



# St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy

<http://www.st-marys-marplebridge.stockport.sch.uk/>

St Mary's Parish: <http://stmarysmarplebridge.org.uk/>

Holy Spirit Parish: <https://www.holyspiritmarple.com/>

**Bulletin Number 2: Friday 15 September 2023**

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

In our whole school worship this week we have focused on celebrating Education Sunday, which



took place this year on the 10<sup>th</sup> September. It is a special day dedicated to celebrating Catholic schools. It is also one of the oldest *Days of Special Prayer* in the Church calendar and this year is the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary! Catholic schools are communities of faith, working in partnership with families and the local parish(es) to nurture children in their learning and faith. The children participated in a fun quiz about aspects of schools, and reflected on how Catholic schools contribute to the mission of the Church. In a concluding time of prayer for pupils

and school staff, Bishop Marcus Stock, chair of the Catholic Education Service, offered some words of encouragement in a special video message. Well done to our Parish Ambassadors who courageously spoke at both parishes last Sunday about Education Sunday.

Sadly, we have received news of two deaths in our school family this week. Please pray for the repose of the soul of Jennifer, the daughter of Mrs Nadin, a Teaching Assistant who retired in 2022. Also, one of our Year 5 parents, Nick Weakly, died yesterday morning after a battle with cancer. Please keep Jennifer, Nick and their families in your prayers. May they rest in peace.

## WEDNESDAY WORD

The latest version of the Wednesday Word can be accessed [here](#). Please enjoy spending some time sharing the Word with your children.

## SAFEGUARDING

The safety of our children is paramount at St Mary's. As a school family we are all committed to effectively safeguarding the children in our care. All our school staff received annual safeguarding training as part of our INSET training day at the start of term. Our Designated Safeguarding Leader is Mr Nish, with Miss Poole, Mrs Bradbury and Mrs Thompson as Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leaders. Our updated Safeguarding Policy and key safeguarding information can be found on the [school website](#).



## FREE SCHOOL MEALS/PUPIL PREMIUM



If your circumstances have changed or you feel you could apply for free school meals (even if your child is in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2 – and they already receive free lunches) please click on [this link](#) which will take you to the Local Authority website and provide you with further details and how to apply. This funding is called 'Pupil Premium'. For every child registered, St Mary's will receive approximately £1,385 additional funding each year per child

registered. Just registering your child for Free School Meals means that school receives the extra money even if you don't take up the free meal. No one will know you have registered, and it will not affect any other benefits you are claiming. The Trust also have the Financial Hardship Fund to support pupils and families who may struggle with the cost of educational visits etc. Please speak with Mr Nish confidentially for further information.



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## POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH AT ST MARY'S

We recognise the need for this area of focus to be high on our agenda especially in consideration of the difficult few years we have all encountered and the continued fallout from Covid-19. There are several initiatives in place to help support the children and encourage the importance of sharing any worries or anxieties. In addition to the excellent support and care from your child's class teacher(s) and teaching assistants, we have added to our lunchtime provision so that every lunchtime all children know there is a place and a teacher on hand to talk to. Wellbeing workshops will be held in Reception class with Mrs Finney on a Tuesday and we have a Wellbeing room which will be available for children to come and chat with Mrs Bradbury on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday lunchtime. All children who check in at morning register as feeling the colour blue/yellow (sad/worried/anxious) will be checked in with during these lunchtime sessions.



## NURTURE GROUPS, ELSA (EMOTIONAL LITERACY SUPPORT) AND MSU (MOTOR SKILLS UNITED – GROSS AND FINE MOTOR SKILLS SUPPORT)



We are fortunate to be able to offer these intervention groups for individuals/small groups led by a very talented team of trained teaching assistants from within our school team. Children may access these resources as a short block of support at any time throughout their journey through St Mary's. If your child is attending any of these sessions, this will have been discussed during our drop-in sessions after school this week or will be at this term's parents'

evenings. For any enquiries or concerns about your child's Mental Health or further information please contact Mrs Bradbury.

## INTRODUCING DEXTER

We are very fortunate to have secured a PAT (Pets As Therapy) dog, Dexter, to come into school every Monday to work with children across the school. PAT dogs are registered, temperament-tested dogs.

Dexter loves to hear children read, so he will spend time listening to individual children. We can also use Dexter to teach children how to care for a pet, how to behave around animals and we can promote social skills and confidence. We understand that some children may be anxious around dogs, and this is something we can work on with your child. Dexter will be always on the lead and under the control of his owner Sara. We are very excited to have Dexter and Sara join our school family but if this is something you do not wish your child to be part of, please let us know.



## WELCOME DAN, OUR NEW LAY CHAPLAIN



We said farewell to Chris our previous chaplain in July following his marriage and relocation to Oxford. It is my great pleasure to welcome Dan, our new lay chaplain to our school. Dan will be working with us one day each week. 'Hello everyone, my name is Dan and I am thrilled to introduce myself as your new lay chaplain working across our four Trust schools in Marple Bridge, New Mills and Buxton. I wanted to take this opportunity to tell you a little bit about myself. I am originally from Birmingham and have previously worked as a teacher in Catholic primary schools. I am a big Aston Villa fan and love watching all sports in my spare time. I love to travel and have been very fortunate to be able to witness the universal Church on international pilgrimages and mission trips to Europe, South America and Africa. These experiences have helped shape my life and ministry. My role will be to work with the young people in the four schools to help them answer the big questions they may have and guide them along their journey of faith.' Welcome Dan. We hope you will be very happy in your new role.

## HARRYTOWN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL INFORMATION MEETING

On Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> September at 5:30pm in the school hall, senior staff from Harrytown Catholic High School will be visiting St Mary's and addressing parents' /carers of children in years 4, 5 and 6. They will talk about their school and curriculum offer. Harrytown is our closest Catholic High School and Mr Turmeau, the headteacher and I are very keen on building strong links between our schools; ensuring St Mary's children can continue their strong Catholic education in high school. All parents in years 4, 5, and 6 are warmly invited to this event.

## GARDENING

Our gardening groups are now back up and running after the summer break and Mr Percy now oversees this provision. A special thank you to our new volunteers: Mrs Tadikonda, Mr Bowler and Mr Tognarelli and of course to our returning regular helpers! Mr Percy writes: 'Garden Working Party on Sunday 1 October at 10:00-1:00pm. We really need as much help as can be given! There will be jobs for all ages, interests and physical abilities, ranging from path laying to weeding to pruning - all the jobs that help keep our school looking smart and get things ready for the children's gardening projects. Those who come to help at the garden task day will be able to make a wildflower pot to take home, using the same seeds as we'll be using on the school wildflower meadow.

- Year 2 Class Gardening on Wednesday 20 September, 9:15am-12:00pm - we'd love to welcome parents and grandparents who'd like to be involved and helping with their children's class during a valuable learning experience. Come for an hour if the whole morning is too much - we are very flexible and grateful of any help offered!

- Nurture groups Wednesdays weekly 1:15-2:45pm. Again, we'd be grateful of any help offered. Getting more volunteers has been a big challenge over the last couple of years, so we're hoping that publicising this in the newsletter in advance will help!



## THE MONTH (OR SO) AHEAD...KEY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Date	Event
	<i>Please note the dates and times detailed below are provisional and may be changed if necessary. (New events added in <b>bold</b>.)</i>
<b>20 September</b>	<b>Y2 Gardening Group – 9:15-12:00. Parents/grandparents of Y2 welcome.</b>
20 September	Harrytown Catholic High School information visit for parents of children in Y4, Y5 and Y6 at St Mary's. 5:30pm in the school hall at St Mary's.
25 September	Year 5 Collective Worship at 2:30pm in the hall. All welcome.
28 September	<b>Harrytown Catholic High School Open Evening (at Harrytown).</b>
29 September	Special Friends Assembly – Reception and Y6 children. 9:30am in the hall.
29 September	Macmillan Coffee Afternoon. 2pm in the hall. <i>Cake donations to be brought into school on the morning of the 29<sup>th</sup> September.</i>
<b>1 October</b>	<b>Gardening Working Party. 10:00am – 1:00pm. All welcome.</b>
6 October	CAFOD Family Fast Day – Wear something green - £1 donation.
13 October	World Mental Health Day. (Wear an item of yellow with their uniform - £1 Healthy Young Minds).
18 October	PTA Sponsored Bounce. (Details to follow.)
20 October	Coffee and Cake with Mrs Bradbury 2pm in the hall.
20 October	School closes for the October half term break.
30 October	School reopens following the October half term break.
<b>3 November</b>	<b>PTA Sparkle Disco.</b>
<b>15 and 22 November</b>	<b>Parents' Evenings. (Booking details to follow in October).</b>

***Wishing you all a wonderful weekend! Mr John Nish and Miss Alice Poole.***