

St Martin's Newsletter



AUTUMN TERM - Friday 4th October

Open Door Policy

As a school we have an open door policy. SLT are available in the morning and all teachers are available at the end of the day. I would ask that parents practice the same values as we share with the children when speaking with staff - to be kind and respectful. Please treat our staff in a way you would want them to treat you and remember that they spend all day doing their best for the children.

For Parents Next Week

Tuesday 8th October 8.50am:
Y4 stay and pray
 Thursday 10th October 2.30pm:
First Holy Communion meeting in Church
 Friday 11th October 9am:
Y5 assembly
 Friday 11th October-Thursday 17th October:
 Book fair after school

Attendance

Year R - 95% 7 Lates
 Year 1 - 92% 4 Lates
 Year 2 - 90% 8 Lates
 Year 3 - 91%

Year 4 - 96% 7 Lates

Year 5 - 94%

Year 6 - 93% 5 Lates

5 Classes with less than 10 lates

Well done to year 3, this weeks Dojo Champs

Anyone who comes into school after 8:50am is marked as late. Please try to be an attendance



Parent's Evening

Booking is now live on School Spider for Parent's Evening which is on **Wednesday 16th October** from **1.45pm-6.15pm**.

Wednesday Word

The Wednesday Word is a resource for parents to use when discussing the weekly Gospel's with their families
<https://www.paperturn-view.com/wednesday-word/openness?pid=MTA101634&p=2&v=150.3>

St Martin's Stars

Well done to everyone who got a certificate this week.

Purple Tie certificates are given for children who embody our rules of being Kind Respectful and Responsible.

Nursery: Star- Ivy B
 Value- Laila C
 YEAR R: Star- Riley J
 Purple tie- Paxton L
 Value- Georgie J
 YEAR 1: Star- Alex C
 Purple tie- Fraser H
 Value- Romaisa A
 YEAR 2: Star- Sommachi E
 Purple tie- Ruby-Rae C
 Value- Katie D
 YEAR 3: Star- Elsie C
 Purple tie- Kasi N
 Value- Vanessa K
 YEAR 4: Star- Reggie MW
 Purple tie- Tommy H
 Value- Amelia F
 YEAR 5: Star- Jayden F
 Purple tie- Winter K
 Value- Sofia L
 YEAR 6: Star- Isaac H
 Purple tie- Jessica B
 Value- Erin H

First Holy Communion Meeting

There is a parent's meeting this week on **Thursday 10th October** for any child who is in **Year 3, or above** who has not yet made their First Holy Communion and wants to make it in June 2025. This will be in the **Church at 2.30pm**. We look forward to seeing you there.

Coffee Morning

For World Mental Health Awareness Day Mrs Hayes will be holding a **coffee morning** on **Monday 7th October 9-10am**. See the poster on page 3 for more details.

Attendance

This week whole school attendance has **slightly dropped** at 93.4%. As the colder weather arrives, bug season comes with it so please make sure your children bring warm coats and tissues with them.

This guide details the online safety concerns associated with in-game chat functionality, and lets you know how to protect young players from these risks.

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about IN-GAME CHAT

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Video games are continuing to grow in popularity – including, of course, among children and young people – and the emergence of gaming communities has been accelerated by the inclusion of chat functionality across many different titles. While in-game chat isn't inherently a bad thing, it can create some concerns about online safety and the people that children might be interacting with.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF CHAT

There are a number of ways that gamers commonly chat with one another online. As the name would suggest, in-game chat happens within the game itself. There's also party chat: a group voice conversation that console users can have with anyone on the same platform. This tends to be more commonly used by players who already know each other. Finally, many gamers – especially on PC – will chat via a third-party app such as Discord.

CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

Whether it's text- or voice-based, in-game chat is frequently open to all players to use. Many games default to making it an opt-in function, but some don't: meaning a child could start seeing messages within the game from people they're playing with, regardless of whether they know those individuals or not. While most strangers won't necessarily have ill intent, there are some who may behave inappropriately when chatting to a child – intentionally or otherwise.

DANGER OF GROOMING

It's been reported that some young gamers have encountered older players online who pretend to be a lower age to manipulate children, sending gifts in exchange for chatting and sending photos. Just as on any messaging platform, it's good to advise young people to avoid speaking to strangers; emphasise that they shouldn't accept gifts from anyone online that they don't know.

BULLYING AND ABUSE

While some in-game chat can turn toxic because of how a match plays out, others turn that way because of people who engage in trolling – in essence, behaving in an offensive and abusive way simply to cause pain or get a rise out of whoever they're talking to. These 'trolls' often lean on racial slurs, anti-LGBT sentiment and other hateful rhetoric; they normally feel most confident preying on younger, more impressionable gamers.

POTENTIAL FOR PRIVATE CHAT

If a player would like a re-match with a stranger after meeting them in the game, they can send a friend request, or use the party chat together in the future. For the most part, this is harmless – but it might lead to messages being exchanged in private. This could then escalate to the sharing of private information, and potentially attempts to manipulate or scam younger players.

COMPETITIVE ATMOSPHERE

Certain games are very competitive, and players can sometimes get upset if they feel a teammate is underperforming, an opponent won unfairly, or they're just a bad loser. This can lead to unpleasant messages that stray away from playful 'trash talk' and wander into the territory of bullying. Some players have been known to get incredibly abusive in situations like this, and the impact of this on a young gamer's emotional wellbeing could be severe.

Advice for Parents & Educators

LOCK-DOWN IN-GAME CHAT

In-game chat can often be disabled in the game's settings. This allows children to play without risk of contact from strangers – but it will need to be done in each individual game. Text chat appears in the corner of the screen in many titles, so it's normally easy to take a quick glance and see what's being said. With voice chat, explain to children what behaviour is inappropriate, so they can spot the dangers themselves.

REPORT POTENTIAL OFFENDERS

Most games offer a robust means of reporting other players, so you can flag an account as potentially harmful. This normally leads to the account not being matched with yours in the future and, if that person's conduct breaks any of the game's rules, they may be banned from playing entirely. This is done within the game itself, so each title has a slightly different process, but these tend to be designed for simplicity.

CONSIDER OTHER CHAT OPTIONS

If a child wants to play with people they know, consider using party chat or a third-party service like Discord. This allows everyone involved to chat on a private server and even enjoy each other's company while playing different games. It's also far more secure, as anyone looking to join will need to request and be granted access – normally by whoever is hosting the chat.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Make sure children understand the difference between being competitive and being abusive. Talk about what constitutes unusual or inappropriate behaviour from strangers online. Be clear that if anything ever concerns or worries them, they should tell a trusted adult as soon as possible. Empower children to identify the risks of in-game chat for themselves and reassure them they won't get in trouble for seeking help if anything goes wrong.

Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is the Editor in Chief of GGRecon and has been working in the games media industry for five years. He's also a parent and therefore understands the importance of online safety. Writing mainly about tech and fitness, his work has been published at sites including IGN, TechRadar, and plenty more.



Source: See full reference list on guide page at: nationalcollege.com/guides/in-game-chat



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COFFEE MORNING

**FOR WORLD MENTAL
HEALTH AWARENESS DAY,
COME AND MEET OUR
SCHOOL'S MENTAL HEALTH
SUPPORT TEAM**

**THEY CAN OFFER SUPPORT
FOR YOUR CHILD AND
SUPPORT FOR YOU TOO**

**Everybody's Welcome!
at St. Martin's School
Monday 7th October
9-10am**