



**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL** It is good to be back together! We hope that everyone enjoyed the break over Christmas and has returned refreshed for the Lent term. Thank you for all the good wishes, gifts, cards and acknowledgements received by staff at the end of last term: we are very appreciative. We send all our families our very best wishes for 2024 and look forward to continuing to work in partnership with you throughout the New Year.



Since returning, our collective worship has explored the Epiphany through children's experience of giving gifts. The children discovered the meaning behind the gifts given by the wise men and reflected on what they can give to Jesus. Finally, they reflected that Jesus Himself is the most perfect gift of love from God to us! This week we have celebrated the Baptism of the Lord. This worship helped children to move from thinking about Jesus' birth to His Baptism,

which marked the start of His public ministry. The children reflected on their identity as God's children and learned that they too are invited to become a special part of His family. The Gospel account of Jesus' Baptism tells us that God's voice spoke from heaven, revealing Jesus as His beloved Son. You might want to find a picture or painting of this scene and talk about the images showing God the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit. Or perhaps you could encourage your child to draw their own picture. This may be a good opportunity to talk about your child/ren's Baptism when they became members of God's family. Perhaps you could share some photographs, light their baptismal candle in prayer time or simply talk about special memories of the day.

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

### ST MARY'S BOOK CLUB

Our December book club recommendations were a huge success with lots of children being keen to read the Christmas texts. Copies were shared around school and some pupil's bought or borrowed their own copy of the books to read at home. This week, we shared new non-fiction recommendations for the month ahead, please find attached our January Book Club.



### ROOKIE ROCKSTARS



Rookie Rockstars are delighted to be coming to work with St Mary's later this month. Rookie Rockstars is a Scottish charity focussing on mental health and wellbeing in children and young people. They offer a free primary school programme that brings professional musicians and performing artists into school to work with the children over three consecutive days. They teach the children five original songs about wellbeing and mental health,

encouraging them to look after themselves and others as best as they can. On 31 or 1 February, the children get to be rockstars for an evening as they perform in their very own concert for members of the community, showcasing all they learned with Rookie Rockstars and the team. It's great fun for everyone involved and I am sure this will be a highlight of the school year for many. Children with surnames starting with the letters A-L will perform from 6-7pm on 31 January and children and children with surnames M-Z will perform from 6-7pm on 1 February. Please see the accompanying letter which was issued last term for further details. Tickets for the concerts will go on sale via ParentPay from 23 January.

## WONDERDOME – PLANETARIUM VISIT TO ST MARYS

Next Friday, 19 January, a travelling planetarium, Wonderdome, will be visiting school and all classes will experience the wonders of space, our solar system and the universe! This event has been fully funded by our amazing PTA. The planetarium shows are presenter-led, providing a truly personal experience for everyone and cover the key curriculum programme of study ([England](#)), allowing pupils to be absorbed in the world and Universe around them. Content is flexed to enhance any space themed topic, as well as providing a cross-curriculum opportunity to explore concepts and ideas across many subjects. Hopefully, we will inspire future space explorers and scientists and kickstart their love for space and science with WonderDome. Take a look at Wonderdome's [GALLERY OF WONDER](#) and see how other schools have enjoyed their WonderDome experience. Further information about Wonderdome is available [here](#).



## RECEPTION PLACES FOR SEPTEMBER 2024



A final reminder that if you are applying for a school (Reception) place for next September, applications should be made by the **15 January 2024** via the [Stockport Admissions website](#). Please note: *if you child attends St Mary's Nursery, this does not guarantee your child a place in the school.* You will need to complete the application form using the link above by the closing date. Offers will be communicated on 16 April 2024 via Stockport Council.

## SAFEGUARDING AWARENESS: FIRST AID

At St Mary's the health and safety of all staff, pupils and visitors is a priority. We aim to ensure that staff and governors are aware of their responsibilities with regards to health and safety. There is a framework provided for responding to an incident, recording and reporting the outcomes and all staff had First Aid training. St Johns Ambulance advise every household and car owner to own an up to date First Aid kit so you can deal with minor accidents and injuries. A First Aid kit does not have to be expensive and can be put together by yourself using the [checklist on their website](#).

The Safe and Sound website provides details on [First Aid for Common Accidents in the Home](#) and Accident Prevention for Babies and Children. We also have a team of Mental Health First Aiders in school led by Mrs Bradbury. The role of a Mental Health First Aider is to be a point of contact for any pupil who is experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress. This interaction could range from having an initial conversation through to supporting the person to get appropriate help. For further information, please contact Mrs Bradbury through the School Office.



## PACKED LUNCHES



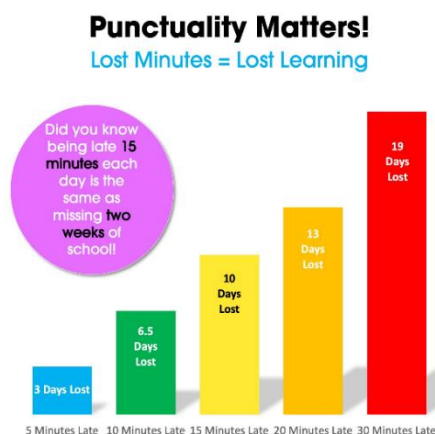
We encourage our children to eat a healthy meal at lunchtime. If your child brings a packed lunch, please make sure it is healthy and nutritious, for example, ham/cheese/egg/tuna sandwiches, fruit, yoghurt and water to drink - no fizzy drinks or 'Prime' drinks. Thank you for helping your child to have a healthy lunchtime. If you would like your child to have a hot school dinner, especially during the cold winter months, please speak with Mrs Towell or Mrs Major in the School Office for further details.

## TERM DATES 2024 – 2025

A reminder that the term dates (holiday list) for 2024 - 2025 are published on our school website – [please follow this link](#). Please remember that holidays requested during term time cannot be authorised and, if subsequently taken, may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued by Stockport Local Authority to each parent. Further details of Fixed Penalty Notices can be found on the [Stockport Council website](#).



## PUNCTUALITY



We often report to parents about the important matter of attendance – but punctuality is just as important. We understand that, on occasions, we can all experience an unexpected delay – and ‘one-offs’ are not a problem. However, some pupils are regularly late. If a pupil arrives at ten past nine every day, almost an hour of learning time is lost across a typical week – over the year this equates to over a week of lost learning - not to mention the unsettling aspect of entering the classroom when all the other children are launched into the day and may have enjoyed up to 15 minutes of social/networking time before registration.

## NEW FREE STOCKPORT PARENTING COURSES

Empowering Parents Empowering Communities (EPEC) is a successful, popular, parenting programme delivered by parents who live in their own community. The course is facilitated by two local parents (Parent Group Leaders), which makes this such a unique offer to parents. Please see the attached EPEC leaflet for further details and how to register. Topics include: being good enough, play and spending time with your children, understanding your children’s behaviour, discipline strategies, listening and communication, coping with stress and more. You can speak to a member of the EPEC Team for any further information by telephoning: 0161 406 9558.



## 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>
15 January	Closing date for Reception place admissions. <a href="#">Stockport Admissions website</a>
19 January	Wonderdome Planetarium visiting school for all classes (PTA funded).
20 January	Cross Country at Woodbank Park.
22 January	Year 6 Class liturgy 2:30pm in the school hall. All welcome.
<b>24 January</b>	<b>Year 6 PGL/SATs meeting for parents at 6:00pm in the Y6 classroom.</b>
31 January	Rookie Rockstars Concert (surnames A-L) 6:00-7:00pm in the hall.
1 February	Rookie Rockstars Concert (surnames M-Z) 6:00-7:00pm in the hall.
5 February	Year 2 Class liturgy 2:30pm in the school hall. All welcome.
9 February	Coffee and Cake with Mrs Bradbury and Mrs Norburn. 1:15pm
9 February	End of half term celebration assembly. 2:30pm in the hall. All welcome.
9 February	School closes for the February half term break.
19 February	School reopens following the February half term break.
<b>19 February</b>	<b>PTA AGM. 6:00pm in the school hall. All welcome.</b>
<b>22 – 29 February</b>	<b>Scholastic Book Fair in school. Details to follow.</b>
<b>23 February</b>	<b>PTA Family Quiz. 6:00 – 8:00pm. Tickets available soon via the <a href="#">PTA website</a>.</b>
26 February	Trust INSET day. School closed for children.
<b>5 &amp; 12 March</b>	<b>Parents Evenings (3:45pm – 6:45pm) in the school hall.</b>
<b>8 March</b>	<b>World Book Day Fancy Dress Disco. 5:00pm – 6:15pm. Ticket details to TBA.</b>
<b>13 March</b>	<b>Y3/Y4 Easter Production (10:00am and 2:00pm in the school hall).</b>
<b>14 March</b>	<b>Grandad’s Wheels – author visit to school.</b>
<b>19 - 22 March</b>	<b>Y6 residential visit to PGL.</b>
<b>22 March</b>	<b>PTA Easter Eggstravaganza.</b>
<b>25 – 28 March</b>	<b>Stations of the Cross led by Y5. 9:05am in the school hall. All welcome.</b>
<b>28 March</b>	<b>School closes for the Easter break.</b>

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