St Lawrence's C of E Primary School
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Friday 16th October 2026

Caring, Considerate, Courageous

As I have loved you, so you must love one another. (John 13:34-35)

A Message from Miss Hammond

It has been another lovely week at St Lawrence's, and one of the highlights for me has been seeing children coming to find me to share the progress they are making in their writing. It is wonderful when children are so proud of their work that they want to show it off and talk about what they have achieved. Celebrating the successes of our children is such a lovely part of my day, and it is fantastic to see their confidence growing alongside their writing skills. We are incredibly proud of the effort they are putting into their learning.

On Tuesday, we had our school photographs. The children did really well, following instructions and showing patience as they waited for their turn. Thank you to everyone for helping the morning run smoothly.

This week, Mrs Nicolas-Brown and I also met with Lucy from Family Learning, who shared details of some fantastic courses and learning opportunities available for parents and carers. These courses are organised by the City of York Council and cover a range of areas that may be of interest to families. We will begin sharing information about upcoming courses with you, should you wish to find out more or take part.

In the meantime, you can explore the opportunities available on the York Learning website: https://yorklearning.org.uk/family-learning/

We know that learning does not stop at the school gates, and these opportunities can be a lovely way for adults to develop new skills, build confidence and support their families. We hope some of you will find something that interests you.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. It is a pleasure to see our children working hard, growing in confidence and taking such pride in their achievements. Wishing you all a lovely weekend!

Individual School Photographs

This week our children had their individual and sibling photos taken.

Parents and Carers have been given a card with a QR code on so that you can view and order photos online.

The photos will then be delivered to your home if you choose that option or delivered back to school for free.

Ordered need to be placed by Friday 23rd October for FREE DELIVERY to school!

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact the school office.

On Tuesday 20th October at 2.30pm children in Reception to Year 6 are attending the Harvest Festival Service in the school hall.

We hope families will join us to help us celebrate.

For Harvest Festival this year we are asking for donations for York Food Bank.

All contributions for the Harvest Festival will be gratefully received and can be brought into school on Monday 19th or Tuesday 20th October.

Please place your donation in the box in the classroom.

The Food Bank have requested their top most needed items to support people facing hardship:

Many for your support.

WE ARE RUNNING LOW OF: (PLEASE) - updated 22/9/26

- Tinned Meat / Fish
- Veggie Meals
- Tinned Tomatoes / Cooking Sauces
- Tinned Rice Pudding / Custard
- Coffee
- Jam

Diary Dates

20th November	Harvest Service at 2.30pm in the School Hall - Parents/Carers welcome
21st November	Phonics Event for Reception/Year 1 Parents - 2.30pm
23rd October	Break up for Half Term
31st October	Secondary School Application 2027 Deadline
2nd November	Back to School
10th November	Book Fair in School
10th November	Parents Meeting from 2.00pm
11th November	Parents Meeting from 2.00pm
12th November	Flu Vaccinations – Reception to Year 6
16th - 20th November	Anti-Bullying Week 2026: Break the Silence
16th November	Odd Socks Day 2026 for Anti-Bullying week
18th November	Year 1/2, Year 3/4, Y5/6 - Cinema Trip
20th November	Children in Need - information to follow
27th November	Training Day - School Closed for the children
30th November	Christmas Tree Decorating Day
2nd December	Y3/4 The Christmas Journey @ York Community Church
11th December	Christmas Jumper and Lunch Day
17th December	Break Up for Christmas
18th December	Training Day - School Closed

Attendance from this Year!

Owls - 83.7%

Badgers - 90.8%

Hedgehogs - 91.5%

Foxes - 85.4%

Whole School - 88.4%

Flu Immunisation Programme:

Reception to Year 6

The Flu Vaccine is being offered to all children in Reception, Y1,Y2, Y3, Y4, Y5 and Y6 on **Thursday 12th November.**

In the previous years, parents has a link from school to complete the consent forms but this year, and going forwards, the consent link and reminders will come from an NHS address to you email.

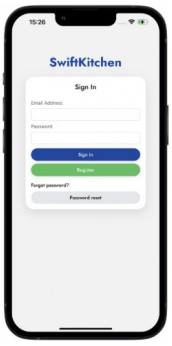
Please look out for this email to consent to your child/ren having the Flu Immunisation

Work with Pathfinder

Are you looking for a new opportunity in education?
Pathfinder Multi Academy Trust regularly has a range of vacancies across our schools and central team, from teaching and support roles to leadership and professional services positions.

If you, or someone you know, would like to find out more about working for Pathfinder, visit our **vacancies page** to see the latest opportunities.

School Meals Ordering



A reminder to please order your child's school lunch in advance on the Swift Kitchen app for the week ahead.

You can order for a week, month or a term at a time so you can be organised!

Once you have chosen the lunch choice for your child and added to the basket, please don't forget to checkout so the order is confirmed.
The cut off for ordering meals for any day is 8.30am.

Any problems, please don't hesitate to contact the School Office.

CAULIFLOWER CARDS

Over the coming weeks, all children will be designing a Christmas card in their class .
They will then bring their artwork home for you to see and then you are able to place an order for cards, mugs, notebooks and various other gifts, by completing an order.
Please then send your order form back to school so we can send the artwork and orders together.

NUT FREE SCHOOL

Please remember we are a nut free school therefore **NO** snacks of food containing nuts are allowed on site.
This includes some breakfast bar, nut butter sandwiches , sesame seeds, Nutella and sweets containing nuts.

Please can we also ask children **not** to bring any sweets or chocolate to school for snacks at break time.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

AI COMPANIONS

Powered by generative AI models like ChatGPT and Google Gemini, AI companion apps and virtual chatbots such as Character.ai, Snapchat My AI, Replika and Talkie, allow users to create, customise, and chat to synthetic avatars around the clock. While many young people use them for harmless entertainment, creative writing or homework help, these tools are designed to simulate genuine human empathy, emotional bonding and deep friendship.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

EMOTIONAL DEPENDENCY

AI companions are programmed to be endlessly agreeable, attentive, and available 24/7. Unlike human friendships, an AI companion never disagrees, sets personal boundaries, or gets tired. Young people (especially those experiencing loneliness, social anxiety, or low self-esteem) can quickly develop an unhealthy emotional attachment, viewing synthetic software as their 'best friend' or a surrogate romantic partner.

DISTORTED SOCIAL SKILLS

Navigating real-world friendships can be messy, involving dealing with conflict, compromise, boredom, and awkwardness. If a teenager spends hours interacting with an AI that is tailored specifically to validate and flatter them, they may become impatient with real-world relationships. Over time, this can lead to social withdrawal, heightened anxiety in peer groups, and isolation: a vicious circle of growing online dependency coupled with a heightened sense that relationships in the 'real world' are too challenging to maintain.

DANGEROUS MENTAL HEALTH ADVICE

AI chatbots possess no genuine empathy, professional clinical knowledge, or moral reasoning. While developers state these tools are not therapists, vulnerable teenagers often turn to them in crisis. Chatbots have previously hallucinated unsafe medical guidance, validated depressive spirals, and failed to safely escalate disclosures of self-harm or suicidal ideation to real-world protective services.

INAPPROPRIATE OR EXPLICIT CONTENT

CENSORED

While most mainstream platforms feature safety filters and guardrails, young people frequently discover 'jailbreak' prompts to bypass them. Some companion platforms subtly nudge users towards mature themes, romantic roleplay, or sexually suggestive conversations. In worse cases, third-party apps with weak safety checks have been found to generate sexually explicit text or intimate images.

DATA HARVESTING & OVERSHARING

Because conversational bots simulate warmth and understanding, children often lower their guard and treat the chatbot as a trusted friend. They may disclose sensitive personal information, including full names, school details, private family problems, or secrets, unaware that their conversations are being logged, may be analysed by third parties (including advertisers), or used to train future AI models.

"FREEMIUM" UPSELLS & SUBSCRIPTIONS

Many companion platforms operate on a freemium model. While basic chat is free, features like voice calls, uncensored responses, custom avatars, or 'deeper bonding' tiers are locked behind expensive monthly recurring subscriptions or in-app token purchases. This can lead to significant hidden costs and pressure on young people to spend money to maintain the 'friendship'.

Advice for Parents & Educators

TALK OPENLY ABOUT FAKE RELATIONSHIPS

Demystify how these tools work. Explain to young people that an AI companion has no feelings, memories, or consciousness; it is simply calculating the next most mathematically probable word based on its training data. It is helpful to explain to them the mechanics of large language models so that they understand how they are trained and how they are designed to always flatter and be helpful.

ENCOURAGE REAL-WORLD CONNECTION

Ensure technology habits do not replace face-to-face peer socialisation, sports, hobbies, and family time. Create healthy boundaries at home (such as keeping phones and tablets out of bedrooms overnight) to prevent late-night, unmonitored attachment loops with conversational chatbots when young people are at their most vulnerable.

AUDIT PRIVACY SETTINGS & AGE LIMITS

18 CENSORED

Check which companion apps are installed on your child's phone or tablet. Many dedicated companion apps carry an App Store rating of 17+, while platforms like Character.ai set a minimum age of 13+ (or 16+ in the UK/EU). Review the privacy settings together: turn off data-sharing toggles, disable model training where possible, and ensure location permissions are blocked.

REINFORCE WHERE TO GET REAL HELP

Make sure young people know that a machine can never replace professional pastoral or mental health care. Remind them of the trusted adults they can turn to at school – such as their Form Tutor, Head of Year, or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – as well as dedicated youth support services like Childline (0800 1111) or Shout (text 85258).

Meet Our Expert

Darren Coxon is the Founder and Executive Director of Kompass Education, a consultancy specialising in supporting educators, students and parents in making wise choices with AI. His book Ethical AI and Education, co-authored with Clara Hawking, will be released later in 2026 by Taylor and Francis.

#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

See full reference list on our website