



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 1: Friday 11 September 2026

WELCOME BACK AND THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL



It has been a real joy to welcome everyone back to St Mary's for the beginning of another school year. A particularly warm welcome goes to our new families and to the children who have joined us in Nursery and Reception. We hope that you will quickly feel part of our very special St Mary's family.

The beginning of a new school year is always a busy time as we settle back into routines and establish the expectations that will help everyone to learn, flourish and feel happy and safe. There will be lots of information coming home over the next few weeks, so please do take the time to read our Friday Bulletins and class newsletters, as these bring together important reminders, information and forthcoming events.

There are a number of different ways in which we communicate with families, and these are outlined in our Home-School Communication Protocols. Please keep these to hand so that you know the most appropriate way to contact us should you have a question or concern.

We are looking forward to a wonderful year ahead, filled with opportunities for learning, faith, friendship and fun. We are particularly keen to welcome parents and carers into school wherever possible, whether through

celebrations, assemblies, liturgies, workshops, performances or our fantastic PTA events. Your involvement makes such a positive contribution to our school community.

A huge thank you must also go to our wonderful staff team, who have worked incredibly hard during the summer break to prepare the school for the children's return. There has been plenty of cleaning, organising, decorating and preparation behind the scenes, and we are grateful for everything that has been done to ensure that our children returned to a welcoming and inspiring environment.

OUR MARIAN MISSION DAY

What a beautiful way to begin our new school year! On Monday we came together for a very special Marian Mission Day, celebrating Mary, the patron saint of our school, and reflecting on how her example can help each of us to journey closer to Jesus. The children spent the day discovering more about Mary through Scripture, prayer, discussion, art, research and creative activities.

The children particularly enjoyed learning about the four Marian apparition sites which now inspire our school Houses: **Red – Our Lady of Walsingham, Blue – Our Lady of Lourdes, Yellow – Our Lady of Fatima and Green – Our Lady of Knock.** Through their House groups, the children explored the stories of these special places and created artwork and projects celebrating Mary and her message.





Our day was made even more special because our Marian Mission Day coincided with St Mary's birthday, the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. As part of our celebrations, every child visited our Mary Garden and presented a flower to honour our Blessed Lady. Together, we asked Mary to watch over us and to help us journey with her to Jesus throughout this new school year. It was a simple but deeply meaningful moment of prayer and devotion, reminding us that Mary always points us towards her Son.

The children have made a wonderful start to the year and it was lovely to see them praying, learning and working together as a school family. We finished our Mission Day with a special celebration of the word, giving thanks for Mary and reflecting on how we can follow her example of faith, courage, love and trust.

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

THE ST MARY'S WAY – OUR SANCTA VALUES

During our first assemblies of the year, we have revisited our SANCTA values – Support, Aspire, Nurture, Challenge, Trust and Achieve. These values help us to understand the kind of people we want to become and underpin the way we treat others and approach our learning.

We have also reminded the children of our three simple behaviour expectations: *Be respectful. Be responsible. Be ready to learn.*

We expect all members of our school community to uphold these expectations, both in school and beyond. We know that children make the greatest progress when home and school work together, and we greatly appreciate parents and carers reinforcing these messages at home, including in relation to children's behaviour and interactions online.



MEET AND GREET CLASS TEACHERS



Thank you to all the parents and carers who attended our Meet and Greet sessions. These sessions provide a valuable opportunity to meet your child's teacher, visit their classroom and find out more about the year ahead. We are grateful for your support and for the strong partnership that exists between our families and school. Looking ahead, our *Parents Evenings* for

this term will take place on **Wednesday 14th October and Wednesday 21st October, from 3:40pm to 6:30pm**. Booking details will be shared with families towards the end of September.

SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and every adult in our school family has an important role to play in keeping children safe. As part of our staff training at the start of the school year, all staff have completed the required safeguarding and child protection training, including updates relating to [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026](#).

Our safeguarding arrangements and Child Protection Policy are [available on the school website](#). At St Mary's, we take our responsibility

to listen to children, respond appropriately to concerns and work closely with families and external agencies very seriously. If you have any safeguarding concerns, please contact one of our Designated Safeguarding Leaders at the school: Mr Nish (DSL), Miss Poole, Mrs Thompson and Mrs Bradbury (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leaders).



OPERATION ENCOMPASS



As a school in Stockport, we work with Greater Manchester Police through Operation Encompass. This provides a mechanism for schools to receive information when police attend a domestic abuse incident involving a child or young person.

If you or your family are experiencing domestic abuse, please remember that you can speak to someone at school in confidence. We are here to listen and to help wherever we can. To find out more about

Operation Encompass parents/carers can [click here](#). Please remember, if you are living with domestic abuse, you can talk to somebody at school in confidence.

UK GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)

We need to hold personal information about your child to support their education. Information about data protection, including privacy notices, is [available here](#).



FOOD ALLERGIES AND BENEDICT'S LAW



The safety and wellbeing of our children remains our highest priority. As part of our commitment to keeping children with allergies safe, we have introduced Benedict's Law into our school practice. Benedict's Law strengthens awareness of the risks associated with food allergies and anaphylaxis and reinforces the importance of everyone in our school community understanding how to respond appropriately.

As part of our INSET training last week, all staff received training on Benedict's Law and anaphylaxis, ensuring

that staff are equipped with the knowledge and confidence to recognise the signs of an allergic reaction and respond appropriately in an emergency.

Please be aware that an increasing number of pupils in school have severe food allergies. St Mary's remains a **nut-free school**. Please do not send nuts, products containing nuts, hummus or seeded breads into school. We ask all families to continue to take great care when preparing and sending food into school, as even very small amounts of an allergen can pose a serious risk to some children. Thank you for your continued support in helping us maintain a safe and inclusive environment for every child.

INHALERS AND MEDICATION

Please ensure that any medication required by your child in school is current and has been provided to the school office in accordance with our medical needs procedures. If your child requires an inhaler in school, please check that we have an in-date inhaler and spacer available. If you have received medication back at the end of the previous academic year because it was approaching its expiry date, please provide a replacement as soon as possible to the school office.



CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS AT ST MARY'S



We love celebrating birthdays at St Mary's and each class has its own special way of recognising children's birthdays. As part of our commitment to being a healthy school, and because of the number of allergies within our school community, children should *not bring sweets or food into school to share on their birthday*.

Children are invited to wear their own clothes on their birthday, allowing us all to celebrate their special day together. If a birthday falls at the weekend or during a school

holiday, children may choose a suitable school day, close to their birthday, on which to wear their own clothes.

HEALTHY SNACKS

Children in Years 3–6 should bring a healthy snack for morning break. This should be fruit or vegetables, such as an apple, banana, cucumber or carrot sticks.

Children in Key Stage 1 (Y1-Y2) continue to receive free fruit and vegetables through the government scheme, although they may bring their own fruit or vegetable snack if they wish. As a simple rule, snacks should be healthy and produce little or no waste!



SCHOOL UNIFORM



The children have made a fantastic start and look extremely smart in their school uniform.

Please make sure that **all items of uniform, coats, shoes, PE kits and other belongings are clearly labelled**. This makes a huge difference when items are misplaced.

Please also ensure that PE kits are complete and labelled. Further information about our uniform expectations and policy can be found on the [school website](#). Uniform items including school book bags are available from [Bulldog Fashion](#), Glossop. Uniform swaps are also held in school each term. There is also

a pre-loved uniform rail in the front entrance, so please come and take a look as there might be a pre-loved item suitable for your child.

MORNING ARRIVAL

The playground door opens at **8:40am** and closes promptly at **8:50am**, when the school day begins and registers are taken. If your child arrives after 8:50am, please accompany them to the school office. All children arriving late must be signed in at the office so that we maintain an accurate register and know who is present in school. Thank you for helping us to ensure that the school day begins promptly and calmly.



SCHOOL ATTENDANCE



School attendance is a national priority. At St Mary's attendance is very strong with average attendance last year standing at 96.7% above the national average of 93%.

Regular attendance is essential to children's learning, wellbeing and progress. We are proud of the strong attendance achieved by our pupils, but we remain committed to ensuring that every child attends school as regularly as possible.

Please notify school of any absence **before 8:50am** and provide the reason for the absence. If you are unable to contact the school by telephone, please use the agreed email arrangements.

As a reminder, leave of absence during term time can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Families should submit a [Leave of Absence Request Form](#) where appropriate. Please note that absence during term time can only be authorised exceptional circumstances, such as the death of an immediate family member. Holidays during term time, regardless of the circumstances cannot be authorised. All absence requests must be made on [this leave of absence request form](#) available from the school website. [2026-2027 term dates are available here](#).

SCHOOL LUNCH MENU

Please find attached to this email a copy of the school lunch menu, as previously noted, **we can only accommodate changes to a lunch pattern at the start of each half term**. Please note that the menu may occasionally change due to supply chain issues. This term's menu is attached for your reference. School meals are priced at £3.38 per child, per day.



HOME LEARNING (HOMEWORK)

Our approach to home learning remains deliberately simple: reading is our priority. We ask parents and carers to make time for regular reading at home and to record this in children's reading records. Regular reading with an adult has a significant impact on children's vocabulary, comprehension, fluency and enjoyment of books. Alongside reading, teachers will use Doodle Learning to provide short, regular opportunities for children to practise important skills in mathematics and English. Our approach is based on 'little and often', helping children to consolidate what they are learning in school without creating an unnecessary burden for families. If you have any questions about home learning, please speak to your child's class teacher. Parents/carers can find out information about their child's learning [here](#).



HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

Home School Agreement

We are very proud of the strong relationship between St Mary's and our families. Choosing a school for your child is an important decision and we are grateful for the trust that families place in us. Our Home-School Agreement sets out the shared responsibilities of school, children and parents/carers. By working together, communicating openly and supporting the same high expectations, we can provide the best possible environment for our children to flourish. As part of our commitment to working together, please take a read of our [Home School Agreement](#) which automatically applies to any families within our school.

LOWRY DRIVE SCHOOL STREETS – VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Our School Street on Lowry Drive launches on **Monday 14 September**. During term time, Lowry Drive will be closed to vehicles **from 8:30am–9:10am and 2:30pm–3:30pm**. Unless you have a valid permit, vehicles are not permitted to enter Lowry Drive during these times. The scheme will help to reduce traffic and congestion outside school and, most importantly, help us to create a safer environment for our children and families. We currently have a small number of volunteers, but we need more people to marshal the closure point ensuring the scheme will be really effective. The School Street will operate from 14 September, but without sufficient volunteers to man the closure point, its impact will not be the same. If you are able to give just one morning or afternoon each month, please consider volunteering. Even an hour of your time would make a real difference in helping to keep our children safe on Lowry Drive and supporting the smooth running of the scheme. [Please sign up using this shared spreadsheet](#). Thank you to those who have already volunteered, and to everyone who is able to give a little of their time to support our school family.



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>	
15 September	Flu vaccinations YR – Y6.
17 September	PTA Pizza Night for Nursery and Reception families. Pizza Night – St Mary's PTA
21 September	Year 5 celebration of the word at 2:40pm. All welcome.
22-25 September	Y6 PGL residential.
28 September	Back to School / Welcome Mass 2:00pm in school.
30 September	Nursery and Reception Phonics meeting for parents 5:30 – 6:30pm.
30 September	Year 6 SATs meeting for parents 5:30 6:30pm.
2 October	YR & Y6 Special Friends Assembly. 9:30-10:30am.
5 October	PTA Great St Mary's Bake Off. 3:20pm. Details to follow.
12 October	Year 4 celebration of the word at 2:30pm. All welcome.
14 October	Y6 Weight and Height checks.
14 & 21 October	Parents Evenings. 3:40 – 6:30pm.
23 October	Celebration Assembly 2:15pm. All welcome.
23 October	School closes for October half term.
2 November	School reopens following October half term.

Thank you for a fantastic first full week of the school year. Wishing you all a restful weekend.