



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL



Just when we thought the celebrations might stop after Christmas, the New Year starts with a month full of significant Church calendar events. What's more, [the Year of Jubilee](#) has begun! This special celebration year comes with an invitation from Pope Francis to place our hope in God's love for us and to share His love with others.

Our Celebration of the Word assembly for the first week of term celebrated the Epiphany of the

Lord. This is when Jesus was revealed to the Wise Men after their long journey following the star. Through this, the children reflected on how God the Father gave Jesus as a gift for us all. They also considered what gifts they can offer Jesus, such as their time and attention. After spotting clues in this painting of the Wise Men meeting Jesus, the children used their imaginations to join with these wise travellers on their journey to see the baby King for the first time. With your child, you might like to spend time drawing, painting or modelling your own artwork depicting the arrival of the Wise Men.

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.

IT'S OFFICIAL – ST MARY'S ARE WORLD RECORD HOLDERS

You may recall that on 15 October 2024, all our children participated in a record-breaking attempt to mark Global Handwashing Day. The event brought schools across the UK together for the largest online hygiene lesson, teaching children the vital role handwashing plays in preventing the spread of infections and diseases.

After thorough verification by the adjudicators, we are thrilled to announce that we have officially broken the world record for the largest online hygiene lesson!

This outstanding achievement is now commemorated with an official Guinness World Records certificate, a special keepsake that celebrates your family's dedication to health and hygiene. In addition to the certificate, you can explore an exclusive range of Guinness World Records merchandise, including medals, bags, and record books—perfect mementos to mark your child's involvement in this historic event. You can also [order a personalised Certificate of Participation](#) featuring your child's name and photo. This makes a wonderful keepsake to frame at home or share with friends and family. To purchase, [visit this link](#) and use the code **KIDS8GERMS** at checkout.



The event took place too late to feature in the latest Guinness World Records but we hope to see this achievement recognised in next year's edition! A huge well done to all the children for their incredible efforts in making history! Well done St Mary's Record Breakers!



NEW DEVICES



We know that many of our children will have received new devices for Christmas. If this is the case in your household, please take a few minutes to read the advice letter I sent home on Monday. Further e-safety advice and information, about how to keep your child safe online, is [available on our website](#).

INTERVENTIONS

At St Mary's, we run a range of intervention groups to support our children's social and emotional development as well as supporting children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEN/D). Just like external services, our intervention groups have a capacity. Therefore, we similarly operate waiting lists and we triage needs when adding children to different groups. Our intervention groups, including services like ELSA, are not intended to be permanent provision for any child. They deliver time-limited therapeutic services to support our children. Please be assured that our staff are trained extensively to meet the needs of children in class. This means that a lot of needs can be met within universal provision that is ordinarily available across the school. Please get in touch with Mrs Norburn or Mrs Bradbury via the School Office with any questions.



CHILD DEVELOPMENT



Child development includes much more than the knowledge or skills we teach children at school. There are so many things, which we often take for granted, that are so valuable in helping children grow, develop and become independent. We know there are so many aspects of child development that we are limited in supporting at school due to the number of children in each class. Therefore, please do all you can to support children with the following at home: - Using cutlery appropriately

at mealtimes - Tying shoelaces and zipping coats - Getting dressed/undressed.

PACKED LUNCHES



We encourage all 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 flavoured juices. 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.

ST MARY'S BOOK CLUB

Our Advent Term 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 half term ahead, please find attached our Lent 1 Book Club.



REPORTING ABSENCES



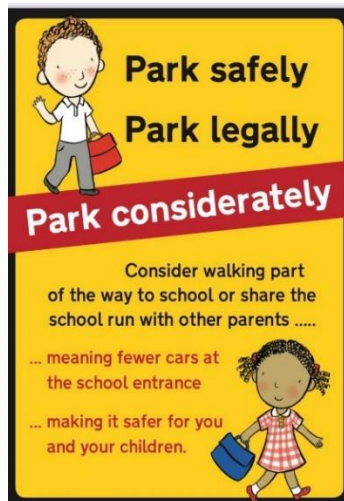
Please remember it is important to communicate with us **every day** your child is absent from school by telephoning 0161 427 7498 – option 1. We have a safeguarding responsibility for every child, so this communication is vital to avoid home visits or further referrals. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

RECEPTION PLACES FOR SEPTEMBER 2025 – FINAL CALL

If you are applying for a school (Reception) place for next September, applications should be made by next Wednesday, **15 January 2025** via the [Stockport Admissions website](#). Please note: *if your 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.



PARKING AND ROAD SAFETY REMINDER



We have received feedback from some residents regarding concerns about inconsiderate and potentially dangerous parking and driving around St Mary's during school drop-off and pick-up times. Specific issues highlighted include parking on double yellow lines, speeding along Hogarth Road and Constable Drive, mounting pavements, and obstructing pathways, making it challenging for pedestrians, particularly those with pushchairs or mobility needs.

As a school, we continue to promote safe and considerate parking practices. Recent initiatives include encouraging 'park-and-stride' options, engaging local councillors and enforcement officers, and having pupils campaign for safer streets. However, it is clear that further action is needed. We ask all parents and carers to take extra care when parking and driving near the school and not to park on Lowry Drive to ensure the safety of all children and members of the community. Let us work together to create a safe and respectful environment for everyone.

START OF TERM REMINDERS

Uniform - Our children are looking lovely in their winter uniform. Please remember to check the uniform section of our website, so that your child is attending school, wearing the correct uniform. You can order branded school uniform items from Bulldog Fashions, Glossop. School uniform includes black shoes. Please ensure that your child has shoes for school and trainers just for PE.

PE Kit - If you have not done so already, by Monday, please ensure that you have sent your child's PE kit into school, so they are well prepared for PE lessons, which started again this week. Each child needs a white PE shirt, dark shorts and pumps or trainers. As several lessons are outdoor, please also add leggings/joggers and a sweatshirt, if you wish, to help keep them warm, especially with the threat of very cold weather on its way to us.



Hair - Any child with long hair **MUST** have it tied up/tied back rather than loose. Please ensure that your child has a bobble or clip in to keep their hair out of their face and workbooks.

Jewellery - A reminder that for health and safety reasons, no jewellery including earrings of any description are permitted in school. Flat analogue or digital (not smart) watches are permitted.

NHS PHARMACY FIRST SERVICE



The NHS Pharmacy First Service enables children and adults to get convenient access to healthcare advice and treatment where appropriate, for seven common conditions without the potential delay of having to wait for a GP appointment. Accessing the service may mean that pharmacists can help children feel better and back to school as quickly as possible, as well as supporting parents/carers to also get better if they are unwell with one of the conditions covered under the service. *There is no need to make an appointment; parents or carers can pop into their local Boots pharmacy with their child and ask for help under the service.* Support for the following conditions can be accessed under the service, free of charge (unless NHS prescription charges apply):

Common condition	Patient eligibility
Earache	1 to 17 years
Impetigo	1 year and over
Infected insect bites and stings	1 year and over
Sore throats	5 years and over
Sinusitis	12 years and over
Uncomplicated urinary tract	Women 16 to 64 years
Shingles	18 years and over

BAG 2 SCHOOL



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Our next Bag 2 School collection takes place on **Tuesday 21 January**. Bag 2 School is a way for families to donate old clothes etc. to raise money for the school. With the New Year being a good opportunity to have a clear out, this a perfect time to declutter and support charity at the same time! The [full list of items accepted is available here](#). Any money raised is spent by our PTA to support school projects they agree on. Please send donations in the bag provided on 21 January only by 9:00am. Thank you for your support.

PTA FAMILY QUIZ NIGHT

Don't miss our **Fun Family Quiz Night** on **Friday 31 January** from **6:00pm – 8:00pm** in the **School Hall!** Enjoy a lively evening with **child-friendly quiz rounds** created and hosted by our brilliant Year 6 children. There's something for everyone, with a **reasonably priced bar**, delicious **pizza and hotdogs**, and a **tuck shop** to keep the fun fuelled. Tickets are just **£2.00 per adult**, and **children go free!** Grab your tickets now via the [PTA website](#) and secure your spot for a fantastic family evening.



BABY NEWS



As I reported in my start of term letter on Monday, I am thrilled to share the wonderful news that Miss Poole has welcomed a beautiful baby boy! Dougie James Burke was born on 23 December, weighing a healthy 8lb. Both mum and baby are doing well, and I couldn't be happier for Miss Poole and her husband during this special time. On behalf of the entire school family, we send our warmest congratulations and best wishes to the Burke and Poole families as they begin this exciting new chapter. Welcome to the world and to the St Mary's family, Dougie James. We had the pleasure of meeting Dougie on Thursday – he is adorable!

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 dates in bold.</i>	
13 January	Druhm workshops for each class. welcome to the DRUHM academy .
18 January	Cross Country at Woodbank Park. 10:00am.
20 January	Year 2 celebration of the word. 2:30pm. All welcome.
21 January	PTA Bag 2 School collection. What We Collect Bag2School
22 January	Year 6 SATs meeting for parents. 6:00-7:00pm.
31 January	PTA Family Quiz Night. 6:00pm – 8:00pm.
2 February	Parish/School Mass. 12 noon at St Mary's Church, Marple Bridge.
3 February	Hinduism workshops for each class.
7 February	Choir to sing at Young Voices 7:00pm Co-Op Live arena, Manchester.
10 February	Year 1 celebration of the word. 2:30pm. All welcome.
14 February	Coffee and cake with Mrs Bradbury and Mrs Norburn 1:15pm -2:15pm.
14 February	School closes for the February half term break.
24 February	INSET day – school closed to pupils.
25 February	School reopens to pupils following the half term break.
25 February	Year 1 parents phonics meeting 5:00pm – 5:30pm.
26 February	NSPCC Speak Out. Stay Safe Workshops (Years 2, 5 and 6).
4 & 11 March	Parents Evenings 3:30pm – 6:30pm.
8 March	Cross Country at Woodbank Park. 10:00am.
17 March	St Patrick's Day Year 6 celebration of the word. 2:30pm. All welcome.
20 March	First Confessions in school for all Sacramental Programme children.
25 March	School Council to visit Houses of Parliament.
28 March	Mother's Day assembly led by Reception class at 9:30am. All welcome.

Wishing you all a wonderful (and hopefully ice free!) weekend.
Mr John Nish.