



18th September 2026

Communication - we want to keep you informed!

Following on from the last newsletter, please make sure you read the newsletters as this has key information on for everyday school life. As well as newsletters every other Friday - sent via our app, and posted on our website, we also use Twitter and Facebook to share information and photographs.

Our calendar on the school website is also populated with events that are planned. Check it out, together with lots of other school information at <https://www.clevescrossprimary.org.uk/>

Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/Cleves-Cross-Primary-and-Nursery-School-113446616998921/?modal=admin_todo_tour

Right of the Fortnight



With clubs starting this week and Y5/6 going to Winmarleigh, **Article 31** is most fitting: Children have the right to rest and play and join in a wide range of activities.

Safeguarding Update

Safeguarding our children is at the heart of everything we do at school. As well as sharing Wake up Wednesday posts we will also share other items monthly. We know that many children use a range of sites and social media and it is important that we work together to make sure we are all safe online.

Online Wellbeing - <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/online-wellbeing/>

Facebook - <https://swgfl.org.uk/assets/documents/facebook-checklist.pdf>

Parent Controls - <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/parental-controls/>

National Crime Agency's [CEOP Education Programme](#) provides information for the children's workforce and **parents and carers** on protecting children and young people from online child sexual abuse.

[Childline/IWF Report Remove](#) is a free tool that allows children to report nude or sexual images and/or videos of themselves that they think might have been shared online.



18th September 2026

MacMillan Coffee Morning – Friday 25th September

Just a reminder that our annual coffee morning event is happening next **Friday 25th September**. Please come along and join us if you can. Money raised will go to the Macmillan Cancer Support - I am sure you will agree, a very worthy cause and one very close to our hearts. We look forward to seeing you.

As in previous years, we are still going to give you a time slot to attend as it always gets very busy. **Grown-ups of children in Nursery, Reception and Years 1 and 2 can attend between 9 and 10am and grown-ups of children in KS2 (Years 3-6) can attend between 10 and 11am.** This will hopefully ease some of the congestion in the hall. Grown-ups who have children in both key stages can choose which one they want to attend. Please be patient with us - we will serve you as quickly as possible. All children will have the opportunity to visit the hall for cake, either with parents or with their class, so if you are unable to make it, please just send a monetary donation in with your child and we will make sure they still get the opportunity to take part. As mentioned in previous communications, Mrs Malkin is making the cakes and biscuits for the coffee morning so please do not send in any cakes.

Allergy Safety and Administering Medication

With lots of new guidance and laws coming into school around allergies and administering medication, I want to share information with you to make sure you are aware of the policies and procedures we have to follow and the implications it may have for you and your child.

The Allergy Safety Policy and the Administering Medication Policy are both available on the website in the 'Policies' section.

Hopefully, if your child has an allergy (that is known to us), you have had a meeting with the class teacher to update their health care plan. This includes asthma. Please contact your child's class teacher if you haven't had a meeting.

When administering prescribed medication in school, the medication needs to be labelled and in its original packaging. You will need to complete a form in school and you need to let us know the times your child had their last dose to enable us to give it at the correct times.

There will be times when your child is feeling unwell but will not be prescribed medication and you have been advised to give them over the counter medication. If this is the case, the same rules apply - you will need to complete a form and indicate when they had their last dose. The medication must be clearly labelled with your child's name. If your child feels unwell at school, we will ring and ask if you can bring some medication for them to take. Ideally, non-prescribed medication should be provided by yourselves, not the school. Occasionally, a child will feel unwell at school and we will ring and in the first instance, will ask you to provide medication but if this is not possible, we will, with your consent, give them some of the school's medication.

Following this newsletter, we will be sending out a form on the app for you to consent to us giving your child paracetamol/Calpol if they are unwell at school. We would always contact you first.



18th September 2026

Fencing work to be completed on the yard

This year we have changed our Year 1 classroom and curriculum so that it better reflects our Reception Provision. With these changes, we are creating an outdoor provision that is for Y1. This will be situated next to Reception class. You might have already noticed that some resources are outside and we kindly request that families waiting to collect their children after school do not use or sit on these resources.

We are going to be fencing off this area and the grassed area to the side. This will mean that there will no longer be any access to the yard from the car park side.

We have always asked for everyone to walk round the front of school to access the yard area. This hasn't always been followed and for those of you who were here during Covid, we did have to change our routines slightly which meant that people have started going that way.

From **Monday 28th September**, there will be no access to and from the yard from the car park side. It might be a good idea to start practising your new route from next week if this affects you.

Children in Y1 will then leave school via the gate to their outdoor provision.

Thank you for your support.

Scamps Holiday Club

Unfortunately, due to changes in staff contracts, we are unable to offer the half-term holiday club anymore. I do appreciate that this will be difficult for some families so wanted to give you plenty of notice so you can find alternative arrangements. There are places in Ferryhill who do offer this service.

Reading Expectations

Reading is always a high priority for all our children at school. Being a fluent reader opens up a world of opportunities and ensures they can achieve and succeed in everything they do. Reading does not just take place at school and there is an expectation, as set out in the home school agreement which can be found in your child's reading diary, that they read at home and have their diary signed by an adult, at least 3 times a week.

Please support your child with reading and any other homework they have.



18th September 2026

Starting school in September
2027

Scholastic Book Fair – Tuesday 22nd
September – 28th September



**Do you or someone you know have a
child who is due to start school
September 2027?**

If so, you need to complete an application
online. Visit

www.durham.gov.uk/primaryschoolplaces
where you can access a useful guide to
help with your application. The easiest
way to apply is online. If you are unable
to apply online, paper application forms
are available on request. You still need to
apply even if your child attends our
nursery or already has a sibling at
school.

Applications open 1 September 2026 and
close midnight 15 January 2027.

Application are now open for secondary
school places - all Y6 children must apply
for a place. Deadline for submitting
applications is 31st October.

The Book Fair will take place
every night after school during
this time **until 3.45pm** and it
will be open during the coffee
morning on Friday too. School
does receive free books from
the fair on a commission basis,
so please take a moment to pop
into school to see what is on
offer. Every little helps!

**SEND Coffee Morning –
Wednesday 21st October**

We look forward to hosting
our first SEND coffee
morning of the year on
Wednesday 21st October at
9am.

This is an opportunity to
come along, network with
other parents, and share
some tricks and tips.
Hopefully giving you plenty
of notice will mean you are
able to attend. We look
forward to seeing you for a
coffee, biscuit and natter.



18th September 2026

Dates to remember so far...



September

Tuesday 22nd – Monday 28th – Scholastic Book Fair
Friday 25th – MacMillan Coffee Morning
Tuesday 29th – Individual School Photographs
Wednesday 30th – Football League (Invited Children)

October

Friday 2nd – Cross County, Ferryhill School
Wednesday 7th – Nursery Music & Move at Ferryhill Leisure Centre
Thursday 8th – Reception Class Parent Storytime 2.45pm
Friday 9th – Y6 Parent Storytime in our library 2:45pm
Friday 16th – Y5 Parent Storytime in our library 2:45pm
Tuesday 20th – Nursery Storytime in Nursery 2:30pm
Wednesday 21st – SEND Coffee Morning
Wednesday 21st – Reception Class Harvest Stay and Play 1:30pm
Wednesday 21st – Bright Rainbow Disco's
Thursday 22nd – Nursery Harvest Stay and Play 9:15am
Friday 23rd – Harvest Festival Assemblies 9:15am and 2:30pm
Friday 23rd – School Closes for Half Term

November

Monday 2nd – PD Day School Closed to Children
Tuesday 3rd – Children return to School
Thursday 5th – Reception Class Ferryhill Library Visit
Friday 6th – Y1 Parent Storytime in our library
Monday 9th – Y5 Ferryhill Library Visit
Monday 9th – Friday 13th – Parents evening week
Thursday 12th – Y6 Ferryhill Library Visit
Monday 23rd – Y1 Ferryhill Library Visit

December

Thursday 3rd – Whole School Pantomime Visit

Individual photographs – Tuesday 29th

September

Individual photographs (Nursery to Y6) will take place on **Tuesday 29th September**. Children will be able to have their photographs taken with their siblings in school but unfortunately, we will not be able to have siblings not of school age included in the photographs. Children with siblings will also have an individual photo taken.

Respectful Parking

Just a further reminder about the clearway outside of school. I am really concerned that a number of parents are continuing to park in the clearway despite being reminded not to. It is a clear safeguarding issue and only a matter of time before an accident happens. Unfortunately, because a small number of adults continue to ignore reminders, I will have to take it further and report vehicles to the police. I have got to put the safety and welfare of our children first. I also kindly ask that we are respectful to our neighbours on the bungalow side of school. Thank you for your support.



18th September 2026

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about CHARACTER.AI

Character.AI is an entertainment platform where users create and chat with AI-powered characters. These chatbots can act like existing favourite characters from movies or books, or like friends, mentors, or even romantic partners, responding in an emotional, personally engaging way. Although this can encourage creativity, it can also make a generated conversation feel like a genuine relationship, which is concerning if it takes the place of human relationships.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

AI replies are generated in real time rather than chosen from a fully checked script. Even with safety filters on, conversations can still move into sexual, violent, discriminatory, or self-harm material. These AI characters are often made by users, so a familiar name or child-friendly description does not guarantee that every response from the character will be suitable for a young person.

BLURRED BOUNDARIES

Characters on Character.AI can use the language of friendship, love, and empathy without ever feeling anything. Vulnerable young people may struggle to separate this simulation from genuine understanding. Romantic role-play or a character that demands attention, loyalty, or secrecy could also risk distorting young people's expectations around consent, disagreement, and the give-and-take involved in healthy human relationships.

UNRELIABLE ADVICE

Characters, like other chatbot platforms, are at risk of inventing facts or giving inappropriate advice while sounding completely confident. Characters may also echo a young person's assumptions instead of questioning them. This can become particularly risky when users rely on a character for guidance about health, mental wellbeing, relationships, money, or personal safety instead of checking with a credible source or trusted adult.

EMOTIONAL DEPENDENCY

Character.AI chatbots can appear endlessly attentive, supportive, and affectionate, which is one of the hallmarks of the generative AI models that such companions are built on. A young person may start turning to a character chatbot whenever they feel lonely or upset and believe that it understands them better than the humans in their life. This can become more concerning when chatting starts to replace sleep, schoolwork, hobbies and friendships.

PRIVACY CONCERNS

Character.AI chats may feel private, especially when a bot sounds personal and caring, but they take place on a company's online systems. Users could intentionally or unintentionally reveal their name, school, location, routines, images, or intimate concerns. Character.AI says some data may be retained to improve its services and AI models, so young people should never treat a chatbot like a confidential diary.

UNHEALTHY ENGAGEMENT

Be aware of warning signs such as secret accounts, bypassing age restrictions, hiding phone use from adults, chatting late at night, distress when access to the platform or character stops, withdrawal from other people, falling interest in school, or believing the character is conscious. Increased use may also signal that the young person is already lonely, anxious, or seeking help.

Advice for Parents & Educators

KEEP CONVERSATIONS OPEN

Ask what the young person enjoys about Character.AI and invite them to show you how the platform and their favourite characters work. Useful questions include, "Has it ever said something that felt wrong?" and "How can you tell it doesn't have feelings?" Avoid shaming them for using platforms like Character.AI or making them feel there is something wrong with them for doing so.

PAUSE, CHECK AND ASK

Teach young people to pause before accepting an answer from characters on Character.AI. Encourage them to check important claims against a trustworthy source and ask a safe adult when the issue matters. Never use a character as the sole source of medical, mental health, legal, financial, or safeguarding advice. Remind them not to share passwords, contact details, school information, live locations, or private images.

CHECK AGE, SETTINGS & LIMITS

Character.AI's minimum age is 16 in the UK, but open-ended companion chat is restricted to adults aged 18 or over. Users aged 16 to 17 receive a different experience built around guided 'Stories' and other creative or social features. Check their current settings, never help or encourage a young person to give a false age, and apply the same safety rules to other chatbot apps.

NOTICE AND RESPOND

Take action if chats involve sexual content, threats, coercion, abuse, self-harm or danger. Save relevant evidence, report the character and follow the setting's safeguarding process; educators should involve the designated safeguarding lead. If anyone is in immediate danger, contact emergency services. Childline is available on 0800 1111 and the NSPCC Helpline on 0800 800 5000.

Meet Our Expert

Darren Coxon is an educator with almost 30 years' experience across teaching, school leadership and governance. He works internationally supporting schools and colleges with AI leadership and governance and [insert NC courses I have written].



#WakeUpWednesday[®]

The National College[®]

See full reference list on our website