



### Statement to live by

I know how to show that I am sorry.

**The end of yet another busy half term is approaching!**... Can you believe that by next Friday we will have reached the end of Summer 1? The weeks really do seem to be passing so quickly! We are incredibly proud of the effort and commitment our children have shown in their learning this half term. We are also very grateful to our supportive and dedicated families for the encouragement you continue to provide. As Headteacher, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our fantastic staff, who work tirelessly each day to provide an excellent education for your children and ensure they are kept safe and well. School will close for the May half term on Friday 22nd May, and we look forward to welcoming our children and families back on Monday 1st June at 8.35am.

**We hope you all have a WONDERFUL and well-deserved break when it arrives!**

**Healthy Week 2026!**... This year we will be celebrating Healthy Week between 6th - 10th July. Miss Potts, our PE coordinator, has been working hard to plan this and has been working alongside lots of different sports providers. We are still awaiting some final details to be confirmed, however, we will be writing to families very soon so watch this space!

### Exciting!

**BWCET Celebration of Sport Event...** Year 5 children across the Trust have been chosen, yet again, to attend the BWCET Celebration of Sport on Thursday 2nd July. This promises to be a really exciting event when all our family of schools will come together to celebrate the sporting talents of our wonderful children. Families should have had information about this recently and more details will be coming over the coming weeks.

### Celebrating Sport!



**Well done Year 6...** A **HUGE** well done to our Year 6 class. They finished their SAT's this week and gave it their all! Well done to each and every one of our children for showing such commitment and hard work over the years and to staff who have guided them on their school journey!



**Amazing work Year 6!**

**Calling all families...** Next half term, we will be celebrating 'Careers and Enterprise' in school. More details are to follow in a letter, but we are giving early notice of this event as we are asking for **your help and support!**

Do you have a career that you are passionate about and would like to share? Do you have an unusual career which you feel our children would like to know more about? Do you work for a company that would be interested in visiting school to talk about careers? Do you work in a career which is trying to raise the profile to different people, e.g. more females in engineering? If the answer to any of these questions is 'yes' or feel you can support, we would **LOVE** to hear from you! Please send expressions of interest into [smi@smi.bwcet.com](mailto:smi@smi.bwcet.com). This event will rely on your support so please do get in touch. **Thank you!**



**Year 6 Celebration!** To celebrate all their hard work from this year and the end of their SATs, our Year 6 children went to the cinema as a special treat today!

Once again, well done for your hard work and dedication. **You deserve it!**



**Curriculum enrichment and learning on other faiths...** Year 3 had a wonderful trip to Newcastle Reform Synagogue. Mr and Mrs Scott were very welcoming and taught them lots about the Jewish faith, worship and religion. As part of our RE curriculum the children learnt about the parts of a synagogue and the community that worship there. We talked about the impact of the Holocaust on the Jewish community and how we can spread peace and tolerance in our community.

**Tolerance, respect, peace!**

### Attendance at school for the past two weeks...

**Reception:** 98.5%    **Year 1:** 95%    **Year 2:** 94%    **Year 3:** 97%    **Year 4:** 99%    **Year 5:** 99%    **Year 6:** 100%

**WELL DONE TO YEAR 6!**

### Home-School Links

**Address:** Durham Rd, Houghton le Spring, DH5 8NF  
**Email:** [smi@smi.bwcet.com](mailto:smi@smi.bwcet.com)  
**Telephone:** 0191 584 05 42  
**Website:** <https://stmichaelshoughton.bwcet.com/>  
**Facebook:** stmichaelshoughton    **Instagram:** st\_michaelcatholicschool





**Year 4 First Holy Communion Celebration...** On Saturday, our wonderful Year 4 children will take a very special step in their faith journey as they make their First Holy Communion at St. Michael's Church. This is a significant and joyful occasion for both the children and their families, and we are incredibly proud of them all.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Miss. Fox and Mrs. Robson for their care, commitment and preparation, as well as to Fr. Marc for his guidance and support. We are also grateful to everyone who has played a part in helping our children prepare so thoughtfully for this important sacrament. Please keep our children and their families in your thoughts and prayers as they celebrate this special moment.

*'I am the bread of Life'*

### Online safety...

# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about AMIGO

Amigo is a social platform which purports to connect strangers from around the world – and, with built-in translation software, it reduces the expected language barriers. Focusing heavily on one-to-one chat, video calls and live streams, Amigo encourages its users to build up online relationships and unlock exclusive features such as private video and audio calls: essentially, the more that people chat, the more functions become available to them. This is an app designed with mature users very much in mind and is therefore definitely not recommended for children.

AGE RATING

## 18

#### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

##### ONE-TO-ONE COMMUNICATION

While online chats and livestreaming are a great way to communicate with people that children can trust (such as friends and family), Amigo encourages users to connect with complete strangers and develop a friendship through private chats, calls and videos. This will be a clear red flag for most parents, due to the possibility of a child encountering inappropriate content or an online predator.

##### INAPPROPRIATE CONTACT

Within minutes of signing up for our trial of Amigo (and without using a profile photo), users of the opposite sex were messaging with suggestive statements such as "You're just my type" and "Let's have fun". While the app's stated intent is to help people build friendships, some users obviously seek to take these relationships in a more mature and amorous direction.

##### MEMBERSHIP COSTS

Like many apps that are free to download, Amigo's business model is centred on in-app purchases. Users are encouraged to pay for VIP membership – enabling them to send more messages each day and boosting their profile's visibility. People can also buy coins (again, for real money) which allow them to send virtual gifts and further increase the number of messages they can send daily.

##### LACK OF AGE VERIFICATION

Amigo makes no secret of the fact that it's for people aged 18 or above. There's no age verification, however, so a young person could simply sign up under a false date of birth. The app's algorithm claims to match users of similar ages (making them more compatible), but either the algorithm isn't very reliable, or most users have entered a fake age which doesn't correspond with their profile pic.

##### REWARDS FOR REPEATED USE

Amigo gifts virtual coins to users if they reply to messages within 10 seconds, while there are also daily rewards for posting comments, sharing a video, getting likes or simply opening the app. It also encourages increasing 'Intimacy Levels' with other users to unlock extra features: once someone's online 'friendship' reaches intimacy Level 3, they can hold one-to-one video calls with each other.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

#### MONITOR DOWNLOADS

As well as frequent catch-ups with your child about what they've enjoyed doing online, you could consider taking the additional step of physically checking their phone every so often to see which apps they've installed. The safest option could be to enable 'ask to buy' (Apple) or 'purchase approvals' (Android) on their device, meaning your authorisation is needed to download any apps.

#### RESPECT AGE RESTRICTIONS

Apps have age restrictions for a reason, and Amigo is very definitely a mature content platform. Given that many of Amigo's users apparently use a bogus date of birth, you might want to remind your child about the implications of setting up a fake profile – such as being exposed to messages and videos that make them feel uncomfortable or feeling pressured into chatting with strangers.

#### BLOCK, REPORT, DISCUSS

Many children already know that connecting with strangers online is dangerous, but it never hurts to refresh their memory. Whatever communication apps your child uses, make sure they're fully aware that if anything online makes them feel uncomfortable, scared or upset, then they can block the user responsible, report the content, take a screenshot as evidence and come to tell you straight away.

#### ACTIVE LISTENING

If your child does approach you with a concern, make time to stop what you're doing and actively listen. Let them talk without interrupting or showing any judgement, then discuss their options and the possible solutions. This empowers them and reassures them that you're there to be supportive. If the issue is one that has put your child at risk, however, you may wish to contact the police.

#### Meet Our Expert

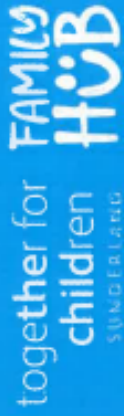
Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.

**National Online Safety**  
#WakeUpWednesday

<https://www.appadvisor.com/en/appdetails/ios-amigo?name=real+friends&id=US5640E5E4>



**Coalfield Best Start Family Hub Timetable**  
**Monday 20th April - Friday 22nd May 2026**  
 Family.hubhetton@togetherforchildren.org.uk  
 Postcode: DH5 9NE Telephone: 0191 561 6625



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<p><b>Review &amp; Development Clinic</b> 10 - 11.30am</p> <p><b>Super Communicators</b> 10 - 10.45am Referral only</p> <p><b>Daisy Chain Drop In</b> 20th &amp; 27th April, 11th &amp; 18th May 10am - 12noon</p> <p><b>Sensory Room - Bookable</b> 9.30-10am 10.15-10.45am 11-11.30am</p> <p><b>Young Mams 'n' Dads</b> (14 - 22 years) 1.30 - 2.30pm Drop In</p> <p><b>Sleep Workshop</b> 11th &amp; 18th May 12.45 - 2.45pm</p> <p><b>Sensory Room Bookable</b> 2.45 - 3.15pm 3.30 - 4pm 4.15 - 4.45pm</p>	<p><b>Baby Messy Play/Sensory Drop in</b> (0 - 12 months) 9.30 - 10.15am</p> <p><b>Tobacco Dependency Service</b> 9am - 4pm Referral only</p> <p><b>Busy Bodies - Drop in</b> (Walkers - 5 years) 11 - 11.45am</p> <p><b>Sensory Room - Bookable</b> (0-5 years) 9.30 - 10am 10.15 - 10.45am 11 - 11.30am</p> <p><b>Play Space &amp; Sensory Room Drop in</b> (0 - 5 years) 1 - 2.30pm</p> <p><b>GroBrain</b> 12.45 - 2.45pm Bookable</p> <p><b>Sensory Room - Bookable</b> (0-25 years with parents/carers) 3.30 - 4pm 4.15 - 4.45pm</p>	<p><b>Birth Registrations</b> - Bookable via Sunderland Council website</p> <p><b>Childminder Network</b> Fortnightly</p> <p><b>Daisy Chain Drop In</b> 6th May - 10am - 12noon</p> <p><b>Daisy Chain Multi-Agency Drop In</b> 22nd April &amp; 13th May 10am - 12pm</p> <p><b>Sensory Room - Bookable</b> 9.30 - 10, 10.15 - 10.45, 11 - 11.30am 1.15 - 1.45pm, 2 - 2.30 2.45 - 3.15, 3.30 - 4, 4.15 - 4.45pm</p> <p><b>Time for Rhyme</b> (Birth- pre crawling) Excluding 29th April &amp; 13th May 1.45 - 2.30pm</p> <p><b>Little Adventurers</b> 1 - 2.30pm Referral Only</p> <p><b>Baby Massage</b> at Houghton Library 1 - 2pm - To book email space4hub@gmail.com</p> <p><b>Introduction to Solids</b> 29th April - 1 - 2pm To book please call 0300 0031552</p>	<p><b>Play Space &amp; Sensory Room Drop in</b> (0 - 5 years) 9.30 - 11.30am</p> <p><b>Stop Smoking Support Drop in</b> 9.30 - 11.30am</p> <p><b>Breastfeeding Support Drop in</b> 10am - 12noon</p> <p><b>Welfare Rights - Referral</b> 9am - 12noon</p> <p><b>Stay &amp; Play</b> (0 - 5 years) 1.30 - 2.30pm</p> <p><b>Ante Natal Programme Bookable</b> 3.45 - 5.45pm To book please call 0300 0031552</p>	<p><b>Play Space &amp; Sensory Room Drop in</b> (0 - 5 years) 9.30 - 11.30am</p> <p><b>Growing Healthy Drop In</b> 10 - 11.30am</p> <p><b>Family Voice</b> 24th April &amp; 22nd May 10.45am - 12.15pm</p> <p><b>Baby Massage</b> 1.30 - 2.30pm (Excluding 1st May) Bookable</p> <p><b>Buggy Walk</b> 1 - 2pm then PlaySpace</p> <p><b>Sensory Room - Bookable</b> (0-25 years with parents/carers) 1.15 - 1.45pm 2-2.30pm 2.45 - 3.15pm</p>

**Social media**

Follow Sunderland Family Hubs on Facebook and Instagram.



Find out more at [www.linksforlifesunderland.co.uk/familyhubs](http://www.linksforlifesunderland.co.uk/familyhubs)



**Midwife Booking In Appointments.** As soon as you find out you are pregnant, contact a GP or Midwife and they will help you book your first appointment. Your first Midwife appointment (also called the booking appointment) should happen before you are 10 weeks pregnant. This is because you'll be offered some tests that should be done before 10 weeks.

**Antenatal Parent Programme** - A five week course for parents to be, and can book from 26 weeks gestation by calling 03000 031 552.

**Birth Registrations** - Please book via Sunderland City Council website. Register a birth, a new born baby must be registered within 42 days of the date of birth. The baby should be registered in the district where it was born.

**Review and Development Clinic** - please book through your Health Visitor. Call 03000 031552.

**Sensory Room (from birth)** sensory lights and equipment to help develop your child's senses. Also for children and young people with SEND aged 0-25 years. 30 minute exclusive slots are available.

**Breastfeeding Support** to share experiences and advice about your breastfeeding journey with other parents. There is no need to book simply drop into any of the sessions.

**Growing Healthy Drop In**  
Come along to meet others and learn some useful tips and advice. There will be scales available to weigh your baby.

**Gro Brain Baby Course** is for parents of babies pre-birth to 12 months. It focusses on bonding and brain development, and the vital part parents and carers play in 'wiring up' the connections in their baby's brain in the first 1001 critical days of life. This 'brain wiring' lays the foundation for emotional wellbeing and the way emotions will be handled in later life.

**Baby Messy Play/Sensory Play.** This is a session that allows children to explore different materials encouraging creativity using their hands and feet. Often involving messy ingredients such as paint, sand, water, cereal or pasta, it is geared toward exploring feelings and imagination through textures and colours.

**Time for Rhyme (birth - crawling)** is an interactive session for babies and their parents / carers. Sessions are based around sharing nursery rhymes, action songs, musical instruments and books.

**Move to Rhyme (Crawling to pre-walking)** an interactive session for babies and their parents/ carers to share nursery rhymes, action songs, musical instruments and books.

**Busy Bodies** - walkers - 5 years. A music and movement session to work on physical skills, experience free movement to support growth and development.

**Stay and Play (0-5 years)** have fun with your little one whilst socialising with parents. Each week we will have a themed activity such as books, messy play and everyday opportunities.

**Introduction to Solid Food** - Support to wean your baby on to solid food, understanding baby's cues, healthy key messages and food tasting. Your baby should be around 6 months old to attend the class. Please contact Health Visiting Service on 03000 031 552 to book.

**Stop Smoking Support** - Are you worried about how smoking is affecting your health and your families? Are you thinking of stopping smoking? Join us for our free stop smoking drop in sessions. An appointment can also be made on a one - one basis at a time to suit you, contact your hub to find out more and arrange.

**Play Space (0-5 years)** a parent led session, where parents are encouraged to play and interact with your child/ren in a friendly environment.

**Young Mams n Dads** is a dedicated friendly group for parents aged between 14 & 22 years old, to have fun and socialise. Includes sensory, messy play, crafts, cooking and much more for the children.

**FISCUS** is an independent charity based in Hendon, we offer benefits and debt advice, food parcel, baby bank, adult clothes bank and we have an energy team who also offer fuel vouchers, warm packs, home energy visits and warm home solutions. The advice is friendly, professional and confidential'.

**Mams' Minds Matter (Maternal Mental Health Week)**

A gentle wellbeing walk, a cuppa and refreshments, optional well-being activities, information, support and advice, and opportunities for mams to support one another. These sessions are suitable for Mams and children under 1 year old, due to the sensitive nature of discussions.

**Registering**

Please complete a registration form using the QR code or visit any of our Family Hubs to register. After registering, remember to sign in each time you visit any hub. Everything is completely FREE!



**Breast Pump Loan Scheme**

Can be loaned on a 4 weekly basis. Each pack comes with information on how to use and a guide on how to clean. Call 03000 031552 to find out more.

## - Important Dates -

	Date	Class	Event
Summer 1	Wednesday 6 <sup>th</sup> May 2026.	Year 3.	Educational Visit to the Synagogue.
	Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> May 2026.	Year 4.	First Holy Communion Preparation.
	Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> May 2026.	Year 4.	Parent Meeting for Residential at Youth Village at 4:30pm.
	Friday 8 <sup>th</sup> May 2026.	Whole School.	Whole School Individual Photographs.
	Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> May 2026 – Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> May 2026.	Year 6.	SATs
	Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> May 2026.	Year 6.	Trip to the Cinema.
	Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> May 2026.	Year 6	Year 6 Celebration Event.
	Saturday 16 <sup>th</sup> May 2026.	Year 4.	Sacrament of First Holy Communion - 10am in St Michael's Church. All are welcome.
	Tuesday 19 <sup>th</sup> May 2026.	Reception.	Reception Reading Cafe 9am in the School Hall. All are welcome to join us.
	Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup> May 2026.	Year 1.	Celebration of the Word at 3pm in the School Hall. All are welcome to join us.
	Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2026.	Reception.	Reception Class Mass at St. Michael's Church. All are welcome.
Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2026.	Reception.	Reception visit to Houghton Library.	
<b>HALF TERM</b>			
<b>Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May – Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2026</b>			
Summer 2	Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> June 2026.	Whole School.	Back to School.
	Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> June 2026 – Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> June 2026.	Year 4.	Multiplication Tables Check.
	Tuesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> June 2026.	Year 2.	Year 2 visit to Houghton Library.
	Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> June 2026.	Year 6.	Nexus Bus Induction as part of transition to Secondary School.
	Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> June 2026.	Reception.	Celebration of the Word at 3pm in the School Hall. All are welcome to join us.
	Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> June 2026.	Year 3.	Year 3 Class Mass at St. Michael's Church. All are welcome.
	Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> June 2026 – Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> June 2026.	Year 1.	Phonics Screening Tests.
	Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> June 2026.	Reception.	Educational Visit to Beamish Museum.
	Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> June – Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup> June 2026.	Year 4.	Residential at Youth Village.
	Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> June 2026 – Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> June 2026.	Year 6.	Bikeability – Cycling proficiency.
	Tuesday 16 <sup>th</sup> June 2026.	Year 1.	Curriculum celebration assembly 9am in the School Hall. All are welcome to join us.
	Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> June 2026.	Year 4.	Celebration of the Word at 3pm in the School Hall. All are welcome to join us.
	Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> June 2026.	Whole School.	Careers / Enterprise Day (Date may change due to availability of volunteers)
	Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> June 2026.	Year 5.	Year 5 Class Mass at St. Michael's Church. All are welcome.
	Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup> June – Thursday 25 <sup>th</sup> June 2026.	Year 6.	Residential to Derwent Hill.
	Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2026.	Reception.	Curriculum celebration assembly 9am in the School Hall. All are welcome to join us.
	Friday 26 <sup>th</sup> June 2026.	Whole School.	Inset Day. School closed to pupils on this day.
	Monday 29 <sup>th</sup> June 2026	Year 6.	Primary Festival at the Youth Village.
	Tuesday 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2026 – Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> July 2026.	Year 6.	Transition days at St Roberts.
	TBC	Reception.	Litter Pick at the Beach.
	Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> July 2026.	Year 5.	Celebration of Sport at Gateshead Stadium.
	Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2026.	Years 1 & 4.	Years 1 & 4 Class Mass at St. Michael's Church. All are welcome.
	Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> July 2026 – Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> July 2026.	Whole School.	Healthy Week.
	Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> July 2026.	Whole School.	Sports Day at 1pm on the School Field.
	Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> July 2026.	School Council / Head Boy and Girl	Visit to London and the Houses of Parliament.
	Thursday 16 <sup>th</sup> July 2026.	Year 6.	Leavers Assembly at 2pm. All are welcome to join us.
Friday 17 <sup>th</sup> July 2026.	Whole School.	Whole School / Year 6 Leavers Mass at St. Michael's Church. All are welcome.	
Friday 17 <sup>th</sup> July 2026.	Whole School.	School breaks up for Summer Holidays at 3:15pm.	
Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2026.	Whole School.	Back to School.	

### Assemblies and Collective Worship – Parents Invited

Class	Curriculum Celebration Assemblies		Celebration of the Word	
Reception	Tues 23 <sup>rd</sup> June 26	9.00am	Thurs 4 <sup>th</sup> June 26	3.00pm
Year 1	Tues 16 <sup>th</sup> June 26	9.00am	Thurs 21 <sup>st</sup> May 26	3.00pm
Year 2	Tues 31 <sup>st</sup> March 26	9.00am	Thurs 22 <sup>nd</sup> Jan 26	3.00pm
Year 3	Tues 10 <sup>th</sup> March 26	9.00am	Thurs 13 <sup>th</sup> Nov 25	3.00pm
Year 4	Tues 17 <sup>th</sup> Feb 26	9.00am	Thurs 18 <sup>th</sup> June 26	3.00pm
Year 5	Tues 10 <sup>th</sup> Feb 26	9.00am	Thurs 27 <sup>th</sup> Nov 25	3.00pm
Year 6	Tues 27 <sup>th</sup> Jan 26	9.00am	Thurs 6 <sup>th</sup> Nov 25	3.00pm
<b>Year 6 Leavers Assembly</b>	Thursday 16 <sup>th</sup> July 2026		2.00pm	

**Important Information:** From time to time, due to unforeseen circumstances, the dates/events mentioned in the Fortnightly may have to be changed /cancelled. If a change/cancellation does occur, you will be notified as early as possible.

**Thank you in advance for your understanding.**

Proud to be part of...



**Bishop Wilkinson**  
Catholic Education Trust  
Through Christ, in Partnership