



St Mary's R.C. First School End of Term Letter – 16th July 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

It is hard to believe that the 2020-2021 school year is almost at its end. This year has been extraordinarily difficult for everyone but the end is in sight and I am looking forward to a less complicated 2021-2022 school year. Staff and pupils have worked tirelessly throughout the year and are ready for their summer holiday.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and flexibility through this very difficult period. This year has been a challenge like no other for parents and I cannot thank you enough for your patience and understanding. All the sacrifices that our school communities have made, have ensured the safety of everyone in school throughout the pandemic. Personally, I am extremely grateful and proud of the hard work, determination and resilience that the children and staff have shown this year, despite all the unprecedented challenges.

Finally, I want to thank all staff for their hard work and perseverance in helping us deliver the best possible educational experience to our pupils under these most taxing of circumstances. To the school leadership teams whose efforts ensure pupils have an enjoyable and safe school environment. It is our staff who make this school a wonderful place of work and learning.

Next week, St Mary's will be closed but St Joseph's will remain open for our summer school and sports camp. We look forward to welcoming those pupils from St. Mary's who are attending the summer camp.

Parents have already been asking how next year will look within our schools. I can shed some light following Gavin Williamson, the Education Ministers recent update about school life going forward. In September we will continue with the same start arrangements. Pupils will be able to enter the school gates from 8.45 am. Taxi pupils will be dropped at the hall door and brought into school. The bell will ring at 8:50am for school to start. Break and lunch times will hopefully be all scheduled at the same time as they were before the pandemic. This will help us deliver the curriculum with less disruption. Parents are welcome on site to collect pupils from 3pm. Pupils in Y2 will use the main entrance and Y3 and Y4 will exit from the usual KS2 door. All other pupils will be collected from the main yard at 3pm.

Although we expect and hope to be back into normal classrooms in September, we shall have a contingency plan in place to restore the zones if necessary. All schools have been encouraged to develop such plans to allow us to respond to the latest data on local and national transmission rates in two months' time. The 'bubble' arrangement of having year groups in separate corridors will also stop from September. Pupils will move freely around our school building utilising all our fantastic

space. With bubbles gone, it will be the responsibility of NHS Test and Trace, not schools, to decide who has to isolate.

I cannot tell you how much we are looking forward to the full relaxation of the restrictions that have kept us safe over the past 18 months. One last effort should see us through. If we have learned anything in the past 18 months, it is to worry about and think about the things we can control, and not devote too much energy to the things we cannot.

We look forward to welcoming our new reception pupils who will phase into full time school over the first 4 weeks. Pupils that struggle or don't settle may require further time before a full time provision is accessed.

Our Y4s have been an absolute joy and myself and the staff are deeply saddened to see them all leave for St Joseph's so soon. However, they have all grown and are ready for the next stage of their academic journey. Thank you to Mrs Oakes for her sterling efforts with the class this year and preparing them for middle school.

Staffing News

Of course, it is the time in the year when we sadly say goodbye to staff. This year, we say farewell to Mr Thompson who will hopefully return in a trust cover capacity.

We will miss Mr Thompson and we thank him for all his hard work and dedication he has given to the school.

I am delighted that Miss Carr will be working full time at St Mary's in September and Mrs Davison has also been appointed as a TA in Reception class with Mrs Irving.

Due to the COVID restrictions we were unable to say goodbye in a fitting way to our previous outstanding Headteacher Mrs Fiona Conley, Caretaker Mr Spence, Administrator Mrs Henderson and Art Teacher Mrs Miller. On Tuesday, St Joseph's staff and pupils welcomed them all back as we officially opened the Fiona Conley Prayer Garden. Please see photos and a video on our Facebook page.



As you are aware, Fr Chris Warren leaves our Parish this Summer for the Vatican. Fr Chris was given a great send off on Monday as he blessed the Fr Chris Prayer Garden at St Mary's, with the choir from St Joseph's in attendance. Please see photos on our Facebook page.

Mr Tomas Neeson will stand down as Chair of Governors at the end of term and I thank him for his years of dedication to both our schools in a difficult and often challenging role.

Reports

The end of year reports were issued on Tuesday and I must thank parents for the positive feedback.

Classes for September 2021 are as follows:

Reception	Miss Baird
Y1	Miss Kane
Y2	Mrs Stansfield
Y3	Mrs Hunneysett/Miss Carr
Y4	Mrs Oakes

Any belongings not collected at the end of the academic year will be kept in school until September 2021 and sent to your child's new class.

Home Readers

Please make sure that any reading books are returned after the Summer. Books are expensive and we cannot afford to replace them at present.

Good Bye and Award Assemblies

Today I had two fantastic Awards ceremonies with our children. Congratulations to all children as everyone now graduates to the next year group.

3 Peak Challenge

Miss Armstrong, one of our TAs, is a Lance Bombardier with 101 Northumbrian Regiment Royal Artillery and on 2nd April, her regiment took part in the 3 Peaks Challenge. This entails climbing 3 highest peaks in England, Scotland and Wales' (Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdonia) in 24 hours. Well done Miss Armstrong.

Year 4

We want to say farewell and good luck to our Year 4 pupils as they move on to pastures new at St Joseph's. The Leavers' Mass on Monday was wonderful and I cannot thank parents and grandparents enough for turning up. The children thoroughly enjoyed performing their 'St. Mary's Song' to all their grown ups today and taking part in the 'Ring the Bell' ceremony.



We have known many of you since being in Reception and it is amazing to see how much you have all developed and grown over the years. As you move to your new middle school, we hope that you continue to flourish and take pride in your learning so that you realise your future ambitions. All the best to each and every one of you. Remember you will always be part of the family of St Mary's and are welcome to return at any time in the future.

Finally, we want to say thank you to all of our pupils, those who are both in school and those who are self-isolating from home. We know that this has been a difficult time for you with so much disruption especially in the Spring Term which has been extremely hard, but you too have played an important role in helping stop the spread of the virus in our community. We are really looking forward to seeing you all in September.

Term starts on Tuesday 7th September 2021.

Once again, please check the website and your emails, as further information regarding the return to school will be posted.

God our Father,

We can look back over the last few years and recall the friendships that have formed and the good relationships that we have developed.

We give thanks for all who have enriched our lives in various ways: at home, in school, in church, and in the local community.

We ask for healing of what has been negative in the past, as we place ourselves into your hands. Inspire us in the years ahead to live in such a way that we readily apologise when things go wrong, as well as expressing thanks and encouragement to those who are a part of our lives.

We give thanks, Father, for the gifts, talents and skills that you have given to each one of us. We think of people who may have received less than others but have made much of themselves.

We remember, too, those who have overcome great difficulties, and all who have inspired us because they have given their best.

In giving thanks for what has been in the past, we ask for your blessing on our present and future.

We pray for wisdom in setting our priorities and in making our choices that we may live fully and make our part of the world a better place because of the care and compassion that we bring into it.

Amen

On behalf of Fr Chris, Governors and staff,
may we wish you a happy and restful Summer.



Mr P Naughton

