



St Mary's Catholic First School Newsletter –
Friday 10th May 2024

We love, we learn, we live.



Dear Parents and Carers,

It may have been a shorter week, but we have certainly packed a fair bit to the four days in school! On Wednesday, we had a fantastic turn out for the art afternoon celebrating World Oceans Day. In school we have been discussing our natural world as a source of wonder and inspiration and how we can all play our part in maintaining & improving the environment. During the art afternoon, the children created some fantastic 'recycled' artwork all related to our oceans theme. It was lovely to see so many family members attending the event and getting stuck-in with some rather messy art projects!



On Thursday, we waved goodbye to our year 4 pupils for their residential trip to Moor House. The children had an amazing time and were a credit to the school in the way they supported and looked after one another throughout their time away. A huge thank you to Miss. Carr, Mrs. Erving & Mrs. Monnelly for doing such a great job of looking after our year 4 pupils. The children had a fantastic time and have some wonderful memories to cherish.

Finally, this morning key stage 1 attended Mass at St. Mary's Church where they reflected on Ascension Thursday. The children participated beautifully in the service adding some of their own thoughtful contributions.

Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus to die for our sin. Thank you for making a way for us to be with you because we believe in Jesus your Son, that He died on the cross, was raised from the dead, and went to heaven. Bless us today as we worship You. Amen.

Best wishes,

Mrs. Oakes

Sun protection

We were lucky to be blessed with a couple of sunny days this week. Just a reminder to send children in with a hat or cap for sun protection during the summer term. Please can we ask that children have suncream applied prior to coming to school to avoid children having to bring suncream into school.

Class Pentecost Celebration of the Word

Next week, parents are invited to join their child/ren in class and participate in our end of RE topic Pentecost Celebration of the Word. Timings are as follows:

Rec: 2:10-2:20

Y1: 2:20-2:30pm

Y2: 2:30-2:40pm

Y3: 12:40-2:50pm

Y4: 2:50-3:00pm

Look forward to seeing many of you there!

Year 4 Quad Kids event

On Monday 3rd June, Year 4 are attending a Quad Kids event at St Joseph's Middle School. The event focusses on key skills such as running, jumping and throwing. It is a great opportunity for those who are attending St Joseph's as their middle school to familiarise themselves with the school grounds and meet some of the staff. All pupils in year 4 will attend this event, regardless of what middle school they are moving to in September. Please ensure your child arrives to school with a water bottle and wearing their **school** P.E kit as usual for a Monday (Year 4 pupils will not require their swimming things on this day). The event is in the afternoon and children will be back to school for normal home time.

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://St Mary's First School, Hexham – Part of the Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust (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.

School Meals

If you would like to take a look at the new Summer Garden Kitchen menu, please use the following link- <https://www.hexhamstmarys.uk/parents/school-meals/>

Extra-curricular clubs

Clubs will begin week beginning 22nd April. Summer 1 clubs are:

Fitness club	Tuesday lunch Y2-4
Singing club	Tuesday lunch Y1-4
Running club	Wednesday Morning 8.15-8.40 Y2-4
Eco-club	Wednesday lunch
Times table club	Thursday lunch – Y4 only.
Mini Vinnies –	Monday 29 th April (3.15-4.30pm) & Monday & Monday 20 th May (3.15-4.30pm)

Class teachers will ask children to sign up for the clubs they wish to join. If your child would like to join running club, please inform the office to sign up.

Year 3 & 4 Swimming

The Summer swimming payment is now available on the Arbor app, (under Clubs). Please ensure these payments are paid before Friday 12th July.



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>

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	Alfie L	Layton	Josie
Year 1	Raffy	Olivia	Mikey
Year 2	George	Miya	Riley
Year 3	Ella	Gabriel	Jessica
Year 4	Nils	Ollie	Elsie

St. Mary's Class Attendance	
This Week's Winners: Year - Year 4	
<u>Reception</u>	92.65%
<u>Year 1</u>	92.86%
<u>Year 2</u>	92.98%
<u>Year 3</u>	94.32%
<u>Year 4</u>	97.73%



Attendance Ladder



Diary Dates

Thursday 16th May	<p>Pentecost Pupil celebrations of the Word-in class.</p> <p>Parents invited into classes.</p> <p>Rec: 2:10-2:20 /Y1: 2:20-2:30pm</p> <p>Y2:2:30-2:40pm/Y3:2:40-2:50pm/Y4 2:50-3:00pm</p>
Friday 17th May	Mass has been cancelled
Monday 20th May	Mini Vinnie's 3.15-4.30pm
Monday 3rd June	<p>Year 4 Quad Kids event at St. Joseph's Middle School</p> <p>(All year 4 pupils attending, please can children come to school in their P.E kit and have a bottle of water)</p>

Wednesday 5th June	Years 3 & 4 Celebration of the Word in hall 9.30am- World Environment Day-Parents/carers invited.
Friday 7th June	Reception Mass in church at 9.30am. All welcome.
Friday 14th June	KS2 Mass in church at 9.30am. All welcome.
Friday 21st June	Y2 Mass in church at 9.30am. All welcome.
Wednesday 26th June	St Joseph's Rounders Afternoon (Children transferring to St Joseph's) 1.30-2.45pm
Friday 28th June	Y1 Mass in church at 9.30am. All welcome.
Wednesday 3rd July	Years 1 & 2 Celebration of the Word in hall 9.30am- Aspirations-Parents/carers invited.
Thursday 4th July	Reception class end of year trip to Hall Hill Farm. Arbor payments are now live on the app.
Tuesday 9th July	Hexham Partnership Transfer Day
Friday 12th July	Reception Class Mass at 9.30am
Thursday 18th July	Y4 Leavers Mass in the school hall at 9.30am.

Safeguarding

St. Mary's Safeguarding

This month our E-safety theme is 'Privacy & Security'. The children will discuss the importance of privacy settings on the networks, devices, apps and sites they use.

Please take a look at the following information and advice for parents and carers on supporting your child in discussing 'Privacy & security': [Parental controls & privacy settings guides](#) | [Internet Matters](#)

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.bwct.com)

Online Safety

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.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about HELLDIVERS 2

Within weeks of release, *HELLDIVERS 2* had become one of 2024's biggest gaming success stories. The sequel to a top-down shooter from 2015 has smashed sales expectations, owing to its frantic gameplay and tongue-in-cheek humour. However, the game comes with several risks to younger players, as indicated by its 18+ rating.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

- PEGI 18 RATING**
Due to its intense violence and the presence of in-game purchases, *HELLDIVERS 2* carries a PEGI 18 rating. While players are generally fighting benevolent enemies like giant bugs and robots, their characters can be killed in various gruesome ways, up to and including dismemberment. It's certainly worth considering whether such a game is appropriate for younger players.
- FRUSTRATION TRIGGER**
The thrill of barely escaping through a dangerous mission in one piece is integral to *HELLDIVERS 2*'s appeal. To accentuate this feeling of achievement, the game includes some very difficult levels that could prove to be too hard for some players – even those who are age-appropriately old enough to play. Losing streaks can be incredibly annoying, so repeatedly failing in missions could easily provoke frustration or anger in younger players.
- IN-GAME PURCHASES**
In *HELLDIVERS 2*, players can use real money to buy in-game currency, with which they can unlock cosmetics and new weapons. At the time of writing, all the in-game items can be acquired without spending too much on a penny – but excited young players wanting to keep up with their friends may still feel the temptation to purchase new weapons more quickly, rather than laboriously earning the in-game currency through play.
- VOICE CHAT AND MESSAGING**
HELLDIVERS 2 is always played online with others, who often use voice chat or in-game texts to coordinate, strategise or just joke around. This does mean that children who play without their friends will be put in contact with strangers. Unfortunately, this represents a roll of the dice, as the game can't control how people treat each other online. However, you can easily report other players for abusive behaviour via the game's 'social tab'.
- LACK OF ACCESS**
The game is available on PC and PS5, but not (yet) on other consoles. Some people will naturally be disappointed they can't get involved or might look for similar alternatives to play on their own console – alternatives which may contain similar levels of violence and gore but lack the same balanced approach to user misconduct and in-game purchases as *HELLDIVERS 2*.

Advice for Parents & Educators

- GIVE IT A GO FIRST**
HELLDIVERS 2 is a third-person shooter with intentionally humorous elements, but much of its comedy is rooted in satire which may go over the heads of some players. Consider playing the game first yourself – while shooting bugs and robots feels too unrealistic to be upsetting, seeing your character get torn to pieces may be too much for young players.
- SET EXPECTATIONS**
At the time of writing, *HELLDIVERS 2* costs £34.99. It could turn out to be an expensive and wasteful purchase if a player gets bored and gives up shortly after receiving the game. If a young person tends to become frustrated easily, it's worth considering whether *HELLDIVERS 2* is really the game for them.
- CONSIDER ALTERNATIVES**
If playing on Xbox – where *HELLDIVERS 2* isn't available – consider something like Halo: The Master Chief Collection as an alternative. One of its game modes – 'Firefight' – replicates *HELLDIVERS 2*'s 'mechanic to some degree. Alternatively, younger players may be better suited to the more light-hearted *Deep Rock Galactic*, which sees them play as fantasy dwarves in space, involving far less gruesome violence.
- KEEP AN EYE ON PAYMENTS**
Many titles offer in-game purchases, but *HELLDIVERS 2* is comparatively cheap. You'll still need to monitor your payment information (or use a prepaid card on the occasion) in case your child buys the in-game currency in bulk, on the wings, however, the game's selling methods are far less egregious than most similar titles on the market.
- MONITOR COMMUNICATION & ADJUST SETTINGS**
Thanks to an in-game "Ping" system (allowing players to highlight important details without speaking), communication isn't as integral to *HELLDIVERS 2* as it is in other games. You can turn off the chat options in-game on PC, or on the PS5's own settings, and feel more secure in the knowledge that your child won't be speaking to people they don't know.

Meet Our Expert
Lloyd Coombes is the Editor in Chief of @G@Rec@n, and has been working in the games media industry for five years. As well as being an avid long-time gamer, he is also a parent and therefore understands the importance of online safety. Writing mainly about tech and fitness, his work has been published on sites including IGN, TechRadar and many more.

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