



St Mary's Catholic First School Newsletter – Thursday 15th February 2024

We love, we learn, we live.

Dear Parents and Carers,

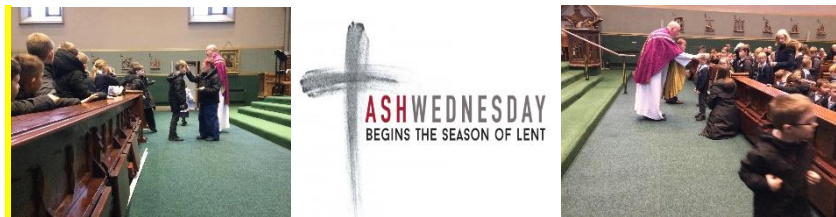


We have ended the first half of Spring Term sharing your child's Interim Report at Parents Evening. It is clear the children are all working very hard in school, and it is always special to be able to share this with you as parents/carers.



Thank you to everyone who baked and/or purchased a cake from our Mini Vinnies bake sale earlier in the week. We managed to raise £69.00 to go towards the St. Vincent De Paul, a Christian voluntary network dedicated to tackling poverty in all its forms by providing practical assistance to people in need.

On Wednesday, the whole school took part in the Ash Wednesday service at St. Mary's Church, marking the start of Lent. Fr. Paul has been into school today to discuss with the children their lent promises as we focus on how we will 'Give Act & Pray' this Lent. In class we have a 'Walk Through Lent' calendar, each day there is a different task. For today's task, it suggests that the children and families of St. Mary's choose a charity such as a clothes bank or make donations of old clothing to charity shops.



Yesterday, we were also treated to a delightful Valentine's Day lunch in school today. Mrs. Berges in the kitchen spoilt us all with red roses and heart shaped biscuits.



God of life, lead us to follow you even when it is difficult. Watch over us all and protect us as we face the stormy seas of life. Guide us to support one another as we journey together. Amen.



Also, just a reminder that today is the last day in school for the children this half term. Friday 16th February is a Teacher Training Day.

Wishing you all a lovely, restful half term,

Mrs. Oakes

Winning With Numbers

Letters have gone out with your child last week on our new approach to maths homework - Winning with Numbers. Children have been using this in school since the start of this academic year and are very familiar with the programme. Winning With Numbers (WWN) is described as the 'phonics of number' as it focuses on number - the most important parts of mathematics. Many parents joined us for the 'Winning with Numbers' Parent Sessions where we launched this with parents. Instead of weekly maths homework sheets, moving forward children's maths homework will now be centred on WWN. On a regular basis (daily is possible), children should log on and complete at least 10 questions for number which their teacher will have set for them. There are short teaching videos to accompany the questions, making it easier for parents to support children in their learning. The daily WWN bitesize maths should be quick, and the children should increase in their automaticity as they progress. After half term, school is looking to arrange another slightly later WWN parent session to accommodate any parents who were unable to make the previous two sessions.

Extra-curricular clubs - Will commence the week commencing Monday 26th February 2024.

Swimming – Y3 & Y4 swimming will commence on Monday 26th February 2024.






Universal free school meals - All pupils in reception, year one, and year two are entitled to a free meal, without having to apply for this option.

Eligibility for free school meals - The government has made amendments to the eligibility criteria since April 2018. This is to reflect the introduction of Universal Credit.

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Education/Schools/Meals.aspx>

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	Fraser	Suzannah	Aanika
Year 1	Nyla	Eabha	Olivia C
Year 2	Phoebe	Gracie	Esmee
Year 3	Zayn	Jessica	Juliette
Year 4	Ollie	Zach	Calum

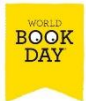


St. Mary's Class Attendance	
This Week's Winners: Year - 4	
<u>Reception</u>	91.91%
<u>Year 1</u>	92.05%
<u>Year 2</u>	85.34%
<u>Year 3</u>	97.16%
<u>Year 4</u>	98.86%

Attendance Ladder



Diary Dates

Teacher Training Day-School closed to pupils.	Friday 16 th February
Spring 2 starts	Monday 26 th February
Reception class Mass at St. Mary's Catholic Church 9.30am (all parents/carers welcome to attend)	Friday 1 st March
World Book Day (Children can come to school dressed as their favourite story character)	 Thursday 7 th March
Year 1-Celebration of the Word 9.30am in school hall (All parents/carers invited to attend)	Wednesday 13 th March
Y4 Moor House Trip 9th & 10th May	The final payment balance of £103.87 for the Moor House Adventure trip is now on Arbor. Regular payments can be made to clear the balance up until 26 th April. Please ensure all outstanding payments are made on Arbor by Friday 26th April 24 . Many thanks.

Safeguarding

This month our E-safety theme is 'Health, Wellbeing & Lifestyle'. Pupils will learn about how technology can be a distraction from other things, in both a positive and negative way.

Please take a look at the following information and advice for parents and carers on supporting your child in discussing 'Health, Wellbeing & Lifestyle': [Key Stage 2 and 1st/2nd Level Teaching Resources - Health, Wellbeing and Lifestyle - Own It - BBC](#)

Pupil Support & Safeguarding

Designated safeguarding Lead- Mrs. Oakes

Deputy safeguarding Lead- Miss. Baird & Mrs. Stansfield

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 (parentcontact@smfs.bwcet.com)

Online Safety Information

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about ONLINE DATING & RELATIONSHIPS

Most online dating apps claim to be for over-18s only but, in some cases, relaxed age verification also allows children to access them. What's more, some popular social media platforms use similar design features to many dating sites – blurring the line between why a young person initially downloads an app and what they actually end up using it for.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

- ONLINE GROOMING**
Online grooming is when someone forms a connection with a child in the digital world and carefully cultivates this relationship with the intention of manipulating the child into doing something sexual or illegal. This process involves building trust and confidence, which can make them far less likely to tell a trusted adult about their new online 'friend', or to recognise what is even happening.
- WEBCAM BLACKMAIL**
Some young people have been coerced into getting naked or sent nude pics in a video chat with someone they met on a dating platform. They're then told that unless they hand over a certain amount of money, a recording of the video will be posted online (or possibly sent to their contacts). This can be hugely traumatic for a young person and, in extreme cases, has resulted in self-harm and even suicide.
- DAMAGE TO SELF ESTEEM**
Many dating platforms encourage users to rate the images that people upload. This has clear potential to negatively impact a young person's self-esteem. On some apps, pictures of a user's face and body can be rated anonymously, with notifications informing them if someone has then declined to match with them. This form of rejection can feel extremely hurtful and degrading.
- CATFISHING AND SCAMS**
Creating a false identity to deliberately lure people into a relationship (whether romantic or platonic) online is known as catfishing. Commonly, someone pretends to share interests or beliefs with their victim and gradually gains their trust. A young person's feelings for this fake 'friend' may cloud their judgement and can lead to them surrendering money, personal images, passwords and so on.
- STALKING AND HARASSMENT**
Stalking is obsessive behaviour by a focused individual which disrupts their victim's life. It can bring severe distress and even the fear of violence. There have been frequent reports of stalking cases that originated on dating apps, with perpetrators creating new accounts in response to being reported or blocked. It's a particular cause for concern if a young person has ever given out personal details (such as their street or school name) online.

Advice for Parents & Carers

- KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING**
Reassure your child that they can always talk to you about anything online that's worried them. Emphasise that if they're being sent unwanted images – or if they've shared images or videos content themselves – they should tell you straight away. Discuss the potential risks of online dating and check in with them frequently to ensure that they're feeling comfortable about their online relationships.
- TAKE A 'SAFETY FIRST' STANDPOINT**
Encourage young people to be careful about who they send invitations to – and accept them from – on dating sites and apps. Emphasise yourself with how to adjust the privacy settings on their child's devices and apps to help them control who can access their profiles and information. Talk to your child about why it's unwise to share any sensitive, private or confidential information in their profile.
- PROTECT CONTACT DETAILS**
If a young person is interested in using online dating sites or apps, strongly encourage them to choose one that offers the facility to conceal both parties' email addresses when messaging prospective dates. If that's not possible, ensure that the young person sets up a separate email address which doesn't include their real name. This is easy to do via providers like Hotmail, Yahoo! Mail or Gmail.
- HIGHLIGHT COMMON DANGER SIGNS**
Talk to your child about some of the obvious red flags in online dating requests for money, for instance, should always ring alarm bells. Likewise, if a young person is in contact with someone who they feel is pressuring them into providing personal or financial information – or who they suspect is trying to trick them into it – they should end communication immediately and contact the dating service provider.

Meet Our Expert

Reduced earnings has made their 20-year experience in the field of relationships, and online safety education, specialise in online safety, wellbeing and training for young people, parents and schools, who are the most sought-after speakers for the Department of Education.

The National College | National Online Safety | #WakeUpWednesday

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