



Friday 13th December 2024

HEADLINES

St Mary's Catholic School



DATES FOR THE DIARY

Tuesday 17th December
Christmas Dinner

Wednesday 18th December
Carol Service, 7pm,
St Joseph and the English
Martyrs

Friday 20th December
End of term, 1pm

Monday 6th January 2025
Inset day (pupils not in
school)

Tuesday 7th January 2025
Spring term begins

Thursday 9th January 2025
Year 13 Parents' Evening,
4.30pm - 7.30pm



Dear Parents

I would like to thank you sincerely for your most kind and generous contributions to the Cardinal Hume Centre as part of our Advent Charity Drive. It is commendable that as families you choose to be able to give to those most vulnerable within our diocese this Christmas, which shows care and compassion and the family values that makes our school such a wonderful community of love. Our Sixth Form Chaplaincy team were exceptionally humbled by your generosity as they co-ordinated the packing up and preparation of the donations to be delivered ready for the Christmas period. Photos and a word of thanks are on page 2.

May I also take this opportunity to warmly encourage you to attend our Advent Carol Service this Wednesday evening, 18th December. Our choirs, soloists, musicians, readers and Y7 choir have been busy rehearsing for this very special occasion where we stop in prayer during Advent and pray together as a community. Fr Peter Harris will be presiding over the service and all are welcome to join us for this service and seasonal refreshments afterwards in the Parish Hall. Families are encouraged to purchase a family candle which will be lit on the evening and your family prayed for during this service. Any parent who wishes to purchase a family candle to be lit during the service, please do submit £5 payment via [ParentPay](#).



You may also choose to purchase raffle tickets via ParentPay for our Christmas Raffle kindly organised by Friends of St Mary's FOSM with a whole host of wonderful prizes. Your support is very much appreciated.

Please do enjoy reading this fortnight's edition to see what is happening around the school. Next week you will be receiving the bumper Autumn Term Curriculum edition which will show all the work and achievements in all curriculum areas during this term.

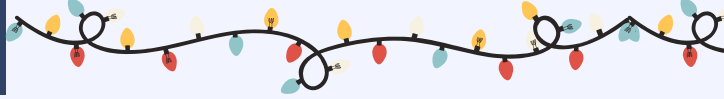
Let us pray together in this third week of Advent:

Lord God, may we, your people, who look forward to the birthday of Christ experience the joy of salvation and celebrate that feast with love and thanksgiving. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

Wishing you and your families a very restful and relaxing weekend.

God Bless
Deirdre McHugh

Advent Charity Collection



Many thanks to the parents, students and staff who have supported our Charity fundraising this Autumn Term. We have held many successful charity events and your donations will make a real difference to the lives of many people, both locally and around the world.

Our chapel is full of items ready to be taken to the Cardinal Hume Centre in London, where they will go towards the foodbank which will support vulnerable families in the coming months. Over £200 has also been donated in supermarket vouchers which will help lift some of the burden of Christmas expenses to these families.

Your generosity to our Red Wednesday fundraising for Aid to the Church in Need saw a record amount of £881.90 raised, which will go to support Christian communities affected by persecution.

Our CAFOD fast day soup sale raised £215.42, to support development projects overseas. In addition, our Year 10 families helped the school donate £250 to the Meninadanca Charity to help vulnerable girls escape child exploitation and prostitution.

As a school community, we thank you for your kind sacrifices and wish you and your families a joyful, healthy and peaceful Christmas!



Jubilee Competition

We look forward to 2025! Not only is it a new year with all the possibilities that a new beginning brings, but it is a Jubilee Year. Pope Francis has proclaimed that the focus of the Jubilee Year is "Pilgrims of Hope." In his Papal Bull, Pope Francis stated: "...the Christian life is a journey calling for moments of greater intensity to encourage and sustain hope as the constant companion that guides our steps towards the goal of our encounter with the Lord Jesus".

We wanted to give students an opportunity to learn for themselves about what a Jubilee Year is and why we are to be Pilgrims of Hope. The R.E Department ran a competition where KS3 students were asked to produce a poster to explain Jubilee 2025 and KS4 students were to write a speech about it. We were very pleased with the entries received and thank all the students who took part. Many entries were beautifully and thoughtfully presented and demonstrated that students understand the importance of a Jubilee Year and the opportunities it brings for our spiritual growth.

Congratulations to Lottie H (KS3) and Sophie S (KS4) who were our winners, and to Celeste S (KS3) and Aaliyah J (KS4) whose entries were highly commended. We hope they enjoy their prizes and well done again!



Year 8 Cake Break

Earlier this week there was a well-deserved reward for those top students in Year 8, with positive attitude to learning in their AP1, most positive house points and good attendance records. Congratulations!



Karate Success

Congratulations to Ben M (Y7) and Aidan M (Y10) on their success at a recent Shotokan Karate Ryu black belt grading.

Aidan was awarded his second dan (nidan) and Ben was awarded his first dan (shodan).

They were put through their paces by Senseis Michael Ring, Donna Ring, Stuart Trow and John Neil Park, with the grading panel members having more than 100 years of combined karate experience between them.

Both candidates were thoroughly tested on their mastery of kihon (basic techniques), kata (formal exercises) and kumite (sparring). The grading demanded not only physical prowess but also a deep understanding of terminology and principles.

Congratulations to both boys on this amazing achievement!



Inter-House Bake Off Competition

Students from Y7 – 13 were chosen to represent their Houses in the recent Inter-House Christmas Bake off. Each team was challenged to decorate a muffin with a Christmas theme, design and create a box and finally create an advert for the finished product. It was great to see students from different year groups working effectively together.

Mrs Crowhurst and Mr Eddleston had the difficult task of judging each team's performance but in the end R and M Houses were declared joint winners. All students will receive house points according to the overall position achieved. Well done to everyone involved!



Inter-House Christmas Card Competition.

Our Key Stage 3 students were presented with the opportunity to create a Christmas card design in their Art lessons.

'Together at Christmas' was the theme for students to base their designs on. There were so many excellent entries that my Senior Prefects and I had a very difficult design with choosing the very best designs!

The designs you see have been created as Christmas cards and distributed to all our students for them to write to a peer or staff member wishing them a Merry Christmas.



Fundraising Swim-a-thon

Fundraising 24-hour Swimathon

Faye L (9K) and Bella H (9J) are taking part in a charity 24 hour swim fundraiser. The Head coach of Ware Swimming Club gave birth prematurely and their baby was quite unwell. After a long stay in Great Ormond Street Hospital, the baby has thankfully been given a clean bill of health.



Ware Swimming Club is organising a 24 hour Swim-a-thon to support GOSH by raising much needed funds. Please support Bella and Faye by sponsoring them using the link below:

[Billy Cyl](#) Sara Matthews is fundraising for Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity.

Consultation on admission arrangements for 2026/2027 – St Mary's Catholic School, Bishop's Stortford

In accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education's School Admissions Code 2021, St Mary's Catholic School, Bishop's Stortford is consulting on their admissions arrangements for the academic year 2026/27.

The consultation will run for 6 weeks commencing on Monday 2nd December 2024 and closing on Monday 13th January 2025.

The proposed Admissions Policies can be found on our website [September 2026 Proposed Admissions Policy](#).

Responses to these arrangements are invited and should be submitted to Mrs D Reilly, Admissions Officer by email: admissions@stmarys.net or by post to the school address: St Mary's Catholic School, Windhill, Bishop's Stortford, CM23 2NQ by Monday 13th January 2025.

The Governing Body will then consider all the responses before determining the final admission arrangements by Friday 28th February 2025.




MESSAGE FROM THE STUDENT HUB

Please ensure that all **lost property** is removed from the Student Hub by Friday 20th December. Anything left will be disposed of.

Our procedure for giving paracetamol has changed: we must have **written** approval from parents before we administer paracetamol. You will be called for consent, but please follow up your consent with an email.

Have a lovely Christmas!



Considerate parking

We would like to remind parents of the need to park responsibly when dropping off or collecting their child from school. Roads adjacent to St Mary's are restricted parking areas for residents only. Whilst it is appreciated that it may be difficult to find suitable parking nearby, please follow basic road safety guidance:

- Do not double park
- Do not park on double yellow lines or corners
- Do not park across the driveways of houses

Parking in these roads is by resident permit only, cars parked here for a substantial amount of time are liable to receive a parking fine.

UNIFORM4KIDS



Updated Opening Hours

Dear Parent/Carer,

During our quiet times, our stores will be closed on Fridays from October to May.

Orders can continue to be placed online 24/7. This will not affect the summer period when we will remain open 6 days a week from June to September.

Thank you for your continued support.

Christmas and New Year Opening Hours

18–27 December 2024 – Closed
 28, 30 & 31 December 2024 – Open: 9am–5.30pm
 1 January 2025 – Closed
 2 January 2025 onward – Open: 9am–5.30pm



HAPpy Camps

Bookings are now open for the HAPpy Campus that will run during the school winter holiday for children and teens living in Hertfordshire who receive benefits-related free school meals.

Bookings go live on 29th November. Click [here](#) for further information and to book.

The unique code for St Mary's is 2CW#3E