ST MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

HEADLINES

FRIDAY 13TH NOVEMBER 2026



Dates for the Diary

Monday 16th November
BSET Drug Awareness Parent Webinar (online), 6.30pm

Wednesday 18th November
Red Wednesday

Thursday 26th November
Piano Recital
6.30pm

GO 4 Schools

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

Dear St Mary's Community

As we move through November, I am reminded of the many ways our school community comes together in faith, celebration and care for one another. These past two weeks has brought reflection, achievement and important information, and I am delighted to share some of it with you.

On Wednesday 11th November, we held our Remembrance Day liturgies. It was a beautiful and very poignant occasion. Rather than a service of remembrance alone, we joined together as a school congregation in prayer, and it was deeply moving to see our young people give themselves so fully to that shared time of reflection. My sincere thanks go to our cadets, who represented the school so beautifully. I also want to praise our liturgical music group and choir, whose singing was exceptional. Together they made the morning a truly moving time of prayer and reflection for our young people.

Throughout November, our form groups are also holding their Remembrance form class liturgies, where students pray for their loved ones in this month of the Holy Souls. It is very moving to see our students support one another as they navigate bereavement and loss through their faith. This is a powerful reminder of the compassion that exists within our community.

On Wednesday 11th November, we also hosted our Sixth Form Open Evening. With over 30 courses on offer for our September 2027 cohort, we strive to ensure that our Sixth Form standards are excellent and our progress outstanding. We are committed to providing personalised, tailored pathways that secure the best depth and breadth of curriculum for every student. Further information is available on our website to guide and support students in choosing St Mary's as their Sixth Form of choice for Key Stage 5 studies, as part of their seven-year journey with us.

You will also be aware in the news the important update regarding mobile phones and schools. The Government has announced its decision to review the current guidance for schools on this matter. Education Secretary Lucy Powell said: "Children should not be using smartphones at any point during the school day, full stop. That's why we're strengthening our guidance to take the next leap towards truly phone-free schools." St Mary's has had a well-established mobile phone policy for more than ten years. We now await the Government's announcement and refined guidance, and I will update you in due course once these details are confirmed.

Thank you for your continued support as we work together to nurture our students in faith, learning and wellbeing.

With warm wishes and God bless,

Deirdre McHugh

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 come to the end of ordinary time there are two important feast days to celebrate.

The 21st November is the feast of the presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This remembers when she was dedicated to temple service, aged three, by her parents (Saints Joachim and Anne) in thanksgiving to God. Here is a prayer for this feast day:

Heavenly Father,
Today we celebrate the young Mary being presented in the temple, offering her whole heart and life to your service.
Long before she became the Mother of Jesus, she chose to say "yes" to your love and guidance.
As we navigate our school days, our friendships, and our futures, give us the same courage Mary had. Help us to remember that we do not have to wait until we are older to make a difference or to do your work.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
Just as your parents presented you to the Lord, we present our talents, our challenges, and our dreams to Him today.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Feast of Christ the King is celebrated on 22nd November. This Feast marks the end of the liturgical year and is the week before Advent starts. We think about how kings and governments rule/are in authority only for a period of time, but Jesus reigns forever over all creation.

Perhaps you could look up the lyrics to the hymn, The Servant King, and reflect on how you can offer your life in service to Jesus every day?

Leah L (Y7)

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.

REMEMBRANCE DAY





On Wednesday 11th November, our students came together for a series of special Remembrance Day liturgies to honour the memory of all those who have lost their lives in conflict, as well as those who continue to serve in the Armed Forces.

The liturgies provided an important opportunity for our school community to pause, reflect and give thanks for the sacrifices made by so many in the pursuit of peace and freedom. Students considered the devastating impact of conflict and our shared responsibility to work towards a more peaceful and just world.

We are particularly grateful to the students who contributed to the liturgies through their beautiful singing, thoughtful readings and the playing of the national anthem and last post. Their contributions helped create a truly moving atmosphere, allowing everyone to reflect on the significance of the occasion.

At 11am, the whole school community joined together in observing the two-minute silence, demonstrating our collective respect and remembrance.

As a Catholic community, we continue to pray for all those affected by war and conflict, remembering those who have died and asking God to guide us in building a world rooted in peace, justice and reconciliation.

Lest we forget.





HEADTEACHER'S TEA



A huge well done to our students who achieved the highest House Points and were rewarded with a special Headteacher's Tea and Cakes!

A lovely opportunity to recognise their hard work, dedication, positive attitudes and outstanding contributions to school life.

We're incredibly proud of you all! Keep shining, keep achieving and keep earning those House Points!



STUDENTS ARRIVING LATE

If private school coaches are late arriving at school, students **MUST** sign in with Miss Gunn in A block using 'BB or Acme bus delay' as the reason for lateness.

This will ensure students are provided with the appropriate late code and avoid minus house points.

If you have any questions, please contact our Attendance Officer on attendance@stmarys.net

CROSS COUNTRY SUCCESS



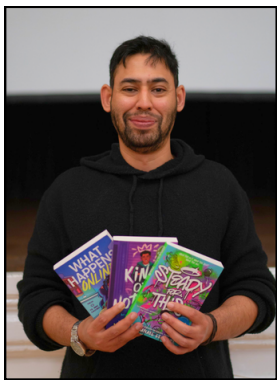
Congratulations to Bella K (Y8) who recently took part in the National Cross Country Relay Championships. Under perfect conditions and running against some of the country's top clubs, Bella and her team mates in the U14 Girls team claimed the National Silver medal.

Well done Bella! We are incredibly proud of your continued success.

LIBRARY NEWS

Here is what's coming up in the Library during the next half term...

Author Visit



Multi award winning author Nathanael Lessore will be visiting St Mary's on Friday 4th December.

Nathanael will be delivering author talks to Years 8 and 9, working with selected students in small group workshops and visiting Books & Biscuits for a book signing followed by a Q&A.

We have spaces available in Nathanael's workshops. If your child loves creative writing, or would like to work with an award winning author, please speak to Mr Smith, CLICK HERE, or scan the QR code and fill in the form at home.

Nathanael will be signing his books after school, pre-order your copy on parent pay now!

Scholastic Book Fair

The annual Scholastic Book Fair is visiting St Mary's from Wednesday 9th - Wednesday 16th December. This is a great opportunity to get last minute Christmas presents, whilst raising funds for the school to receive free books.

Last year, purchases from the book fair raised £229 worth of free books!



Why is Attendance important? So many reasons!

Some examples include future career success, social & emotional development, preparation for adulthood, wellbeing, skill building, resilience, new experiences!

Students with 95% to 100% attendance are nearly twice as likely to pass key exams and achieve strong academic results compared to those attending 90% to 95% of the time. Government studies show these averages have led to stronger earning potentials in the future of your child's lifetime.

Attendance per academic year	Equivalent time in days per academic year	Missed lessons per academic year
95%	your child is missing **10 days** of school	equivalent to roughly **2 weeks** of school missed, or **50** missed lessons.
90%	your child is missing **19 days** of school	equivalent to roughly **4 weeks** of school missed or **100** missed lessons.
85%	your child is missing **29 days** of school	equivalent to almost **6 weeks** of school missed, or or **150** missed lessons

How can we all support good attendance?

- Support a healthy sleep schedule by preparing books, PE bags and equipment the night before, no phone 2 hours before bedtime.
- Overcome barriers by encouraging your child to speak to a trusted adult in school, who might offer a safe space or academic support.
- Engage in school clubs.
- Set small goals!

We understand that good attendance is a struggle for some families. Please make sure you make the school aware of your situation so that we can offer support.

To read more about the importance of attendance, click this link:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/link-between-attendance-and-attainment

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!

NOTICES

REMINDER FOR PARENTS AND CARERS



Parent Webinar

Drug and Alcohol Awareness

Equipping you with the knowledge, understanding and practical advice to help keep your child safe.

Safeguarding our children is a shared responsibility.
Being informed and working in partnership with school helps us to recognise risks, have confident conversations, and support our young people to make safer choices.

THE WEBINAR WILL COVER:

- Young people's exposure to drugs and alcohol and the associated dangers.
- The pressures and influences affecting young people's decisions.
- How to have open and effective conversations with your child.
- Recognising potential warning signs and knowing where to seek support.

- Led by the **Daniel Spargo-Mabbs Foundation.**
- Organised collaboratively by **pastoral** leads from eight local secondary schools, including St Mary's.
- Includes school representatives on the panel and opportunities to ask questions (before and during the webinar).

MONDAY 16 NOVEMBER | **6.30pm**

Online via Zoom

We strongly encourage all parents and carers to prioritise attending this important webinar.
You do not need to have concerns about your own child to benefit from understanding the risks they may face.

REGISTER NOW

Click the link below to register:
https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_vOFNhDJfRZ-h6uLI-AF71A

Following registration, you will receive a confirmation email with joining instructions.