



St Mary's Catholic First School Newsletter –
Friday 15th March 2024

We love, we learn, we live.



Dear Parents and Carers,

Another busy week at St. Mary's as Year 1 took part in their Celebration of the Word all about Lent. The evaluation forms completed by parents and family members who joined us on Wednesday, highlighted how fantastic all the children were and also how amazing the behaviour of all the children in school was too-this was lovely to share with all the children!



On Thursday, we were visited this week by Catholic Schools Inspectorate who thought the children of St. Mary's were extremely welcoming and polite. The children and staff were a credit to the school, I would also like to say a huge 'thank you' to the parents and governors who also spent time talking with the inspectors.

Just a reminder that on Tuesday & Wednesday next week, parents/carers are invited in after school from 3:20pm to look at your child's books and see how hard they have worked this term. Next Thursday, is **World Down Syndrome Day**. St. Mary's is taking part in the Down Syndrome Sunflower Challenge for World Down Syndrome Day 2024! Just like sunflowers, every child grows and blooms uniquely. On the 21st March, we will be asking the children to come to school in their school uniform but wearing a yellow item (to represent their sunflower) and a suggested donation of £2 to Down syndrome UK. Children may choose to come to school wearing yellow socks or a yellow hairband or wearing a simple yellow ribbon etc. The children will be able to bring home their 3-week-old sunflower plant on the 21st March. Next Friday, we have another 'Blast Off with Books' breakfast session from 8.15-8.40am in the school hall. Refreshments and pastries will be on offer in the school hall, as you spend time some quality time with your child(ren) reading through some stories together.

God our Father,
Thank you for being close to us!
Help me to make time to be
in your presence.
Show me how I can share your love
and presence with others.
Amen

Have a lovely weekend,

Mrs. Oakes

CAFOD Big Lent Walk

Just a reminder that during Lent, the staff and children of St. Mary's are going to 'Act' by taking part in CAFOD's annual 'Big Lent Walk'. The Big Lent Walk is an annual challenge where we walk up to 200 miles over the 40 days of Lent and get sponsored to raise money to help people fighting extreme poverty globally. On **Thursday 28th March at 10am**, the whole of St. Mary's school community of children, families and parishioners, are invited to conclude the Big Lent Walk Challenge by walking several laps around Sele Park. Our target this year is to raise £150 for CAFOD. Thank you to those who have already donated on via our 'Just Giving' page, all donations can be made via our donations page by following this link: **St Mary's Catholic First School Fundraising Page is fundraising for CAFOD** please feel free to share this link with family and friends. All donations would be greatly appreciated!

Easter Bonnet Making

As previously mentioned, during the last week of the Spring Term, the whole of St. Mary's school will conclude the Big Lent Walk Challenge by walking several laps around Sele Park. The children will get the opportunity to make their Easter bonnets during school next week in readiness for the parade, so that they can wear their bonnets as they complete 'The Big Lent Walk'. Parents and parishioners will be invited to join us on our walk, which will take place on the morning of the last day of the Spring Term (Thursday 28 March 10am).

Please can we ask parents/carers to send Easter Bonnet making materials in with their child in a named bag by Monday 18th March.



School Website

The purpose of this letter is to promote our school website: [St Mary's First School, Hexham – Part of the Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust \(hexhamstmarys.uk\)](http://www.hexhamstmarys.uk). The website has all the key information that parents/carers need, from curriculum information to term dates etc. Our weekly newsletters are always posted on the website (on the bottom of the home page) and have all the key dates and notices for events taking place in and around school.

Free school Meals

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>



Easter Lunch- Thursday 28th March. If your child is currently on packed lunch and would like the Easter lunch. Please inform the school office.

Parent information evening – Moorehouse

On Monday 18th March, at 3:30pm, Miss Carr will be holding an information evening for parents of children who are attending Moorehouse residential. This meeting will provide you with essential information and forms needed prior to the residential trip.

Mini Vinnies

The next Mini Vinnies meetings will take place Monday 25th March. Our meeting will finish at 4:30pm.

Phonics Workshop for Y1 Parents

Parents of all children in Y1 are invited to a quick workshop after school 3.30pm on the 26th March. We will refresh you on what Phonics looks like in Y1 and the Statutory Phonics Screening Check that all children will be taking in June. Strategies to help your child read confidently and fluently will unlock learning in the whole of the curriculum and make academic life easier and more engaging, we look forward to seeing you there.

PTA Easter Fair-




On Wednesday 27th March, the PTA will be holding an Easter Fair in the school hall after collection.

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stmarysptahexham>

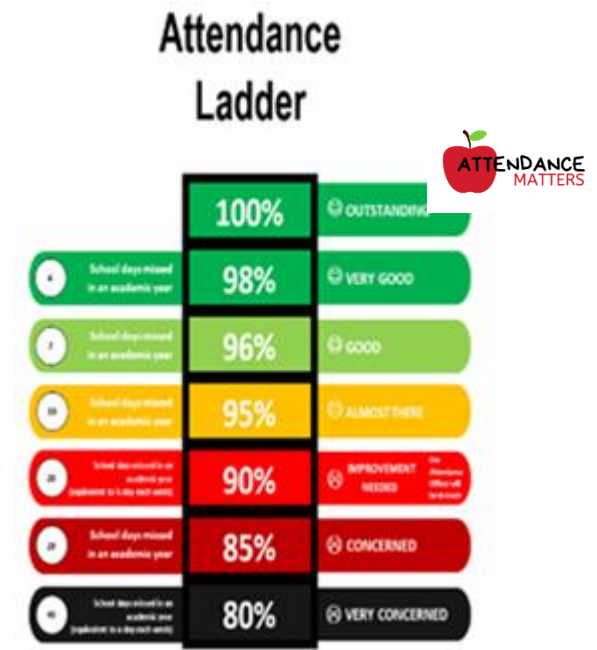


Mission Statement Value Award Winners:


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	Layton	Jay	Erin
Year 1	Eabha	Phuc	Hazel
Year 2	Ashton	Esmee	Gracie
Year 3	Ruby	Ava	Skylar
Year 4	Kaylin	Elsie	Freddie.S

St. Mary's Class Attendance	
This Week's Winners: Year - 4!	
<u>Reception</u>	95.29%
<u>Year 1</u>	95.45%
<u>Year 2</u>	86.11%
<u>Year 3</u>	95.91%
<u>Year 4</u>	98.48%



Diary Dates

Send in child with Easter bonnet making materials to make Easter bonnets.	Monday 18 th March
Y4 Moorhouse Parents information evening	Monday 18 th March
Parents to look at Books 3:20-4pm	Tuesday 19 th & Wednesday 20 th March
 Children to come to school wearing a yellow item (to represent their sunflower) with a donation to Down syndrome UK.	Thursday 21 st March

'Blast Off With Books' Breakfast Session- School Hall 8.15-8:40am	Friday 22 nd March
Mini Vinnies 3:20-4.30pm	Mon 25 th March
Phonics Parent Workshop for Y1 parents	Tuesday 26 th March
Whole school Lenten Journey to the Cross Celebration-St. Mary's Church 11am-Parents/carers welcome to attend.	Wednesday 27 th March
Easter Fair after school-School hall	Wednesday 27 th March
The Big Lent Walk-whole school-Sele Park & Easter Bonnet Parade <u>10am</u>	Thursday 28 th March
Easter Lunch	Thursday 28 th March
Last day of Spring Term	Thursday 28 th March
Easter holidays	Friday 29 th March-12 th April
Start of Summer Term	Monday 15 th April 8:40am
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 'Managing Online information'. The children discuss how not all information online may not be real or true.

Please take a look at the following information and advice for parents and carers on supporting your child in discussing 'Managing Online Information': [Educational Resources - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)

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)

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.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

DEVELOPING HEALTHY SLEEP PATTERNS

Quality sleep is paramount for wellbeing as it impacts our cognitive function, emotional balance and overall health. A World Health Organisation study highlighted that 44% of young people reported difficulty sleeping – potentially affecting their mood, concentration and immune system. Our guide offers expert tips for helping children to sleep more healthily.

- 1 MINDFUL TECH USE**
Encourage a balanced approach to screen time. While phones, laptops, tablets and so on can serve as a helpful means of stress relief, it's advisable to minimise their use right before bed. These devices can keep the mind racing long after they're switched off, impacting how easily and how well a person can sleep.
- 2 EFFECTIVE SLEEP PRACTICES**
Offer practical advice on reinforcing certain habits that have a positive influence on sleeping patterns. Children could start keeping a diary which they add to each evening, for example – or they could use up excess energy by exercising during the day.
- 3 HYDRATION HABITS**
Underline the importance of drinking plenty of water throughout the day, while limiting drinks close to bedtime to prevent disruptions during the night; it's a lot harder to switch off if you keep needing to get out of bed for the toilet. Avoiding caffeinated drinks later in the day also allows the body and brain to slow down naturally, without any chemicals firing them back up.
- 4 CONSISTENT BEDTIME SCHEDULE**
Assist children in developing consistent bedtime routines that tell the body it's time to wind down, promoting a more relaxed state. Establish specific activities for young ones right before going to bed – such as brushing their teeth – to set up an association between that action and falling asleep.
- 5 OPTIMAL SLEEP ENVIRONMENT**
Ensure that the bedroom is comfortable, dark and free from distractions, fostering an ideal space for quality rest. The room's temperature should also be suitable for sleeping – that is, not too hot and not too cold – while rooms should be kept as tidy and free of clutter as possible.
- 6 RELAXING EVENING ACTIVITIES**
Recommend activities that have a calming effect on the mind – such as reading or gentle stretching – in the lead up to bedtime, to prepare the mind for a peaceful night's sleep. Doing something quiet, relaxing and low intensity signals to the brain that it's time to rest and makes falling asleep much easier.
- 7 PRIORITISING ADEQUATE SLEEP**
Emphasise the crucial role of sleep in maintaining physical and emotional wellbeing. It's especially important to sustain a healthy sleep pattern during challenging and intensive periods in our lives, during the exam season for children and young people, for instance.
- 8 NUTRITIONAL BALANCE**
Highlight the significance of a healthy, balanced diet – and its role in establishing a more consistent sleep pattern. Try to lean towards preparing meals with plenty of fruit and vegetables, served in reasonable portion sizes; not only is this a lot healthier, but it also reduces the chances of feeling too full to be comfortable to bed.
- 9 PARENTAL SUPPORT**
Parents and carers, of course, are uniquely situated to support their children in establishing and maintaining healthy sleeping habits. Parents can review their own sleep habits (incorporating anything from the list that they don't do already) to model a balanced bedtime routine and reinforce the importance of self-care.
- 10 MILITARY SLEEP METHOD**
Look up 'the military sleep method'; it's a technique for falling asleep quickly, which incorporates deep breathing exercises. You could encourage children to try it or even use it yourself. While it can take a good deal of practice to perfect, eventually it will start to feel natural – and the results are often extremely impressive!

Meet Our Expert
Mind Ahead design and deliver the UK's only specialist postgraduate mental health qualifications. Winner of the Social Enterprise UK 'One to Watch' award, the charity provides training and support to education organisations and local authorities. This guide has been written by Adam Collins – a learning and development specialist who is also Associate Vice-Principal for Personal Development at a large secondary school.

#WakeUpWednesday The National College

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