

Newsletter – WC 12th October 2026

Inspiring success through learning, community and faith.

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me

– Philippians 4:13



A massive St John's well done to all our Silverdale Stars this week.

Leonie (Curlews)

For having a go at absolutely EVERYTHING!
every question!

Axel (Bitterns)

For always being learning ready and working
so hard every day. Keep it up!

Sam(Harriers)

For being such a fun member of our class
and always being first to be learning ready!

Wrap Around Care

Wraparound care is popular in our school.
Breakfast club starts at 07:45 until 08:45, and
after school club is 15:15-17:30 (16:30 on a
Friday). We provide such a valuable service
to our parents. If you would like to book your
child a place, please call the office and pay
via scopay.

Breakfast club charge:

1st child in family £4.50. 2nd child £4.00
after 8.30am £2.00 per child

After School Club Charges:

3.15pm - 4.30pm: £4.75

4.30pm - 5.30pm: £3.75

School Council

Elections for school council will be held WC
9th November. Children need to write a
manifesto and then be prepared to share that
with classmates ready for elections.
We will have a representative from each year
group. If your child would like to put
themselves forward as a candidate, please
help them with their manifesto. Speeches,
PowerPoints, flyers etc. It all helps with the
delivery. We want councillors that want to
make a difference to our school. Children
with ideas and with energy!

Secondary School Places

The deadline for secondary school
applications is 31st October – please
ensure you have applied for your Y6 child
by this date.

Online Platforms

It's so good to see our children accessing
our online learning platforms. Last week,
93% of children accessed Mathletics and
all of our children are accessing spelling
shed at home as well as part of our guided
reading carousels in school. Whilst we
love that these platforms do consolidate
learning, and homework does get our
children 'secondary school' ready (Year 7s
are always shocked how much homework
they get!), please do be mindful as to how
much screen time your child gets. 15 mins
max an evening is plenty, if not less.
Reading a physical book always takes
priority too.

Christmas Pantomime

We are delighted to have re-booked
Lancaster Grand Theatre for **Wednesday
16th December**, where we will be watching
Little Red Riding Hood. Thanks to the
generosity of PTA, every child will also enjoy
an interval ice cream. The cost of the trip is
£14.00 per child, and payments can now be
made in advance via Scopay.

Friday Thought

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of
this world, but be transformed by the
renewing of your mind. Then you will be able
to test and approve what God's will is — his
good, pleasing, and perfect will.
—Romans 12:2



Lunches

Week 3 WC 19.10.26



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The words of Jesus: Our Christian Value this week is Thankfulness

Workshop Week

These are being held in school **WC 09.11.26.**

There will be a **phonics workshop** on Monday 9th at 17:00 with Mrs Hodkinson and Miss Sanderson.

There will be a **SATS workshop** for year 6 parents on Tuesday 10th at 17:00 with Mrs Tetchner.

There will be a **maths workshop** on Thursday 12th, with Miss Jackson. Please email these teachers, if you would like to join these workshops.

Chocolate and Chat

It was lovely to see the Year 7s last night. They shared all their new experiences of secondary school – friendships, lessons (loved or not!) after school clubs etc. Gosh they have grown! We shared lots of chatter and chocolate together. It was great to see them.

Open Day 2026

Do you know anyone who is turning 4 this year and will be starting school in September 2027? If so, please let them know that our open day is on **Wednesday 21st October from 9:30am – 11:30am**; spread the word! You must apply by 15th January 2027 (see poster below)

Wedding Bells

Curlews' class enjoyed a very special day on Thursday. The marriage of two of our Year 1s. Love was in the air as the children sang songs, made bunting, wrote invites and wore VERY fancy clothes. Thanks to Reverend Eve for walking the children through their vows in church?!
This was a wonderful way to end the English Unit of Celebrations.

Next Week...

19.10.26 - Teaching staff appraisals
19.10.26 – School Nurse Drop in for families
20.10.26 – Mrs T CPD
20.10.26 – Animal Theatre visiting school
20.10.26 – Business committee meeting
21.10.26 – Open Day 09:30-11:30
22.10.26 – Bitterns Fungi workshop
22.10.26 – School support staff appraisals

[WEBSITE CALENDER](#)

Attendance

Well done to Harriers this week

Harriers 99.4%

Bitterns 98.0%

Curlews 97.1%

AVERAGE SCHOOL 98.5%

Parent Meetings

These will be taking place WC 16.11.26.

Curlews will be on Tuesday 17th November. Harriers on Wednesday 18th

Bitterns on Thursday 19th

Please complete the reply slip with your preferred time, and return to class teacher.

Badger News!

Does anyone have an electric fence we can borrow? Our final strategy to try and deter our resident badger! We have now found the set. Yippee!!

FLU VACCINATIONS

The School Nurse Team will visit us on Thursday 26th November 2026 to administer Flu Vaccinations.

Mathletics



'Well done' to Arlo and Toby on their first 'first' this week!



Silverdale St John's
CofE Primary School & Nursery
Learning, Community and Faith

**"A fun, thriving,
beautiful school"**

OPEN DAY

Wednesday 21st October 2026

- Weekly outdoor learning with forest school accredited teachers
- Creative curriculum
- Educational trips
- Set in an area of outstanding natural beauty
- Before & after school clubs
- Nursery places

**Chance to look around 09:30-11:30. Just turn up,
and our school council will show you around!**



t. **01524 701467**
e. **bursar@silverdale.lancs.sch.uk**
www.silverdale.lancs.sch.uk





BAG 2 SCHOOL



Our next Bag2School collection
has been arranged for

Thursday 5th November 2026

Any questions – please ask your school
collection organiser Anna Lawton

**SCHOOL
ADMISSIONS
PRIMARY**

APPLY NOW!
at lancashire.gov.uk/schools

School and Academy places September 2027

You must apply if your child has a 4th birthday between 1 September 2026 and 31 August 2027.

You must apply even if an older brother or sister is already at the school, or the school is linked to your child's nursery.

If you're a non-Lancashire resident apply through your own local authority.

Please read the admission criteria for your chosen schools on the website or get a copy from them.

CLOSING DATE
15 January 2027

lancashire.gov.uk



School transport



If travel cost is an important factor in your school preference, search 'school transport' at lancashire.gov.uk or scan the QR code.



Lancashire
County Council



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Pet Celebration and Blessing

**Sunday 18th October
3.30pm**



Love your pets?

**Come to a short celebration
at St John's Church,**

**bring your pets;
a picture of your pets;
or simply enjoy someone else's pet.**

(Do make sure you bring leads/cages so your pet and others feels safe)

**Finishing with tea, cake
and pet treats!**





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Stay and Play at school



Friday

09:00 – 10:30

We would love to see you.

Parents, grandparents,
aunties, uncles –
all children great and small.



**Snacks
provided**

**and a LOT
of fun.**

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about AI COMPANIONS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

INAPPROPRIATE OR EXPLICIT CONTENT

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.

"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.

AUDIT PRIVACY SETTINGS & AGE LIMITS

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.

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.

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.



The National College®

See full reference list on our website

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