

LOVE-RESPECT-FLOURISH

St. Mary's Catholic School Newsletter

Issue 12 - 2nd December 2022



Stay Awake!

Mr Neves
Executive Headteacher

Last Sunday was the first Sunday of Advent. The start of Advent marks the start of another new year in the life of the Church and the lead up to Christmas. No doubt our students will be getting excited, spurred on by the advertising on TV, radio and billboards all around us. However, it is very easy for our young people to lose sight of the real meaning of Christmas and if we are true to our school ethos we will remind them of the 'reason for the season'. Firstly, Advent directs us to the birth of Christ in Bethlehem. The Catholic faith is founded on the clear fact that, in the birth of Jesus, God came into the world and lived among us as a human being. Secondly, however, as explained in Sunday's gospel reading, Advent directs us to Christ's coming for the last time:

'So stay awake, because you do not know the day when your master is coming. You may be quite sure of this that if the householder had known at what time of the night the burglar would come, he would have stayed awake and would not have allowed anyone to break through the wall of his house. Therefore, you too must stand ready because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.'

The evangelist, Matthew, is thus providing advice about getting our lives in order and Advent is seen as a time for reflection and possible renewal, directing Christians' attention to Christ's presence in their daily lives. Wednesday's 'Thought for the Day' on Radio 4 was presented by Catholic theologian and writer Tina Beattie. She referred to the recent news about the 2021 census, which concluded that, for the first time in census history, less than half the population of England and Wales identifies as Christian. Tina reflected on people's different approaches to spirituality and the positives and negatives of religious groups' activities throughout history. However, despite a drop in the number of people identifying as members of organised Christian Church groups, she highlighted an important message in St Paul's Letter to the Philippians. In this letter Paul told his audience that, ultimately, they won't be judged by proclamations of faith - and certainly not as a result of ticking a box in a survey - but in the way they treat others, especially the poor and marginalised. Advent is therefore a time for all in our community to model the Gospel values of kindness and compassion in our daily lives and an ideal time to think of others who will probably not be looking forward with the same excitement to Christmas as we may be. With that in mind, I would like to say a big thank you to those of you who have donated so generously to the Catholic Children's Society with gifts for children. I am sure they will be delighted to receive them.



Save the Date!

St Mary's Catholic School

Advent Carol Service

12th December 2022, 7pm

at St Joseph and the English Martyrs Roman Catholic Church



St Francis of Assisi
CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST

UPCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday 6th December 2022
Presentation Evening

Thursday 8th December 2022
Year 7 Parents Evening

Monday 12th December 2022
Advent Carol Service 7pm

Tuesday & Wednesday
13th & 14th December 2022
Year 11 Futures Meetings

Thank you for supporting the Christmas Gift Appeal

A brilliant show of Christmas love and joy
Merry Christmas



Class 7B



Class 9K



Student Librarians



On Tuesday in assembly the Year 7 Librarian team received their badges and certificates.



This group of dedicated students give up their breaks and lunchtimes to help the library run smoothly. Their duties include tidying shelves, using their creativity for library displays, recommending books to their peers and operating the online library system to check books in and out. They regularly help their fellow students and are truly living out our school mission.

Congratulations everyone, on completing your training!



School Library Books!



**Don't forget
to return your
library books!**

Please check your child's school library books to see if they are due before the Christmas holidays.

On Monday 12th December Mrs Frino will be issuing minus house points for overdue books.



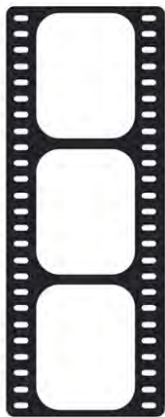
Books can be renewed at the library if students want to keep them over the holidays.

Thank you for your help!



MFL Department ~ Film Afternoon

THE MFL DEPARTMENT
ITALIAN FILM AFTERNOON



Film: Luca
Date: Friday 9th December
Time: 3:20 – 5:00pm
Location: T11

Pizza will be offered! We would appreciate a £2 donation prior to the event to help with refreshments. Please pay this on ParentPay before Wednesday 7th December.



If your child would like to attend the MFL Italian Film afternoon, please email Miss Gilchrist at e.gilchrist@stmarys.net to confirm your place by Monday 5th December at the latest.

Art Department News...

Well Done Year 8

This term our Year 8 students have been engaging in self-portrait work using the work of **artist Julian Opie** as inspiration. We have been so impressed with our Year 8 students approach to this challenging subject matter. Here is a small selection from some of the year groups work. Very well done Year 8, keep up the fantastic work!

Miss Nairn, Mrs Morgan-Wren and Mrs Skinner



Julian Opie



Julian Opie



World Book Day 2023 Competition!

This exciting competition is open to all Key Stage 3 students (Years 7 to 9).

Students must **hand their entries** to their Accelerated Reader teacher or

Mrs Frino in the Library **by 9th December** in the morning.

The best 10 entries from each AR class will be posted to the organisers.



MAG London Stansted Airport

Calling all aspiring authors!

In celebration of World Book Day 2023, London Stansted Airport is publishing its brand new 'Little Book of Travel Tales' to be launched at the airport in February 2023.

WIN!

A chance to see your students' work in print, a special visit to the airport and a contribution to your library!

What you need to create:
KS2 and KS3 students should submit either a poem, short story, or a picture for the front cover, on one of the following themes:

- People at airports
- Aeroplanes
- Flying
- Travelling
- Visiting different countries
- Working at an airport

What you need to know:

- All work to be portrait format only
- Stories and poems to be no more than 500 words and may include pictures (we will try to include where possible)
- Clearly label on the back: the school name, teacher's name, student's full first name, initial of surname, and age

Deadline: 13th December 2022

Teachers should post their **top 10 entries** to:
Alex Smith (Education Coordinator)
3rd Floor, Enterprise House
Stansted Airport
CM24 1QW

For enquiries please contact aerozonestn@magairports.com

Leave of Absence Form for Students

The Department for Education has emphasised important guidance for schools regarding the taking of any leave of absence during term time. Please be reminded of the following:

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. **THIS INCLUDES HOLIDAYS.**

Exceptions are:

- Service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time and evidence is provided to this effect.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.
- Parents who are subject to a strict and non-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect.

Exceptional circumstances to be agreed at the Headteacher's discretion.



In order to request leave of absence for your child, please complete the Leave Of Absence Form for Students which can be found here:

<https://www.stmarys.net/page/?title=Attendance&pid=61>

and return it to headspa@stmarys.net or by hand to the Head PA's office which is located in the Student Hub.

If you are unable to access this electronic version of the form, please ask your child to collect a hard copy from the Heads PA's office.

Once the completed form has been received, it will be passed to Mr Neves for his authorisation and you will receive notification of the outcome of the request.

Absence: Medical Appointments

Please do notify the school using the Absence telephone line **01279 654901** or by contacting the following email address: attendance@stmarys.net

When reporting your child absent please state: **Your name/Your child's name and Year group/ the reason for absence/a contact number.**

We ask parents to request an absence in advance via the [Student Digital Planner App](#). Please book any medical appointments around the school day when possible. Parents must notify the school in advance of any pre-arranged absence or treatment. **This should be within 48 hours of the appointment made and a copy of the appointment record should also be shared with the school when requesting absence so that this can be authorised.**

School attendance is aimed to be 96% and above for every child. Students with good attendance are happy, thrive and succeed. Please ensure your child aims for excellent attendance and any medical/dental appointments etc are scheduled for after school and holiday times wherever possible so as not to disadvantage their learning.

**EVERY
DAY
COUNTS**

Here at last... Social Media and Mental Health Talk



Here at Last!

A group called 'Here at Last' visited the school this week to deliver a message about the safe use of social media and mental health to students in Years 7 and 8.

They also performed some songs, for the students, including an Ed Sheeran cover track!

The students enjoyed hearing the message and the music!



Teens and Addiction

At St. Mary's Catholic School, we have a very firm line on vaping. Students vaping or having vaping materials are very likely to be excluded from school.

Please see our website for the full behaviour policy and discuss this with your child (ren).



The number of children vaping is going up, with many being influenced by social media sites.

Although there was a slow drip feed of bad news about tobacco smoking, it failed to sink in for many people. New brands and some clever marketing helped keep the tobacco industry earning healthy profits. In the early 70s there was much more of a collective waking up to the dangers of smoking. Attitudes and medical links and proof started to influence the way people looked at smoking.

The brain is the last organ in the human body to develop fully. Brain development continues until the early to mid-20s. Nicotine exposure during periods of significant brain development, such as adolescence, can disrupt the growth of brain circuits that control attention, learning, and susceptibility to addiction. Many e-cigarettes contain nicotine, which is highly addictive.

The effects of nicotine exposure during youth and young adulthood can be long-lasting and can include lower impulse control and mood disorders. The nicotine in e-cigarettes and other tobacco products can prime young brains for addiction to other drugs, such as cocaine and methamphetamine.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

The most popular brands are Elf Bar and Geek Bar which can be purchased widely in stores and online. While it is illegal to sell vapes to under-18s, social media carries posts from teenagers showing the new vapes and discussing the flavours, which include pink lemonade, strawberry, banana etc.



Around 52% of youngsters who vaped said disposable e-cigarettes were their favoured product, a sharp rise on the 7% who said the same thing in 2020. Over the last year, a new generation of disposable vapes known as 'puff bars' - which contain nicotine - have come on to the market.

E-CIGARETTES OR VAPE PENS

What are they?

They are electronic devices that heat a liquid and produce an Aerosol or mix of small particles in the air. These come in many shapes and sizes. Most have a battery, a heating element, and a place to hold a liquid. Some e-cigarettes look like regular cigarettes or cigars. They also look like USB flash drives, pens, and other everyday items.

How do they work?

They produce an aerosol by heating a liquid that usually contains nicotine, flavourings and other chemicals that help to make the aerosol. This liquid is sometimes called 'e-juice', 'eliquid', 'vape juice,' or 'vape liquid.' As well as the flavoured liquids, E-cigarette devices can be used to deliver marijuana and other drugs. It has been reported Liquid drugs such as LSD, GHB and Ketamine are being vaped as well. Nicotine is highly addictive and can harm adolescent brain development, which continues into the early to mid-20's. For more information and advice click link below:

parentinfo.org/article/e-cigarettes-and-vaping-a-parent-s-guide

Teens and Addiction



MYTH -Vaping is a healthy alternative to cigarettes.

FACT - Vape e-juice may contain nicotine, chemicals that cause cancer, and can lead to health problems including wheezing, coughing, sinus infections, nosebleeds, shortness of breath and asthma.

MYTH - Vaping has nothing to do with smoking regular cigarettes.

FACT - Young people who took up vaping were more than four times more likely to smoke traditional cigarettes a year later, according to one study.

MYTH - It's just harmless water vapour.

FACT - It's not harmless, and it's not just water vapour. It may contain toxins, potentially cancerous agents and dangerous chemicals like diacetyl, which is known to cause a potentially fatal lung disease called popcorn lung. It most often contains a combination of propylene glycol, vegetable glycerin, flavourings and nicotine. Some of the chemicals used can lead to acne or other skin problems.

MYTH - Vapes don't contain nicotine.

FACT – Vapes typically contain nicotine, propylene glycol, vegetable glycerine, and flavourings.

For more information on teen Vaping please use the following link:

<https://childmind.org/article/teen-vaping-what-you-need-to-know/> and

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aasKIDz9ZX4>



Chaplaincy News...



The season of Advent has begun!

Advent starts on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day. It marks the start of the Church's liturgical year. In 2022, we enter Cycle A.

Advent comes from the Latin *adventus*, meaning 'arrival' or 'coming'. It is a key time in which we prepare ourselves for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ at Christmas and also of preparation for the Second Coming of Christ.

The liturgical vestments priests wear during the season are purple, matching the candles lit on each Sunday of Advent. Purple is a colour typically associated with penance. The exception is the third Sunday – Gaudete Sunday – when priests wear pink vestments – the colour of rejoicing.



Sunday 4th December, Second Sunday of Advent

On the Second Sunday of Advent we light the second candle, which is the symbol of FAITH. The candle's name has its origins in the prophet Micah who prophesied Jesus would be born in Bethlehem. It is referred to as the Bethlehem Candle.



Feast of the Immaculate Conception

Thursday 8th December 2022 is the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

This feast day is celebrated on 8th December every year

"In the Gospel of the Annunciation, the Angel's greeting to Mary resounds: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee", (Luke 1:28).





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#DedicatedtoExcellence

STUDENTS ARE INVITED TO THE ST MARY'S

Christmas Dinner

DECEMBER 14, 2022
Prepay £3.75

Please pay via Parentpay.
Payment cannot be made on the day

Vegetarian option available

No other food is available
from the Refectory on the day,
packed lunch only.

We are hiring!



St Francis of Assisi
CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST

Click Here For Latest Vacancy Information

<https://www.stmarys.net/vacancies>

**WE ARE
HIRING!**