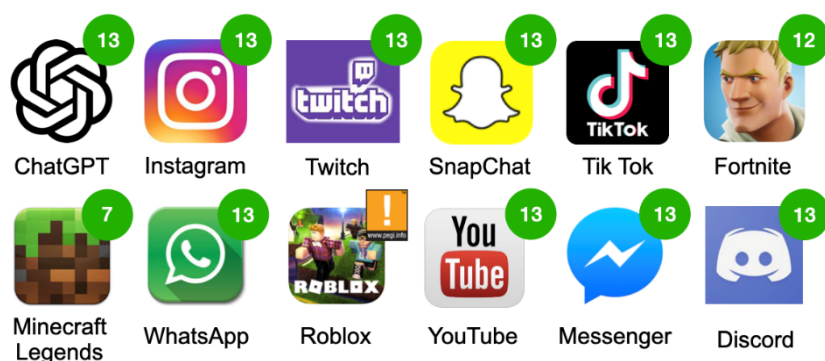
<https://www.esafety.gov.au/newsroom/blogs/ai-chatbots-and-companions-risks-to-children-and-young-people>

Age Ratings

Age ratings exist to help protect your child by showing whether content is suitable for your child's age. Whether your child is viewing films, accessing apps, playing games online or using social media— make sure you check the age rating first to see if your child is old enough.

Popular apps and their age ratings

Here are the age ratings of some of the more popular apps that young people are currently accessing.



For users under 18, a parent or legal guardian's permission may be required to use the service

In addition to checking the age rating, the likes of PEGI (Pan European Game Information) provide further content descriptors, which will give you an indication of the type of content that your child might encounter e.g. violence or bad language within a game.

What else should I review?

It is important to note that whilst age ratings do allow you to see if something may be appropriate for your child, **it is also vital to review the content yourself**. This will allow you to make an informed decision as to whether it is suitable for your child to access and if it is necessary to apply further parental controls. For example, does it include the ability to communicate with others and are in game/app purchases available?

What else can I do?

- Explain the importance of age ratings to your child and how they protect them.
- Go online together to see what your child is accessing.
- Set up parental controls on your broadband, devices and on any individual apps that your child is using. This will reduce the chances of them accessing or viewing anything unsuitable.
- Chat to your child regularly about what they are doing online and remind your child that if anything is worrying them then they should talk to you or another trusted adult.

Further information

You can find out more here:

<https://parentzone.org.uk/article/age-ratings>

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What You Need to Know about Instagram Map

Instagram has released a new feature that allows you to share your location with friends. This feature is off by default, but if your child is using Instagram then this is a useful article to find out more about it:

<https://connectsafely.org/what-you-need-to-know-about-instagram-map/>

Online Roasting

Have you heard of this term? It has been around a while now, but Online Roasting refers to a form of cyberbullying. Roasting typically involves making fun and insulting somebody, sometimes with their consent and other times not.

What can I do?

- Talk to your child about what online roasting is, ask them if they have ever experienced it and what they think about it.
- If this has negatively impacted your child then save any evidence and involve the school (if appropriate). Childline also offer further advice and support in relation to cyberbullying.

Further information

Find out more here:

<https://www.bark.us/blog/online-roasting-signs-cyberbullying/>

What to do when...from CEOP

CEOP Education have published this poster directing you to the relevant information around six different situations, such as what to do to protect your child from online blackmail. You can access it here:

<https://www.ceopeducation.co.uk/globalassets/professional/resources/wtdw-round-up.pdf>