



Newsletter 2 – Autumn 2026

Dear Rockcliffe Families,

At the end of Week 2, as staff we couldn't be prouder of how well the children have settled into the new routines this year. It was lovely to hear about all the fantastic things the children had been doing to earn a certificate in our Superhero Assembly this morning. Our Year 4s have been allocated their roles in the Pupil Leadership Team and I know what a brilliant job they are going to do this year.

The new Play Equipment is Officially Open!

The biggest excitement this week has been watching the construction team on site creating our fantastic new play equipment. We did an official opening in a special assembly on Thursday where our new Sports Leaders cut the ribbon to mark it officially open. Every child then had a chance to test it out. Before school, we used the expertise of "experienced" play equipment users to make sure it was suitable!



The new equipment has only been possible thanks to a very generous donation from NE Supported Tenancies Ltd and the amazing fundraising efforts by the Friends of Rockcliffe! If you have attended a school event, bought cakes from the cake stall or took part in the Junior Parkrun takeover – this has helped enormously. With school budgets as they are at the moment, we are really grateful for all the help we are given to enhance the experiences for our children.

Now, the safety bit. Please can we ask that children don't use this before and after school. The design and challenge is for children in Key Stage 1 and 2, and we want to make sure it is used safely and has a safe number of children on at any time. Thank you for your co-operation.

Headteacher: Tom Jones

Rockcliffe First School ■ Grafton Road ■ Whitley Bay ■ NE26 2NR
0191 607 6573 ■ office@rockcliffeschool.org.uk
www.rockcliffeschool.org.uk



Welcome Back Summer Fair



We hope to see lots of our families at our Fair next Friday at 3.30pm. The Friends of Rockcliffe are busy with plans and it looks like it will be a great community event. On Wednesday after school and on Thursday at drop off the Friends will be on the Grafton Road and Rockcliffe Street to take donations of cuddly toys, gift or paper bags, books, toys and tombola prizes.

New Members of Team Rockcliffe

This year we have welcomed three new members to the Rockcliffe Staff Team. Mrs Julie Petty has joined our lunchtime team. Julie has a long family association with the school and will also be working in Kids' Club occasionally. Sam Clayton and Scott Stewart from Andrew Cartwright FC are also working with us every lunchtime to provide sports and games in The Cage. Scott will be delivering Year 3 and 4 PE lessons and both will be involved in the after school clubs provided by ACFC too.



The games at lunchtime have already been hugely popular. This, along with the new play equipment, is the start of a plan to enhance the lunchtime outdoor experience for the children. More will be introduced over the coming weeks too.

Polite Reminders

Please can all parents check that all packed lunches and snacks are **nut free**. This includes Nutella. As an Allergy Aware school with several children and staff with nut allergies it is really important that everyone is following this.

Here's a reminder of PE days for each Key Stage. Children should come to school in their Rockcliffe PE kit on these days. Our uniform guide is here: [Rockcliffe First School - Uniform](#)

	Days
Reception	Monday and Friday
Year 1 and 2	Tuesday and Thursday
Year 3 and 4	Wednesday and Friday (Swimming on Wednesdays – Beacon this half-term)



September 2027

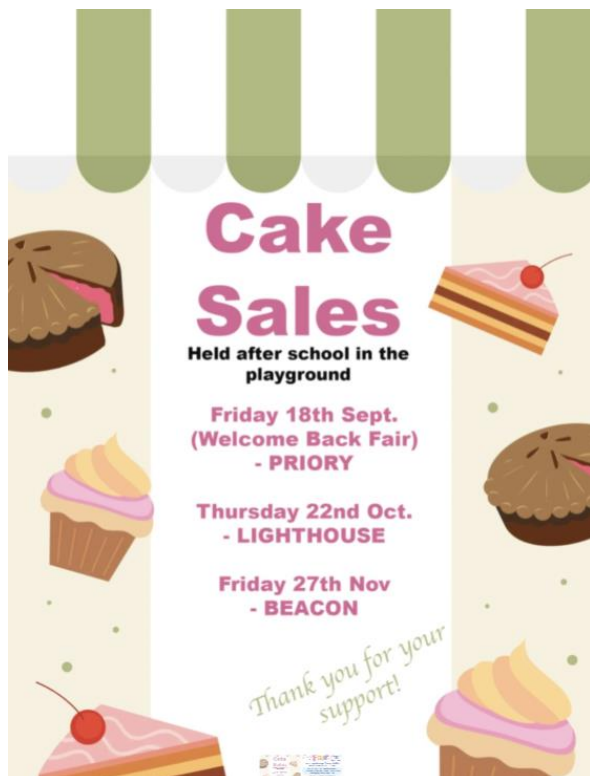
I know we have only just welcomed our new families into Nursery and Reception but we are already looking ahead to next year. If you, or anyone you know, are looking for a Nursery or Reception place for next September, we are holding school tours and an Open Morning over the next few months. You can sign up via our website: [Rockcliffe First School - Joining our Early Years](#). Please share this with anyone you know who would be interested. Thank you.



Back to this year, our Key Dates section has been updated for events this term. This will be updated regularly so please keep checking back.

Have a lovely weekend and I hope to see you at the Fair next Friday. Good luck to any children doing the Junior Great North Run this weekend and any parents running on Sunday.

Tom Jones





Dates for Your Diary

September	
Fri 18 th	Dr Martin Lee Author Visit 3.30pm – 5pm: Friends of Rockcliffe Welcome Back Fair
Tue 29 th	Year 1 and 2: Space Educational Visit
October	
Mon 12 th	Tempest Photography - Individual Photos
Wed 14 th	Parent Consultations 1 – information to follow soon
Tue 20 th	Parent Consultations 2 – information to follow soon
Wed 21 st	9am: North Tyneside Inclusion Service Parent Workshop (see below)
Thu 22 nd	Lighthouse Cake Sale after school End of Term
November	
Mon 2 nd	Start of Term
Fri 13 th	Children In Need Day Flu Immunisations for Rec to Y4
Fri 27 th	Beacon Cake Sale after school
December	
Mon 7 th	9.30am KS1 Christmas Performance for Y1 Parents
Tue 8 th	9.30am KS1 Christmas Performance for Y2 Parents
Wed 9 th	9.30am KS2 Christmas Performance for Y3 Parents
Thu 10 th	9.30am KS2 Christmas Performance for Y4 Parents
Fri 11 th	10.30am Nursery B Performance
Mon 14 th	9.30am Reception Performance 10.30am Nursery A Performance
Fri 18 th	End of Term
Training Days 2026-27	
<i>Term Dates are on our website here: Rockcliffe First School - Term Dates</i> <i>Our Teacher Training Days are:</i> • Friday 23rd October 2026 • Monday 4th January 2027 • Thursday 6th May 2027 (Polling Day) • Monday 7th June 2027	
Facebook - Please follow our Facebook page – visit our school website and click the Facebook link at the bottom of the Home Page.	



Growing Brains, Guiding Behaviour

A free workshop primarily for families of children in the Early Years (0-5). However, it is also suitable for families of children of First School age.

We know that young children struggle to manage their emotions and behaviour, this often comes out in behaviours which we as adults find difficult to manage.

In these workshops we will explore the link between brain development and behaviour and offer practical tips for supporting children when they are dysregulated.

We will cover:

- Brain development in early childhood and how this can affect behaviour.
- Tools and 'top-tips' to support co-regulation.

Come along to our free workshop on Wed 21st October at 9am – 10.30am at Rockcliffe First School to find out more.



Delivered by

North Tyneside Council

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about CHARACTER.AI

Character.AI is an entertainment platform where users create and chat with AI-powered characters. These chatbots can act like existing favourite characters from movies or books, or like friends, mentors, or even romantic partners, responding in an emotional, personality engaging way. Although this can encourage creativity, it can also make a generated conversation feel like a genuine relationship, which is concerning if it takes the place of human relationships.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

- INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT**
AI replies are generated in real time rather than chosen from a fully checked script. Even with safety filters on, conversations can still move into sexual, violent, discriminatory, or self-harm material. These AI characters are often made by users, so a familiar name or child-friendly description does not guarantee that every response from the character will be suitable for a young person.
- BLURRED BOUNDARIES**
Characters on Character.AI can use the language of friendship, love, and empathy without ever feeling anything. Vulnerable young people may struggle to separate this simulation from genuine understanding. Romantic role-play or a character that demands attention, loyalty, or secrecy could also risk distorting young people's expectations around consent, disagreement, and the give-and-take involved in healthy human relationships.
- UNRELIABLE ADVICE**
Characters, like other chatbot platforms, are at risk of inventing facts or giving inappropriate advice while sounding completely confident. Characters may also echo a young person's assumptions instead of questioning them. This can become particularly risky when users rely on a character for guidance about health, mental wellbeing, relationships, money, or personal safety instead of checking with a credible source or trusted adult.
- EMOTIONAL DEPENDENCY**
Character.AI chatbots can appear endlessly attentive, supportive, and affectionate, which is one of the hallmarks of the generative AI models that such companies are built on. A young person may start turning to a character chatbot whenever they feel lonely or upset and believe that it understands them better than the humans in their life. This can become more concerning when chatting starts to replace sleep, schoolwork, hobbies and friendships.
- PRIVACY CONCERNS**
Character.AI chats may feel private, especially when a bot sounds personal and caring, but they take place on a company's online systems. Users could intentionally or unintentionally reveal their name, school, location, routines, images, or intimate concerns. Character.AI says some data may be retained to improve its services and AI models, so young people should never treat a chatbot like a confidential diary.
- UNHEALTHY ENGAGEMENT**
Be aware of warning signs such as secret accounts, bypassing age restrictions, hiding phone use from adults, chatting late at night, distress when access to the platform or character stops, withdrawal from other people, falling interest in school, or believing the character is omniscient. Increased use may also signal that the young person is already lonely, anxious, or seeking help.

Advice for Parents & Educators

- KEEP CONVERSATIONS OPEN**
Ask what the young person enjoys about Character.AI and invite them to show you how the platform and their favourite characters work. Useful questions include, "How is it ever said something that felt wrong?" and "How can you tell it doesn't have feelings?" Avoid shaming them for using platforms like Character.AI or making them feel there is something wrong with them for doing so.
- CHECK AGE, SETTINGS & LIMITS**
Character.AI's minimum age is 18 in the UK, but open-ended companion chat is restricted to adults aged 18 or over. Users aged 15 to 17 receive a different experience built around guided "Stories" and other creative or social features. Check their current settings, never help or encourage a young person to give a false age, and apply the same safety rules to other chatbot apps.
- PAUSE, CHECK AND ASK**
Teach young people to pause before accepting an answer from characters on Character.AI. Encourage them to check important claims against a trustworthy source and ask a safe adult when the issue matters. Never use a character as the sole source of medical, mental health, legal, financial, or safeguarding advice. Remind them not to share passwords, contact details, school information, live locations, or private images.
- NOTICE AND RESPOND**
Take action if chats involve sexual content, threats, coercion, abuse, self-harm or danger. Save relevant evidence, report the character and follow the setting's safeguarding process; educators should involve the designated safeguarding lead. If anyone is in immediate danger, contact emergency services. Chatline is available on 0800 1111 and the NSPCC Helpline on 0800 800 5050.

Meet Our Expert

Darren Coan is an educator with almost 30 years' experience across teaching, school leadership and governance. He works internationally supporting schools and colleges with AI leadership and governance and (insert NC courses I have written).

See full reference list on our website

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