ST MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

HEADLINES

FRIDAY 9TH OCTOBER 2026





Dear St Mary's Community,

What a wonderful week we have had celebrating our Catholic identity and the spiritual growth of our young people. On Monday, we gathered together for our St Francis of Assisi Feast Day Trust Mass, which brought together our Chaplaincy team members from Year 7 through to Year 13, alongside all our Primary school chaplaincy teams. It was truly a joyous occasion, and Father Axcel delivered a fantastic homily that resonated with everyone present. I must extend tremendous thanks to our St Mary's worship band and choir for their excellent musical accompaniment throughout the Mass – their contribution was exceptional and really enhanced the prayerful atmosphere of the celebration.

Following the Mass, our Chaplaincy team had the opportunity to participate in reflection and a retreat that was expertly planned and delivered by one of our student leaders, Anna S. Her confidence and authenticity in leading this session was remarkable, and we are very proud of the way she stepped into this role with such maturity and dedication.

Our liturgical calendar plays such an important role in shaping our school calendar, ensuring that our young people have genuine opportunities to grow in both faith and education. This was exemplified beautifully on Friday 2nd October when our Sixth Form students enjoyed a day of spiritual growth and reflection as part of their first year group retreat. The day was expertly led by Mr Hutchinson, Mrs Russell and Mr Eddleston, and we were delighted to welcome Daniella Stephens from Manchester as our guest speaker. Daniella shared her personal testimony with the students, helping them to understand how they can "Grow in Grace" as they progress through the Sixth Form and beyond. Father Axcel celebrated Mass during the retreat, and the students thoroughly enjoyed the experience, which has truly enhanced their spiritual development.

Dates for the Diary

Thursday 15th October
Presentation Evening (7pm-8pm)

Thursday 22nd October
Flu Vaccinations

Friday 23rd October
Year 7 Retreat

Monday 26th October - Tuesday 3rd November
Half Term

Wednesday 4th November
Students return to school

GO 4 Schools

Click here to access your child's academic achievement and progress data.

Looking ahead, I am delighted to inform you that our annual Presentation Evening is coming up on Thursday 15th October. This is our prize giving event where we recognise and reward students for their academic achievements throughout 2025-2026. We have over 120 students receiving awards on the evening, and I am greatly looking forward to celebrating their successes with you and sharing this special occasion with our community.

Finally, I am pleased to share that we have streamlined our email procedures to support parental queries more efficiently and effectively. This means your concerns and questions will be addressed with greater speed and clarity. Please see later in this edition for further details on this new process.

Please do keep our Year 11 and Year 13 students in your prayers over the weeks ahead as they prepare for the important Autumn mock examinations. Please do support them in their studies and preparations. We hope they secure the grades we know they are well capable of.

Wishing you and your families a restful and relaxing weekend.

God Bless,

Deirdre McHugh, Head Teacher

The Chaplaincy Team – Living our Faith

"In simplicity of our hearts joyfully giving all to God"
Sisters of St. Mary of Namur

Prayer intention requests

We are a community that prayers for one another. Please click here or scan the QR code to submit a prayer request.

Our Parish News

Stay connected with news from our parish, click here or scan the QR code to find latest mass times and newsletters.



Living Liturigcally Together

Last week our chaplaincy team joined with the other teams from across the Trust to celebrate the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi, it was great to see so many students at St. Joseph's Church. The chaplaincy team then came back to the chapel for a mini-retreat lead by the Sixth Form students.

Over the next few weeks, we are celebrating the feast days of some incredible saints. On **Tuesday 13th October** it is the Feast of St. Edward the Confessor, the Patron saint of Westminster Diocese. During this week could you go to confession as a family as this is something St Edward was known for. You could also pray for our current monarch during family prayers. On **Thursday 15th October** it is the feast day of St. Theresa of Avila a doctor of the church. On this evening, have a dinner associated with Spain in her honour. On **Thursday 22nd October** it is the Feast of Pope St. John Paul II. On this day, try to get outside as a family. JPII loved walking, as an extra challenge don't have any devices with you.

Hopefully focusing on these feast days along with our regular attendance at mass on Sunday will allow us all to grow in holiness and live more liturgically.

Key Catholic Dates

In School

- September-October: Welcome Liturgies in the School Chapel
- Friday 23rd October: Year 7 retreat

In the Parish

Saturday 6th March – Flame 2027. FLAME is an event which takes place every two-three years and is the largest gathering of Catholic Young People in the country. Tickets can be purchased for £30 by speaking to Sophie Sullivan at St. Joseph's or emailing bstortfordcatechist@rcdow.org.uk.

SIXTH FORM RETREAT





Sixth Form students had a brilliant day on Friday 2nd October, stepping away from the everyday, making memories, building friendships and taking time to reflect.

They embraced every part of the retreat experience — from fun and laughter to meaningful conversations, teamwork and personal reflection.

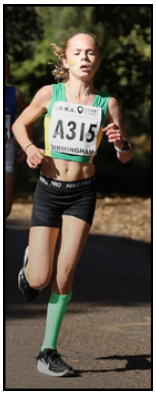
A wonderful opportunity to pause, connect and grow together.

STUDENT SUCCESS!



Well done to Bella K (Y8) who won her first national medal last weekend when she took part in the national road running championships in Birmingham. As part of a three girl team running just under 4km each, they successfully completed the relay and were awarded the bronze medal.

Congratulations are also due to her sister, Isla (Y10), who came 6th in the country with her team.



SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPHY – EXTENDED DISCOUNT

Pret-a-Portrait have extended the discount available on the recent school photos until Tuesday 13th October, so you can take advantage of the discount for longer.

Head to their website www.pret-a-portrait.net and enter your sitting ID, the discount will be applied automatically.

If you've misplaced your sitting ID, please contact Pret-a-Portrait directly on 0800 021 7626 or customerservice@pret-a-portrait.net.

INTERNAL PROGRESS EXAMS - YEARS 11 & 13

The internal progress exam timetable for Years 11 and 13 can be found on the school website here.

CONTACTING ST MARY'S

How to use our central email address info@stmarys.net

For routine questions or concerns, please send your email to info@stmarys.net. This helps us make sure your message reaches the right person and is followed up.

What happens when you email us?

1. We receive your email: The central inbox is monitored by designated administrative staff throughout the school day.

2. You receive an acknowledgement: You will receive confirmation that your email has been received and passed to the appropriate member of staff or team.

3. Your email is sent to the right person: Your enquiry is reviewed and allocated to the appropriate member of staff, such as a class teacher, Head of Department, Head of Year, SENCO or another relevant colleague.

4. One person takes responsibility: A named member of staff will be responsible for responding to you. If they need to speak to another colleague, they will follow this up rather than expecting you to contact someone else.

5. You receive a response: You should expect a response within 2 school days. If more time is needed, the school will contact you to let you know.

Why are we using one central email address?

- It helps us make sure no parent or carer email is overlooked.
- It allows us to confirm that your message has been received.
- It means your enquiry can be directed to the person best placed to help.
- It helps us monitor outstanding enquiries and make sure they are followed up.
- It avoids messages being sent to several members of staff at the same time.

If you have contacted a member of staff directly

Where appropriate, the member of staff may forward your email to info@stmarys.net so that it can be logged and allocated. Please use the central email address for future routine correspondence.

Important: urgent or safeguarding concerns

If your concern is urgent, relates to safeguarding or child protection, involves a serious welfare concern, or there is an immediate risk to a pupil, please telephone the school on 01279 654 901 rather than relying on email.

Thank you for helping us make sure your enquiry reaches the right person quickly and is followed up.



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