

14th November 2025

Dear Parent Carers,

Weekly Update: 14/11/25

I hope this update finds you well. Today marks Children In Need, a day that raises money and awareness for disadvantaged children who face a range of issues. Students have taken part in activities this afternoon, as well as dressing up in their Pudsey wear. Thank you for supporting us to raise funds for this vital charity. To donate to Children In Need, please go to their donation page:

<https://donate.bbcchildreninneed.co.uk/>

Online Safety – Group Chats

We have recently seen an increase in reports from students about challenges and concerns related to online group chats. These platforms can sometimes lead to misunderstandings or exposure to inappropriate content, which can affect students' wellbeing.

To support families in navigating these issues, we have included an **Information Guide on Online Safety – Group Chats**. This resource provides practical advice on how to help your child stay safe, make positive choices, and manage their online interactions responsibly.

Thank you for working with us to ensure a safe and supportive environment for all our students, both in school and online.

If you have any concerns regarding your child's safety online, please contact the Family Support Team who are able to provide additional resources or advice.

Mini Monster Marathon

Thank you for supporting us with our fundraising this year. So far we have raised over £2,264 through the Mini Monster Marathon! This money will go towards either resources in school or an experience to boost cultural capital experiences. Previously, fundraising has paid for swings, as well as trips to the beach and Spring Lakes.

Horizons Contact

If you would like to get in touch with the Horizons team regarding attendance or any other student related matter, please call the main school phone number on 01332 571151 – we no longer have an Option 2 for Horizons. Mel Lane, who was based at Irlongate, is now working in the office at the main school. All of the Admin Team are able to support with any queries you may have.

Toni Beardmore **Headteacher**

St Martins School, The Derwent Campus, Bracknell Drive, Alvaston, Derby, DE24 0BT
Tel: 01332 571151 **Email:** admin@stmartins.set.org **Online:** www.stmartinsschoolderby.co.uk

Congratulations

Congratulations are due to Saffron Hanley and family as they welcomed baby girl Otilie into the world last Saturday, weighing 6lbs 10oz. We look forward to seeing Saffron and baby Otilie soon!

Farewell

Today, we say thank you and farewell to Ryan Gascoine and Tina Brady.

Ryan has worked at St Martins since 2017, initially starting as a Teaching Assistant before utilising his skills to become a Learning Mentor for Transitions. Ryan has taken on an exciting new role within Derby City Council, where he will continue to make a positive difference for young people with SEND. We wish Ryan all the best for this exciting new step.

Tina has worked as our Receptionist at St Martins since 2021. Tina is leaving the school to start working for the Respect Collaboration as a Finance Clerk. We wish Tina all the best for this new role.

With best wishes,



Toni Beardmore
Headteacher

Dates for your diaries:

Date	Event	Details
Wednesday 26 th November at 5:00pm	Certificate Presentation Evening for last year's Year 11 and Year 13 students.	Invitations have been posted home.
Thursday 11 th December	Save the Children's Christmas Jumper Day	Information to follow.
Tuesday 16 th December time TBC	Winter Wonder Show	Information to follow.
Tuesday 16 th December from 2:30pm-3:30pm	Christmas Market	Information to follow.
Wednesday 17 th December	Christmas Dinner for students	Information to follow.

Toni Beardmore Headteacher

St Martins School, The Derwent Campus, Bracknell Drive, Alvaston, Derby, DE24 0BT
Tel: 01332 571151 **Email:** admin@stmartins.set.org **Online:** www.stmartinsschoolderby.co.uk

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about GROUP CHATS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

On messaging apps, social media and online games, group chats are one of the most popular ways that children connect. Group chats allow messages, images and videos to be shared in one place and help friendships flourish; however, they also come with a number of risks.

TEASING AND BULLYING

Children of all ages are keen to fit in socially, and group chats can sometimes complicate that process. While group chats can foster connection, they can also give way to mean comments or jokes at someone's expense, especially when others join in for laughs. When bullying happens publicly, in front of friends and classmates, it can intensify the emotional impact – adding to embarrassment, anxiety and feelings of isolation for the child being targeted.

UNKNOWN MEMBERS

Children often can't control who is added to a group, which can lead to privacy concerns. Sharing personal details in group chats can be dangerous, and children have no control over what others do with the material they send. Some members of the chat might even decide to use such information maliciously.

PEER PRESSURE

Children may feel they have to constantly stay engaged just to be included and keep up with the conversation. In some cases, they might partake in inappropriate behaviours – like sharing explicit photos, jokes or teasing – just to fit in. Group settings can also encourage children to act in ways they normally wouldn't, or stay silent when they know something is wrong, out of fear of being excluded. Some children may find it difficult to leave toxic group chats.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some group chats may include inappropriate language or imagery. Even if a child isn't actively participating in the conversation, they may still be exposed to this content simply by being part of the group. Some apps have disappearing messaging features, where content is only available once or for a few seconds, which makes it harder for children to report something they've seen.

EXCLUSION AND ISOLATION

Exclusion in group chats is common and can take several forms. Sometimes a new group is created specifically to leave one child out on purpose. In other cases, the chat may happen on an app that a child doesn't have access to, making it impossible for them to join in. This can cause feelings of being left out – even unintentionally.

VIDEO AND LIVE CHATS

Many popular apps allow children to engage in live streaming with interactive chats or have group video chats. Anyone can be added to these streams, and often children tag peers in the comments and have conversations which are unmoderated. There's a risk of being exposed to inappropriate or violent content and offensive language, either in the group videos or via the group chats.

Advice for Parents & Educators

CONSIDER OTHERS' FEELINGS

Group chats can become an arena for children to compete for social status. Help children consider how people might feel if they behave unkindly. If a child does upset someone, encourage them to reach out, show empathy and apologise for their mistake.

SET SOME GROUP CHAT RULES

Discuss safe group chat practices, such as asking a peer for consent before adding them to a group chat, or leaving a group chat if a stranger is added. Tell children that if they're added to a group they didn't agree to beforehand, it's OK for them to leave immediately.

BLOCK, REPORT AND LEAVE

If a child encounters inappropriate content or feels uncomfortable in a group chat, encourage them to block and report the sender and leave the group. Make sure children know it's OK to leave a group chat if they feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

SUPPORT, NOT JUDGEMENT

Group chats are an excellent way for children to connect and feel like they belong. However, remind them that they can confide in you if they feel bullied or excluded, instead of responding to the person who's upset them. Validate their feelings and empower them by discussing how they'd like to handle the situation. You can also encourage children to speak up if they witness others being bullied.

PRACTISE SAFE SHARING

It's vital for children to be aware of what they're sharing and who might potentially see it. Ensure they understand the importance of not revealing personal details – like their address, their school, or photos they wouldn't like to be seen widely. Remind them that once something is shared in a group, they can't be certain where it might end up or how it might be used.

SILENCE NOTIFICATIONS

Being bombarded with notifications from a group chat can be an irritating distraction – especially if it's happening late in the evening. Explain to children that they can still be part of a group chat while disabling notifications. In fact, it would be healthier for them to do so, helping them avoid the pressure to respond immediately.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant at BCyberAware, who has developed anti-bullying and cyber-safety workshops and policies for schools in Australia and the UK. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government, comparing the internet use and online behaviours of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



The National College



Term Dates 2025/2026

Autumn Term 2025

School Starts Back – Monday 3rd November

School Breaks up for Christmas – Friday 19th December

Spring Term 2026

INSET Day – Monday 5th January 2026

School Starts Back – Tuesday 6th January

School Breaks up for Half Term – Friday 13th February

School Starts Back – Monday 23rd February

School Breaks up for Easter – Friday 27th March

Summer Term 2026

School Starts Back – Monday 13th April

INSET Day – Friday 1st May

Bank Holiday – Monday 4th May

School Breaks up for Half Term – Friday 22nd May

School Starts Back – Monday 1st June

School Breaks up for Summer – Wednesday 22nd July

INSET Day – Thursday 23rd July

St Martins follows Derby City Council's term dates. Dates for next year can be found on their website – please follow the link for these - <https://derby.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools-and-colleges/term-holiday-dates/#>

Social Media Links

Facebook - [St. Martins School Facebook](#)

Instagram - [St. Martins School Instagram](#)

Toni Beardmore **Headteacher**

St Martins School, The Derwent Campus, Bracknell Drive, Alvaston, Derby, DE24 0BT
Tel: 01332 571151 **Email:** admin@stmartins.set.org **Online:** www.stmartinsschoolderby.co.uk

The Shaw Education Trust Limited is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England (no 09067175) Registered address: Shaw Education Trust, Kidsgrove Secondary School, Gloucester Road, Kidsgrove, ST7 4DL. The details of our academies registered as business names can be found at www.shaweducation.org.uk.