



## 2024/25 Term 2 Newsletter

### Secondary

1. Welcome from the Head
2. Safeguarding
3. What Secondary has been doing this term.

### Our Mission

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Dear Parents and Carers

I cannot believe that we are at the end of yet another busy term filled with festive joy and laughter at NS180. We have achieved so much as a school community, I barely know where to begin.

Firstly, thank you so much for your support throughout the year and for entrusting us with your wonderful children. They have been an absolute credit to you, immersing themselves in their learning and in the opportunities available to them.

The term started with a full student council making important decisions about lots of very important matters! We then launched the Poppy appeal, got involved with Children in Need and raised £53 for this all important charity. Thank you!

We had our second 'Tea and Talk' morning which saw Parents and Carers come together to network and support one another. We will be holding another event next term, please do come along. It's a 'tough gig' being a parent and we are keen to provide a non judgemental space to support you with any struggles. As a mother of four myself, two of which have been 'tricksy', I would encourage you to come along.

We also established our first ever PTA—'Friends of North Star 180', who have worked tirelessly to help us to put on our Christmas Fayre. The generosity of our school community has been extra-ordinary and we have been overwhelmed with donations, thank you!

The past two weeks has seen the result of our wonderful Primary Pupils and staff who have worked hard to produce a 'West End worthy' Christmas play. Their debut was a dress rehearsal to our fabulous Secondary Pupils who showed great maturity and supported their younger peers. It was an absolute pleasure to see so many parents and carers attend and I know that I am not the only one who found it an emotional experience. I am sure that like me, you had 'no one wraps like an elf' stuck on repeat in your heads as you processed the

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incredible success of your children. Its fair to say that they did our whole school community proud!

Our Christmas Choir did a fabulous job of bringing festive cheer to Midford Manor, which is a care home local to school. Again, there was not a dry eye in the house!

Friday saw our Christmas Fayre and my goodness, what a great success, with all classes getting involved. On Wednesday our children enjoyed their Christmas dinner and a visit from Santa! Special shout out to Tobie, Evan , Lucas, Corey, Aiden, Adrian—some of our eldest pupils and Omar, who between them have supported with Christmas dinner, being Santa’s Elves and taking on the all important role of professional photographers. I even caught three year 11’s doing the dishes!

I also want to give my very special shout out to Ellis from Events LM for providing not only the stage and tech for our Christmas play, but also for giving up hours (days!) of his time to set up, and be present. If you have events coming up and are seeking a company to help, Ellis is your man! My thanks also go to Charlotte Churchill, who set up ‘Operation Christmas’, and provided 31 hampers and Christmas presents for some of our families this year. Incredible!

My final thank you goes to our fantastic staff team who I know you will agree, go to incredible lengths to support our children and young people. When people ask me what I do for a job, I proudly tell them that I have the best job in the world, with the most wonderful children, young people, families and staff! I am truly blessed!

I wish you all a happy and restful Christmas break. I know that this time of year can be difficult, and further on in this newsletter, you will find sources of support should you need it.

With my very best wishes,

Mrs McDicken



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### E-Safety

Wake up Wednesday—our IT leads have carefully selected a wake up Wednesday poster and it has been included in this newsletter. If however you would like information or advice on any other E-safety topics please ask.

### Feedback

North Star Academy Trust is committed to listening to you and working with you to resolve any concerns or complaints you may have.

In the first instance, please talk to your child's tutor if you have any concerns. They will be able to make sure they understand your concern in order to resolve it informally as soon as possible to avoid the need for you to make a formal complaint.

However, if the matter has not been resolved you may raise it formally. To do this you need to state that you are making a complaint, this can be done via telephone, email, in writing, through our 'get in contact' button [www.ns180.northstar-academy.co.uk/contact](http://www.ns180.northstar-academy.co.uk/contact). If you would like help to do this, please talk to your school reception staff who will make arrangements for someone to get in touch with you to give you any assistance you may need.

North Star Academy Trust will then review and/or investigate your complaint and this will include talking to you about it in further detail to find out what you would like to happen in order to resolve it.

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# 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, topping 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.



The National College®

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



## Helpful Numbers and websites



While we all wish you a very peaceful and restful Christmas, we do understand that this can also be a stressful time, especially for families of children with additional needs.

Below are some contacts of services if you need support over the festive break:

NHS non-emergency line 111

Police non-emergency line 101

Social Care BANES 01225 396111 or out of hours 01454 615165

Social Care Wiltshire 0300 4560108 or out of hours 0300 456 0100

Social Care South Glos 01454 866000 or out of hours 01454 615165

Social Care Bristol 0117 9036444 or out of house 01454 615165

ChildLine 0800 1111

Samaritans 116 123

For more information about services in your area look for the Local Offer:

BANES <https://livewell.bathnes.gov.uk/children-and-families>

Wiltshire Wiltshire SEND Support for 0 to 25 - Local Offer South Glos SEND

[lhttps://localoffer@wiltshire.gov.uk](https://localoffer@wiltshire.gov.uk)

South Gloucestershire ([southglos.gov.uk](https://southglos.gov.uk)) Bristol <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/bristol-local-offer>



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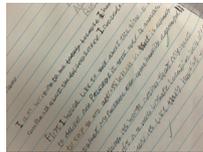
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# Secondary



## English

Throughout the years in Key stage 3 and 4 we have working towards our Functional Skills exams at various levels. That requires us to be very precise in our writing, correcting grammar and spelling mistakes, editing our sentences and using different features such as bullet points. The students have shown a great deal of maturing and resilience to keep practicing the skills to improve their work each time. They all coped admirably with the effort and concentration they showed over their mock exams. We'll continue to improve and hopefully take their formal examinations in the New Year.



## Food Tech

The run-up to Christmas in food technology classes is always an exciting time. Students get hands-on experience with festive recipes, learning to bake traditional treats like gingerbread cookies and mince pies. Beyond just cooking, students also explore the science behind the recipes, understanding how different ingredients interact. This period is not only about honing culinary skills but also about fostering creativity and teamwork as students often work together to create festive feasts. It's a delightful blend of education and holiday cheer!



We would appreciate any large empty Christmas chocolate tubs for taking cooking home.

Please remind students with long hair, it needs to be tied back for cooking.



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### **Careers information education and guidance**

**This term we welcomed City of Bristol college in to speak to our secondary students. They found out lots of information about career pathways, qualifications and what life is like at the City of Bristol college.**



**It was also fantastic to have a 1 to 1 careers advisor in from South Gloucestershire college to speak to our year 11s about aspirations, college course and the next steps in their development.**



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## Christmas Tree



**7A had the honour of choosing a Christmas Tree for the school. We went to Bath Christmas Tree Farm. We had a great time checking out all the trees and selecting the right size. We measured, we looked around each tree carefully checking out for the perfect shape, until we found the right one. Everyone helped and they chose a beautiful tree which is now on display in the hall. Every child in the school has helped to decorate it and it started the Christmas season off for us all !**



## School Choir



**After lots of practice with Miss Napier, the choir were finally ready for their debut performance. The children in the choir visited Midford Manor care home to sing for the residents.**



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# Christmas Fayre

The Christmas Fayre was held on the last day of term and was a great success. There was a good sized crowd there enjoying all that was on offer. Stalls were run by students. Parents and staff.



See below pictures from just before the doors were opened.



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## **Father Christmas**

**Father Christmas visited the school and gave a present to every student.**

**Behaviour was excellent and Father Christmas was very impressed with our students. He was heard to say "I'm sure all these fine young people will not be on the naughty list this year."**





## A Message From Zoe Napier Deputy Headteacher

**Dear Parents and Carers,**

**What a busy but brilliant term it has been! We have had so many events over the last months and the children have been amazing, rising to the challenges.**

**We have had lots of sporting achievements this term in KS<sub>3</sub> and KS<sub>4</sub> with our NS<sub>180</sub> football team travelling to different schools. The rewards trips were a huge success with so many students meeting their targets. Our Student Council has been more active than ever before, supporting us in improving the environment for all. I have been incredibly proud!**

**There have been so many moments which have stood out to me but one special moment was seeing the school choir sing out at a local care home: they represented the school so well and sang out with such pride and confidence! Another special moment was seeing the Y<sub>11</sub> students so active in creating our grotto and helping serve Christmas dinner to the school: what a fine group of students we have.**

**I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to our entire school community for supporting with the Christmas Fayre. We were completely blown away with the generous donations and offers of help from so many of you. A special thanks to the following businesses for their donations:**

**Rob Stone from QBE Charity Team**

**he Wave, Bristol**

**Avon Valley Adventure Park**

**Redpoint Climbing Centre**

**Avon Valley Railway**

**The Hub in Mulberry Park**

**The Cross Keys, Bath**

**Farrington Gurney Soft Play**

**Berry Barn, Farrington Gurney**

**Sarah's Cakes**

**The Green Parlour**

**I am delighted and astounded to say that we have raised over £1000!!! This amount is incredible and will go such a long way in making our school even more wonderful. Thank you, thank you, thank you!**

**I wish you all a very happy Christmas and cannot wait to welcome the students in 2025!**

**Zoe Napier**

**Deputy Headteacher**

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## An Finally, breaking news



**Mrs McDicken was found by Primary Students taped to a chair and dressed as an elf.**

**This was the final act of the mischievous Elf On The Shelf Brigade who have been up to all sorts of things in the run up to Christmas.**

**Those responsible have been rounded up by staff and sent to the LSR to wait for Santa to come and pick them up.**



