



# St Catherine's School & College

*Specialists in Speech, Language and  
Communication Needs*

St Catherine's  
Grove Road  
Ventnor  
Isle of Wight  
PO38 1TT

Tel: 01983 852722

Email: [general@stcatherines.org.uk](mailto:general@stcatherines.org.uk)

Website: [www.stcatherines.org.uk](http://www.stcatherines.org.uk)

Issue 163

18th December 2025

## Principal's Welcome

Dear Parents/Carers,

As we reach the end of the Autumn Term, I would like to take a moment to reflect on what has been a busy, positive and enriching term for our whole school community. Across the past weeks, students have shown tremendous enthusiasm for learning, growing confidence in their abilities and a real commitment to our shared values of kindness, resilience and respect. This final part of term has been particularly special; from the Christmas Market and Carol Service to RE Day, Forest School workshops and end-of-year celebration meals, our students have embraced the festive season with creativity, curiosity and joy. Class learning highlights have ranged from Viking studies and Science investigations to Art, Music and practical life skills, all reflecting the breadth and depth of our curriculum. I am incredibly proud of the way students have supported one another, celebrated achievements and engaged so positively in school life. Attendance and effort have remained strong, and it has been wonderful to see so many students recognised through awards and Principal's Praise over the course of the term.

Update to our Data Monitoring Systems: within both Education and Occupational Therapy, we are moving to use new data monitoring systems. Within Education, we are moving to using BSquared to provide a consistent, evidence-based approach to tracking progress, informing planning, and supporting improved outcomes for learners. The new OT data monitoring system focuses on areas such as self-care, organisation, fine motor skills, gross motor skills, use of equipment, money skills, understanding of time, community access and self-regulation.

The new system allows the OT team to monitor progress in a more age-appropriate and meaningful way, reflecting the different expectations for students as they move through the school. It is important to note that these are new monitoring systems, and data gathered through them cannot be directly compared with data from previous systems. If a learner's or individual's scores appear lower in certain areas, this does not indicate a loss of skills. Instead, the new systems provide a clearer and more detailed picture of current levels of independence, participation, and achievement. We understand that changes to reporting can raise questions, and we want to reassure parents and carers that these new systems are designed to give a more accurate and supportive picture of student development over time. If you have any questions about these changes, please feel free to contact the school. The first reports including the new data will come out in the spring term.

I wish you all a restful break and look forward to welcoming both residential and day students back to school on Tuesday 6th January 2026.

Thank you for your continued support.

With best wishes

Sarah Thompson  
Principal

# 2025-2026 TERM DATES

ST CATHERINE'S SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

## TERM DATES 2025 – 2026

<i>Staff Development Day</i>	<i>Monday 1<sup>st</sup> &amp; Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2025</i>
Start of Autumn term for students	Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> September 2025
Quarter term weekend	Friday 19th September 2025
Return after quarter term weekend	Boarders: Sunday evening 21 <sup>st</sup> September 2025 Day Students: Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup> September 2025
Break up for half term holiday	Friday 17 <sup>th</sup> October 2025
<b>OCTOBER HALF-TERM</b>	
Return after half term holiday	Boarders: Sunday evening 2 <sup>nd</sup> November 2025 Day Students: Monday 3 <sup>rd</sup> November 2025
Quarter term weekend	Friday 21 <sup>st</sup> November 2025
Return after quarter term weekend	Boarders: Sunday evening 23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2025 Day Students: Monday 24 <sup>th</sup> November 2025
End of Autumn term for students	Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> December 2025
<i>Staff Development Day</i>	<i>Friday 19th December 2025</i>
<b>CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY</b>	
<i>Staff Development Day</i>	<i>Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2026</i>
Start of Spring term for all students	Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> January 2026
Quarter term weekend	Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> January 2026
Return after quarter term weekend	Boarders: Sunday evening 25 <sup>th</sup> January 2026 Day Students: Monday 26 <sup>th</sup> January 2026
Students break up for half term holiday	Friday 13 <sup>th</sup> February 2026
<b>FEBRUARY HALF-TERM</b>	
Return after half term holiday	Boarders: Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2026 Day Students: Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2026
Quarter term weekend	Friday 13 <sup>th</sup> March 2026
Return after quarter term weekend	Boarders: Sunday evening 15 <sup>th</sup> March 2026 Day Students: Monday 16 <sup>th</sup> March 2026
End of Spring term	Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> March 2026
<b>EASTER HOLIDAY</b>	
Start of Summer term	Boarders: Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> April 2026 Day Students: Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> April 2026
Quarter term weekend including Bank Holiday	Friday 1 <sup>st</sup> May – Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2026
Return after quarter term weekend	Tuesday morning 5 <sup>th</sup> May 2026
Break up for half term holiday	Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2026
<b>SPRING BANK HOLIDAY HALF-TERM</b>	
Return after half term holiday	Boarders: Sunday 31 <sup>st</sup> May 2026 Day Students: Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> June 2026
Quarter term weekend	Friday 26 <sup>th</sup> June 2026
Return after quarter term weekend	Boarders: Sunday evening 28 <sup>th</sup> June 2026 Day Students: Monday 29 <sup>th</sup> June 2026
End of Summer term for students	Friday 24 <sup>th</sup> July 2026
<i>Staff Development Day</i>	<i>Monday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2026</i>
<b>SUMMER HOLIDAY</b>	

# ACHIEVEMENTS & AWARDS

## 100% ATTENDANCE

**Congratulations to the following students for 100% attendance this half term.**

Sophia  
Mia  
Megan  
Jamie  
Eddie  
Byron  
Fletcher  
Nicholas  
Tim  
Joseph  
Charlie  
Max

William  
Darcy  
Toby  
Olivia  
Alex  
Jacob  
Bella  
Maisey  
Levi  
Maddie  
Lydia

Keagan  
Jim  
Luis  
Gracie  
Bentley  
Junior  
Kayan  
William  
Kristen  
Charlie-Joe  
Holden  
Luke

## AMAZING ATTENDANCE

**Congratulations to the following students for amazing attendance this half term.**

Sean  
Apryl  
Elliott  
Raphael  
Lukas  
Ted  
Cosmo  
Jasmine  
Shaun

# ACHIEVEMENTS & AWARDS

## BEHAVIOUR FOR LEARNING

The Behaviour for Learning award has been presented to:

Final  
Halle  
Holden  
Luis

Branson class  
Elliott  
Ashton  
Selene

Charlotte  
William  
Tanner  
Rooa

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## BEHAVIOUR FOR CHARACTER

The Behaviour for Character award has been presented to:

Radcliffe Class  
Darcy  
Lulu  
Raph  
Bentley

Bloom Class  
Charles  
James  
Eric  
Jamie

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## READING AWARD

Max

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## JOHN HILSUM AWARD

Sharlene  
Ted

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## HOUSE AWARDS

St Christopher's

Fletcher

St Margaret's

Sophia

St Anne's

James

# ST CATHERINE'S ROUND UP

We have welcomed some new staff this term, Amelia has joined our team of teaching assistants at the school and will be joined by another new team member, Julian who will be with us from the start of next term. Teresa has joined the residential team and is enjoying bringing her creativity to our students. Lorraine joined housekeeping and is making sure the college site is looked after.

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## NEWS FROM THE BOARD

At our meeting earlier this term Trustees approved the Charity Improvement Plan for 2025/26. Our Core Priorities are:

1. Develop and strengthen our communication with students, families and stakeholders
2. Develop our cyber resilience and online safety and wellbeing strategies
3. Enhance student progress and learning

At the meeting we also reviewed the changes to the Ofsted inspection framework and the implications for St. Catherines.

The key themes are:

Achieve - do all pupils learn, develop and make strong progress

Belong - do all pupils feel safe, included and valued

Thrive - are pupils safe, supported and flourish personally

8 areas are to be evaluated on a 5 point scale

Action plans and monitoring are being adapted and aligned to ensure we do the best we can for our students and thanks go to my fellow Trustees who regularly visit and monitor progress on our actions plans.

Approaching St Catherine's along Grove Road it is pleasing to see the improvements we are making. The exterior of St Anne's looks great alongside the new kitchen roof and we are planning work on St Margaret's soon. We continue to invest in the in St. Catherines for the future.

Best wishes from the Board of Trustees to all of you and your families for a safe and enjoyable Christmas break.



Graham Pengelly  
Chair of Trustees

# SCHOOL MENU

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Pasta/Quorn Bolognese or Jacket Potato with choice of filling	Jumbo Sausage/Cheese & Onion Roll or Tomato Pasta	Roast Lamb/ Vegetable Burger or Jacket Potato with choice of filling	Pizza with Wedges or Tomato Pasta	Battered Cod/ Fish Fingers/ Quiche with Chips or Jacket Potato with choice of filling
Salad Bar Tuna or Mackerel	Salad Bar Cheese & Egg or Mackerel	Salad Bar Ham or Mackerel	Salad Bar Tuna or Mackerel	Salad Bar Cheese or Mackerel
Fresh Fruit Platter	Rice Pudding	Fresh Fruit Salad	Fairy Cake	Pudding of the Day

Fresh vegetables and salad are available with all main meals. Fresh fruit and yoghurt are always options for dessert.

## SAVE THE DATE

St Catherine's  
School & College  
Specialists in Speech, Language and  
Communication Needs

SAVE THE DATE  
ST CATHERINE'S  
GALA DINNER  
18<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2026  
NORTHWOOD HOUSE  
COWES

TO REGISTER YOUR INTEREST NOW EMAIL  
SMITHT@STCATHERINES.ORG.UK

## **BLOOM CLASS**

Jacob:

This term I have loved PE. Badminton and basketball have been fun. I enjoyed learning how to bounce the ball. Art has been great. We have been learning about architecture and what architects do as a job. We designed our own buildings by sketching which was difficult, but fun. My building was a modern house that had a water slide in it. It had a big garage for two cars. I wish I had a water slide! The Viking visit to school was good because the swords were sharp and strong. They had a fight in the playground - that was the most fun! I've really liked Maths because I like numbers and I find it easy to answer the questions. Sensory Club is fun because we get to go to the Blue Room with Tom (Head of OT) and we can use the swing and the mats.

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## **RADCLIFFE CLASS**

Emilia:

In Art this term 'I liked doing salt and paint, doing a pattern. In English we learnt about Estate Agents, like selling houses and buying houses. We wrote a brochure and made sentences. The pictures are from the internet. We had to write about the picture. We read our brochure to everyone, Bridget recorded it. In Maths we looked at 3D shapes and 2D shapes. We done a shape with lollies, triangle. We looked round the school to find objects that were puffed up - 3D and 2D. We done months of the year, we sang a song. We moved on to clock. In Forest School, we made garlic bread.

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## **HOPKINS CLASS**

Toby:

It feels good to be here at St Catherine's. I really like my new class teacher. ICT is my favourite lesson because I am technological. SaLT is fun, we have been working on laptops to make presentations about what we're interested in. Mine is on BMWs, Scania's, Lamborghinis and Dodge cars. I like swimming for my clubs on Friday afternoons.

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## **PACKHAM CLASS**

Cameron:

One of my favourite things we have done this term is the RE day. I was in Forest School and we made these little angels out of wool, leaves, pine cones and sticks. You could make a 2D or a 3D one. I made a 3D one. It had a dress on it. In the Christmas club I made another angel for the Christmas tree competition at the Donkey Sanctuary. The Vikings came to visit the school. That was really cool and I got very excited and screamed a lot. It was really fun to see them fight. They had animal skins and I liked to feel them - especially the wild boar skin. I got to see the different foods they ate and it looked good. There was a taxidermied crow there.

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## **OLIVER CLASS**

Jamie:

I have enjoyed all my Maths lessons and of course, ICT. I really enjoyed the Viking visit and my cooking lessons in OT. Next term I am looking forward to more ICT lessons as I really like this subject. In PE this term I have learnt some new skills, basketball and lots more.

## AUSTEN CLASS

Selene:

I have enjoyed DT where we have been making a mobile phone case and sewing. In Art, I have printed pictures and made t-shirts and painted them. In English, we have been reading a book called 'Journey to Jo'burg' which has been interesting and a little sad. We have been doing Vikings in Humanities and the Vikings came in which was very strange. They used children as slaves. In PE we have played basketball and badminton.

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## GOLDBERG CLASS

Tanner:

This term I have enjoyed Music and learning about different instruments. I have really enjoyed learning Badminton in PE, it was such good fun. I have enjoyed reading 'Journey to Jo'burg' in English and found it very interesting but sad at times. Maths has been good as we have been learning about time. We also looked at bus timetables and I can confidently say I'd be able to get the bus now on my own. I have enjoyed DT as we are making a clock and I can't wait to finish it and take it home. I have enjoyed this term and I'm really looking forward to Christmas.

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## BURTON CLASS

Charlie-Joe:

I've enjoyed Maths this term as it's fun to learn about Maths. Humanities has been great because we have learnt about the Vikings. I really enjoyed it when they came into school for a visit. I loved looking at all of their weapons. Art has been really nice and calm. I've enjoyed designing my portfolio cover and using oil pastels to colour my dragons in. I've found Science really interesting as we have been learning about our muscles and how our arms move. I like doing handball in PE as it's like basketball. I love basketball.

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## NEWTON CLASS

Fletcher:

This term we have been learning about 'Journey to Jo'burg'. Writing lessons has been interesting. Overall 'Journey to Jo'burg' has been a great book. Maths has been really fun using the B-bots. We have also been learning about shapes. In DT we have been making clocks. Sawing wood needed a lot of elbow grease! Some of us have done medieval clocks, others have done pop art. A highlight of OT was cooking a tray bake. Learning about electricity had been interesting with lots of experiments.

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## BRANSON CLASS

Charlie:

This term in Maths I have enjoyed learning about shape. In English, I have liked reading our book 'Journey To Jo'Burg'. We have just started our topic on space in Science. In PE, I have learnt to work as a team in handball. I am working on my coursework in ICT. We had Viking day, I would not have liked to live then as they didn't have computers and life was hard! In Art we started photography and we got cameras out this week and took our own photos. In Humanities, we have been learning about St Catherine's School in the past and present.

# WATSON CLASS

Megan:

This term, I have really enjoyed English. We have finished reading "Blood Brothers" and we were taught how to write a good grade 7/8/9 introduction. We have started reading a Novella called "A Christmas Carol" based on a misanthropic character called Scrooge and his redemption. In Maths this term, I have been looking at Polygons and interior and exterior angles. This helps us towards our Maths GCSE paper in May/June. I found this quite fun once I got the hang of it. I have also been doing lots of Art and Photography GCSE coursework which I am enjoying. I walk up to the College to do this. Overall, it's been a really good half term and I'm looking forward to the Christmas holidays. I hope you all have a good holiday. See you in 2026!

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# 6JG CLASS

Aaron:

This half term I have really enjoyed my Photography lessons. I have been working towards putting on an exhibit of my work. I exhibited my work at college for everyone to see before we break up for Christmas. I have also really enjoyed Maths this half term. I have found that I am really good at algebra. This is a topic which has previously filled me with dread. Music this half term has also been really good. We have been looking at the history of music from the 1950s and 1980s.

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# 6AMD CLASS

James:

This half-term I have really enjoyed Music. I finished my set brief creating a piece of music to accompany a picture of a boat at sea and the narrative I developed to go with it. I have also recorded my ensemble bass performance of 'Come Together' by The Beatles. Photography has also been good fun, I have started my own project about myself. In the residential house I have really enjoyed our activities. Going to the cinema last week to see Wicked was great, and our Christmas dinner at The Sloop was delicious. I had gammon and turkey.

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# 6ILP CLASS

William:

I enjoyed working with other students of 6ILP. I particularly enjoyed getting on the bus and going to different places on the Island. Although, I preferred going into Ventnor town, I was able to estimate prices of products and go into shops I wouldn't normally go into. I enjoyed doing Young Enterprise with Sarah. I enjoyed presenting our pens to the Dragons' Den when we went to Newport. I enjoyed going to the music room. I enjoyed creating songs with others.

# ST CHRISTOPHER'S UPDATE

This term in St Christopher's has been action-packed and full of Christmas cheer! Students have taken part in a wide range of activities, including weekly athletics sessions on Tuesdays, where they have enjoyed running, jumping, throwing, and lots of fun team games. They have also been playing football up at Rew Valley and swimming at the Heights, which has been a fantastic opportunity for them to build confidence and develop new skills.

In class, the students have embraced the festive spirit by decorating the Christmas tree and making Christmas lanterns to give to their parents or friends. One of the highlights of the term has been writing letters to Santa — and even more exciting, receiving a reply! The students were thrilled to read their personalised messages.

Alongside the festive fun, the class has been working hard on their life skills. They have been learning how to describe themselves, exploring healthy food choices, and understanding the importance of staying hydrated.

It has truly been a wonderful term full of learning, creativity, and Christmas magic.

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## FOREST SCHOOL

Forest School classes have had a fun term, we've made good use of our snugly hut during wet weather, working on various woodworking projects and we even made some Christmas decorations for the Carol Service. We now have a Forest School Club on a Friday afternoon, so students can enjoy getting outside in nature even if you don't have Forest School on the timetable!



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## HOUSES AND HOMES

Lower school ended their topic of 'Houses and Homes' by visiting Osborne House. The students had a private tour around the house and made some Christmas decorations. Everyone had a fabulous time and enjoyed looking at the Christmas trees around the house.



# NATIONAL SPECIAL OLYMPIC COMPETITION

This competition was a national Special Olympic Event and the first time competing in an athletics competition for our school students and only the second for the Post 19 students. The students who went were Sophia, Timothy, Lulu and Brooke. Post 19 students were William, Ella and Thomas. They each competed in 4 events and came away with a large haul of gold, silver and bronze medals. It was a long day, starting with catching the 6am ferry and returning on the 10.15pm. Everyone had a great time and were a credit to the club and school, showing great teamwork, determination and resilience.

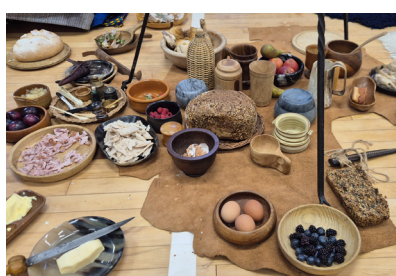
It was a real pleasure to be a part of this experience.



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## VIKING DAY

This term we had a full on Viking invasion at St Catherine's School. There was jewellery making, armour and weapons, animal hides and a homestead cooking set-up on display. The students were able to ask many questions about Viking life and were given demonstrations and were able to put on the armour and hold and try out the various weapons. The Vikings then put on a battle on the playground showing the different ways they attacked and protected themselves.



# CHRISTMAS MARKET 2025

We held our Christmas Market on Saturday at St Catherine's Church, and what a wonderful day it was! 25 traders sold Christmas Gifts, while a popular raffle saw 20 lucky winners. Guests were treated to a special visit from Spiderman and Elsa, while the event's much-loved Gift Elves gave out 200 free gifts. Live music, organised by Greg Barnes, played throughout the day, bringing festive cheer to the event.



## St Catherine's

A registered Charity no. 288148  
Recognised by the Department for Education (DfE)  
Grove Road, Ventnor, Isle of Wight, PO38 1TT  
T: 01983 852722 E: [general@stcatherines.org.uk](mailto:general@stcatherines.org.uk)  
[www.stcatherines.org.uk](http://www.stcatherines.org.uk)

## Fundraising Enquiries

For further information about our fundraising activities, contact our Fundraising Team on: 01983 852722 or email: [smitht@stcatherines.org.uk](mailto:smitht@stcatherines.org.uk)



**St Catherine's**

*Specialists in Speech, Language and  
Communication Needs*  
School - College - Post 19

## TRUSTEE VACANCY

**We are looking for outstanding individuals to join our Board of Trustees to help take us forward as we continue to develop our services. We welcome interest particularly from people with expertise in special educational needs.**

**If you would like to find out more, have an informal discussion or visit St Catherine's, please contact Susan Graves, Clerk to the Trustees on 01983 852 722 or email [susan@stcatherines.org.uk](mailto:susan@stcatherines.org.uk)**

**Trustee appointments are subject to enhanced-level disclosure and barring checks.**

St Catherine's is a national charity, based in Ventnor on the Isle of Wight, which runs a residential special school, sixth form college and post 19 provision for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs and associated difficulties.

Charity no. 288148, 288148:2

# ST CATHERINE'S CHARITY SHOP

It's been a very busy time at the charity shop, getting ready for Christmas, and I am pleased to say that the shop is doing very well. Thank you for all the donations and purchases, I really appreciate all the support. Thank you to all the students, Laura and to my super volunteers, Jazzy and Carol, who have helped in the shop. I had a visit from some of the students who are learning about time management to the shop, and was really happy to talk to them about what I do here, and answer their questions, and I hope they gained some valuable knowledge of the workplace.


Wishing staff, students and their families a very Happy Christmas and New Year!  
Love Amanda, Charity Shop Manager











e.g.

Example

Dec  December 2025 / January 2026  Jan

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
15th	16th	17th	18th	19th	20th	21st
22nd	23rd	24th	25th	26th	27th	28th
29th	30th	31st	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th


 December 2025 / January 2026
 

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
15th	16th	17th	18th	19th  Development Day	20th	21st
22nd	23rd	24th	25th	26th	27th	28th
29th	30th	31st	1st Jan	2nd	3rd	4th
5th  Development Day	6th Back to school 	7th 	8th 	9th 	10th	11th

  
Monday 15th  
Dec

  
School



  
Tuesday 16th  
Dec

  
School



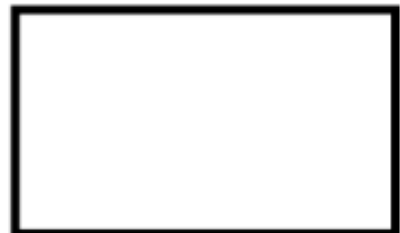
  
Wednesday 17th  
Dec

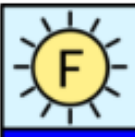
  
School



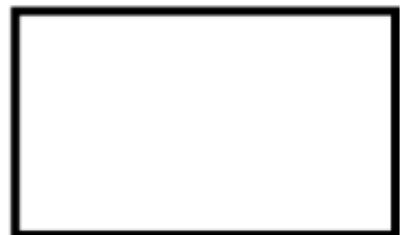
  
Thursday 18th  
Dec

  
Last Day of  
School



  
Friday 19th Dec

  
Development  
Day










  
Saturday 20th  
Dec



  
Sunday 21st  
Dec



 Monday 22nd Dec		
 Tuesday 23rd Dec		
 Wednesday 24th Dec		
 Thursday 25th Dec		
 Friday 26th Dec		
 Saturday 27th Dec		
 Sunday 28th Dec		

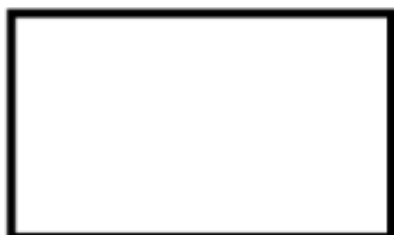
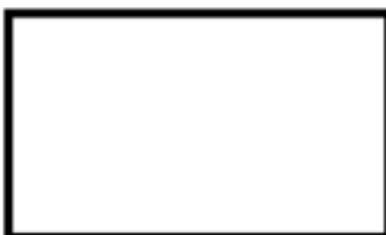
  
Monday 29th  
Dec




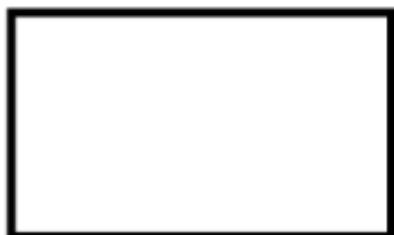
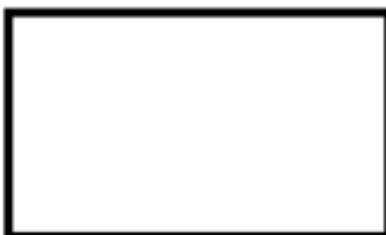
  
Tuesday 30th  
Dec




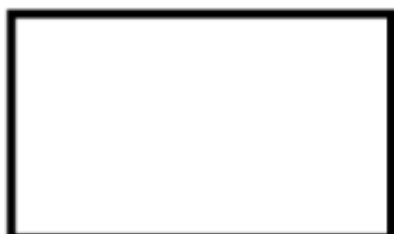
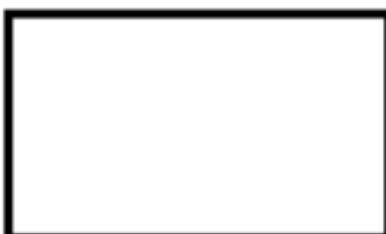
  
Wednesday 31st  
Dec



  
Thursday 1st  
Jan



  
Friday 2nd Jan




  
Saturday 3rd  
Jan

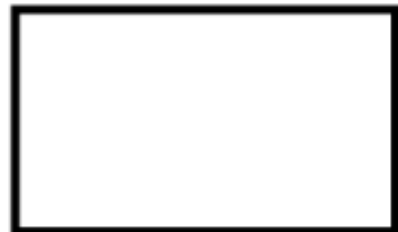



  
Sunday 4th Jan



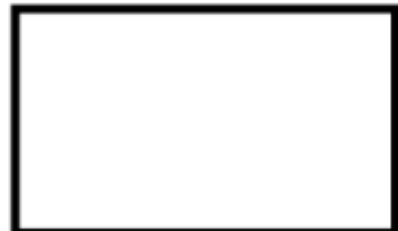
  
Monday 5th Jan


  
Development  
Day



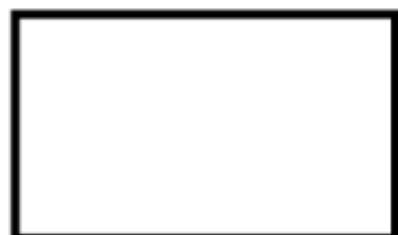
  
Tuesday 6th  
Jan

  
School



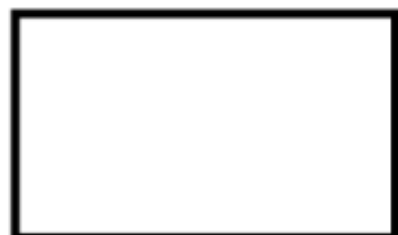
  
Wednesday 7th  
Jan

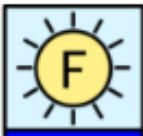
  
School



  
Thursday 8th  
Jan

  
School



  
Friday 9th Jan

  
School



  
Saturday 10th  
Jan



  
Sunday 11th Jan



# DECEMBER HALF TERM-WHAT TO DO

The following pages are provided for information -  
St Catherine's does not endorse any of these activities

## ISLE OF WIGHT DONKEY SANCTUARY

Celebrate Christmas with magical, affordable fun at the Isle of Wight Donkey Sanctuary! Meet over 100 donkeys and ponies and enjoy a unique Santa's Grotto experience inside one of our donkey barns.

New for 2025 - We're excited to offer a special Quiet Time with Santa on Saturday 20 December, 10.00 to 10.30am. If your child would love to meet Santa but would prefer a calmer, more relaxed experience, this is the session just for them! From £5 per person, including a festive goodie bag. Spaces are limited and must be booked in advance online. As well as the Quiet Time session, Santa will be at the sanctuary all weekend from 10.30am to 3pm. Come and meet him in his festive grotto, joined by his elves and our donkeys for a very special Christmas experience.

From £5 per child (includes a festive goodie bag).

Book online or book on the day (subject to availability).

Other activities on over the weekend include:

Pony & carriage rides - £5 per person (weather dependant)

Free reindeer trail - search for the reindeers hidden around our site - everyone gets a sweet treat!

Seasonal music in the barn

Mulled wine and festive treats in our café

Christmas shopping ideas

Isle of Wight Gin Company tasting - mums, dads and grandparents only!

Come along and step into Christmas with us!



### The Footprint Trust

Isle of Wight's Energy Charity

**Want to cut your home energy bills?**

**FOR FREE HELP:**

✉ [info@footprint-trust.co.uk](mailto:info@footprint-trust.co.uk)  
📞 01983 82 22 82  
🌐 [www.footprint-trust.co.uk](http://www.footprint-trust.co.uk)

Drop in: Newport Library every Monday  
10:00am - 1:00pm

Reg. Charity No. 1106024



## IW STORY FESTIVAL

### NO BATTERIES REQUIRED

Gift-giving problems solved

Draw along with Robi



Stuck for present ideas?  
Brighten up the grey days of February Half Term by ordering tickets for the IW Story Festival!

A fantastic line-up of authors and performers will be visiting our Island from Thursday 19 to Saturday 21 February 2026. Tickets for this whole-family event are available now at [iwstoryfestival.com](http://iwstoryfestival.com) or directly from the Box Office at Quay Arts, Newport.

Inspire your young readers and writers by meeting:

Joseph Elliott	Lucy Strange	Emma Carroll	Philip Reeve
			
<b>Cbeebies, CBBC and Horrible Histories</b>			<b>Mortal Engines 25th year celebrations</b>

Add a Christmas book by one of these icons of children's fiction.

Have your book signed at the Festival



Get the **NATIONAL YEAR OF READING** off to a **GREAT START** with the **IW STORY FESTIVAL**

Available from Medina Books Coves, Waterstones Newport, and online retailers.



Proud to support The National Year of Reading 2026.



# iwstoryfestival.com



# Protect your festive season with a flu vaccine

**Has your child been vaccinated against flu?  
If not, it's not too late!**

**The HIOW School Aged Immunisation Team are holding  
Community Clinics before Christmas and in the New  
Year**

**Telephone 0300 123 5074 to complete a consent form  
and book into one of the clinics**

# NATIONAL ONLINE SAFETY

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 climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit [nationalcollege.com](http://nationalcollege.com).

## What Parents & Educators Need to Know about EMOJIS

### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Emojis are more than playful expressions — they form a fast-evolving digital language that many adults struggle to decode. For young people, this 'secret code' is central to how they communicate identity, humour and emotions. With over 5 billion emojis sent daily on Facebook Messenger alone, understanding these symbols is key to engaging meaningfully with digital youth.

### GENERATIONAL MISCOMMUNICATION

An emoji like 👍 (thumbs up emoji) might seem friendly to adults, but teens often interpret it as sarcastic or passive-aggressive. These differing interpretations can create confusion or unintended tension in cross-generational conversations.

### SHIELDING BULLYING OR PEER PRESSURE

When embedded in emojis, mean-spirited jokes or exclusionary language can fly under the radar. Terms like 'mid' or 'delulu' may seem harmless, but they can be used to undermine peers in subtle ways.

### RAPIDLY SHIFTING MEANINGS

Emoji meanings can change overnight. A person standing emoji (👤) once signified awkwardness but might now be repurposed for something entirely different. This ever-changing lexicon can leave adults in the dark and young people vulnerable to misunderstanding or misuse.

### MASKING DISTRESS OR HARM

Some emojis are used to discreetly signal troubling behaviours. For instance, 🍂 (falling leaves emoji) or 💊 (pill emoji) might suggest drug use, while 🌵 (wilted flower emoji) could hint at emotional struggles. Such usage can obscure serious issues, making them harder for trusted adults to detect.

### NORMALISING RISKY BEHAVIOURS

Emojis can make harmful actions seem light-hearted or fashionable. Strings like 🍷🍷 (fire + 'woozy' face + pill emojis) may appear humorous but can reference partying, intoxication or dangerous challenges, which might otherwise raise red flags.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### LEARN THE LINGO

Stay updated with emoji trends and definitions using resources like [emojipedia.org](http://emojipedia.org) or Urban Dictionary. Knowing current meanings builds confidence when engaging with young people and helps spot potential concerns early.

### CREATE SAFE SPACES FOR DISCUSSION

Encourage casual chats about emojis, online slang, memes, or social media trends. Showing interest without judgement reassures young people that they can talk about their digital world openly and safely.

### ASK, DON'T ASSUME

Approach unfamiliar emojis with curiosity rather than suspicion. A light-hearted "What does 🍷 (juice box emoji) mean these days?" can open conversation and show that you respect their knowledge.

### PRIORITISE TRUST OVER SURVEILLANCE

While parental controls and monitoring tools can be useful, emotional safety matters most. Be someone children and young people feel they can come to — not just someone who's watching them.

## EMOJI CHEAT SHEET - The following slang terms and emojis are some common examples - please be aware this isn't an exhaustive list.

### COMMON EMOJIS:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 🤡 (Clown face) Foolishness or clowning around | 🙄 (Pleading face) Over-affectionate or 'simping'                       |
| 😎 (Cool face) Cool, stylish or ruthless       | 👁️ (Eyes) Watching drama unfold  |
| 😍 (Hot face) Intense attraction or excitement | 🐐 (Goat) Greatest of all time (G.O.A.T.)                               |
| 😐 (Moai) Stone-faced, unbothered              | 💅 (Nails) Confidence, sassiness, or indifference                       |
| 👑 (Crown) 'Slaying', as in doing great        | 🚩 (Triangular flag) Red flag; a warning sign about someone's behaviour |

### POTENTIALLY CONCERNING EMOJIS

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 🌽 (Ear of corn) Slang for pornography (avoids censorship algorithms) | 🌵 (Wilted flower) Often used to convey emotional struggle or sadness      |
| ❄️ (Snowflake, snowman, snow cloud) Can symbolise cocaine            | 🐍 (Snake) Can represent betrayal or being 'two-faced'                     |
| 🔑 (Key, lying face) Related to cocaine use                           | 🔫 (Water pistol) Sometimes used to reference violence or self-harm        |
| 🍃 (Falling leaves, herb, maple leaf) Can symbolise cannabis          | ⚠️ (Warning) Used to emphasise drama, threats or emotional turmoil        |
| 💊 (Pill) May reference drug use or prescription misuse               | 🍜 (Steaming bowl) Refers to nudes ('noods' is an abbreviation of noodles) |

### Meet Our Expert

Keith Broni is a globally renowned emoji expert and the Editor in Chief of [emojipedia.org](http://emojipedia.org), the world's number one emoji resource. He has an MSc in Business Psychology from University College London and an MBA from Quantic School of Business and Technology.



#WakeUpWednesday

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