



St Mary's Catholic Academy

Newsletter No.3 – 4th November 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are a week in to this half term after a damp and soggy two weeks off. I hope you had a restful break whatever you got up to. This is my favourite half term in school as we enter the prayerful season of Advent, however, I know many of you are experiencing some extremely challenging times, likely financial, and I promise the school will keep the community in our prayers.

Please have a good read of this newsletter. There is information about what is taking place in school between now and Christmas and other important messages.

Dates for your diary

Mon 7 Dec	Diwali Dance workshops F1 – Y6
Wed 9 Nov	Nursery Stay and Play
Mon 14 Nov	Anti-Bullying Week begins/ Odd Sock Day 3pm Parent Governor information event
Wed 16 Nov	3pm E-Safety Presentation 4:30pm E-Safety Presentation
Thurs 17 Nov	Parent Forum / Friends of St Mary's
Mon 29 Nov	Advent Retreat
Fri 9 Dec	9:30 & 2:30 EYFS Christmas songs
Wed 14 Dec	2pm Christmas Performance
Fri 16 Dec	2pm KS2 Christmas celebration
Tues 20 Dec	Christmas jumper and party day
Tues 20 Dec	Time TBC - Christmas Disco Time TBC – KS2 Christmas Disco
Wed 21 Dec	Break up for Christmas

Advent Term

We enjoy our whole school daily assemblies during Advent – starting at the end of November, full of hope and joy. We prepare our hearts to celebrate the birth of Jesus. The sound of beautiful singing and the sight of nativity costumes will again bring a sense of joy and warmth to the winter chill. The festive season will begin with our Advent Retreat Day on Monday 29th November. Look at the calendar dates for when your child's Christmas celebration will take place.



Parent Governor Position

St Mary's Governing Body has a Parent Governor position opening. **Is this something you would be interested in?** The governing body's responsibility is to approve the future vision for the school, working in partnership with myself, the Headteacher. Governor's help to seek continuous improvement in the performance of the school, while also promoting our Catholic ethos and values. A parent governor is a 'representative parent' and is concerned for the welfare of the school as a whole.

More information about this parent governor role will be sent out this week. Please consider whether you have the time to commit to this role, for example, attending a Governor meeting each half term – usually 4pm on a Thursday and additional school visits. You can find out more about parent governor responsibilities and the role by attending a meeting at **3pm on Monday 14th November.**

Attendance

Did you know...?

A total of 6 days off (authorised) over the year will achieve an attendance of approximately 96.8%
This means that if your child takes 6 school days off for a holiday in a year, any further sickness absence will mean they cannot reach an acceptable attendance and their learning is significantly impacted.

Attendance and Punctuality

Improving attendance and punctuality is a priority for St Mary's school this year. In my September newsletter I wrote about attendance and punctuality and I asked for your support. Again, I'd like to remind you of the importance that your child attends school if at all possible, every day. Letters have been sent (last week) to those families where attendance and lateness already presents a concern; based on September and October data. Where letters have been received, please work with me to improve your child's learning journey this year.

St Mary's has always been proud of a high attendance and as we consider a post-COVID world, we must strive to return to a respectful 97% attendance – our school average in past years.



Please know that:

- **Holidays taken during school time are not acceptable and fines are likely.**
- **Adding a day on to a half term holiday is not permitted – flights are rarely rescheduled. These absences will be unauthorised.**
- **Taking time off school for medical appointments that can be made outside of school hours are not encouraged. Book appointments in advance, out of school hours.**

Lateness

The school gate opens at 8:40am and children should be on the playground **ready for the school bell at 8:50am**. Several families are regularly running through the gate **at 8:50pm** or entering after the bell. Please plan your morning so you leave home 5 minutes earlier if this is the case. Regularly, people report 'transport issues' as a reason when it is instead the usual heavy traffic causing delays. It is not a good feeling for anyone, especially a child, to arrive late. It causes discomfort at the start of the day. Please support your child by modelling positive lifestyle habits.

School improvement goals



This academic year, as a school we are working on the following aspects of school life:

- Improving school attendance and punctuality
- Developing Oracy – focusing on children's ability to develop the building blocks of talk, especially for an audience
- Building the Curriculum further, ensuring each subject has the desired content, building on learning over time
- Strengthening our Christian virtues and British Values within our PSHE curriculum

We will offer ideas on how and where you can help your child to develop in these areas throughout the year.

Reading is ALWAYS a priority

Reading is key to your child's future success in education. A regular habit of reading will ensure that your child reads regularly at a time that works for you at home. More information to follow.



Online Safety

I hope you find the monthly online newsletters that we email supportive – I believe they are invaluable in making sure our knowledge of the risks is up-to-date.

Alongside these newsletters, we would like to invite you to an Online Safety meeting on 16th November. The session will be run twice at 3pm – in the school hall and again at 4:30pm on Teams.

Please pop this date in your diary and attend one of these sessions. Only by working together can we protect your children from the challenges that are present online.



Friends of St Mary's Meeting – 17th November 2022 at 3:20pm

I'd like to invite you to a meeting to consider plans for our children, firstly to celebrate Christmas. We have managed to book a DJ for a Disco on Tuesday 20th December. I'd like your thoughts and school will certainly need parent support to make the event possible. We need to agree suitable times

and volunteers could help: watching over the children, supervising toilet trips, supervising a snack and so on. Please come along to the meeting. If you are unable to attend and have any ideas for future community events or are happy to help at the disco, please come and speak to staff in the school office.



Christmas Gifts for Teachers

As a staff, we are always grateful when we receive cards, chocolates and gifts at Christmas. But, this is a tradition that is not necessary and receiving gifts at a time when people are struggling for money feels uneasy. Please can we ask that, for those who do, you do not buy staff members gifts this Christmas (or year). I will speak to parents at the upcoming Friends of St Mar meeting and we will plan a way for children to offer a kind festive gesture, if they wish... but your money needs to be spent on your own family and your needs. Everyone must abide by this request to help see it happen. One gift will cause others to feel they should give too.



Thank you for your on-going support.

Kind regards,

Anne-Marie Bell