Headteacher: Mrs Michaela Velayudhan Tomlin
Deputy Headteacher: Mr Simon Bartram

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Pontefract, a Voluntary Academy
Newgate, Pontefract, West Yorkshire, WF8 4AA

Telephone: 01977 701493
Email: admin@sjp.bkcat.co.uk **Website:** www.sjp.bkcat.co.uk

Tuesday 1st September 2026

Dear Parents/Carers and Families,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all back to St Joseph's for the start of another academic year. I am really looking forward to seeing you and your children tomorrow, and over the coming weeks. A very warm welcome to all of our returning pupils, who have now progressed into their new year groups.

We are also delighted to welcome our new Lower Foundation and Upper Foundation pupils, together with their families, as they join the St Joseph's family. We hope that our newest members settle quickly, feel happy and secure, and know that we are here to support both children and families in any way we can to make this important transition as smooth and positive as possible. I hope that you have all enjoyed a restful summer break, filled with lots of wonderful memories, and that your children are feeling excited about beginning a new school year.

To help everyone get off to a positive start, I have included some important information and reminders below.

Nut Allergy – We Are a Nut-Free School

A number of members of our school community have a severe airborne nut allergy. In order to minimise the risk of a potentially life-threatening allergic reaction, St Joseph's is a **nut-free school**.

Anaphylaxis can occur through the ingestion of nut products and, in some circumstances, through exposure to nuts in the air.
We very much appreciate your support in helping us to keep our children and wider school community safe. Please ensure that:

- Your child does **not** bring any food items or snacks containing nuts into school.
- Packed lunches do **not** contain nuts or nut products.

Thank you for your care and cooperation with this very important safety measure.

Student Contact Details/updated information

Please remember, if you haven't done so already to log into the Arbor app and complete the following:

- Complete any outstanding consent requests for the 2026/27 academic year.
- Check that your contact details and your child's information are up to date.
- Submit any changes, such as a new address or telephone number, directly through Arbor

It is essential that we have a **minimum of two emergency contacts** for every child. Please also ensure that anyone collecting your child from school is listed on your child's contact details, or that you have informed the school office in advance of them collecting your child. It is important that we receive all updated contact information, permissions, including **Year 5 and Year 6 walking-home permissions**, and any other relevant information promptly.

The Bishop Konstant Catholic Academy Trust is an exempt charity regulated by the Secretary of State for Education.
It is a company limited by guarantee in England & Wales, company number 08253770 whose registered office is at
St Wilfrid's Catholic High School & Sixth Form College, Cutsyke Road, Featherstone, West Yorkshire, WF7 6BD.

Preparing for the School Day

We want to ensure that all of our children are well prepared, happy and ready to learn each day. Please take note of the following reminders:

- **Uniform and Belongings:** Children must wear the appropriate school uniform, black school shoes and appropriate headbands/hair bobbles (e.g. no brightly coloured headbands, cat ear headbands, etc). Please ensure that **all uniform, coats, bags and personal belongings are clearly labelled with your child's name**.
- **Breakfast Club:** This club is available to support parents and carers. Places must be **pre-booked and pre-paid** before your child attends. Please remember that there is **no pay-on-the-door option**. Drop off is between 8-8:10am promptly.
- **PE Days:** On PE days, children should come to school wearing their PE kit and remain in it throughout the day. This should include a **plain white polo shirt and blue shorts**, with a **plain blue or black tracksuit** for outdoor PE and appropriate trainers.
- **Earrings:** Earrings must **not be worn at any point on PE days**. Earrings cannot be taped over; they must be removed before your child attends school on a PE day.
- **Water Bottles:** Please send your child to school every day with a named water bottle containing **water**.
- **Healthy Snacks:** Only healthy snacks should be brought into school, such as fresh fruit or dried fruit. If you choose to send grapes, these should be **cut lengthways**.
- **School Bags:** Children only need to bring a small school bag to school. This ensures that bags can be stored safely in our EYFS and KS1 cloakrooms or KS2 lockers.
- **Illness:** If your child has sickness or diarrhoea, please do not send them into school until **48 hours after the last episode**.
- **School Dinners:** If your child is having a school dinner, please ensure that you have selected their menu choice **before the day they are having a school dinner** and that there are sufficient funds on their account at all times.
- **Packed Lunches:** If your child brings a packed lunch, please ensure that it contains appropriate, healthy food. Chocolates, sweets and fizzy drinks should **not** be included in lunchboxes, and children should not be sent to school with a lunch consisting predominantly of chocolate-based items.

Attendance and Absence

If your child is absent from school, please contact the school office **before 9.00am on the morning of the absence** to let us know.

If we have not received notification of an absence, we will contact you. If we are unable to reach you, we will then contact the other people listed on your child's contact list. If we are still unable to make contact, a home visit will be carried out.

Parents and carers are also reminded that all **absence request forms** must be submitted to the school office using the school's designated template and should be completed in a timely manner. Any relevant supporting information or documentation should be attached where appropriate. We thank you for your support with this.

Late Arrivals and Early Collections

Please ensure that children arrive at school **on time and ready to learn** each morning. Punctuality is important in ensuring that children begin their day calmly and positively and do not miss valuable learning time.

If your child needs to be collected before the end of the school day, please ensure that this is communicated to the school office in advance and that the appropriate arrangements are followed.

Late arrivals, early collection and late collection at the end of a school day are monitored closely, school would like to avoid taking any further action.

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Health, Safety and Medication

Please ensure that all **new asthma plans and healthcare plans** are sent to the school office tomorrow morning, before your child starts school.

In addition, please ensure that all medication and inhalers are returned to school tomorrow, ready for your child's return.

Please check that:

- Your child's inhaler/epi-pen/medication has not passed its end date.
- All medication is within its expiry date.
- Medication is in its **original packaging**.
- Medication is clearly labelled with your child's **name**.
- All medication is in date and any medication your child requires on a regular basis should be in school and accessible.

School administers medicine prescribed for the child four times a day.

These checks are extremely important in ensuring that we are able to support your child safely should medication be required during the school day.

Safeguarding

The safety and wellbeing of our children remains our highest priority.

Children should be accompanied by an adult on the school playground at all times before and after the school day. Please support us in safeguarding our pupils by ensuring that children are not left unattended before or after school.

Taking photographs or filming on the school site is a safeguarding concern and **is not permitted**. This is extremely important to ensure parents/carers support in keeping our children, staff and parents safe. Parents/families are not permitted to post other parent's children online though social media platforms, including WhatsApp.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) team is:

- **Lead DSL:** Mrs Velayudhan Tomlin – Headteacher
- **Deputy DSL:** Mr S Bartram – Deputy Headteacher
- **Deputy DSL:** Mrs J Clements – Learning Mentor
- **Deputy DSL:** Mrs S Smith – Year One Teacher

Our designated email address for **safeguarding matters only** is:
safeguarding@sjp.bkcat.uk

If you have a safeguarding concern, please do not hesitate to contact us.

No Dogs on School Grounds

With the exception of guide dogs, dogs are **not permitted on school grounds**. This includes the area beyond the school gates, dogs are not permitted once you arrive at the carpark gates. Dogs must remain outside the school grounds **at all times**. Thank you for helping us to maintain a safe environment for all members of our school community.

Looking at the year Ahead

As always, we have been busy planning for the year ahead and are looking forward to sharing lots of exciting dates and events with you.

We know that parents and carers have many commitments to juggle and that having advance notice of school events is extremely helpful. We will therefore aim to share key dates for the full academic year with you early next week, including events such as **Parents' year groups expectations meetings, parent's evenings, Nativities and other important school activities**.

We hope that this will help families to plan ahead and ensure that you are able to join us in celebrating the many special moments that make school life so memorable.

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Fundraising- 'Friends of St Joseph'

Our 'Friends of St Joseph' work tirelessly behind the scenes to create wonderful events and experiences for our children, whilst also raising valuable funds to positively impact our children. This is a real strength of St Joseph's. This year the funds we raise are intended to go towards enhancing and improving our playground/outdoor areas. We thank you for your ongoing support.

Newsletters

Our weekly newsletter, posted on ClassDojo, is **for you, our parents and carers**. It is a chance to celebrate all the wonderful things happening in school, keep you informed, and provide important updates and reminders about school life.

We kindly ask that you take a few moments from your busy week to read through the newsletter each time it is posted. We understand that family life can be busy, but taking the time to read it can help ensure you have the latest information and may save you from needing to contact the school to ask about information that has already been shared.

Your support in keeping up to date with our weekly newsletter is greatly appreciated and helps us to keep communication between home and school clear, consistent and effective. Thank you for taking the time to stay informed and for your continued support.

A Personal Welcome

As I begin my ninth year as Headteacher of our incredible St Joseph's community, I can honestly say that I feel just as proud and privileged to lead our school as I did on my very first day.

As a former pupil of St Joseph's, myself, I have a deep and personal appreciation of the wonderful gift that a Catholic education can provide. Alongside my fantastic team, I am passionate about ensuring that every child in our care receives the very best education, while also having the opportunity to grow in confidence, develop their talents and deepen their faith and spirituality.

There is so much to look forward to in the year ahead, and I feel incredibly proud to be part of such a special school community. Most of all, I am excited to see your children grow, develop and flourish as the year unfolds, and to share in the many achievements, friendships, experiences and special memories they will make along the way.

Our partnership with parents and carers is such an important part of what makes St Joseph's special. Your support, encouragement and involvement make a real difference to our children and to our wider school community, and I would like to thank you for everything you do to support our school and our children.

Please always remember that our door is open. Whether you have a question, a concern, a suggestion, or simply need a little support, please do come and speak to us. We are here to listen, to help and to work alongside you to ensure that your children are happy, safe and able to thrive.

We are so looking forward to welcoming you and your children back to St Joseph's and beginning another wonderful year together. I hope the year ahead will be filled with learning, laughter, faith and many moments for us all to celebrate.

I look forward to seeing you on the playground tomorrow morning and to starting another exciting year together.

Best wishes,
Mrs Velayudhan Tomlin

Headteacher

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