



SAINT CHRISTINA'S BULLETIN

Friday 9th January 2026



CURIOSITY CHARACTER COMMUNITY



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Dear Parents,

On behalf of the entire Saint Christina's community, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy New Year. I hope you were able to enjoy the Christmas break and that despite the recent cold snap, that the New Year has begun with a sense of possibility.

I would also like to offer a warm welcome to the families who have joined our school this term. Starting somewhere new takes courage, and we are very pleased you are part of this community. We look forward to getting to know you, and to supporting your children as they settle in.

Over the Christmas period, I read an article in The Guardian that drew on the thinking of Paul Tillich, a German theologian writing in the aftermath of war, displacement, and social fracture. Tillich was suspicious of easy optimism, chiefly because he had lived through too much for that. Instead, he wrote about what he called the 'right to hope'.

For Tillich, hope was not merely a feeling, and nor was it a promise that things would always turn out well. For him it was a position to take when certainty is absent. He believed that the moment you abandon hope, you also abandon responsibility; for how you act, how you treat others, and whether you remain engaged when things become difficult.

That idea feels particularly relevant at the start of a new year. January arrives with resolutions and good intentions; some will last and many will not! What matters more is what remains once enthusiasm fades. Tillich's idea of hope is useful here because it is not tied to success. It is about staying involved even when you fall short of what you set out to do.

This is a message that matters deeply for children.

School is full of moments where effort does not immediately pay off. Sometimes the work takes longer than expected and sometimes confidence dips. Perhaps something that made sense yesterday suddenly feels that bit harder today. The response to those moments shapes how children come to understand themselves as learners and as people.

Hope, in this sense, shows itself when a child returns to something they found difficult, when they keep going after disappointment, and when they stay curious rather than shut down. It is present when the adults around them signal that struggle is not a reason to withdraw attention or lower expectations.

This is the stance we try to hold across the school. We do not promise ease, nor do we pretend that learning is always smooth. What we do commit to, is staying with the children in the process, and helping them see that effort and reflection matter.



SAINT CHRISTINA'S BULLETIN

As we move into 2026, that feels like a better kind of resolution because it doesn't depend on perfection, but the potential to endure after resolve wavers. A commitment to remain engaged, to keep trying, and to take responsibility for the work in front of us.

Thank you, as always, for the trust you place in us. Here's to a successful 2026.

Have a good weekend when it comes.

Best,

Damien Walshe
Headteacher



A message from our Provincial, Sister Marina Santos, ACI

After more than three decades of service to Saint Christina's, and a lifetime of commitment to the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Joan McConnell has decided to retire from her role as Chair of Governors. Joan was instrumental in establishing the Governing Body and has shaped the school with sound judgement and deep wisdom. Her contribution to Saint Christina's has been profound and lasting.

We will be marking Joan's tenure properly. Plans are underway to celebrate her leadership, her service, and the impact she has had on the life of the school over many years. Further details will be shared in due course. At the same time, we are pleased to welcome Tim Guilford as the new Chair of Governors. Tim brings over 30 years' experience in education, including senior leadership roles in London schools, extensive work in curriculum and professional development, and more than 15 years chairing a North London primary school governing body. His experience in governance, compliance, and strategic planning will be a real strength for Saint Christina's.

We thank Joan for her lifelong service and the difference she has made to the school. We pray that Tim will build on this work as he takes the Governing Body forward.



SAINT CHRISTINA'S BULLETIN

International and Heritage Week



We are very much looking forward to our International & Heritage Week, which will take place from Monday 19th to Friday 23rd January.

During the week, each class will be learning about a different country as part of their classwork. Alongside this, we are excited to continue our much-loved home heritage project, which has evolved each year with the last two themes:

- Who am I? – exploring personal heritage
- Influential people from our heritage

This Year's Home Project: Living Heritage – Traditions, Stories & Celebrations

For this year's (optional) project, we invite the children to create something at home that celebrates a living tradition or aspect of culture from their heritage. This might be something that is still practised or celebrated today and has meaning for their family. The project links closely to our 6Cs, particularly creativity and communication.

Children can choose one of the following:

- A family tradition (e.g. food, holiday, ritual, weekly practice)
- A cultural celebration or festival
- A traditional story, legend, or myth
- A traditional craft, dance, song, or game
- A food with cultural meaning (focusing on why it matters, rather than just the recipe)

To help guide the children, they may wish to consider:

- What is it?
- Where does it come from?
- Why is it important to your family or culture?
- How is it celebrated or shared today?
- What would you like others to know about it?



SAINT CHRISTINA'S BULLETIN

Projects can be presented in any creative way, for example, a poster, model, scrapbook, digital presentation, or artefact display. We encourage children to focus on meaning and storytelling, rather than size or complexity. The children will share their projects with the class during the week.

On **Friday 23rd January** the children are **invited to wear national dress or the colours of their country's flag**, and we will celebrate during our International Mass in the afternoon, which you are welcome to attend.

If you have any questions or would like guidance on supporting your child with their project, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. We are really looking forward to celebrating the rich diversity of our school community together.

Mrs Ellisdon & Ms Sephton - Assistant Head (Academic) & Head of Humanities

Parent Workshop: *The Alchemy of Self-Compassion*

Before the holidays, we shared details about a possible parent workshop exploring The Alchemy of Self-Compassion, led by Caroline Hanson. As we continue to gauge interest, we wanted to share this again in case any parents missed it or would like to register their interest.

The session would explore how the way we speak to ourselves shapes how we show up for our children, offering gentle reflection, practical tools and simple self-compassion practices to support calmer, more connected parenting.

At this stage, we are simply gauging interest. If this is something you would be keen to attend, please let me know at dburke@saintchristinas.org.uk.

Mr Burke - Assistant Head (Pastor)



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Catholic Social Teaching at Saint Christina's

Catholic Social Teaching is an expression of the Catholic faith, which touches on many aspects of life. Writings by Popes and Catholic leaders show how the Catholic faith can guide our response to different issues.

There are seven principles of Catholic Social Teaching, we are called to uphold them.

- Sharing God's world, protecting the poor - How do children share at home and at school? What are the kinds of things that are shared? Should everyone get exactly the same? Should some people get more? Why? For example, families with more children might need more resources, or someone with a disability might need extra help.
- Human Dignity - 'What makes me special?' 'What makes people special?' 'How should we treat each other?'
- Caring for Creation - How do I show respect for Creation? The earth and all life on it are part of God's creation. We are called to respect this gift. We are responsible for taking care of the world we live in and for sharing all the wonders and resources the earth gives us.
- The Common Good - What is 'true community'? The Common Good is reached when we work together to improve the wellbeing of people in our society and the wider world.
- Solidarity and Peace - Who are our leaders? How do we stand with others? How did Jesus show service and justice?
- Family, community and participation - This means all people have the right to participate in society and to seek the Common good, which means the good for all.
- Dignity in work - All people work in some way because work is more than making a living, it is participating. Therefore, jobs and pay should be fair for everyone.





SAINT CHRISTINA'S BULLETIN

We will be looking at each of these principles throughout the academic year. The principle we will be focusing on this half term is Solidarity and Peace.

Solidarity is a word which can be overused and little understood. However, it is fundamental to the way in which we treat one another. If we truly believe that we are all sisters and brothers of one another, made in God's image and likeness as seen in the guideline of human dignity, then seeking the good of one another cannot be ignored. The quotation from St John Paul II is an ongoing challenge. Solidarity is not just feeling sorry for those who suffer. It is a commitment to action. "We are all really responsible for all" – all of us. Wherever we are. Whatever our age. Whatever our circumstances. We are all responsible for one another, those close by, and those far away. All of our actions have consequences locally and globally. From how we treat people we meet in the street, to the coffee we buy in the supermarket. It is how we live out Caritas - love in action.

Mr Burke - Head of Pastoral

Fr Terry's Food Bank

At Saint Christina's we believe that we are called to serve those around us throughout the year. We were so touched by your generosity towards Fr Terry's Food Bank last term, and we will continue to collect non-perishable food to celebrate his legacy. All donations will be distributed to the homeless and local families in need.

We would be delighted if you would support us again with this initiative – even the smallest donation can make a big difference. If you would like to donate any non-perishable goods to this cause, please ask your child to leave their donation in the food bank collection container underneath the stairs next to the Arts Hall. We kindly ask that all donations for this half term are brought into School by Monday 9th February. Thank you for your support with this cause.

Mr Burke, Charity Prefects and Caritas Ambassadors

Saint Christina's Food Collection





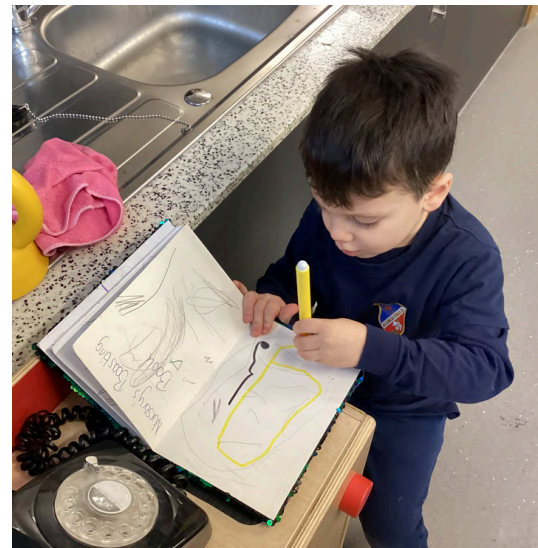
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The Case of the Home Corner Break-In in Nursery

On Tuesday, we discovered there had been a break-in in the home corner. The children were excited to investigate and searched for clues, including a strand of blonde hair, a red ribbon, some porridge oats and a broken chair. After talking through what they found, they decided it must have been Goldilocks.

This led to a police station role-play for the rest of the week. The children enjoyed investigating, interviewing and trying to find the suspect, working together and recording their ideas as they played.

Ms Randle - Head of EYFS



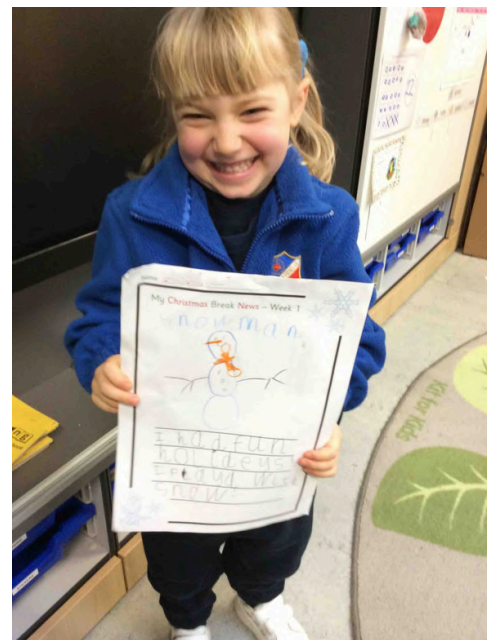


SAINT CHRISTINA'S BULLETIN

Holiday News and Happy New Year in Reception

Tuesday morning was full of excitement as Reception returned to school, happy to see their friends and ready to begin a new term. Throughout the week, the children have been sharing their holiday news with the class, with stories such as skiing down snowy mountains, exploring sandy deserts, learning to swim, and even trying ice skating and skiing backwards. During choosing time, they have been busy creating colourful New Year hats and headbands to celebrate the start of 2026. As a class, we read Squirrel's New Year's Resolution and talked about what a resolution is and what goals we might set for the year ahead. We also changed our calendar to a brand new month and a brand new year, and we are excited to see where our learning takes us next.

Ms Williams - Reception Class Teacher





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Year 1

Year 1 have settled back in wonderfully after the break and it has been a joy to see how quickly everyone has returned to familiar routines. We have loved spending time sharing what we did over the holidays, drawing pictures and writing simple sentences about our experiences. It has been especially lovely to see friends reconnect, hear lots of excited chatter and enjoy being back together in the classroom.

Alongside this, we have been revisiting our phonics as a whole class to refresh key sounds and build confidence after the break. We have shown great focus and enthusiasm during these sessions, joining in with blending, reading and writing activities. This recap work is helping us get ready for our upcoming new phonics groups, ensuring we feel confident and ready to move forward with our learning this term!

Ms Higgins and Ms Khalique - Year 1 Class Teachers

What did you do during your Christmas break?



Capital letters	Punctuation	Finger spaces	Neat writing	Makes sense
★	★	★	★	★

In the winter holidays
I went with my grama
in France. I went to the
beach.

What did you do during your Christmas break?



Capital letters	Punctuation	Finger spaces	Neat writing	Makes sense
★	★	★	★	★

The winter
holidays I hirt
self and my
sister Rosie was
born.



SAINT CHRISTINA'S BULLETIN




Capital letters	Punctuation	Finger spaces	Neat writing	Makes sense
★	★	★	★	★

In the Winter holidays I went to Sury. where my Sister and brothers. And with my Sister and brothers we went to a hotel. And in the hotel I went to a swimming pool.

What did you do during your half term?

Timanfaya



I went to a volcano called Timanfaya. I also rid a camel. I saw a bag. When I was in the hotel every day I jumped right into the pool and played with my new friend. We both played sinkers and one kept running away.

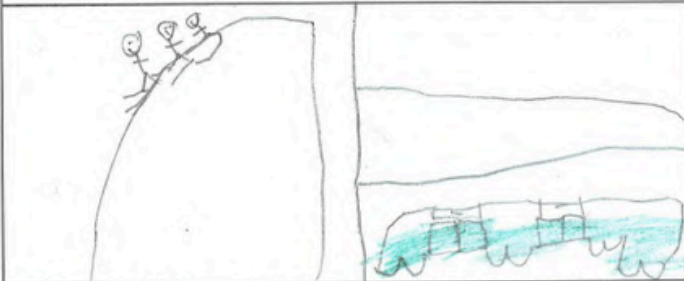
What did you do during your Christmas break?



Capital letters	Punctuation	Finger spaces	Neat Writing	Makes sense
★	★	★	★	★

I went to my daddy's work and I watched wonder bloks on the computer. I had a very good lunch.

What did you do during your Christmas break?



Capital letters	Punctuation	Finger spaces	Neat writing	Makes sense
★	★	★	★	★

I went skiing. I went to the white ground powder. It was fun.



SAINT CHRISTINA'S BULLETIN

Year 2

Year 2 have had a brilliant first week back and have returned to school with fantastic energy and enthusiasm.

We began the week by writing recounts of our Christmas holidays, taking time to share our memories and practise writing in clear, well-structured sentences. In PSHE, we reflected on our class rules and discussed why they are important, before setting personal targets to work towards in the new year.

In Maths, we have been learning about lines of symmetry, identifying symmetrical shapes and carefully completing shapes by reflecting them across a vertical line. The children showed excellent focus and were keen to explain their thinking.

We were also delighted to enjoy the snowy weather on Tuesday, making the most of the wintry conditions and sharing lots of laughter together.

It has been a wonderful start to the term and we are very proud of how well the children have settled back into school routines.

Mr Burke - Year 2 Class Teacher





SAINT CHRISTINA'S BULLETIN

Year 3

Year 3 have had a fantastic start to the term. In English, they have begun a new unit on Poetry. The children have been exploring the structure of poems, identifying rhyming patterns, and discussing the themes found in a range of different poems.

In Art, the children have been learning about Roman mosaics. They discovered that wealthy Romans decorated the floors of the main rooms in their homes with mosaics. The children are now designing and creating their own mosaics using small coloured paper squares.

In Science, the children have started an exciting new topic on Rocks and Soils. They have been learning about the three main types of rocks: igneous, metamorphic, and sedimentary, how each type is formed, and the different ways rocks are used.

Ms Sephton - Year 3 Class Teacher





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Year 4

Year 4 returned to school full of energy after a wonderful holiday and are excited for a term packed with learning! In Religion, we explored our Catholic Social Teaching focus of Solidarity and Peace, creating posters or writing letters to explain its importance. In Geography, we started our new topic which is South America and the Rainforest! We began by exploring everything we already knew, thinking about what we might want to find out, and started exploring where South America is and some of the countries within it. In Maths, we started work on length and perimeter, converting units and calculating shapes. English saw us predicting events in our new class novel Journey to the River Sea and writing detailed reviews of Secrets of a Sun King. Finally, in Art, we sketched realistic toucans and will soon add vibrant colours with oil pastels.

Ms Farquhar - Year 4 Class Teacher





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Year 5

Year 5 children joined Year 6 for an exciting and truly inspiring creative writing workshop led by the award-winning author Katherine Rundell, hosted by the British Library. This fantastic opportunity gave children the chance to pick up brilliant tips for creative writing, discover where authors find their inspiration, and explore how maps and imagination can help shape the most memorable and adventurous stories.

The children were absolutely thrilled to hear their own questions read aloud and answered live by Katherine Rundell, making the experience feel extra special and personal. The session sparked huge enthusiasm for reading and writing, with children buzzing with ideas and eager to start crafting their own stories. It was a memorable experience that has inspired a real love of storytelling across both year groups.

Ms O'Leary - Year 5 Class Teacher





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Year 6

Year 6 enjoyed their enrichment lesson with Fr Rudolf this week, where the 6C focus was on curiosity. The children watched a video in Hungarian and were challenged to decipher what was happening using only visual clues. This led to great discussion, thoughtful inference, and plenty of curiosity-driven questioning.

On Wednesday, we were delighted to join a live remote workshop with author Katherine Rundell, organised by the British Library. The session was fantastic. Katherine was hugely engaging and provided Years 5 and 6 with wonderful inspiration for their creative writing. We had submitted questions in advance and were thrilled when Saint Christina's was mentioned, and one of our questions was answered live.



This week, the class have also been introduced to Genius Hour. They were asked to reflect on what interests them most, and throughout the term, they will complete an independent project based on this passion. Each child's journey will be unique, with learning taking them in many different directions. The children are extremely excited, and I look forward to sharing their progress. Topics include sailing, cardiology, baking, photography, fashion, and Greek mythology, to name just a few.

The children continue to conduct themselves admirably during their final exams, and many are now well into the interview stage of the 11+.

Mrs Ellisdon - Year 6 Class Teacher

Primary Mathematics Challenge - Good news!

As many of you are well aware, a group of children entered last term's national Primary Mathematics Challenge back in November.

Two of the children who performed particularly well back in November have now been selected to participate in the Bonus Round, which will take place in early February. This is very good news as only the top one or two thousand children in the whole country will get selected for this round.

Our congratulations go to Philippe and Ehwan, both in Year 6, who will take part in the Bonus Round!

Fr Rudolf - Teacher in Charge of Enrichment



SAINT CHRISTINA'S BULLETIN

Music Update

Composer of the Month

Our first composer of the month for 2026 is Florence Price, famous for being the first African-American female composer to have a symphony performed by an orchestra. We have started exploring her work in KS2 music lessons, with Years 3 and 6 starting by looking at the quirky little piano piece “The Goblin and the Mosquito”. We agreed it sounded very much like a goblin being pestered by an annoying little insect!

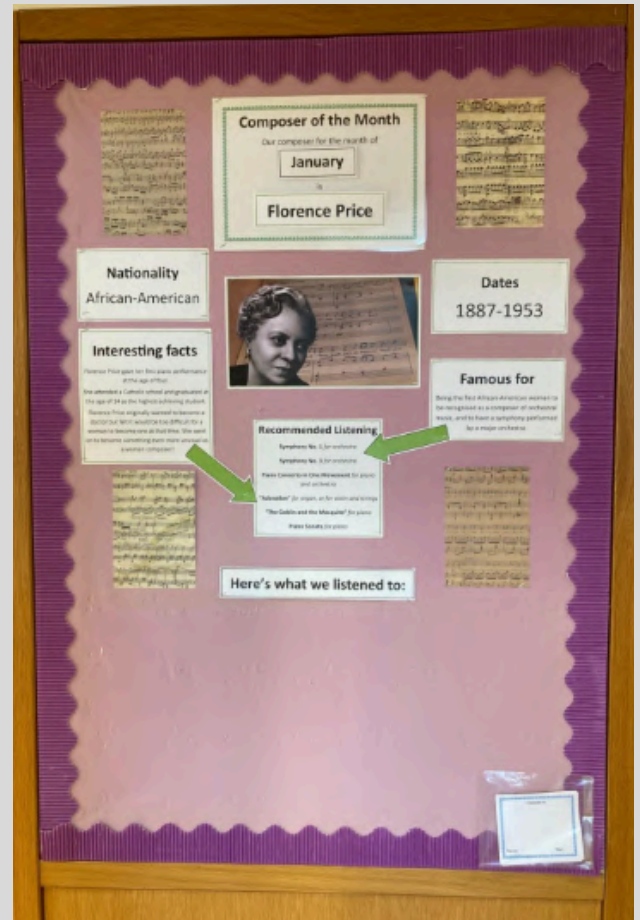
Here is some more recommended listening. Children who complete a listening log (the slips for this can be found on the Google Classrooms, or a paper copy collected from the Music Department) will earn a house point and it would be great to see our display filled this month!

[Symphony No. 1 in E minor, 1st movement](#)

[“Adoration” for string orchestra](#)

[“Rainbow Waltz” for piano](#)

[“The Goblin and the Mosquito” for piano](#)



Music Assemblies

I am planning to organise music assemblies this term. This is normally an opportunity for children who have lessons **in school** to perform to an audience, but this time it will also be open to children who have lessons **outside school**. If your child has music lessons outside school and would like to perform, please complete the form [here](#) to register your interest and I will get in touch once we have a date confirmed.

Music Lessons

We have spaces for flute, violin, guitar, trumpet and trombone lessons at the moment. If you are interested in lessons for your child, you can find information and the application form [here](#). If you have any questions, please contact me via email - ebryant@saintchristinas.org.uk

Mrs Bryant - Director of Music



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Poetry Club (KS1)

Give your child the gift of confidence, creativity, and joyful self-expression!

Our **Key Stage 1 Poetry Club** is a gentle, imaginative space where young learners explore rhythm, rhyme, and storytelling through fun drama-based activities. Each 30-minute session is carefully designed to build **early performance skills**, boost **verbal confidence**, and nurture a genuine love of language.

Children will enjoy:

- Silly rhyme games
- Voice and expression activities
- Learning and performing short poems
- Building confidence in speaking aloud
- Celebrating creativity with new friends

Led by an experienced, passionate drama teacher, this club is perfect for children aged 5–7 who love words, performing, or simply trying something new.

£127 for the full club experience.

A supportive, exciting environment where little voices grow big and brave!

Come join us - we can't wait to welcome your young poet!

Just drop Mr Duncan an email at drama@saintchristinas.org.uk

Mr Duncan - Drama Teacher





SAINT CHRISTINA'S BULLETIN

NOTICES and REMINDERS

Nut Free School

We have a number of children and staff in the school who have serious nut allergies. Please will you ensure that you do not give your child any nuts or nut products (e.g. Nutella) to bring into school.

Cold Weather Clothing

There has been a noticeable drop in temperatures. Please ensure your child comes to school with their school hat, scarf, and gloves, as well as appropriate warm layers. This will help keep all children comfortable and prepared for the colder weather.

Sunday Mass

You are warmly invited to join Sunday Mass, which is held in the Chapel at 10:00am.

Parking

We kindly ask parents and carers to please avoid parking on the zig-zag lines outside the school. Keeping this space clear helps ensure a safe and smooth arrival and departure for all our children. Thank you for your support.



SAINT CHRISTINA'S BULLETIN

Dates for your diary

Monday 12th
January

- **Clubs Start**
- Mr Walshe visiting St Anthony's School

Wednesday 14th
January

- **Year 4 Coffee Morning (9.00 am)**

Friday 16th
January

- **Year 4 Mass (2.45pm)**

Monday 19th
January

- **Year 5A and B Girls Netball (Away)**
- **Heritage/International Week**

Friday 23rd
January

- **Year 2 International Mass (2.45pm)**
- **Non-School Uniform**

Monday 26th
January

- **Year 3/4 Mixed Football (Home)**
- **Year 4 Swimming (2 Weeks)**

Thursday 29th
January

- **Mr Walshe & Mrs Reilly visiting Handmaids School in Dublin**



SAINT CHRISTINA'S BULLETIN

Friday 30 th January	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Year 6 Mass (2.45pm)
Monday 2 nd February	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Year 5/6 Mixed Football (Home)
Wednesday 4th February	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Year 5/6 Inter House Football• Parent Child Learning Review (Details to Follow)
Thursday 5th February	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent Child Learning Review (Details to Follow)• Mr Walshe attending the CISC Conference (2 Days)
Friday 6 th February	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NSPCC Workshop with Years 2, 5 and 6• Year 5 Mass (2.45pm)
Monday 9 th February	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Year 3/4 Netball (Home)
Tuesday 10 th February	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inter House Pancake Challenge• Year 5A and Year 6A Netball Fixture (Home)
Thursday 12 th February	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inter House Music Competition



SAINT CHRISTINA'S BULLETIN

Thursday 12th February
SCHOOL CLOSURES AT USUAL TIME FOR HALF TERM

Monday 23rd February
CHILDREN RETURN

ABOVE TIMES/DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Please note: Policies can be found on the School Website – please click link below:

<https://www.saintchristinas.org.uk/our-school/policies/>