



Head Teacher's Message

This week, we welcomed our Reception children in for full days. We are incredibly proud of how they have settled into school life.

**'Living and
growing in
Christ'**



A reminder that everyone is welcome at our 50th celebration Mass next Friday 25th September at 10am.

God Bless,

Mrs Hughes

Introducing Our New Head Boy and Head Girl!

This year, we are incredibly excited to introduce our new St. Aidan's Head Boy and Head Girl. The journey to choosing our student leaders started with our wonderful Year 6 pupils, who were given the opportunity to apply for this highly special role.

The staff faced a difficult decision just trying to narrow down the applications to a shortlist. Every single candidate who stepped forward was an absolute credit and an asset to our school. On Thursday, the shortlisted pupils delivered their presentations to all of our KS2 classes. They spoke with incredible clarity, confidence, and passion, making the entire school community immensely proud.

Following the presentations, the KS2 children cast their votes. The final tallies were exceptionally close, which is a true testament to how hard every single candidate worked and how deeply they inspired their peers. We are so proud of each and every one of them for their dedication and outstanding public speaking.

A huge congratulations to our newly elected student leaders: James C and Sienna H



Well done to all the children who applied and spoke about their role as head boy and head girl - they should be so proud of themselves. The teachers were blown away by the standard of talk.



School Council

We are excited to announce this years school council (Reception to follow).
Congratulations to all our school councillors.

Year 1 - Jude and Seren

Year 2 - Jax and Aria

Year 3 - Emily and Joseph

Year 4 - Luca and Luna

Year 5- Rocco and Charlotte

Year 6- (Deputy Head Boy/Girl) Jake and Olivia



St. Aidan's 50th Mass



Dear Parents, past pupils and members of our community,

You are warmly invited to join us in celebrating our special 50th anniversary. We are marking this wonderful milestone with an anniversary Mass on Friday, 25th September at 10 am at St. Aidan's Church. This is a fantastic opportunity for our whole community to come together, reconnect, and celebrate five decades of our history.

We look forward to welcoming you there.

Important dates for your diary...

25th September	Whole School 50th Year Celebration
25th September	10am Whole School Mass
25th September	3.30pm - 7pm 50th Year Celebration at School
28th September	Y3 Trip to Lullingstone
28th September	Y2 Meet the teacher for parents to attend 3.30pm - 4pm
29th September	Open Morning 9.30am
29th September	Y3 Meet the teacher for parents to attend 3.30pm - 4pm
30th September	9.30am Y5 and Y6 Cross Country at Royal Russell
30th September	Y6 Meet the teacher for parents to attend 3.30pm - 4pm
30th September	Y4 Meet the teacher for parents to attend 4pm - 4.30pm
1st October	Y5 Meet the teacher for parents to attend 3.30pm - 4pm
2nd October	Y6 Visit from the nursing team: Height and Weight
2nd October	Y1 Meet the teacher for parents to attend 3.30pm - 4pm
7th October	Open Morning 9.30am
12th October	PGL Week
21st October	School closes at 3.30pm
22nd October	INSET DAY
23rd October	INSET DAY
26th - 30th October	Half term

Archbishop - John Wilson

I was very proud of our St. Aidan's representatives at Mass on Sunday where the children presented their Catholic Social Teaching learning to the parish.

The children met Archbishop John Wilson who congratulated St. Aidan's on our special 50th Year milestone.

Well done to our children that represented the school.



St. Aidan's University



Aim of St. Aidan's University

We believe that it is important to extend our children beyond school work and to support them to develop in many diverse aspects of life. Part of our role is to prepare our children for their adult lives, teaching them to understand how to engage with culture and society, providing them with plentiful opportunities to do so. **St Aidan's University** enables us to recognise the substantial amount of extra-curricular activities completed by our children, to develop a love of learning in our children and to encourage children to experience a range of learning activities and opportunities.

Learning Beyond School

On Fridays, our children are used to bringing in evidence of awards gained outside of school for a wide range of activities, such as swimming, scouting, mathematics and martial arts. This will now be used as evidence towards their potential graduation.

In addition, if the children:

- ◆ Visit places of educational value, such as museums, art galleries or historical monuments
- ◆ Take part in charitable work or giving (raising money, donating toys etc)
- ◆ Helping in their community (organising a cake sale, litter pick or similar)
- ◆ Extra-curricular research or projects

Children can bring evidence of these extra-curricular activities to school or parents can email university@st-aidans.croydon.sch.uk with any photos/evidence of trips that will count towards St. Aidan's University. This email will be monitored and credits tallied in school. (Please only use this email for St. Aidan's University evidence).

Each visit or extra-curricular activity will account for 1 'hour of activity' towards St. Aidan's University. In order to graduate from St. Aidan's University, pupils will need to accumulate points of extra-curricular activities across a whole school year. These points will be tallied and monitored by the school.

Who can graduate from St. Aidan's University?

Any pupil from Reception to Year 6 can graduate and children can graduate multiple times throughout their school career. They will receive a certificate and wear a graduation sash and cap. If your pupil does not graduate this year, they can try again in following years.

Clubs, trips and extra-curricular activities in school such as Catholic Social Teaching charitable work will be automatically counted towards extra hours towards graduating.

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 drive change. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about CHARACTER.AI

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Character.AI is an entertainment platform where users create and chat with AI-powered characters. These chatbots can act like existing favourite characters from movies or books, or like friends, mentors, or even romantic partners, responding in an emotional, personally engaging way. Although this can encourage creativity, it can also make a generated conversation feel like a genuine relationship, which is concerning if it takes the place of human relationships.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

AI replies are generated in real time rather than chosen from a fully checked script. Even with safety filters on, conversations can still move into sexual, violent, discriminatory, or self-harm material. These AI characters are often made by users, so a familiar name or child-friendly description does not guarantee that every response from the character will be suitable for a young person.

BLURRED BOUNDARIES

Characters on Character.AI can use the language of friendship, love, and empathy without ever feeling anything. Vulnerable young people may struggle to separate this simulation from genuine understanding. Romantic role-play or a character that demands attention, loyalty, or secrecy could also risk distorting young people's expectations around consent, disagreement, and the give-and-take involved in healthy human relationships.

UNRELIABLE ADVICE

Characters, like other chatbot platforms, are at risk of inventing facts or giving inappropriate advice while sounding completely confident. Characters may also echo a young person's assumptions instead of questioning them. This can become particularly risky when users rely on a character for guidance about health, mental wellbeing, relationships, money, or personal safety instead of checking with a credible source or trusted adult.

EMOTIONAL DEPENDENCY

Character.AI chatbots can appear endlessly attentive, supportive, and affectionate, which is one of the hallmarks of the generative AI models that such companions are built on. A young person may start turning to a character chatbot whenever they feel lonely or upset and believe that it understands them better than the humans in their life. This can become more concerning when chatting starts to replace sleep, schoolwork, hobbies and friendships.

PRIVACY CONCERNS

Character.AI chats may feel private, especially when a bot sounds personal and caring, but they take place on a company's online systems. Users could intentionally or unintentionally reveal their name, school, location, routines, images, or intimate concerns. Character.AI says some data may be retained to improve its services and AI models, so young people should never treat a chatbot like a confidential diary.

UNHEALTHY ENGAGEMENT

Be aware of warning signs such as secret accounts, bypassing age restrictions, hiding phone use from adults, chatting late at night, distress when access to the platform or character stops, withdrawal from other people, falling interest in school, or believing the character is conscious. Increased use may also signal that the young person is already lonely, anxious, or seeking help.

Advice for Parents & Educators

KEEP CONVERSATIONS OPEN

Ask what the young person enjoys about Character.AI and invite them to show you how the platform and their favourite characters work. Useful questions include: "Has it ever said something that felt wrong?" and "How can you tell it doesn't have feelings?" Avoid shaming them for using platforms like Character.AI or making them feel there is something wrong with them for doing so.

PAUSE, CHECK AND ASK

Teach young people to pause before accepting an answer from characters on Character.AI. Encourage them to check important claims against a trustworthy source and ask a safe adult when the issue matters. Never use a character as the sole source of medical, mental health, legal, financial, or safeguarding advice. Remind them not to share passwords, contact details, school information, live locations, or private images.

CHECK AGE, SETTINGS & LIMITS

Character.AI's minimum age is 18 in the UK, but open-ended companion chat is restricted to adults aged 18 or over. Users aged 16 to 17 receive a different experience built around guided 'Stories' and other creative or social features. Check their current settings, never help or encourage a young person to give a false age, and apply the same safety rules to other chatbot apps.

NOTICE AND RESPOND

Take action if chats involve sexual content, threats, coercion, abuse, self-harm or danger. Save relevant evidence, report the character and follow the setting's safeguarding process; educators should involve the designated safeguarding lead. If anyone is in immediate danger, contact emergency services. Childline is available on 0800 1111 and the NSPCC Helpline on 0800 506 0000.

Meet Our Expert

Darren Coxon is an educator with almost 30 years' experience across teaching, school leadership, and governance. He works internationally, supporting schools and colleges with AI leadership and governance, as well as teaching the key fundamentals of AI use and safety to educators at The National College.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

See full reference list on our website

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This Week's Awards at St Aidan's

Congratulations to these children who won awards this week. These will also count towards their St Aidans University points, working towards graduation at the end of the year!



St Mary: -

St Francis: Imani L

St Joseph: Matteo H

St Bernadette: Oliver W

St Theresa: Joseph G

St Peter: Joshua L

St Paul: Shannen P

St Mary: -

St Francis: Leonardo G

St Joseph: Elodie T

St Bernadette: Daniel L

St Theresa: Ezra B

St Peter: Sophia S

St Paul: Betsy H

