



St Leonard's Catholic Primary School

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Newsletter no. 1

5th September, 2025

Dear parents and carers,

What a great start we have had to our new school year. Our new Reception children have settled in beautifully and all of our returning children have quickly adapted to their new classrooms. If I haven't spoken to you already, I hope you have had a wonderful Summer break and enjoyed the time with your families.

Dates

I shared some dates with you yesterday, and already there are changes! A letter is coming home tonight about afterschool clubs being ran this half term and how you can secure your child a place. Please note, the multi-sport club places will be allocated to the first 30 responses and the football will be by invitation only following the trials next week; there is no charge for the trials but do need a tick to show your child will attend them. In the coming days, further details of important dates for the whole Autumn term will be shared to give you plenty of notice for events that you may want to attend.

Parking

Parking is always an issue at St Leonard's and I ask that you carefully consider the whole community and the safety of our children when parking to drop off or pick up your child. As a school, we will be recording the number plates of cars that are parked illegally or dangerously and will hand out leaflets around the fines that could be incurred. Also, the Local Authority are to send Enforcement Officers around regularly to monitor the situation – so please park thoughtfully. Parents are not allowed to park on the white 'zig-zag' lines next to the crossing patrol, on pavements or in front of the Residential Care Home's entrance. There are streets behind Tunstall Village Road with a cut that brings you through to the school – but again, don't park over residents' drives please. I am very proud of the relationship that we have built with our residents and keen to keep this.

Attendance

As always, I will begin the year by 'bleating on' about how important it is that your child is in school and on time every day. Statistics show that missing even a few sessions each year will soon amount to a significant level of missed educations that will often never be caught up. You may have heard on the news recently how Bridget Phillipson MP – Secretary for State for Education – has shared statistics from 2024 that show that a child who misses time in the first week of term is likely to become 'persistently absent' compared to peers who attended the full week. Often the cause of absence is unauthorised holidays. Please note that holidays will NEVER be authorised, regardless of the purpose or reason for the trip, and penalty notices will be issued. Please see the attached leaflet for more information.

Great North Run

St Leonard's has staff members and pupils running the Great North Run and Junior Great North Run on Sunday and we wish them all the very best of luck. If you are also taking part in this wonderful race, we wish you a fast and safe run. For those of you watching it, like me, enjoy the amazing sites and sounds that are synonymous with this iconic half marathon.

Whatever you are doing this weekend, have a lovely time and enjoy the last of the Summer sunshine while you can. Happy Weekend!

Dionne Dunn
Headteacher

Think before you park outside schools

Pick-up and drop-off times are busy outside schools. This can cause an increased safety risk to both children and parents.

Parking restrictions outside schools are there to keep you and your children safe. Parking inconsiderately can put children in danger and you also run the risk of being issued with a Penalty Charge Notice.



Parking restrictions

Outside school entrances there are yellow zigzag markings with the writing 'School Keep Clear'.

You **MUST NOT** wait, park or stop to drop off and pick up your child on these school entrance markings.

The markings are there for a reason, to show the areas that must be kept clear so that children and other road users can see clearly when crossing the road.



Penalty Charge Notices

The council's road safety vehicle regularly monitors parking outside schools, particularly at school starting and finishing times. We will issue drivers with a penalty charge notice (PCN) for waiting, stopping, or parking on yellow zigzags.

Safety tips for parking outside schools

When picking up or dropping off children at schools, you should do the following:

- Allow yourself plenty of time as the area is likely to be busy
- Do not park on yellow zigzag lines and avoid parking opposite them
- Be considerate of local residents and avoid blocking driveways or access ways
- Where possible, walk your child to school instead of driving

Fixed Penalty Notices for irregular attendance at school

Important information for parents

1 OVERVIEW

Regular school attendance is vital for children to reach their full potential. If your child is absent for any reason, it is important that you communicate fully with the school. However new national guidance is to be implemented from September to manage irregular attendance at school.

Penalty notices are issued as an alternative to prosecution where parents have failed to ensure their child attends school regularly. They can be used in cases where absence has not been authorised by a head teacher and can be in respect of any unauthorised absence, irrespective of reason.

The notices are used to prevent the need for court action, for example, when support has not been engaged with or is not appropriate (for example, leave of absence during term time).

Changes from September 2024 are shown →

2 LEAVE

Head Teachers are unable to grant leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**.

Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation **would not** constitute an exceptional circumstance.

3 ABSENCE

A Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued if there are **5 days / 10 sessions** of absence in a period of **10 school weeks** (where absence has not been authorised).

A notice may be issued where the 5-day level of consecutive absence has not been reached, for example, if there are several periods of leave.

4 AMOUNT

The first penalty notice is **£160** if paid within 28 days, reduced to **£80** if paid within 21 days.

A second penalty notice is **£160** to be paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued.

Legal action may result (for example, prosecution).

5 FAQ'S

For further information please see Sunderland City Council website page on school attendance:

<https://www.sunderland.gov.uk/>

Or DfE Working together to improve school attendance document:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

