

Saint John Wall Catholic School

A Catholic School For All



Mission Statement

'To educate each and every unique child in our care to hear and respond to what God calls them to be'



Issue 15

Weekly Information Bulletin

Date: Thursday 19 December 2024



Catholic Life Annual Theme: Pilgrims of Hope on the Path of Peace

Termly Theme: 'Each and every unique child'

Termly Catholic Social Teaching: Dignity

Termly SJW Values: Curious and Active

A Christmas Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,

As we finish for Christmas, we come before You with hearts full of gratitude and joy. We thank You for the gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ, who brought light into the world and offered us the hope of salvation.

As we celebrate His birth, may we reflect on the love, peace, and joy that He brought to the earth. Help us to share that same love with others, to bring peace to troubled hearts, and to spread the joy of Your presence throughout this season and beyond.

We pray for those who are struggling this Christmas—those who are lonely, sick, or in need. May Your comfort surround them and Your provision be evident in their lives. Help us to be a source of encouragement and support to those around us.

Thank You for the blessings of family, friends, and community. We ask for Your continued guidance and protection in the coming year. May we walk in the light of Your love and carry the spirit of Christmas in our hearts each day.

In the name of Jesus, our Savior and King, we pray.

Amen

Dates to Note



- **Christmas Holidays – Pupils to be dismissed from 12.30pm to 12.45pm**
Thursday 19 December 2024
- **Teacher Training Day – School Closed to all Pupils**
Friday 20 December 2024
- **Teacher Training Day – School Closed to all Pupils**
Monday 6 January 2025
- **Teacher Training Day – School Closed to all Pupils**
Tuesday 7 January 2025
- **School Open to all Pupils**
Wednesday 8 January 2025

Have a Happy Christmas



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Message from Chair of Governors



So long, farewell

This is my last report of the term and indeed for 2024. It is also my final one as it is with a heavy heart that I am standing down as a governor at Saint John Wall School.

Having retired from teaching a decade ago I was happy to become a governor at a time when the school was experiencing difficulties. Mr Quinn arrived soon after as Executive Principal accompanied as Head of School by Miss Marston. Many years ago, at the start of his Presidency, JFK said leaders “choose to do things, not because they are easy but because they are hard.” Mr Quinn and Miss Marston together set about making the necessary changes that with the co-operation of our staff and pupils have transformed the school. It has gone on to enjoy its most successful period since being established.

Only a few days ago the government issued details on the performance of all schools in England during the school year 2023-24. The link below will take you to the information regarding Saint John Wall which you will be able to compare with other schools in Birmingham and beyond:

<https://search.app/Rprq4pF9VDuK6xqz7>

It makes very impressive reading and was a similar story last year and the year before that for year-on-year the school continues to excel. Achieving success, however, is one thing sustaining it despite the challenges presented by government interference, financial constraints, staff recruitment and safeguarding not to mention the on-going impact of the COVID pandemic underlines what a remarkable record this is. Many congratulations of course go to our pupils on their astonishing achievements. A huge debt of gratitude is owed to our wonderful staff, past and present, and the support from the children’s parents.

Education is not solely about exam results, however. With all that it does the school continues to bring Jesus Christ closer to the lives of the young people it serves. You’ll have seen for yourselves the many and varied activities that take place in the daily life of the school as shown by the excellent Friday Newsletter issued each week on our superb website.

Six years ago in my first of these articles I wrote: “what a privilege it is to be chair of governors at Saint John Wall School.” It has been and I wish to thank all the governors I’ve worked alongside who have selflessly given of their time and expertise in holding the school to account.

I must mention Mrs Pawar who has been our clerk. Not only has she ensured that as a governing body we have acted legally in fulfilling our responsibilities but has shown enormous patience and wisdom in guiding us through some choppy waters. Also grateful thanks to those members of staff who have attended evening meetings over the years to present countless items keeping governors informed of crucial developments in school and the impact they’ve had. There are too many individuals to name but they know who they are.

Finally, Miss Marston! Even before being appointed as headteacher over five years ago, I’d witnessed at close hand her professionalism and attention to detail. They tell only half the story however. Our most recent Ofsted report stated that: “The school is led with grace, determination and vision.” I’ve often seen determination and vision mentioned in reports by Ofsted as they are vital qualities for any successful school leader. I have never seen the word “grace” mentioned before. Miss Marston is too modest to dwell on such a description but for me and all those who know her she embodies true Catholic leadership.

So that’s it. As Earl Grant once sang: “at the end of a river, the water stops its flow”. I wish yourselves and your families a joyful and peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year and finish, for the last time, with this prayer:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you for the many ways you have blessed us this Christmas. We are grateful for each of those who will gather around our table on Christmas Day. We ask you to bless us and our food and to bless those we love who will not be with us on your Special Day. In our gratitude and love, we remember your humble birth into our lives and pray for those who are without enough to eat. We remember the stable in which you were born and pray for those who have no place to live. We remember your challenging message of caring and giving and we pray for peace in families and nations throughout the world. We bless you and give you thanks in your Spirit who brings our hearts to life this Christmas Day and forever. Amen.

Saint John Wall, pray for us.

By Martin Jones



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Message from Headteacher



We have a number of staff leaving us this Christmas. Mr Di Mattia is returning to Italy, Mr Bakshi is moving to another school, and Mr Patel is going to work outside of education. I would like to thank them all for their service to our school, and wish them all the best for the future.

In addition, Mr Jones, our Chair of Governors will be ending his term of office with us. Mr Jones has volunteered many hours of his time to help make Saint John Wall the successful school it is today. Mr Jones worked as a school leader in a number of Catholic Schools before retiring and then taking on the role of Chair of Governors. Mr Jones has dedicated over ten years to the role of Chair, and in that time he has been a true champion of the staff and pupils. Mr Jones has seen us through two successful Ofsted inspections, and two Catholic Schools Inspections. He has provided support, challenge and rigour for leaders in the school and held us to account to ensure that we fulfil the school's mission 'to educate each and every unique child in our care to hear and respond to what God calls them to be'. It has been a privilege to have shared in his wisdom and guidance over the years, and it is difficult to put into words how grateful we are. Thankyou Mr Jones, and all the best for the future.

By Miss Marston

Christmas Card Competition

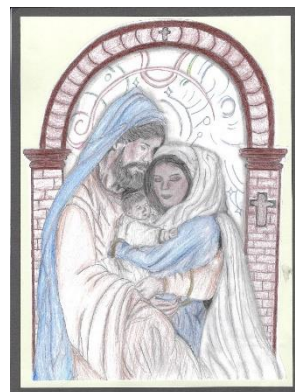


Well done to all the pupils who entered the Christmas Card competition, you have all received 20 house points!

Congratulations to our winners, Diya Chana 11MUH and Priya Chem 10TOW for winning the competition. They have received 50 house points as well as their designs featuring on our official school postcard which was delivered to our local community this morning.



By Diya Chana 11MUH



By Priya Chem 10TOW

Attendance and Punctuality Prize Draw



The winners of the attendance and punctuality prize draw were announced on Thursday 19 December. All pupils with 100% attendance and no lates this term were entered into a name selector wheel and the following pupils were selected at random:

1st Prize - Sunny Atobrhan 8HEA - Amazon Kindle

2nd Prize - Jose Malundama 11JON - £20 Amazon Voucher

3rd Prize - Jaspreet Sheemar 7BRK - £10 Amazon Voucher

Congratulations to you all!

By Miss Lally

ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY PRIZE DRAW

We will be doing a prize draw on Thursday 19 December for 100% attendance and punctuality this term!

WIN THE GRAND PRIZES!

1st	2nd	3rd
Amazon Kindle	£20 Amazon Voucher	£10 Amazon Voucher



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Jolly Jumper Day

Wednesday 18 December 2024



We celebrated our annual Jolly Jumper Day on Wednesday, focusing on pupil and staff wellbeing. Whilst anyone could come to school wearing their Christmas jumper, we thought it was important to raise the importance of being comfortable in your own individuality. This meant that pupils and staff could wear any jumper that made them feel good about themselves. Some pupils and staff also brought in donations which will be given to Birmingham Mind and Saint Augustine's Catholic Church. We raised £63.50 **By Mr Price**

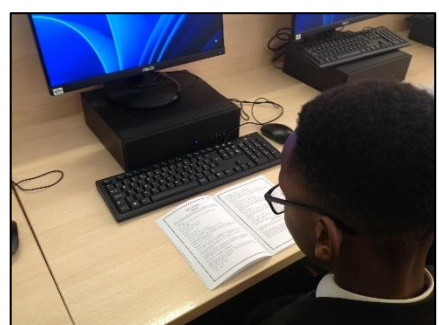
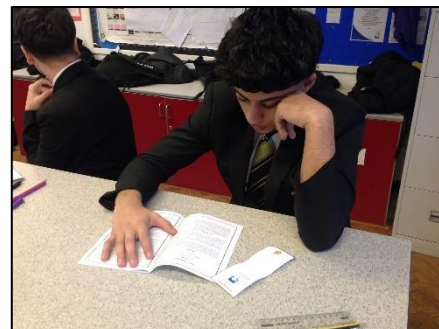
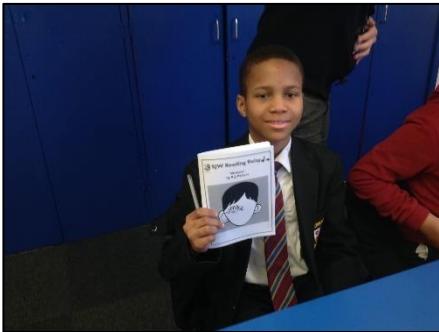
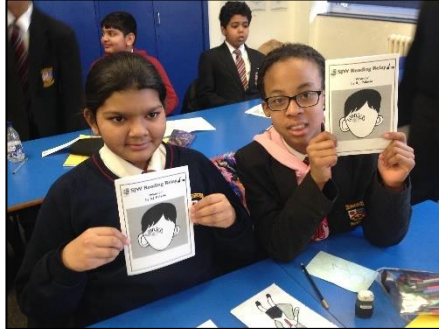




Reading Relay

Wednesday 18 December 2024

This week, Years 7 and 9 participated in a "Reading Relay," where throughout the day, every subject teacher read parts of *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio at the start of each lesson with the pupils. By the end of the day, they had completed the entire book and engaged in meaningful discussions. The themes of individuality, courage, kindness, and acceptance resonated deeply with the pupils, sparking insightful conversations. The event was a great success, showcasing the power of literature to inspire and educate. Well done to all the pupils for their enthusiastic participation! **By Miss Hashmi**



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Kenelm Youth Trust

Wednesday 18 December 2024

Our Year 8's had a lovely day with the Kenelm Youth Trust on Wednesday, taking part in their outreach programme which helped deepen their understanding of Catholic Social Teachings. The day began with a short reflection, games and hymn practice. Pupils then took part in a variety of sessions on a carousel, these sessions focused on:

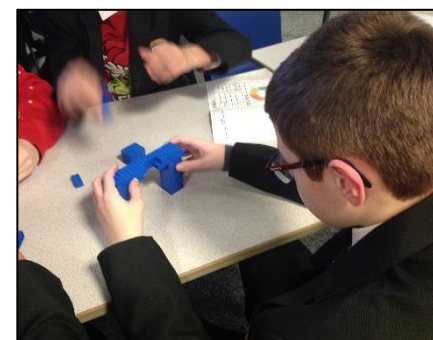
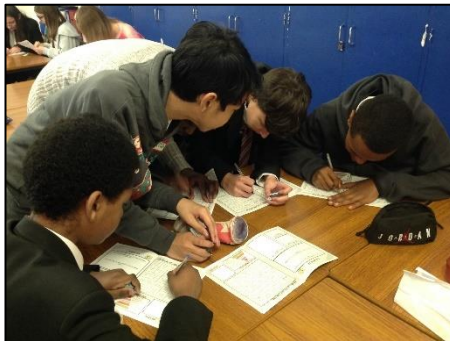
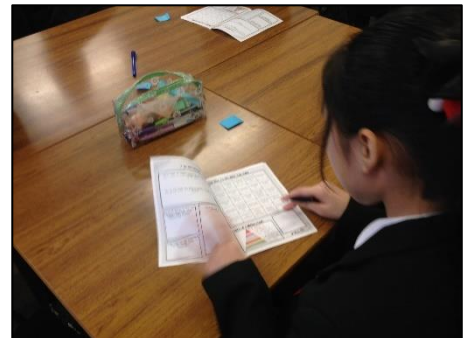
'Who am I' - An exploration and sharing of "who I am" Looking at levels of communication and how we can deepen friendships.

'On the move' - An opportunity to reflect and learn about the experiences of people seeking sanctuary in our country. It is more important than ever to raise our voices and put our faith into action.

'Bridge building' - An exploration of teamwork and team roles and the importance Christ plays in this.

'I belong' - An arts and crafts session delving into our unique identity in Christ and our place in the world.

A huge thank you to the Kenelm Youth Trust, Saint John Wall staff for their support and well done to Year 8 who were praised for their excellent attentive behaviour. **By Mr Price**



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Christmas Showcase

Wednesday 18 December 2024

On Wednesday, the Music Department put on a Christmas Showcase to finish off this term! This was an opportunity for pupils who take part in instrument lessons to showcase their talents and progress on their chosen instruments to parents, carers and the whole school. It was so amazing to see all the pupils performing so proudly especially on the new staging which enhanced the performances even further. Thank you to all the pupils who practised so hard for this as well as the instrument teachers for their constant support and all the parents who came to watch and brought on the Christmas Spirit. Our next showcase using the new staging will be Aladdin in Summer 2025, the Performing Arts department looks forward to seeing you there. **By Miss Antonucci**



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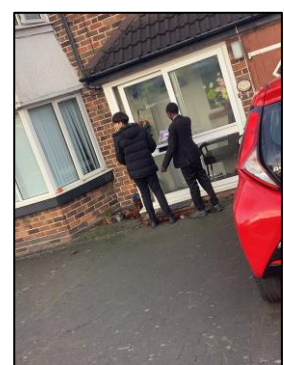
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Christmas Community Card Delivery Thursday 19 December 2024



On Thursday, we completed our annual Christmas Card delivery to our neighbours in the local area. Throughout the term, we have been praying for our local roads and community during our afternoon prayer. Pupils have had the opportunity to nominate their road or another local road in the area. We value our neighbours and work closely with them to keep the local area safe. Here are some photos from our card deliveries: **By Mr Price**

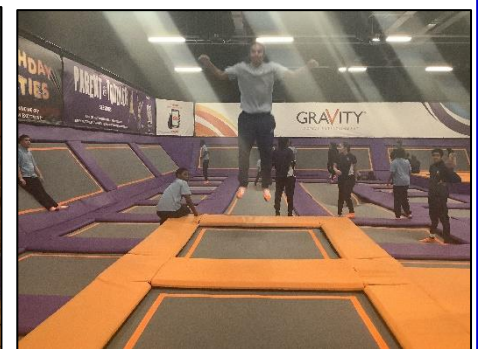
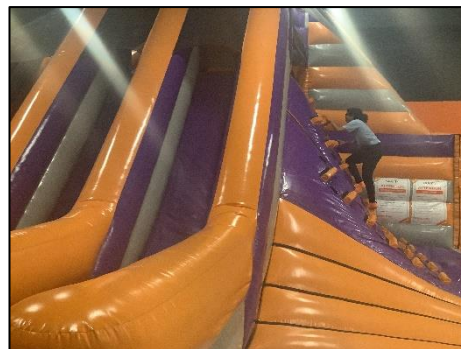
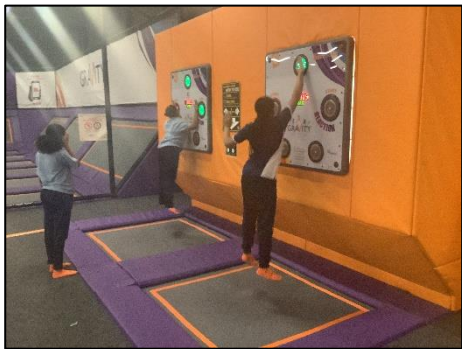




Year 11 Trip to 'Gravity' Star City Thursday 19 December 2024

We had the pleasure of taking Year 11 to gravity (Star City) as a reward for their hard work in the autumn term and in their mock 1. The pupils were fantastic ambassadors for the school and fun time was had by all. This provided a reset point for the pupils as they begin to prepare for their 2nd set of mocks in February. #limitless

By Mr Holder



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Carol Service Thursday 19 December 2024

On Thursday, pupils in Year 7 and Year 8 ended this term with a Carol Service in the hall. Pupils reflected on Advent being an invitation to us all, thought about the items they had donated to local charities and listened to some bible reading of the Advent story – whilst singing some carols in between. Thank you to pupils in Year 7 and Year 8 for their hard work over the past few weeks with practising for carols for today's service. Thank you also to Miss Antonucci, Mrs Crooks and Mrs Ellis for rehearsing with the pupils during Weekly Worship and lessons. A big well done to our readers who read during the service too.

By Mr Lysaght



Christmas Service Thursday 19 December 2024

On Thursday, Year 9 and 10 ended the term with a service focusing on our theme for the year, 'Pilgrims of Hope on the Path of Peace'. Pupils were able to reflect on their own personal hopes and how they can be a source of hope in our world today. They reflected on the Advent story, thinking about how they can open their hearts to those who need it most. Thank you to all pupils for their excellent behaviour, especially during the moments of being given some chocolate treats. A big well done to our readers who read during the service too.

By Mr Lysaght



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Christmas House Competition



Year 7 – Nativity Scene

Celebrating Creativity, Faith, and Sustainability: A Successful House Competition

This half term, our school community came together for another successful house competition, showcasing the creativity and dedication of our pupils through meaningful festive projects.

Pupils from different year groups took on unique challenges inspired by the Catholic faith, highlighting key symbols of the Christmas season:

Year 7 built **Nativity Scenes**, offering touching representations of the birth of Jesus Christ. Their work beautifully reflected the humility and love at the heart of the Christmas story.

Year 8 created **Jesse Trees**, symbolizing Jesus' ancestry and connecting significant Biblical figures leading up to His birth.

Year 9 designed thoughtful **Advent Calendars**, complete with daily messages and reflections to help us prepare spiritually for Christmas.

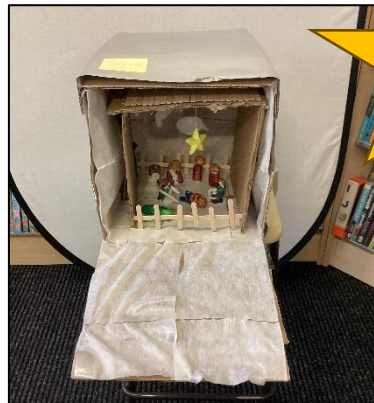
Year 10 constructed **Sustainable Christmas Trees**, combining traditional decorations with eco-friendly materials to emphasise our role as stewards of God's creation.

These activities provided a wonderful opportunity for pupils to deepen their understanding of meaningful Catholic symbols while fostering creativity, teamwork, and reflection.

The festive projects have brought our community closer together, encouraging us all to celebrate this special season with faith, creativity, and a commitment to sustainability. Congratulations to all our pupils for their inspiring efforts and contributions, this truly has been a competition to remember!

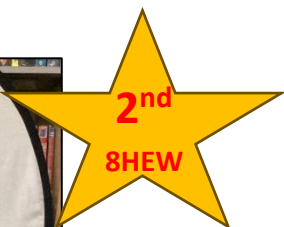
See our winners and pictures of each entry from forms in Year 7 through to 10. Well done to all the hard work, effort and dedication from both form tutors and our pupils this half term, on the Christmas House competition.

By Miss Young



Year 8 – Jesse Tree

Year 9 – Advent Calendar



Year 10 – Sustainable Christmas Tree



Rewards Week



Celebrating Success and Looking Ahead!

This week marked an incredible celebration of our pupils' achievements during **Rewards Week!** 🎉 A total of **424 rewards** were collected, showcasing the hard work and dedication of our pupils. Since August, an impressive **48,290 points** have been spent, reflecting the enthusiasm for recognizing and rewarding positive behaviour and accomplishments.

We also celebrated pupils' outstanding achievements across **House, attendance, and enrichment** this half term. It was heartwarming to witness the supportive atmosphere as pupils cheered on and encouraged their peers while they received their well-deserved awards. The spirit of teamwork and positivity was truly inspiring!

Looking ahead, we're excited to announce that the **next Rewards Week will take place from 10th–14th February**. To make it even better, we'll be sending out a survey soon to gather your ideas for prizes. This is your chance to have your say and help us make the next Rewards Week even more special!

Let's keep up the fantastic work!

By Miss Young





Interventions

We are thrilled to see such positive outcomes from our SEND support sessions this term. Attendance has been strong across a range of interventions, each designed to target specific needs: personalised reading sessions, structured literacy programmes, and group-based reading discussions. These interventions not only help improve reading skills and phonics but also build confidence, social interaction, and communication skills. See below some of the interventions we have and what impact they have.

Lexia Form Time

A structured literacy programme focusing on phonics, word recognition, and reading comprehension, helping to build fundamental reading skills.

Dyslexia Gold Form Time

Specialist support for students with dyslexia, enhancing reading, spelling, and memory skills through tailored activities.

Reciprocal Reading

Group reading sessions that promote discussion, critical thinking, and comprehension through peer interaction and guided strategies

Language for Behaviour and Emotion

Sessions designed to improve communication skills and emotional regulation, supporting students in expressing themselves positively.

Midpoint assessments show that regular attendance leads to noticeable progress, with students making gains in literacy, behaviour, and emotional regulation. The enthusiasm and dedication of our students have been inspiring, and it's wonderful to see their hard work paying off.

Thank you to all the staff and students for their commitment to these sessions. Let's continue this excellent progress as we move forward!

Stars

Ameliah Raj-Sawyers 9RAH - For effort and achievement in completing her intervention reading homework.

Remaya Headley-Clarke 8BRS - Showing effort by attending her phonics intervention and trying her best.

Jayda Corbett-Brooks 7PHA - Attendance and perseverance. Dyslexia Gold

Nigel Mthinsi 10BAK - Lexia Attendance and good attitude to learning.

Harjot Singh 9RAH - Lexia Attendance and good attitude to learning.

Isaac Masamuna 9LEV - Trying really hard and remembering to attend Helping hands intervention.

David Oye 8HEA - for his improvement and attitude in Lexia.

Valentina Opoku 10BRO - for her continued brilliance and enthusiasm in Lexia.

Jennifer Pham 7MAV - for her fantastic attitude towards her maths intervention.

Aftanna Bargil 7BRK - for her fantastic attitude towards her maths intervention.

By Mr Esmaili





UK Health
Security
Agency

Winter infections in children – guidance for parents/guardians

This leaflet gives advice on illnesses that are currently affecting nursery and primary school children across the West Midlands

What are the symptoms?

There are two groups of symptoms:

- Diarrhoea and vomiting – usually lasting 1-2 days
- Fever, tiredness, runny nose, cough and sore throat – lasting 3-4 days

What should I do if my child is unwell?

- If your child has diarrhoea and/or vomiting symptoms, they should not attend nursery/school until they have been symptom free for 48 hours
- If your child has a high temperature and is unwell, it is very important they stay at home and don't attend school until they have recovered. Children with mild symptoms like runny nose, sore throat, or mild cough, who are otherwise well, can continue to attend school.
- Ensure they drink plenty of fluids – taking sips rather than gulps, to avoid vomiting
- If they have a fever – give child paracetamol and/or ibuprofen, according to manufacturer's instructions. Your pharmacist can also advise you about the best treatment for your child
- If your child is unusually sleepy, can't take fluids or has other symptoms, such as an unusual rash, headache or neck stiffness – **seek medical advice immediately**

Infection control advice

Handwashing is one of the most important ways to prevent the spread of both of these infections. This applies to the child who is ill and the person caring for them. Hands should be washed using soap and rinsed under running water:

- Before and after caring for the child
- After using the toilet
- Before eating, preparing or handling food
- After cleaning up spills (vomit, diarrhoea or urine)
- Also – keep a separate towel for each family member who has symptoms, and change them regularly
- Dry hands thoroughly

Other control measures:

- Cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, using a tissue if possible – dispose of used tissues immediately and wash hands
- Wash soiled clothing, bed linen and towels at 60°C, using detergent – if possible, wear disposable gloves to handle contaminated items
- Surfaces and touch points (taps, toilet flush handle, door handles) should be cleaned then disinfected with bleach-based cleaner
- Check that your child is up to date with their [NHS vaccinations schedule](#)

For further information, visit [NHS.uk](#) and search for 'respiratory infections' and 'diarrhoea and vomiting'



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Protect yourself and your loved ones from the flu, Covid-19, and Norovirus this winter

As we approach the festive season and face colder winter weather, it's important to prioritise the following measures that protect you and your families from the flu, Covid-19, and Norovirus.

Are you to up to date with your vaccines?

This winter, vaccinations are being offered free of charge to those most at risk of getting seriously ill from the flu and/or Covid-19.

To learn more about the **flu vaccine**, including who is eligible, how to book an appointment, and local pharmacy locations, please visit www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/flu-vaccine.

NOTE: If you are not eligible for the free flu vaccine, you can still get vaccinated. Please contact your local pharmacy directly for more information and be aware that there will most likely be a cost associated with this.

To learn more about the **Covid-19 vaccine**, including who is eligible, how to book an appointment, or walk-in vaccination sites, please visit www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/covid-19-vaccine. Keep in mind that you do not need to wait for an invitation before booking an appointment.

Do you know how to stay safe from the winter vomiting bug?

Norovirus, also called the "winter vomiting bug", is a stomach bug that causes vomiting and diarrhoea. It can be very unpleasant, but usually goes away in about 2 days.

To protect yourself and your loved ones from Norovirus this winter, make sure to

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water. Alcohol hand gels do not kill norovirus!
- Stay off school or work until you have not been sick for 2 days
- Rest and have lots of fluids to avoid dehydration

To learn more about Norovirus, including when to seek advice or medical attention, please visit www.nhs.uk/conditions/norovirus/.



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(AGED 11-14)

TUESDAYS 18:30-20:00
Female-led coaching and
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BOYS
(AGED 11-14)

SUNDAYS 10:30-12:00
Coaching structure built
from current men's players!

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CONTACT JORDAN HARRISON
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