ST MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL
HEADLINES

FRIDAY 23RD OCTOBER 2026



Dear St Mary's Community

It has been an exceptionally busy few weeks here at St Mary's as we bring a very successful and packed Autumn Half Term to a close. Our school community has come together in so many ways, and I am delighted to share some of the highlights with you.

Our Year 11 and Year 13 students have now completed their Autumn progress exam period. I am exceptionally proud of their diligence, hard work and determination throughout this demanding time. Their conduct, focus and discipline has been exemplary. Please God, they will reap the rewards of their endeavours in their progress exam grades. I would like to thank them, and the teachers who have supported them, for their commitment .

Today, our school is a vibrant sea of colour as we celebrate Cultural Heritage Day 2026. Our students' rich heritage spans 62 different countries. With flags, jerseys and traditional dress from all over the globe, we have covered countries from Argentina to Zimbabwe, and nearly every continent is represented. It is a true testament to, and celebration of, the rich vibrancy that is St Mary's. Our students carry their heritage with real pride, and it enriches the life of our whole school and is wonderful to see our diversity and unity in faith go together hand in hand. A tremendous thank you to you, as parents, for supporting and encouraging your child today.

Our Year 7 students are also on their retreat today with Fr Axcel, who is joining them for a day of prayer and spiritual reflection. It is a wonderful opportunity for them to grow together as a year team and to deepen their sense of belonging as part of our St Mary's family. I hope they have a very enjoyable day.

Last Thursday evening, we held our annual Presentation Evening, celebrating our students' academic endeavours and achievements from 2025-2026. It was a wonderful celebration and a family event, and I congratulate every student who was recognised. Their success belongs to them, but it also reflects the encouragement and support they receive at home and at school. Please see the photos of the highlights from this year's event, which capture the pride and joy of the evening.

For those planning ahead, please see within this edition the dates for the diary for Half Term 2 so that you are aware of the events taking place for parents and students. Keeping these dates in mind will help us all to plan together for the second half of the Autumn term ahead.

Wishing you all a very restful and wonderful extended half term break.

Deirdre McHugh
Head Teacher

Dates for the Diary

Monday 26th October - Tuesday 3rd November
Half Term

Wednesday 4th November
Students return to school

Wednesday 11th November
Remembrance Day

Wednesday 11th November
Sixth Form Open Evening, 6.00pm - 8.30pm

GO 4 Schools

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







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

As we continue through Ordinary time, there are a number of important feast days coming up over the next few weeks. On the **28th October** we celebrate the feast of St. Jude and St. Simon, a reminder that we are usually sent, not alone but together to spread the message of God. A popular tradition is to pray the Novena of St Jude and to light a green candle as green is the colour that St Jude is usually depicted in. You could also bake Soul Cakes (which are a type of gingerbread). On the **1st November** we will celebrate All Saints Day, on this day after you have attended mass ask your confirmation saint or your favourite saint to pray for you. On the **2nd November** we celebrate All Souls Day where we remember those who have died and we pray that they rest in peace, on this day you could pray for your loved ones that have died saying the eternal rest prayer.

The words from the Epistle of St Jude are great to reflect on over the coming weeks:

"To the only God, our saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord be glory, majesty, power, and authority from ages past, now, and for ages to come. Amen"

Written with Joseph (7K)

Key Catholic Dates

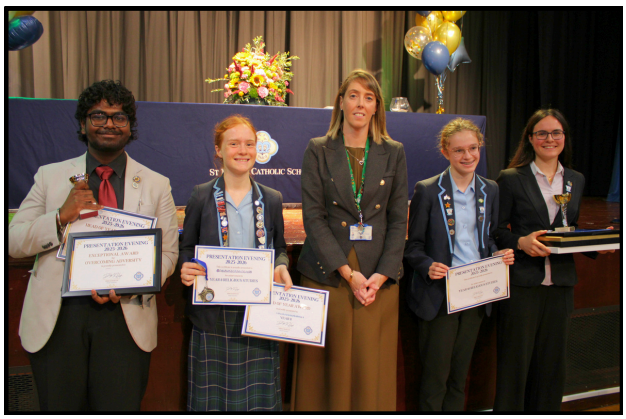
In School

- November Liturgies - throughout November
- 30th November - Mass for members of our families who have died
- 30th November - Advent Confession Opportunity
- 8th December - Feast Day Mass with Bishop Paul

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.

PRESENTATION EVENING 2026

































ST MARY'S CULTURAL HERITAGE DAY



Our community proudly includes staff and students from several different cultural heritages! Below is a small selection of the different countries we represent and the clothes worn to show our pride.



Alyssa (8A) - Ghana



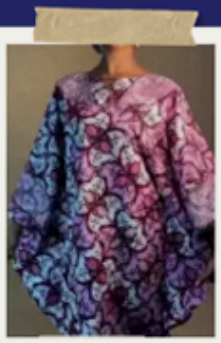
Izzy (7A) - Hungary



Naomi (9T) - Nigeria



Mia (11T) - Italy



Marie (8K) - Angola



Pietro (7B) - Brazil



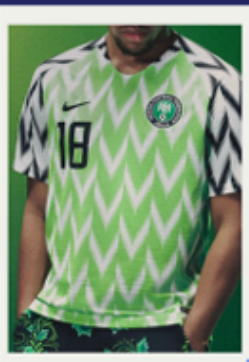
David (7J) - Nigeria



Samuel (7B) - Colombia



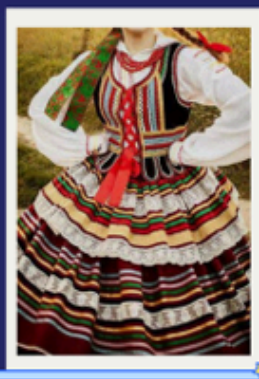
Zara (7M) - Nigeria



Munachim (7M) - Nigeria



Lottie (9K) - France



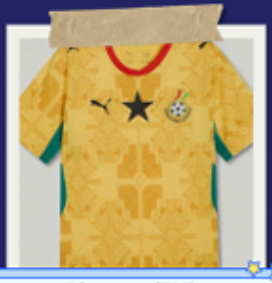
Antonia (7M) - Poland



Jazmyne (11T) - Antigua



Mya (11M) - Zimbabwe



Ohemaa (7M) - Ghana

UK MATHS TRUST COMPETITIONS 2026

Every year, the UK Maths Trust runs a series of competitions designed to advance maths education for young people. A number of St Mary's students have participated in two competitions so far this year. First, students from the Sixth Form took part in the **Maths Competition for Girls**, the aim of which is to inspire and challenge young female mathematicians across the UK.

Well done to Khloe De B, Daniela M, Isabel A, Sophie L and Chidiogo U for achieving Distinctions, and to Ava C and Harriet I who were both awarded Merits.

Extra congratulations go to Khloe, who was awarded Best in Year, and Daniela, who was awarded Best in School.

The UK Maths Kangaroo competition is an internationally recognised challenge that encourages senior students to develop and demonstrate their problem-solving skills, logical reasoning and mathematical creativity through challenging problems beyond the standard school curriculum. Achieving a high score or distinction is a valuable academic accomplishment, reflecting mathematical ability, intellectual curiosity and a willingness to embrace challenges beyond the classroom.

Out of this year's participants, we are delighted to announce that 9 students achieved Bronze status, 14 achieved Silver and 11 achieved Gold. The Gold award winners will be moving onto the next stage of the competition: Senior Kangaroo. Special congratulations go to Jonathan P, who was awarded Best in School and Jayden W, who was awarded Best in Year.

Congratulations to all our marvellous Mathematicians!

Ava C	Bronze
Keir McG	Bronze
Khloe De B	Bronze
Leanita G C	Bronze
Thomas B	Bronze
Victoria N	Bronze
Chidiogo U	Bronze
Kieran P	Bronze
Liam G	Bronze

Connor McL	Silver
Harriet I	Silver
Thomas K	Silver
Valentin A	Silver
Barnaby W	Silver
Daniela M	Silver
Ethen S-S	Silver
Isabel A	Silver
James L	Silver
Michael O	Silver
Mikolaj K	Silver
Nathan M P	Silver
Samuel M	Silver
Sophie L	Silver

Alex L	Gold
Daniel K	Gold
Daniel L	Gold
Michael A	Gold
Daniel B-D	Gold
Dominic S	Gold
Lamont A-R	Gold
Michael C	Gold
William De B	Gold
Jonathan P	Gold - Best in School
Jayden L	Gold - Best in Year



KEY DATES, HALF TERM 2

DATE	EVENT
Monday 26th October – Tuesday 3 November	HALF TERM
Wednesday 4 November	Students return to school
Wednesday 11 November	Sixth Form Open Evening, 6pm-8.30pm
Thursday 3 December	Year 11 Mock Interview Day
	Year 11 Parents Evening, 4.30pm-7.30pm
Thursday 10 December	Year 13 Parents Evening, 4.30pm-7.30pm
	Advent Service, St Joseph's, 7pm
Friday 18 December	Term ends, 1pm
Monday 21 December – Friday 1 January 2027	CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY

INTER HOUSE CROSS COUNTRY COMPETITION

A huge well done to our Year 7–10 students who took part in the Inter Cross Country Competition! It was fantastic to see so many students embracing the challenge, demonstrating determination and pushing themselves to achieve their personal best.

With the choice of a 3km or 4km course, students were able to challenge themselves over a distance that suited them, showing resilience and a positive attitude throughout the event.

Cross country is about so much more than simply reaching the finish line. It takes courage to take part, commitment to keep going when the course gets tough, and sportsmanship to encourage and support others along the way. Our students should be incredibly proud of the effort they put in and the way they represented our school.

Congratulations to everyone who participated!








On Thursday 3rd December all Year 11 students will be taking part in our **Mock Interview Day**. Having a mock interview will help students learn how to answer difficult questions, develop interview strategies, improve their communication skills and help students to remain calm before an actual interview.

We are looking for volunteers to be our Interviewers between 9am - 12.30pm. No prior experience is needed and lunch will be provided!

If you can support us, please email Mrs Knight on info@stmarys.net

Thank You!

NEW TRIAL STREET LAYOUT, BISHOP'S STORTFORD

There will be a new trial street layout in North Street, Bishop's Stortford, to help support local businesses and create a more welcoming town centre.

The new layout will be introduced from Monday 9 November 2026.

The trial has been developed in partnership with local businesses, Bishop's Stortford BID and Bishop's Stortford Town and will run for up to 18 months.

It provides an opportunity to test the new road layout, helping us understand how North Street could become an even more attractive and vibrant place to visit.

What is changing?

From Monday 9 November 2026:

- a one-way (southbound only) arrangement on North Street and Water Lane
- there will be no vehicle access into North Street from High Street or Market Street
- a new temporary 20mph speed limit will be introduced

From Friday 13 November 2026:

- every weekend, North Street will become a Pedestrian and Cycle Zone
- the zone will apply between the junctions with Water Lane and High Street/Bridge Street, with no through access to motor vehicles
- the zone will operate from 5.30pm on Fridays until 7am on Mondays
- closing the road to traffic will provide space for events, markets and community activities

All businesses will remain open throughout the trial and we encourage residents and visitors to continue shopping, dining and spending time in the area. We have been working closely with businesses to understand and accommodate their delivery requirements and there will be further engagement in the coming weeks ahead of the start of the trial.

Parking and public transport

No parking is initially being removed as part of the trial. However, on-street parking spaces within the weekend Pedestrian and Cycle Zone, the Sworders Yard car park and parking to the rear of The George/Prezzo will not be accessible during the weekend closures.

Alternative parking is available in nearby car parks, including Basbow Lane, Northgate End, Jackson Square and Apton Road.

Bus services will be diverted via Link Road throughout the trial. Passengers using the 35 and 511 services should use the nearest stops on Link Road instead of the Bridge Street stop.

More information and public feedback

More information about the trial is available on our scheme webpage at:
https://letstalktransport.hertfordshire.gov.uk/north-street

During the first six months of the trial, residents, businesses and visitors will be able to share their views through an online survey, which will be launched on Monday 9 November 2026.

There will also be an opportunity to comment on the scheme through the formal statutory consultation process.
If you have any questions about the trial, please email at: northstreet@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Hertfordshire's School Admissions Consultation 2028-29

Hertfordshire County Council is running a consultation on the proposed admissions arrangements for the school year 2028/29 and is seeking responses from parent/carers, schools and community groups.

The proposed changes are:

- Retain the remainder of the county council's existing admission arrangements for 2028/29, including PANs, Relevant Areas and schemes of coordination.

The consultation period runs until 22 November 2026. Please visit www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions2028 for more information and to respond online.

If you have any queries, please email admissions.consultation@hertfordshire.gov.uk

NOTICES



I Wish I'd Known

A workshop for parents and carers about young people, drugs and decisions

from the Daniel Spargo-Mabbs Foundation

We would like to invite you to a drug and alcohol awareness webinar for parents and caregivers led by the drug education charity the Daniel Spargo-Mabbs Foundation, with funding from The National Lottery Fund. This will be held on Monday 16th November at 6.30pm.

This webinar has been organised by pastoral leads at Herts & Essex, Birchwood, Leventhorpe, St Mary's, Avanti Grange, Hockerill, The Bishop's Stortford High School and The Bishop's Stortford College. Each school will be represented on the panel during the session.

The world for young people today is very different than it was for the adults in their lives, including greater levels of exposure and access to drugs than ever before, partly thanks to social media, which in turn increase the potential for them to come to harm. This session provides an opportunity for you to become more aware of what issues face your children, and what you can do to help them stay safe. You can ask questions before the webinar via the online survey link you will receive, and during the session itself.

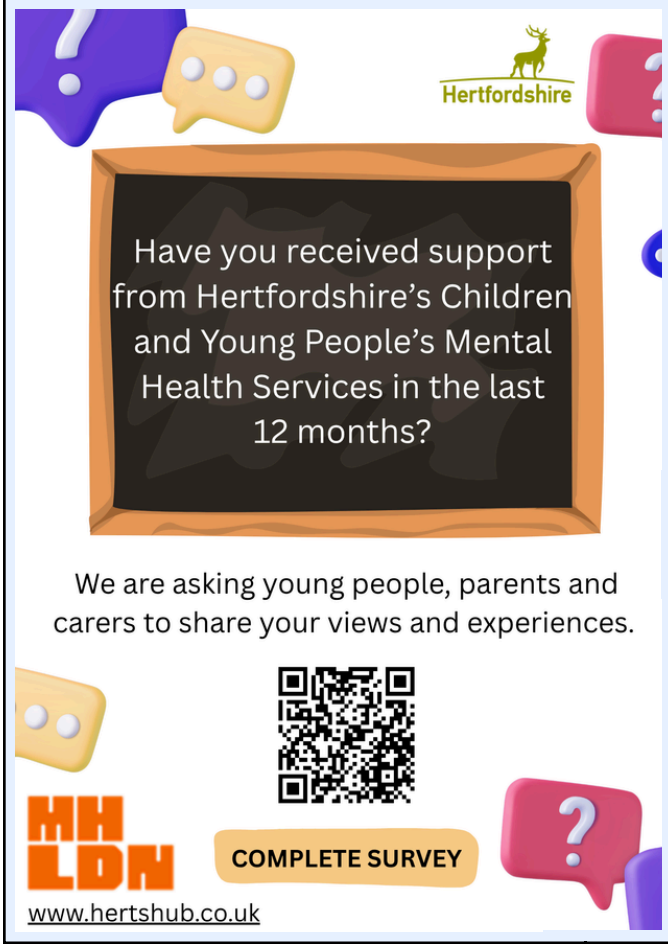
The session will involve finding out about:

- levels of young people's exposure to drugs and alcohol – what, where, when and how
- what parents and caregivers need to know about the risks faced by young people when it comes to drugs and alcohol, and the factors that affect the decisions they make
- how to have effective conversations with your child about drugs and alcohol, and practical suggestions for what you can do to support them to stay safe
- how to know and what to do if you have concerns about drug use
- where to go for more information and support.

Please click the link below to register for the event:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_vOFNhDJfRZ-h6uLI-AF71A

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email from the Foundation containing information about joining the webinar.



Hertfordshire's Commissioners of Children and Young People's Mental Health services (Herts CYPMHS) are asking young people, parents and carers to answer a few simple questions about their experiences of accessing and using services. This will help build a fuller picture of longer-term outcomes and the ongoing effectiveness of services, so improvements can continue to be made.

The survey can be accessed via scanning the QR code above or by clicking here.