
Capel St. Mary Church of England VC Primary School

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“A Place to Learn and Achieve”



With faith as small as a mustard seed, you can move mountains. – Matthew 13 verses 31- 35

Friday 28th November, 2025

Dear Families,

School News!

The weeks fly by and December is almost upon us! There is already lots of excitement in school about Christmas festivities. I've already seen Christmas cards being given out and the Early Years children have been practising their nativity performance. I'm enjoying the sounds of beautifully-sung Christmas carols drifting down the corridors from hymn practice in the hall. There are lots of Christmas celebrations coming up. In particular, don't forget the PFA Christmas Fayre after school on 2nd December and the carol singing on the playground at 3:00pm, just before home-time.

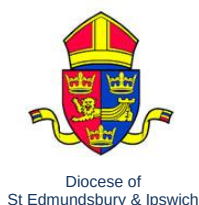
Stone Age Day!

On Wednesday 26th November, the Unit 2 children enjoyed an exciting 'Stone Age Day'. There were lots of themed activities to bring the Stone Age to life and reinforce the children's learning in history. The children really enjoyed cooking, weaving, making pots, lighting fires, creating cave paintings, making spears and many other adventurous, hands-on experiences. Thanks very much to the Unit 2 staff and Mrs Dix (Forest School Leader) who organised such an imaginative, immersive learning experience.



Parent & Relatives

I would like to say a huge thank you to all the parents, friends and relatives who have been into school in recent weeks to share learning experiences and fun activities with the children. We have had a brilliant response to events like the 'Stay and Play', 'Rustle Up a Relative' and the 'Open Classrooms' sessions – there has been a really positive atmosphere and I've had some lovely conversations with parents and relatives. The next event for parents is the Stone Age Museum in Unit 2. Parents and carers are welcome to come in from 2:30pm on Monday 1st December to see the children's history work.



Suffolk County Council

Julia Grainger – Interim Assistant Director for
Education Skills and Learning



Goodbye

I'm sad to announce that we must say a fond farewell to Mrs Dean at the end of this term. Mrs Dean currently teaches three days a week in the Early Years but she has taught across the age-range during her time at Capel. Mrs Dean has been a teacher here for an astonishing 33 years – what wonderful loyalty, commitment and service to our school community. I had a chat with her about her time at the school and she shared some of her memories and thoughts about Capel.

Mrs Dean started her as a Newly Qualified Teacher 33 years ago. In those early days, she remembers the school being smaller, with a smaller staff team. With new housing in the area, she has enjoyed seeing the school grow. She has fond memories of relaxed Friday lunchtimes with colleagues and the annual staff pantomimes, which were written by former Deputy Headteacher Graham Cleaver. She enjoyed welcoming in members of the community to help with activities like sewing. It was really special when she took children to Holywells Park in Ipswich to see The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh arrive in a helicopter. Other special times included burying a time capsule for the Millennium, and events for The Queen's Jubilees and the Coronation, celebrated with the school community.

Mrs Dean expresses a real love for teaching – all of it – seeing children develop as whole people, seeing and celebrating all their little successes, and seeing them develop a love of learning and real interests in things like reading and music. Mrs Dean has a passion for music outside school and has loved trying to get children involved in music through running a recorder club and choirs in the past. Over the years, Mrs Dean has played a leading role in learning a range of subjects, including science, PE, music and history, making a real contribution to Capel St Mary.

Mrs Dean is taking up a teaching post elsewhere, in another lovely school. However, she says it's been a privilege to have been part of the Capel community for so long – she and her own family have grown while she has been here and the school, children, staff and extended community have been a special part of her life. I'm sure everyone will join me in wishing Mrs Dean all the best with her new opportunity. If anyone would like to donate to a leaving gift for Mrs Dean, then please contact the school office or pop into school.

We have arrangements in place for the remainder of the academic year, ensuring continuity and care for the children in the Early Years. Mrs Read (Mrs Dean's job-share) will be increasing her hours and working in the Early Years on a Tuesday as well as Wednesdays and Thursdays as she does currently. We are absolutely delighted to announce that Fiona Abbott will be working with the children on Mondays and Fridays. Mrs Abbott already knows the school, children and staff well as she has taught here on many occasions (in fact, she is actually teaching in the Early Years once again as I type the newsletter!). So, as we say goodbye to Mrs Dean and wish her well for the future, we offer a warm Capel welcome to Mrs Abbott!

Picture News

Picture News is a great resource that we use across the school for class assemblies. Each week, a poster about a theme from the news is used to spark discussion and to help the children explore the world around them. They have chance to think and talk and the theme is linked to our Christian Values. This week, the theme was understanding our feelings, which was linked to the new McDonald's Happy Meal boxes. The new boxes are blank on three sides, leaving space for children to be creative and decorate the boxes with their own designs, finding ways to express themselves. You may want to follow this up by discussing the 'Take Home' page with your child at home (see below!).

Online Safety

Parents may be interested in the news about changes to the popular game platform Roblox. Roblox is a favourite amongst many young people, enabling them to access lots of different games. However, Roblox is set to introduce age verification checks, following concerns around child safety. There are particular concerns around the chat features and age-appropriate content in some games.

The article can be found here: <https://www.itv.com/news/2025-11-18/roblox-to-introduce-age-verification-checks-following-child-safety-concerns>

As we head towards Christmas, and children may be getting devices as gifts, this might be a good moment to reflect more generally about online safety.

Attached to this week's newsletter is a 'Top Tips' leaflet from Care for the Family called 'Raising Children in a Digital Age'. The tips include ideas like agreeing limits, creating tech free times and showing interest in their online world by using technology together. There are lots of challenges and risks online but also much to enjoy and lots of benefits – it's important to have a balanced view and to help children to make good choices.

Headteacher Awards!

I have been really impressed with the children's hard work and focus in class. Their concentration is brilliant to see and they are really proud of their efforts. Well done to the following children, who have been given a Headteacher's Award since the last newsletter:

Kaiden – writing (Year 6)

Finley – maths (Year 2)

William – writing (Year 6)

Dougie – effort and focus (Year 5)

Christmas Fayre

Please do join us for the PFA Christmas Fayre on Tuesday 2nd December after school. Thanks in advance to everyone on the PFA and at school involved in organising the event – it's a lot of hard work! There will be lots of activities and stalls, such as present wrapping and face-painting. Weather-permitting, festivities will begin with a couple of carols on the playground at pick-up time before everyone heads into the school for Christmas fun! If anyone could bake homemade mince pies to serve at the event (no nuts due to allergies please), it would be much appreciated – please do let the PFA know via the office, the PFA Facebook page or email: capelstmarypfa@mail.com

Children in Need

Wow – well done everyone! You raised a fabulous £325 for Children in Need! Your generosity will help provide much-needed help to vulnerable children.



What are some of the different ways we can express ourselves?

Share your thoughts and read the opinions of others

In the news this week

McDonald's changed the colours of its famous Happy Meal box in the UK, making it white on three sides, for children to colour and design it themselves. The company said the new boxes encourage creativity and let children express their ideas and feelings through drawing. Four million of the new 'colour-your-own' boxes have been given out as a trial to see how children respond.

Things to talk about at home ...

- > Talk to someone at home about the campaign. Share your thoughts – do you think it's a good idea? Share what you might draw on the box.
- > One of the aims of the campaign is to encourage children to express themselves. Do you believe it achieves this aim? Can you think of any other ideas?

Please note any interesting thoughts or comments

www.picture-news.co.uk/discuss



Apply your values online

Help your child understand that the behaviour and values you expect from them in other areas also apply online. For example, if kindness is something that you expect, emphasise the importance of being kind to people online.

Respond to their needs

As your child grows older they will need greater responsibility and freedom when it comes to using technology. Each child will be different, so it can help to tailor your response accordingly. Reward trust and responsibility, but be prepared to re-impose reasonable limits if your child breaks your agreement.

Develop your child's resilience

Developing resilience is about helping your child to deal well with any challenges and move forward from any mistakes they might make.

The best way to do this is to create an environment in which they feel free to talk to you about anything they encounter online and where they can learn from their mistakes.

And finally ...

Let your child know that you will love them whatever and that no problem – online or off – is too big for you to overcome together.



In a world of unlimited choices, our role is to equip them to make good ones.

Katharine Hill



Care for the Family creates resources that help to build firm foundations for family life and support those who face family difficulties.

Resources

Read Left to Their Own Devices? Confident Parenting in a World of Screens by Katharine Hill cff.org.uk/shop

Attend a local parenting course
cff.org.uk/courses

Visit our Parent Support page for parenting podcasts, blogs, and other resources
cff.org.uk/parenting

cff.org.uk

029 2081 0800

mail@cff.org.uk



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Top Tips For Parents

Raising Children in a Digital Age

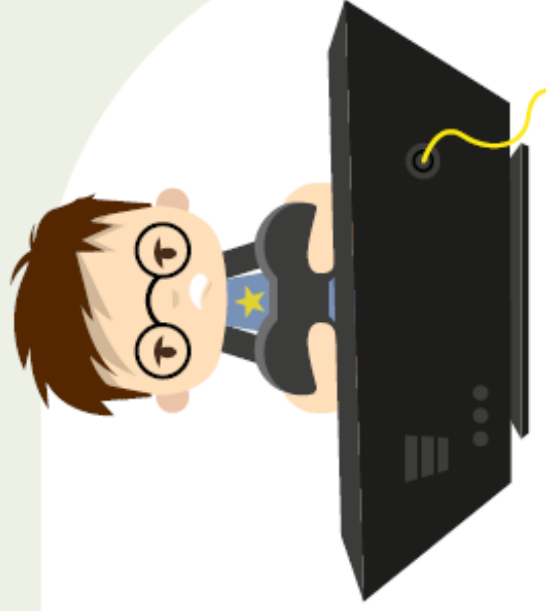


Parenting your child around screen time and online behaviour doesn't have to be daunting. In fact, it is likely to involve many of the approaches and skills that we use in other areas of parenting. Here are some tips on helping your child use technology positively and safely.

Take a balanced view

There can be two temptations as a parent when it comes to technology. One is to see it as negative and ban it completely, and the second is to ignore the dangers and bury your head in the sand.

Neither approach will equip your child effectively. Like most things in life, technology can be used for good or for bad, and as a parent you can help your child to be aware of the difference. With you as their guide they can learn to overcome the challenges and make good choices in the way they interact online.



Be a good role model

It starts with you. Your child will learn more from what you do than from what you say. This applies as much to using devices and online behaviour as it does to any other area of life. It can help to think about how and when you use technology, and the example you are setting.

Keep learning

Technology is constantly changing, so it is a good idea to keep yourself up to date with what your child is using and how it works. Become familiar with the social networks, apps, AI tools, and games that they are using. Be curious and ask your child and other young people that you know to explain something you don't understand or are unsure about.

Create tech-free times

It is important to have quality time as a family where you are interacting without the distractions of devices. Set aside times in the week when you can all relate face-to-face and without screens – perhaps during a family night or over a meal together.



Get involved

It helps to show an interest in what your child is interested in. Spend time using technology together, whether that's playing a game, creating something together or helping them find information. Get to know what they are doing online and the friends that they are making.



Agree limits

Giving your child boundaries helps them feel safe and secure – this applies as much to online activity as in other areas. When your child is younger they will need greater limits, but these can be re-negotiated as they become older and more independent. Think about limits in regards to areas such as time allowed on screens, appropriate content, budget, behaviour online, sharing private information and access to certain sites or games. Consider forming a family internet agreement and discuss consequences for breaking any rules. It is also worth creating a united front with any other adults involved in your child's life.

Equip children to make good choices

It is important to help your child understand how to respond appropriately when you are not there looking over their shoulder. Talk through various scenarios with them, and help them to protect their privacy and reputation online.

Dates for Your Diary:

We have agreed dates for a number of events over the course of the year, which are listed below for your convenience. Any new dates on the list have been **highlighted**. Further details about individual events will be shared closer to the time. Also, look out for communication from your child's class teacher about 'Stay & Play' or 'Stay & Learn' sessions in November, when you'll be invited to join in the lessons and get involved in the activities to support children's learning.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Name of Event</i>
3 rd November 2025	PFA – AGM at Capel Village Bar 8.00pm
7 th November 2025	Early Years open morning 9.30am – 11.30am
11 th November 2025	Flu vaccinations Reception – Year 6
14 th November 2025	Children in Need Day
18 th November 2025	Individual photos of children
19 th November 2025	Open Classrooms – an informal opportunity to visit your child's class after school
20 th November 2025	Parent Forum – a chance to meet myself and Governors to discuss school 2.45pm
20 th November 2025	Early Years open morning 9.30am – 11.30am
21 st November 2025	Early Years open morning 9.30am – 11.30am
28 th November 2025	PFA – Break the rules day!
2 nd December 2025	Christmas Carol Singing on playground 3.15pm
2 nd December 2025	PFA – Christmas Fayre after school
2 nd December 2026	PFA – Christmas present wrapping activity – at the christmas Fayre
3 rd December 2025	Units 2 & 3 – Christmas pantomime trip 12.45pm – 4.30pm approx
9 th & 10 th December 2025	Early Years Christmas Nativity performances 10.00am
9 th & 11 th December 2025	Parent consultations 9 th 4pm – 7pm 11 th 4pm - 6pm (booking via the Arbor app from 28 th November)
11 th December 2025	Christmas lunch day – (Children can wear their christmas jumpers instead of school jumper)
12 th December 2025	Rocksteady Concert 2.30pm
W/B 15 th December	Christmas class parties
16 th December 2025	Christmas carols on the playground – parents and carers are invited to join us 2.30pm
17 th December 2025	Early Years and Unit 1 Travelling Panto coming to school!
19 th December 2025	Christmas Service
19 th December 2025	Last day of term – break up for Christmas
5 th January 2026	Professional Development Day for staff (no children in school)
6 th January 2026	Children return to school
13 th February 2026	PFA – Disco
W/B 16 th February 2026	Half Term week
9 th March 2026	PFA – Mother's Day present wrapping activity
17 th & 19 th March 2026	Parent consultations
W/B 23 rd March 2026	PGL residential trip – Year 6
27 th March 2026	Last day of term – break up for Easter
13 th April 2026	Back to school after Easter
W/B 11 th May 2026	Year 6 SATs week
W/B 25 th May 2026	Half Term week
W/B 1 st June 2026	2 week window for Year 4 Multiplication Check
W/B 8 th June 2026	Year 1 Phonics Screen week
9 th June 2026	Key Stage 2 Sports Day
15 th June 2026	PFA – Father's Day present wrapping activity
17 th June 2026	Early Years / Key Stage 1 Sports Day
3 rd July 2026	PFA – Summer Fayre
7 th July 2026	Summer Celebration event – parents and carers are invited to join us
13 th July 2026	Annual reports out to parents