



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 18 September 2026

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL



This week, our Word of the Week is 'Outreach', and through our Celebration of the Word we have been reflecting on how we can share God's love with those around us, particularly those who are poor, lonely or may feel excluded. Through the story of the prophet Jeremiah, the children were reminded that we are never too young to make a difference and that God is with us when we reach out to others. We explored the inspiring example of St Teresa of Kolkata, who dedicated her life to caring for people living in poverty, and learned about Mary's Meals, which provides school meals to children in some of the world's poorest communities. Our

children were challenged to put their faith into action by noticing someone who may not always be included, reaching out to them and helping them to know that they are loved and important. Our prayer and reflection were brought together through *The Cry of the Poor*, reminding us that "The Lord hears the cry of the poor."

FAMILY CHALLENGE: REACH OUT TOGETHER

As a family, notice someone who might need a little kindness this week. Perhaps an elderly neighbour, a new child at an activity, someone who is feeling lonely, or a family member who could use some encouragement. Decide together on one practical act of outreach. You could visit or phone someone, invite someone to join you, share something you have, write a kind note or simply spend some time listening. At the end of the week, talk together about how your small act of kindness made a difference. Remember: we are never too young to show God's love.

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

SPECIAL FRIENDS ASSEMBLY

We are delighted to invite parents, especially those of children in Reception and Year 6, to our *Special Friends Assembly* on **Friday, 2 October at 9:30am**. This much-loved event, organised by our dedicated Early Years Team, celebrates the special bond between our Reception children and their Year 6 "special friends." These friendships play an important part in helping our youngest pupils settle happily into school life, while also giving our older children the opportunity to live out the SANCTA values of nurture, support, and trust.



Following the assembly, we will be hosting a **Macmillan Coffee Morning** in support of the national appeal. Refreshments and cakes will be available, with all donations going to this important cause. We warmly encourage families to stay, enjoy a coffee, and join us in raising funds for Macmillan. We look forward to sharing this special occasion with you!

MEDICATION AT SCHOOL



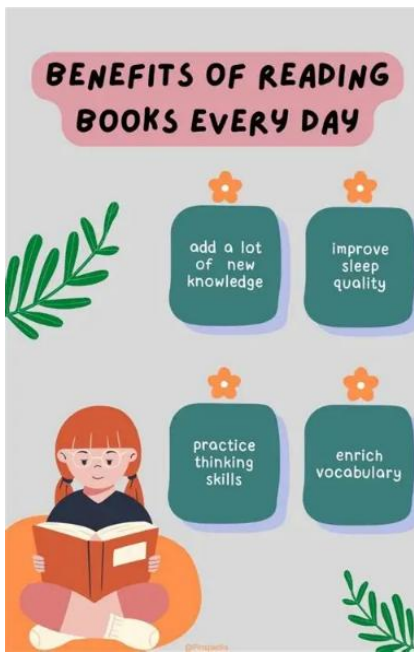
Thank you to those who followed up on our request to update asthma inhalers at the beginning of the year. If your child has any other medical conditions of which we should be aware, or there is new information to share, please call into the school office as soon as possible.



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THE IMPORTANCE OF READING



At St Mary's, reading remains a key priority. We know that children who read regularly for pleasure develop stronger reading skills, a wider vocabulary, greater general knowledge and a deeper understanding of the world around them. Most importantly, a love of reading opens doors, builds confidence and helps children to become successful, lifelong learners. Quite simply: if your child reads, they will succeed! Developing a positive reading habit takes time, encouragement and support. Alongside reading aloud together, we encourage families to make time for Book Chat – those relaxed conversations about books that help children talk about characters, predict what might happen, explore new vocabulary and share their thoughts and feelings. These simple conversations are powerful in developing language, comprehension and, above all, a genuine enjoyment of reading. Throughout the year, Miss Poole leads a wide range of reading initiatives, activities and opportunities designed to inspire our children and bring books to life. With families and school working together, we can nurture confident, curious and enthusiastic readers who develop a

lifelong love of books.

ST MARY'S BOOK CLUB

We are excited to announce that we will be continuing with our 'book club' after last year's success. Classes will have time each half term to discuss favourite authors and books and listen to book recommendations, which we hope will help our pupils to choose books to read independently, discover new authors and share a love of reading. We have attached our Advent 1 book recommendations, which you may like to share and discuss together at home over the weekend.



CAFOD HARVEST FAMILY FAST DAY 2026

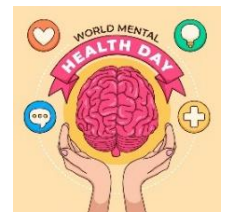


Fast, pray and give

On **Thursday 1 October** we are asking that children come **wearing something green to accompany their school uniform** e.g. green socks, hair ribbon/bobble etc... and donate £1 in aid of Family Fast Day. As you know, CAFOD is a fabulous charity that supports and reaches out to people who are affected by poverty. This year the theme is the 'carving a better future for the world' and we think it is important that we get involved and show our support where we can. You can [read more about this year's campaign here](#).

WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY 2026

The following **Friday, 9 October 2026**, we will be celebrating World Mental Health Day at St Mary's, and we are asking all children to wear an **item of yellow with their uniform** e.g. yellow socks, tie etc... and to donate £1. This will form part of our contribution to the Healthy Young Minds organisation. This is a wonderful charity which does so much to support children and young adults. During that week, the children will have a special focus on mental health as part of their learning.



HARRYTOWN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL VISIT



On Monday we were delighted to welcome Mrs Pickles, Headteacher of Harrytown, alongside two Year 11 pupils, including one who is a former pupil of St Mary's. They spoke to our Y5 and Y6 children about life at secondary school, shared their experiences and answered questions about the next stage of their educational journey. It was particularly lovely for our pupils to hear from a former St Mary's child and discover how their primary school experiences continue to support them. Families considering the school are warmly invited to attend the Open Evening on Thursday 1 October, 4:00pm–6:30pm, with opportunities to meet staff and pupils, explore the school and hear from Mrs Pickles, with Headteacher talks at 4:15pm and 5:00pm.

DOODLE BACK TO SCHOOL CHALLENGE 2026

Our children are taking part in the *Doodle Back to School Challenge*, designed to help them settle back into routines while building confidence in maths and English. By spending just 10 minutes a day on **DoodleMaths** and **DoodleEnglish**, pupils can fill gaps in knowledge, develop healthy learning habits, and even earn a special virtual badge! There are also exciting prizes on offer:



our school will be entered into a national competition, with the chance to win a bundle of games worth £75. Research shows that short, regular use of Doodle makes a big difference: 10 minutes a day adds up to five extra hours of learning each month. We encourage families to support children in taking part and to celebrate their achievements along the way. The Back-to-School Challenge commences today and runs until 1 October.

CYCLE AND SCOOT TO SCHOOL WEEK



We are excited to launch our Cycle & Scoot to School Week from Monday 5th to Friday 9th October, encouraging our children and families to choose active journeys to school wherever possible. Cycling and scooting are fantastic ways to start the school day feeling energised while also helping to create a healthier, greener community. The week also supports the launch of our School Streets initiative and our continuing Travel Tracker and WOW Schools projects with Living Streets. As part of the week, children can take part in our Pedal, Scoot & Shine! Decorate Your Ride Competition on Friday 9th October –

simply decorate your bicycle or scooter and bring it to school to show off your creative designs! Throughout the year, our WOW Schools project will also celebrate children who walk, cycle or scoot to school at least once a week, with children working towards earning a WOW badge each month. Together, let's make our journeys to school healthier, greener and more active!

APPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL PLACES: SEPTEMBER 2027

We may still be welcoming our new Nursery and Reception pupils into the St Mary's family for this year but applications are already open for our 2027 cohorts!

NURSERY: for children born between 1 Sept 2023 - 31 August 2024: closing date **31 March 2026**.

RECEPTION: for children born between 1 Sept 2021 - 31 August 2022: closing date **15 January 2026**.

SECONDARY: for children born between 1 Sept 2014 - 31 August 2015: closing date **31 October 2026**. [All school applications are managed by Stockport Local Authority via this link.](#)

Prospective St Mary's parents are most welcome to attend our open events on Tuesday 3 November 10:00am-11:30am or Thursday 5 November from 1:30pm-3:00pm.



FREE SCHOOL MEALS (FSM)

FREE SCHOOL MEALS



FSM eligibility has now been categorised into two forms:

1. **Targeted Free School Meals.** Available to children from households receiving Universal Credit and with annual earnings of £7,400 or less (excluding benefits). Children eligible for Targeted FSM will also qualify for:

- Pupil Premium funding for their school.
- Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme.
- Other support linked to FSM eligibility where applicable.

2. **Expanded Free School Meals.** Available to children from households earning more than £7,400 but who are still in receipt of Universal Credit. Children eligible for Expanded FSM will:

- Receive a free school meal.
- Not qualify for Pupil Premium funding.
- Not qualify for the HAF programme.
- Not automatically qualify for other benefits linked specifically to Targeted FSM eligibility.

All children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to a free meal at lunchtime, under the government's Infant Free School Meals scheme. However, if you think that you are eligible on the criteria above, we encourage you to [complete the application via Stockport Council here](#). Our school receives a pupil premium payment for each eligible child in the 'targeted' category. It is therefore important for our school that all eligible families apply using the link above. Please note that children in receipt of Free School Meals are also eligible for a range of other benefits, including discounted school trips, free uniform and much more. It is therefore important to check your eligibility to ensure your child does not miss out. If you have any questions, or need support completing the application, please do not hesitate to contact the School Office.

GARDENING VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



We would like to invite parents and grandparents to join us on Wednesday mornings to help care for our school grounds alongside the children. This is a wonderful opportunity to work with the pupils, encouraging them to learn about nature, responsibility, and pride in their environment. We are very fortunate to already have a number of dedicated and valued volunteers who give their time so generously - their support makes a real difference and is deeply appreciated.

We would love to welcome even more helpers, whether on a regular basis or just occasionally. If this is something you'd be interested in, please contact the School Office or Dominic Bowler (dbowler@mmb.srscmat.co.uk) for further details.

PTA PIZZA EVENING THANKS

A huge thank you to all our Nursery and Reception parents and carers who joined us for our first Pizza Evening on Thursday. It was a wonderful opportunity for families to meet one another, enjoy some time together and begin building the strong sense of community that is such an important part of life at St Mary's. We hope everyone enjoyed the evening and found it a lovely way to mark the beginning of this exciting new chapter as our youngest children settle into school life. A special thank you to the PTA who helped make the evening such a success!



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>	
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.
1 October	CAFOD Harvest Family Fast Day – a touch of green with uniform - £1 donation.
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.
9 October	World Mental Health Day. (Wear an item of yellow with their uniform - £1)
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.
21 October	PTA Sponsored Bounce.
23 October	Celebration Assembly 2:15pm. All welcome.
23 October	School closes for October half term.
2 November	School reopens following October half term.

Wishing you all a relaxing weekend, especially those preparing for PGL! Mr John Nish.