



# Weekly Newsletter

## St. Teresa's Catholic Primary School



The School is a charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales. Registered number 8111345.

2<sup>nd</sup> Half Spring Term 2026 – Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2026

### TERM DATES 2025 – 2026

#### SPRING TERM 2026

##### Easter Holidays 2026:

Return on: Mon 13<sup>th</sup> April

*Friday 1<sup>st</sup> May is a non-pupil day  
Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May is a Bank Holiday*

##### Year 6 SATS Week:

*Mon 11<sup>th</sup> – Thurs 14<sup>th</sup> May 2026*

##### May Half Term 2026:

Break up: Thurs 21<sup>st</sup> May  
*Fri 22<sup>nd</sup> May is a non-pupil day*  
Return on: Mon 1<sup>st</sup> June

##### Summer Holidays 2026:

Break up: Fri 17<sup>th</sup> July at 2.30 pm  
**No wraparound care on this day**  
*Mon 20<sup>th</sup> July is a non-pupil day*

### TERM DATES 2026 – 2027

#### September 2026:

Return on: Thurs 3<sup>rd</sup> Sept  
*Tues 1<sup>st</sup> is a non-pupil day  
Weds 2<sup>nd</sup> is a non-pupil day*

#### October Half Term 2026:

Break up: Fri 23<sup>rd</sup> October  
Return on: Mon 2<sup>nd</sup> November

#### Christmas Holidays 2026-27

Break up: Fri 18<sup>th</sup> December at 2.30pm  
Return on: Tues 5<sup>th</sup> January  
*Monday 4<sup>th</sup> Jan is a non-pupil day*

#### February Half Term 2027:

Break up: Fri 12<sup>th</sup> February  
Return on: Mon 22<sup>nd</sup> February

#### Easter Holidays 2027:

Break up: Thu 25<sup>th</sup> March at 2.30pm  
Return on: Mon 12<sup>th</sup> April

*Friday 30<sup>th</sup> April is a non-pupil day  
Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> May is a Bank Holiday*

#### May Half Term 2027:

Break up: Thurs 27<sup>th</sup> May  
Return on: Mon 7<sup>th</sup> June

*Fri 28<sup>th</sup> May is a non-pupil day*

#### Summer Holidays 2027:

Break up: Weds 21<sup>st</sup> July at 2.30 pm

Please note that after-school wrap-around care will **not** be available on the following dates:

**Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

(last day of term - early finish)

**Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2026**

(last day of term - early finish)

#### Forthcoming Trips / Visits:

Wed 17<sup>th</sup> June  
Y6 Theatre Trip

Dear Parents, Carers and Friends

This week has been truly prayerful and reflective, as we have journeyed together through the events of Holy Week. Each day, our collective worship has been beautifully led by different classes, helping us to walk in Jesus' footsteps, from the joy of Palm Sunday, through the humility of the Last Supper, to the sorrow and love shown on the cross.



Thank you to all parents and carers who were able to join us during the week, your presence always adds something special to these moments of shared faith. Our week culminated this afternoon in a whole-school Stations of the Cross, led so reverently by year 5 and 6. It was a moving opportunity to pause, reflect and pray together. As part of our Lenten commitment to prayer, fasting and almsgiving, our Big Lent Walk raised a fantastic £200 for CAFOD. This is a wonderful example of our children putting faith into action, supporting those most in need and truly living out Catholic Social Teaching.

A true highlight of the week for many has been the Year 4 production, supported so beautifully by Year 3. It was, quite simply, delightful. The children performed with such confidence and joy, and the quality of their singing, particularly singing in parts, was exceptional and a real testament to their hard work. What appeared to be an effortless performance was clearly the result of tremendous dedication behind the scenes. A special thank you must go to Mr Rees, whose commitment and care gave the children such a memorable and enriching experience.

Year 3 also enjoyed a fantastic trip to Colchester Castle this week, which I was delighted to accompany. The staff there were genuinely blown away by the children's knowledge and enthusiasm, something that was of course music to my ears!

It has been lovely to welcome Ms Garton back into school this week as she begins to 'keep her toes in' during her maternity leave. The children were thrilled to see her, and it has been a joy to have her back with us, even for a short while.

As part of our Lenten preparation, we were grateful to Father Matthias for leading the Sacrament of Reconciliation for our pupils. This is always a special and important opportunity for reflection, forgiveness and renewal as we prepare our hearts for Easter.

We also enjoyed a wonderful Year 5 stargazing evening, my thanks to Mrs Heron for organising above and beyond, such a special event!

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge that it has been quite a term! From burst pipes and unexpected site challenges to waves of chicken pox making their way through the school, there have certainly been moments that have tested us, alongside periods of staff absence which have required flexibility and teamwork. Yet, through it all, our community has shown such resilience, patience and kindness. I am incredibly grateful to our staff, who have gone tirelessly above and beyond, and to you as families for your understanding and support. This term has certainly reminded me of the strength of our St Teresa's family and what a privilege is it to lead such a special community.

As we reach the end of term and the end of our Lenten journey together, we now look forward with hope to the joy of Easter Sunday.

Have a magical holiday, I look forward to welcoming the children back to school on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April, in their summer uniform.

God bless, Mrs Maguire

## Attendance Data

94% and below

94 - 97%

97% and above



	Last week %	This week %
Reception	88.57	85.4
Year 1	98	94.0
Year 2	82	84.7
Year 3	93.75	98.7
Year 4	95.63	94.4
Year 5	94.69	95.3
Year 6	95.63	95.2
Whole School total:	92.73	92.91



Well done to Year 3 for highest attendance this week!

Our usual termly attendance update letters have been shared with families. We do recognise that, for some, recent cases of chicken pox may have impacted attendance and led to a dip from previously strong levels. However, it remains our duty to keep parents informed, and this includes writing to families where attendance falls below 90%, in line with the government's threshold for persistent absenteeism.



### Menus

#### Lunch Menu

Next week is **Week 3**

#### Wraparound Menu

Next week is **Week 3**

#### Nursery Snack Menu

Next week is **Week 3**



Please visit the school website to view the menus:

<https://www.st-teresas.essex.sch.uk/page/?title=Menus&pid=72>

### Breakfast Club

Early Bird Breakfast club starts at 7.30am with food served until 8.30am.

Please note that the price will increase by 10p per session from 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026.

Universal Free Breakfast Club opens at 8:15am with children escorted to class up till 8.45am

#### Breakfast club



### School Meals

The dinner menus are available on the school website and via Seesaw



### After School Club - 3.15 - 6.00pm

Places for the after-school club must be booked via your child's ParentPay account (or by contacting the office for nursery children).

The cost is £9 per child per session YR - Y6

£16.50 per nursery child per full session and £8.25 per nursery child per half session

Please note that prices will increase by £1 per session from 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026.



Remember to check Seesaw and the website for useful information, letters and dates!

*We are occasionally asked to promote activities/clubs etc. from local groups. Such activities are not quality assured by the school and parents should be aware of the need to reassure themselves of the quality and safety of the services on offer, for example by visiting, looking at inspection reports etc.*

# CAFOD: THE BIG LENTEN WALK

The children had a wonderful time participating in the big lent walk.  
Thank you for all your support of this worthwhile charity!



# SPORTING SUCCESS!

WELL DONE TO OUR NETBALL TEAM WHO WON AGAINST HEATHLANDS ON FRIDAY. IT WAS AN EXCEPTIONALLY TIGHT MATCH! ST TERESA'S WERE DOWN 7-3 IN THE THIRD QUARTER BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP THEM! THEY WORKED EXCELLENTLY AS A TEAM, CHEERED EACH OTHER ON AND SCORED 4 GOALS IN THE FINAL QUARTER. WHAT A MATCH. WELL DONE TO CHRISTOPHER AS PLAYER OF THE MATCH.



PIC•COLLAGE

### Free School Meals Eligibility

As a school we are registered with the London Grid for Learning (LGfL). They provide a service called the LGfL FSM Checker, which allows any parent or school in England to use the system completely free of charge to check if their child is eligible for Free School Meals (FSM). Eligible children receive a free school meal, and schools get the funding they need. This funding helps provide additional resources and support to improve education for all pupils.

Parents, or schools acting on their behalf, simply enter a few basic details online. The system securely checks with the Department for Education (DfE) and gives an instant “eligible” or “not eligible” response. There are no paper forms, and you only need to apply once.

Schools can recheck eligibility and manage applications at any time using a secure portal. The LGfL FSM Checker has helped schools identify millions in funding. It could help your school too, completely free!

Please use the following link to check eligibility for your child <https://fsm.lgfl.net/>

### St Teresa's Church First Holy Communion programme 2025/6

Sessions - 9.15am - 10.45 am St. Teresa's school (pick up from the church)

#### Communion

21/3/26- We share the bread of life

25/4/26 - Retreat 10 -2pm (children to bring a packed lunch) -

16/5/26 - Reconciliation session - times to be advised

#### First Holy communion rehearsal

Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2026

6.00pm -Group 1      7.00pm-Group 2

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2026 First Holy Communion service -11am and 2pm

Going Forth Mass - June 14<sup>th</sup> @ 9.00am



### Class / Year 6 Leavers' Photographs - Advance Notice



Please be aware that the photographer will be visiting school on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April to take the class group photographs. Please can you ensure that your child has their cardigan / jumper with them on that day.

He will also be taking the special Year 6 Leavers' photograph on the same day. Children in Year 6 are invited to bring in an item that represents their hobby / interests for the photo. Thank you.

Our next SEND tea/coffee session will be on April 22<sup>nd</sup>

April 22<sup>nd</sup> 1:30 – 3pm

Visiting guest from SPACE.


They will deliver a brief introduction about their services followed by an informal Q&A with and parents.

They welcome any questions related to all aspects of SEND.

**SPACE offers free support to families of children and young people with SEND.**

Delivered by peer educators - all parents and carers with lived experience.

Get support your way:

 in person - meet us at Local Offer roadshows, coffee mornings, and community events

**\*\* There will be a focus on 'transition' during this session.\*\***



# SPOTLIGHT ON SAFEGUARDING

WORKING TOGETHER TO KEEP OUR YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE

Primary | April 2026. In this issue: Navigating the news online | Delaying social media

## Talking to children about what's happening in the world

Many of the events happening around the world are discussed frequently in the news and on social media. Even if adults try to shield children from it, they often pick up snippets of conversations, headlines or comments from other children. Because of this, children may already have partial information, misunderstandings or worries that they have not shared.

For primary-aged children, it is usually better that the trusted adults in their lives help them make sense of what they are hearing. When parents and carers talk openly and calmly about world events, it helps children feel safe, supported and able to ask questions. The goal is not to give lots of detail or expose children to distressing information. Instead, it is about helping them understand the basics, reassuring them that they are safe and reminding them that many people are working hard to help.

### HOW PARENTS AND CARERS CAN APPROACH THE CONVERSATION

#### START BY LISTENING

Ask what your child has already heard. This helps you understand their level of knowledge and whether they are worried about something specific.

#### KEEP EXPLANATIONS SIMPLE AND FACTUAL

Use clear language and avoid too many details. Answer the question they asked rather than giving long explanations.

#### OFFER REASSURANCE

Remind children that they are safe and that many adults, leaders, helpers and communities are working to solve problems and keep people safe.

#### FOCUS ON HELPERS AND POSITIVE ACTIONS

Children find comfort in knowing that people help each other in difficult situations.

#### FOLLOW YOUR CHILD'S LEAD

Some children will want to ask lots of questions; others may only want a brief explanation. Both responses are normal.

## CONVERSATION STARTERS YOU COULD USE

Parents/carers sometimes find it difficult to know how to begin these discussions. The following questions and sentence starters can help open the door.

- 1 "Have you heard anyone talking about what's happening in the news lately?"
- 2 "What have you heard about what's going on in the world at the moment?"
- 3 "How did that make you feel when you heard about it?"  
"Do you have any questions about it?"
- 4 "Sometimes the news can sound a bit scary. If you ever hear something that worries you, you can always talk to me about it."
- 5 "There are lots of people working very hard to help others and make things better."

### Why these conversations matter

Talking about world events in a calm and supportive way can help children to:

- feel safe and reassured by hearing information from a trusted adult
- correct misunderstandings they may have picked up from others
- develop emotional awareness by talking about feelings and worries
- build resilience and empathy by learning how people help each other during difficult times.

When children are not given opportunities to talk, they sometimes fill in the gaps with their imagination, which can make things feel scarier than they really are.

### Top tip: Use child-friendly news

- If your child is interested in finding out more, it can help to use news sources designed specifically for children. Programmes such as BBC Newsround explain current events in a clear, age-appropriate way that avoids unnecessary distress.

# SPOTLIGHT ON SAFEGUARDING

## Why social media isn't appropriate for primary-aged children

Many children become curious about social media while they are still in primary school. They may hear friends talking about it, see older siblings using it or ask for accounts themselves. While this curiosity is completely natural, most social media platforms are designed for teenagers and adults, not younger children.

Popular social media platforms, such as **TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube**, set a minimum age of 13 for creating an account. These limits are largely linked to online data and advertising regulations rather than a guarantee that the platforms are suitable for young children and teenagers.

In reality, many of the conversations, videos and images shared on these platforms are created by and for older teenagers and adults. This means children may easily come across content, language or ideas that are confusing, upsetting or simply not appropriate for their age. Even for children who are 13 or older, these platforms often require careful guidance and supervision from adults.

For younger children in primary school, social media can therefore expose them to online spaces that they are not yet ready to manage safely or confidently.

## How to talk to your child about social media

When children ask about social media, a calm and open conversation can help them understand the reasons behind family rules.



### Explain the purpose of age limits

Let children know that these rules exist to help keep them safe.



### Focus on readiness rather than punishment

Frame it as something they will be able to explore when they are older and better prepared.



### Acknowledge their feelings

Children may feel frustrated when friends seem to have access. Listening to their feelings helps them feel understood.



### Keep the conversation ongoing

Rather than a single "no," make it an ongoing discussion about online safety and responsibility.

## Conversation starters

If you are unsure how to begin the conversation, these prompts can help:

- "I know lots of children talk about social media. Have you heard people at school talking about it?"
- "What do you know about apps like TikTok or Instagram?"
- "Some apps are designed for teenagers rather than younger children. Do you know why that might be?"
- "Our job as parents is to help keep you safe while you're still learning about the online world."

## Why waiting matters

Choosing to delay social media use can help children in several important ways.

### Protecting emotional wellbeing

Social media often includes comments, likes and comparisons that can affect children's confidence and self-esteem.

### Reducing exposure to unsuitable content

Even with filters and controls, children may come across upsetting, confusing or inappropriate material.

### Supporting healthy friendships

Children benefit most from learning social skills through face-to-face interaction, play and real-world experiences.

### Helping children build digital skills gradually

As children grow older, they develop stronger judgement, critical thinking and resilience that help them manage online environments safely.

# LONDON MARATHON FUNDRAISER IN SUPPORT OF OUR PLAYGROUND PROJECT



## LONDON MARATHON!

We are HUGELY grateful and in awe of Stevie who is running this years' London Marathon in support of FOST and our outdoor play equipment fundraising. Keep her in your prayers and, if you can, please donate on her GoFundMe page here:

[https://www.gofundme.com/f/im-running-the-london-marathon-for-our-school-playground/cl/s?utm\\_campaign=fp\\_sharesheet&utm\\_content=amp20\\_t1&utm\\_medium=customer&utm\\_source=copy\\_link&lang=en\\_GB](https://www.gofundme.com/f/im-running-the-london-marathon-for-our-school-playground/cl/s?utm_campaign=fp_sharesheet&utm_content=amp20_t1&utm_medium=customer&utm_source=copy_link&lang=en_GB)

### *Stevie's Message:*

*This April, I'll be taking on the incredible challenge of running 26.2 miles in the London Marathon — all in support of something amazing: transforming the playground at St Teresa's.*

*As a mum to a child in Year 6, I see every day just how important school is — not just the learning that happens in the classroom, but the friendships, confidence and life skills that grow outside it too. Children spend a huge part of their school day outdoors, and play is vital for their physical health, emotional wellbeing, creativity, resilience and social development.*

*Our school community, alongside the Friends of St Teresa's (FOST), is working towards a major playground improvement project. The goal is to create a safe, inclusive, modern and inspiring outdoor space where every child can thrive. This isn't simply about new equipment — it's about investing in our children's happiness, confidence and long-term development.*

*Running a marathon is no small feat. There will be early mornings, long training runs, tired legs and moments of doubt — but knowing that I'm doing this for our children will keep me going every step of the way.*

*If you're able to donate, no matter how small the amount, I would be incredibly grateful. If you can't donate, sharing my page or offering words of encouragement would mean just as much.*

*Together, we can help build a playground — and a school environment - where our children can truly flourish.*

*Thank you so much for your support 🍷*

FRIENDS OF ST TERESA'S

# Quiz Night

SATURDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> APRIL

7:00 PM

£30  
PER TEAM  
(MAX 8)

Get your team together and book now to support the Friends of St Teresa's, Colchester!

Pay on ParentPay or email [fost@st-teresas.essex.sch.uk](mailto:fost@st-teresas.essex.sch.uk)

**QUIZ . GAMES . RAFFLE**

### WIN

Prizes for the Best Team Name & Best Table Decoration - get creative!

### NO TEAM?

Come along anyway and join others, or help us out with the event!



FRIENDS OF ST TERESA'S, COLCHESTER Charity Number:1206040



## April 2026 Timetable

All regular sessions delivered live online via zoom, 90 minutes long

**£24 each or FREE with School Membership**

Book online at [facefamilyadvice.co.uk](http://facefamilyadvice.co.uk)

Recordings available for 48 hours

Understanding Anger	6 April 10am
School Anxiety	6 April 7pm
Facing Defiance	7 April 10am
Supporting Healthy Screen Use	7 April 7pm
Anxiety Explained	13 April 10am
Cannabis and Ketamine Awareness	13 April 7pm
Introduction to OCD	14 April 10am
What is ACT?	14 April 7pm
Decreasing Depression	20 April 10am
Raising Self-Esteem	20 April 7pm
Understanding the Teenage Brain	21 April 10am
Supporting Healthy Sleep	21 April 7pm
<b>FREE Decreasing Depression</b>	<b>23 April 7-8pm</b>
Improving Family Communication	27 April 10am
Autism: Improving Communication	27 April 7pm
Supporting a Child with ADHD	28 April 10am
Understanding Addictive Behaviour	28 April 7pm

# EASTER Holiday Camps

Children's Activity, Education, and Childcare provider



Football and Activity day camps taking place during EVERY school holiday. Whether you need a reliable childcare solution, want to enjoy a hot drink in peace, or want to give your child a memorable school holiday experience - we've got you covered!

## Activities include:



Basketball



Inflatable Games



NERF Guns Wars



Archery



Football



Lego Challenges



Dodgeball



...and lots more!

## Venues:

- Philip Morant
- Friars Grove
- Earls Colne
- Stanway Fiveways
- Perryfields
- St Georges
- Whitehall
- Tending

## The Details:

- ♥ Suitable for Children in School Years R to 6
- 🇬🇧 Childcare Vouchers & Tax Free Childcare accepted
- 💷 Prices from £22.50 per day
- 🕒 Flexible Timings:
  - Half Day: 08:30-12:30
  - Full Day: 08:30-15:00
  - Extended Day: 08:30-16:30



Click above to learn more

Not Been Before?  
Your first time is on us!



Learn more here

**ACL**

**FREE!**



# Easter Crafts

## ACL Colchester

Join us to have fun as a family and improve communication and wellbeing through creative activities.

**Date: 02/04/2026**

**Time: 09:30 - 11:30 or 13:00 - 15:00**



Scan the QR code, or  
Visit our website  
[acessex.com](https://acessex.com) and type  
"Easter" in the 'Find a  
course...' box



**acessex.com**

**0345 603 7635**



Essex County Council



KNIGHTS OF  
ST COLUMBA  
COUNCIL 270  
COLCHESTER

# Family Funday & Easter Egg Hunt



**Monday, April 6th  
10 AM – 2 PM**

**£4 per child**

**Monday, April 6th | 10 AM  
– 2 PM | St Teresa of  
Liseux, Lexden**



**ACL**

**FREE!**

# Easter Crafts

## ACL Colchester

Join us to have fun as a family and improve communication and wellbeing through creative activities.

**Date: 09/04/2026**

**Time: 09:30 - 11:30 or 13:00 - 15:00**



Scan the QR code, or Visit our website [acessex.com](https://acessex.com) and type "Easter Crafts" in the 'Find a course...' box



**acessex.com**

**0345 603 7635**



Essex County Council



28th March - 11th April

# Easter Egg Trail

Explore the garden to find hidden wooden eggs, stamp their location on your map, and enjoy a prize at the end.

Standard garden admission applies.



Book online

[www.bethchatto.co.uk/courses](http://www.bethchatto.co.uk/courses)

 Beth  
Chatto  
Education Trust

# COLCHESTER

## ROLLER HOCKEY CLUB

### NEW PLAYERS WANTED

All positions welcome

- ✓ Basic skating skills required
- ✓ Equipment provided
- ✓ Colchester Leisure World  
Wednesdays 5–7pm
- ✓ 2 FREE sessions

Contact **CRAIG LEE**  
**07789 880654**



  
**FAIREY**  
ASSOCIATES LIMITED

## St Mary's senior school experience event

We have been asked to share the following information with our Year 4 and Year 5 families:

*Good afternoon,*

*We would like to invite your Year 4 and Year 5 girls to our upcoming Senior School Experience Event taking place on Saturday 16 May at our Senior School, Lexden Road, Colchester. This exclusive event offers the opportunity for girls to experience the empowering and inspiring environment of our Senior School.*

*Through a series of exciting challenges, the girls will take part in a series of challenges to complete 'Mission Possible'! Pupils will engage with our core values - being ambitious, bold, compassionate, dynamic, and enquiring to ignite curiosity, build confidence and nurture leadership qualities.*

*We would be grateful if you could please share the invitation below with parents of girls in your Year 4 and Year 5 classes. We recommend that girls join us for an Experience Day before sitting the entrance assessment, to familiarise themselves with the school and meet other girls looking to join.*

*The day runs from 10am until 2pm, with parents and carers invited to join us for refreshments when they collect their daughters at 2pm.*

*Places for the event can be reserved at [www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk/mission-possible](http://www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk/mission-possible) or if you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.*

A promotional poster for the 'Mission Possible' event. The background is dark with vibrant, multi-colored laser light streaks in shades of blue, green, purple, and pink. The text is white and arranged in a clear hierarchy. At the top right is the St Mary's Colchester logo, which consists of a circular emblem with a cross and the letters 'SM' inside, followed by the text 'St Mary's Colchester'. The main title 'MISSION POSSIBLE' is written in a large, bold, sans-serif font for 'MISSION' and a large, white, cursive script font for 'possible'. Below the title, the text 'EXCLUSIVE EVENT DESIGNED FOR GIRLS IN YEARS 4&5 TO EXPERIENCE ST MARY'S SENIOR SCHOOL' is written in a smaller, all-caps, sans-serif font. A paragraph of text describes the event: 'Through a series of exciting challenges, your daughter will engage with St Mary's core values - ambitious, bold, compassionate, dynamic and enquiring. Let your daughter discover what it means to be part of a school where girls are empowered to thrive. Places are limited so secure your daughter's spot today.' In the bottom left corner, the date and time are listed: '16 MAY | 10am-2pm | St Mary's Senior School'. In the bottom right corner, a white rectangular box contains the text 'Reserve your daughter's place at' followed by the URL 'stmaryscolchester.org.uk/mission-possible' in a pink font.

**MISSION**  
**possible**

St Mary's  
Colchester

EXCLUSIVE EVENT DESIGNED FOR GIRLS IN YEARS 4&5  
TO EXPERIENCE ST MARY'S SENIOR SCHOOL

Through a series of exciting challenges, your daughter will engage with St Mary's core values - ambitious, bold, compassionate, dynamic and enquiring. Let your daughter discover what it means to be part of a school where girls are empowered to thrive. Places are limited so secure your daughter's spot today.

16 MAY | 10am-2pm | St Mary's Senior School

Reserve your daughter's place at  
[stmaryscolchester.org.uk/mission-possible](http://stmaryscolchester.org.uk/mission-possible)