



St Mary's Catholic First School Newsletter –
Friday 8th September 2023

We love, we learn, we live.

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back to the new school year, I hope you all had a lovely holiday with your friends and family. We have had a lovely time in St. Mary's this week, children in years 1-4 will take part in their first WILD Passport session this week. Wild passport is an outdoor learning curriculum that is going to provide the children with weekly outdoor learning opportunities, taught by outdoor education experts. We were blessed with stunning weather this week, but we advise that children in years 1-4 have a pair of wellingtons and/or some sturdy walking boots and a waterproof coat in school each Tuesday in preparation for this outdoor session. We also suggest sending the children in with a spare set of clothes, just in case it gets muddy!



We welcome Ms. Lawson to our school team this academic year. Ms. Lawson has been teaching classes this week and is learning names very quickly! Ms. Lawson has already commented on how impressed she is with the fantastic attitude and behaviour displayed by our wonderful children. It was lovely to meet our new Reception children and families this week. We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you all to the St. Mary's family. Starting school is such a special time; a time for new experiences, new friends, and a step towards greater independence for your child. We look forward to sharing in your child's learning journey throughout their time at St. Mary's.

The 'Soft Start' to school is going well, with children settling into classes promptly. Where at all possible can pupils remain with parents at the entrance gates until staff come out of on duty at 8.40am. Next week, Reception children continue with their gradual start to school life, coming into school for 9am and finishing at 1.45pm.

We started our week with a whole school 'Welcome Back' Liturgical Prayer. We discussed how this new school year is a fresh opportunity to give our all, learn lots and have the best possible year. Each class took a candle back to their classrooms to act as reminder that we are entrusted to keep the light of Jesus shining brightly as we make a fresh start this. We prayed together that we would keep our lights shining brightly and give 100% in all we do this year!

Have a lovely weekend,

Mrs Oakes

Parent Curriculum Workshops

Next week, we are inviting parents to attend our Parent Curriculum Workshops. The workshops are an opportunity for us to share St. Mary's vision and values with you as parents and carers. The workshops will outline what your child will be covering in school throughout this academic year and explain how you can access information regarding your child's curriculum. It will also outline useful strategies and support that you as parents/carers can give your child, such as expectations for homework etc. We encourage as many parents as possible to attend these workshops. We would like to invite you to our Parent Curriculum evenings as follows:

- Reception Curriculum Workshop-Week beginning 11th September 1.45-2:00pm.
- Key Stage 1 (Years 1 & 2) Curriculum Workshop -Tuesday 12th September from 3.30pm.
- Key Stage 2 (Years 3 & 4) Curriculum Workshop -Wednesday 12th September from 3.30pm.
- Parents Evenings Tuesday 10th and Thursday 12th October 3.30-6:00pm.

For any parents unable to attend the curriculum workshops due to work commitments, please contact the school office and we will happily accommodate another time.

We ask that parents of Reception children attending the Curriculum Workshop wait by the main entrance at 1.45pm. The children will be supervised separately by a member of staff while parents attend the workshops from 1.45pm each day. Please can any Reception parents let the school office know in advance, if you unable to attend the workshops.

Extra-Curricular Clubs

Starting next week will be the following extra-curricular clubs. If the club is within the school day, we will sign all relevant children up to the club. If your child wishes to attend a club that is before or after school, then please ring and inform the school office.

Club	Day/Time
Girls Football Club (Years 3 & 4)	Tuesday 12.25-12.55pm
Boys Football Club (Years 3 & 4)	Tuesday 12:25-12.55pm
Running Club (Years 2-4)	Wednesday 8.15-8.40am
Mini Vinnies (Years 1-4)	See following information below
Homework Club (Years 1-4)	Thursday 12.25-12.55pm
Singing Club (Years 1-4)	Wednesday 12.25-12.55pm
Regenerators	Wednesday 3.15-4.00pm

Please note Regenerators is our school Council/Eco Council clubs. Children are invited to be elected for this club. The children will find out more about this in school next week. Therefore, Regenerators will not commence immediately, until the members have been voted for and elected by the children. School will inform parents when Regenerators commence and who is in the club.

Mini Vinnies- The Mini Vinnies are the youngest members of the St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP), an international Christian voluntary organisation dedicated to tackling poverty in all its forms by providing practical assistance to people in need.

The Mini Vinnies get together in primary schools and parishes across England and Wales to live out their mission of *see, think, do*, supporting their school community and beyond alongside the SVP.

Mini Vinnies turn concern into action by...

- Praying for those in need
- Making cards for those who may be sick, isolated, lonely or in prison.
- Visiting local care homes to sing and share stories with residents.
- Taking part in arts and crafts to share with others.
- Running food collections for a local food bank
- Supporting other children in their school or parish

There will be two Mini Vinnies sessions every half term. The first two sessions for this half term are as follows:

Monday 25th September 3:15pm-4:30pm

Monday 16th October 3:15pm-4:30pm

If your child is in years 1-4 and would like to attend Mini Vinnies, please let a member of our office know on (01434) 603791.

Please note that we review extra-curricular clubs each half term to ensure all children have the opportunity to attend a club at some point in the academic year.

Year 4 International Day of Peace Liturgical Prayer

To celebrate the International Day of Peace year 4 will be holding a whole school liturgical prayer in the school hall on Wednesday 20th September at 9.20am. All parents and carers are invited to attend this event.

Reception Welcome Mass

To welcome our new Reception pupils into St. Mary's we are having a Welcome Mass at St. Mary's Catholic Church on September 28th at 9.30am. All parents and carers are invited to attend this event.

Autumn Term Class Masses

Following our Reception Welcome Mass on the 28th September each class will have the opportunity to attend Mass at St. Mary's Church at 9.30am. Parents and carers are invited to attend class Masses at the Church. Dates are as follows:

Reception Welcome Mass: 28/9

Y4- Friday 6/10/23

Y3- Friday 13/10/23

Y2- Friday 20/10/23

Half Term

Y1-Friday 10/11/23

Y4- Friday 17/11/23

Y3-Friday 24/11/23

Y2- Friday 1/12/23

Y1 & Rec-Friday 8/12/23

Thurs 14/12/23- **11am** Christingle Service-Whole School

Wed 20/12/23 - End of term Christmas Mass-9.30am-Whole School

Arrivals and Departures Policy

This week we sent a copy of our Arrivals and Departures Policy to all parents/carers. It is great to see so many children on scooters and bikes. Please can we ask that children dismount until they are out of the school gates to avoid any collisions.

Today your child will be sent home with updated parking permits for St. Mary's Church car park for this academic year. Access to what is a Private Car Park at St Mary's Church, is allowed as a courtesy of the Church, while the majority of parents and guardians dropping off and collecting children from school drive park in a safe and considerate manner, we politely request the following in relation to the Church car park when dropping off and collecting children:

- Please display the parking permits you are provided with in the windscreen of your car for the duration of your stay in the Church car park.
- Vehicles to observe a 10 mph speed limit when using the car park.
- Vehicles must park in designated parking bays only.
- Access to and from the Presbytery/Private House at the rear of the car park must be maintained at all times - ie the access road must not be parked on.
- Parking must not block in other parked cars.
- No parking on the yellow lines - i.e. adjacent the footpath leading to the church entrance.
- No parking in the Disabled Bay without displaying a Blue Disabled Badge.
- Please allow time in your journey to find an alternative place to park if there are no parking bays/spaces available when arriving.

Inhalers

Please can any children requiring an inhaler bring a spare one (to remain in school) if you have not already done so. Parents/carers will also be requested to complete an Asthma Card for their child if they haven't already done so.

P.E. Kit

Please ensure your child's P.E. kit is clearly labelled with their name on each item. There has been a slight alteration to when children wear PE (a change from the previous information sent out in last week's Welcome Letter). PE will take place as follows:

Reception-Monday & Thursday

Year 1-Tuesday & Friday

Year 2-Monday & Tuesday

Year 3 & 4-Monday & Tuesday

Reception children should bring their PE kit into school each Monday in a separate named bag and leave it on their peg for the duration of the week. They will bring it home on Friday to be washed.

Year 1 & 2 children should bring their PE kit into school each Monday (in a separate named bag) and

leave it on their peg for the duration of the week. They will bring it home on Friday to be washed.

Years 3 & 4 children should come to school wearing their **school** PE kit on Mondays then bring their PE into school in a bag on Tuesday to hang on their peg. School uniform should be worn from Tuesday to Friday. The children will bring their PE kit home on a Friday to be washed.

KS2 Swimming:

Weekly swimming lessons will commence for years 3 and 4 each Monday afternoon starting on Monday 11th September. Children will require a swimsuit, a towel and swimming goggles. Key stage 2 children are requested to come to school in their PE kit on Mondays.

Wild Passport Equipment:

As previously mentioned, children in years 1-4 will take part in Wild Passport every Tuesday. Ideally, the following suitable footwear and spare clothes should remain in school in a separate named bag on your child's peg:

- A pair of wellingtons and/or some sturdy walking boots
- A waterproof coat
- *A spare set of old clothes to remain in school such as jogging bottoms, top, socks.

*Please note: Wild Passport will take place outdoors each week regardless of the weather. I would strongly advise that all children have a spare set of old clothes left in school should they get wet during these sessions. Wild Passport do use shelters in inclement weather, but children must be prepared for the Northumberland weather. Unfortunately, any children who are not suitably attired for the weather may find themselves unable to participate in their designated session.

Jewellery

Children are permitted to wear stud earrings, and a crucifix or cross necklace. All earrings must be removed for P.E. Watches are permitted but we request that there are no Smart Watches with camera facilities and independent access to the internet. We also request that no nail varnish is worn in school.

Hexham Abbey-A Peaceful World-Singing project

Just a reminder that St. Mary's is taking part in the 'Joint Schools Project' being held in Hexham Abbey on **September 21st**. Fiona Lander is leading this year's festival singing project with young people from local schools, including St. Mary's KS2 children, to mark United Nations World Peace Day.

The children's performance will take place between 11:00 and midday with parents and the general public invited to attend the performance. Entry will be free. Please feel free to join us if you are available.

MacMillan Cancer Care

On the afternoon of the 29th September from 2.45pm, we would like to invite all friends and families of St. Mary's to our MacMillan Cancer Care Coffee Afternoon. We will be asking for donations of cakes and treats for this event, all funds raised will be going to MacMillan Cancer Care one of the largest British charities, providing specialist health care, information and financial support to people affected by cancer.

Blast Off with Books

We would like to invite parents and carers to 'Blast Off with Books' week during the week of the 25th September from 8.15-8.35am. Each year group will have a designated day where parents can come into school early with their child(ren) to spend time reading their favourite stories before the start of the school day. Children can bring in a book of their choice or read one of the school books on offer. Older children may even want to read some of their English stories to their grown up. Days are as follows:

Class	Day
Reception	Monday
Year 3	Tuesday
Year 1	Wednesday
Year 2	Thursday
Year 4	Friday

Parents Evenings

We would like to invite parents into school to look at your child's books in the week before our autumn parents evening. School will be open for parents and children from 3.20-4:00pm on Tuesday 3rd and Wednesday 4th October. Children will have their school books on their desks to show their grown-ups all their hard work from this term.

Parents Evenings will be held on Tuesday 10th and Thursday 12th October. Details on how to register for these events will be given nearer the time.

Shoe Box Appeal

It is lovely to see all the shiny new school shoes in school this week. We would be grateful if any leftover shoe boxes could be brought into school over the coming weeks. We are hoping to take part in Operation Christmas Child later in the autumn term, it would be great to have lots of boxes to get started with!

<https://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/>

The idea within school is that we all contribute items to fill as many shoe boxes as possible. However, please feel free to retain shoeboxes if you wish to donate a fully completed nearer the time. More details will be given nearer the time.

Homework & Reading Books




From **Friday 15th September** children will come home with a reading book, their Reading Record and their first piece of homework. In May, we carried out a survey to ascertain parental views regarding homework, the outcomes of which I have added to the end of this week's newsletter (please see below). As a result, we have updated St. Mary's Homework Policy which will be shared with parents/carers next week explaining the expectations for homework in each year group. Homework will be set by class teacher's each Friday to be returned the following Wednesday. More information regarding homework will be given at the Parent's Curriculum Evenings next week.

The expectation is that children read at least 1 book a week and when completed parents/carers write a note in their child's Reading Record and sign to say their child has finished their reading book. When the child returns their signed Reading Record and book to school, they will be given the opportunity to visit the library to exchange their library books. The expectation is that children will be given new books each Wednesday,

however, if they finish their book and have their Reading Record signed it can be changed as and when is required.

Mission Statement Value Award Winners:

If you would like to celebrate your child’s achievements out of school and would like us to give them a mention in Celebration Assembly on a Friday, then simply fill out one of the Mission Statement Value Cards that have been sent home with your child or ask for one at our school office. We love to hear about all the children’s wonderful achievements, both in school and out!

Class			
Reception	Isabel	Felix	Evie
Year 1	Olivia W	Nathan	Frankie M
Year 2	Riley	Frankie M	Phoebe.B
Year 3	Ella	Ava	Harrison
Year 4	Kaylin	Tyler	Nils

Attendance Ladder



St. Mary's Class Attendance

This Week's Winners:
Year – Year 3!

<u>Reception</u>	99.2%
<u>Year 1</u>	97.4%
<u>Year 2</u>	95.9%
<u>Year 3</u>	100%
<u>Year 4</u>	99.3%

Diary Dates

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reception Curriculum Workshop- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Week beginning 11th September 1.45-2:00pm.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key Stage 1 (Years 1 & 2) Curriculum Workshop - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tuesday 12th September from 3.30pm.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key Stage 2 (Years 3 & 4) Curriculum Workshop - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wednesday 12th September from 3.30pm.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clubs Starting Week 	W/B 11 th September
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Y3 & Y4 Swimming 	Starting Monday 11 th September

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 4 International Day of Peace Liturgical Prayer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To celebrate the International Day of Peace year 4 will be holding a whole school liturgical prayer in the school hall on Wednesday 20th September at 9.20am. All parents and carers are invited to attend this event.
<p>Hexham Abbey-A Peaceful World-Singing project</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">September 21st</p> <p>The children’s performance will take place between 11:00 and midday with parents and the general public invited to attend the performance. Entry will be free. Please feel free to join us if you are available.</p>
<p>‘Blast Off with Books’ week</p>	<p>during the week of the 25th September from 8.15-8.35am.</p>
<p>Macmillan Cancer Support</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Friday 29th September</p>
<p>Parents Evenings Tuesday 10th and Thursday 12th October 3.30-6:00pm.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For any parents unable to attend the curriculum workshops due to work commitments, please contact the school office and we will happily accommodate another time.

Safeguarding in the summer Holidays

In the summer holidays children have more free time to spend with friends, family and online. Please follow the link below for advice and tips on how to ensure your child stays safe online over the summer holidays, and how as a parent/carer you can support with this:

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/staying-safe-online-in-the-summer-holidays>

Pupil Support & Safeguarding

Designated safeguarding Lead- Mrs. Oakes

Deputy safeguarding Lead-Miss. Baird

Assistant safeguarding Lead-Mrs. Stoves

SENDCo/Assistant SENCo-Mrs. Stansfield & Mrs Stoves

Please remember that we are here to support you and your child at any time. You can contact us via the main office (01434 603791) or by email (info@smfs.bwcet.com)

Summary of Parent/Carer Survey Responses to Homework Survey-May 2023

