

LOVE-RESPECT-FLOURISH

St. Mary's Catholic School Newsletter

Issue 15 - 6th January 2023



Happy New Year 2023

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Dear Parents/Carers

Happy New Year! I hope you and your family have had an enjoyable Christmas. It has been lovely to welcome our students back to St Mary's this week and I look forward to another successful term ahead.

At the end of last term we said goodbye to some members of staff who were leaving St Mary's: Mr Bamlett - LSA; Mrs Gagliano Styczynski - MFL; Mrs Henderson - LSA; Mrs Skinner - Art. As the term ended in December, I thanked these colleagues for their service to St Mary's and wished them well for the future.

We start this new term by welcoming new members of staff: Ms Barnes – Head of RE; Mr Chapman – Music; Mrs Johnston – SENDCo; Ms Moran – LSA; Mr Orlando – MFL; Mr Riberio – IT Technician; Miss Salter-Kay – LSA. I hope they will settle into their new roles quickly and enjoy their time at St Mary's.

I always say that our students are lucky to have two new years to celebrate: one in September, when, refreshed after a 6 week break, we begin a new school year, in a new year group, with new teachers etc. Then there's the new year that everyone celebrates on 1st January – an opportunity to start afresh, with new hopes and aspirations for the 12 months ahead. My local Park Run has roughly 400 runners on a typical Saturday morning. This coming Saturday I expect there will be a lot more, as people typically set out on their new year resolutions. The big test will be the attendance figure at the end of the month!

Our joyous Christmas season reaches its pinnacle today, with the Feast of the Epiphany, commemorating the arrival of the Magi at the stable in Bethlehem. Here they bore witness to the birth of Jesus - the Messiah who had been promised. The word "epiphany" comes from the Greek "epiphaneia," meaning "appearance" or "manifestation," and referred to the revelations brought by the gods. Originally its English use was restricted to the religious feast day and nothing else. From the 19th century, however, the meaning began expanding and today it carries a range of meanings. Perhaps a popular definition of an epiphany is "a moment of sudden or great revelation that usually changes you in some way."

As a Catholic school, we should take the great revelation of the birth of Jesus as a great motivator for change in our community, renewing our commitment to our faith, lived out in the way we approach each new day - with joy, compassion and love. Like the park runners, we will be pleased to see our students renew their efforts in their studies this week, but we will hopefully see them maintained for the long haul.

With best wishes for 2023

Yours faithfully

Mr P Neves
Executive Headteacher



St Francis of Assisi
CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday 12th January 2023
Year 13 Parents Evening

Friday 13th January 2023
Inter-house Chess Competition

Tuesday 17th January 2023
Year 9 Battle of the Bands



How to Request Leave of Absence

The Department for Education has emphasised important guidance for schools regarding the taking of any leave of absence during term time. Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances are 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.

**REPORT AN
ABSENCE**

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.**



Winter Illnesses - Flu Advice



Back to school advice issued amid high levels of flu, COVID-19 and scarlet fever

As pupils and students return to school following the Christmas break, UKHSA is reminding people that winter illnesses continue to circulate at high levels.

Following simple steps can help protect children, minimise the spread of illness in education and childcare settings and protect wider communities.

Flu and coronavirus (COVID-19) are currently circulating at high levels and are likely to continue to increase in coming weeks. High numbers of scarlet fever, which is caused by group A streptococcus, also continue to be reported.

Professor Susan Hopkins, Chief Medical Adviser at the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), said:

It's important to minimise the spread of infection in schools and other education and childcare settings as much as possible. If your child is unwell and has a fever, they should stay home from school or nursery until they feel better and the fever has resolved.

Helping children to learn about the importance of good hand hygiene is also key, so practice regular handwashing at home with soap and warm water. Catching coughs and sneezes in tissues then binning them is another simple way to help stop illness from spreading.

Adults should also try to stay home when unwell and if you do have to go out, wear a face covering. When unwell don't visit healthcare settings or visit vulnerable people unless urgent.

Remember that flu vaccination is still available for all eligible groups and is the best protection against the virus. We have seen good uptake in older age groups but vaccination among young children remains low. Flu can be very unpleasant and in some cases can lead to more serious illness. Getting your child vaccinated protects them and others they come into contact with, and it's still not too late.

Eligible children include:

those aged 2 and 3 on 31 August 2022

all primary school-aged children

some secondary school-aged children

You can get more information [getting your child vaccinated against flu](#) on NHS.UK

Proposed Train Strikes/Travel to School

Please note, we are not able to put on any additional buses to cover the proposed train strikes.

Helpful bus travel information in Hertfordshire, is available at

<https://www.intalink.org.uk/>



House Point Reward System

To increase the profile of the House Point Reward Systems at St. Mary's, teachers will be logging points on SIMS from this term. House Points are used to praise and reward our students and at every opportunity possible teachers use them to praise students for their effort, achievement and participation in lessons. This will also have a big emphasis on House Points leading to "House Cup" and other rewards available. Pupils will be issued with certificates to celebrate the total of House Points received each half term if they are able to reach or exceed the following totals:



Student who achieves 60 (TBC) combined House points across half-term	"BRONZE Certificate" Presented by Learning Coordinator in Assembly 1 x Canteen Queue Jump Pass 1 x Small Chocolate Bar (e.g. Funsized)
Student who achieves 120 (TBC) combined House points across half-term	"SILVER Certificate" Presented by Learning Coordinator in Assembly 3 x Canteen Queue Jump Pass 1 x Large Chocolate Bar (e.g. Regular)
Student who achieves 180 (TBC) House points across half-term	"GOLD Certificate" Presented by Learning Coordinator in Assembly 5 x Canteen Queue Jump Pass 1 x Large Chocolate Bag

Parents can track their child's House Point totals using the SIMS APP as this allows the school to share behaviour data with parents/students directly.



Accelerated Reader ~ Word Millionaires!

Congratulations Word Millionaires!

Word Millionaire certificates will be presented in assemblies next week. These are for students who have read and quizzed on books totalling more than a million words so far this year, using Accelerated Reader.



Certificates will be awarded to:

Year 7: Tobiasz D, Eliza J, Isabel J, Ellie-May M, Joseph S, Jessica W

Year 8: David D, Giosue F, Rozalia G, Hannah P



Congratulations to all of these students, especially David D, Rozalia G and Hannah P in Year 8, who all read over a million words last year as well. What a fantastic achievement!

Many students have already passed the 500,000 word mark, so they are very likely to meet the one million target at the end of this term. Certificates are awarded three times a year, so please encourage your children to keep reading and quizzing!



TERM DATES REMINDER

Spring Term

Half-Term Week

Monday—Friday, 13th-17th February 2023

End of Spring Term

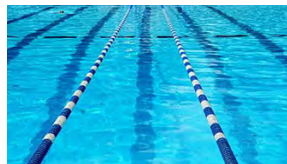
Friday 31st March 2023

Pupils Return to School on Monday 17th April 2023





Inter-house Swimming Competition



Well done to all the students who competed in the Inter-House Swimming Competition event.



Here are the results!

		BOYS							GIRLS								
		M	T	J	A	K	B	R			M	T	J	A	K	B	R
7	Ba	3	7	4	5	6	4		7	Ba	2	7	5	4	6	3	
	Br		6	5	4	7	0			Br	6	4	3	5	2	7	
	Fl	6	7	4		5	3			Fl		5	4	7	3	6	
	Fr	5	2	6	7	4	3			Fr	4	2	7	5	3	6	
		14	22	19	16	22	8	0			12	18	19	21	14	22	0
8	Ba		3	7	4	6	5		8	Ba	7	5		6	3	4	
	Br		6	5	4		7			Br	3	6	5	7		4	
	Fl		6	3	4	5	7			Fl		7					
	Fr		4	6	3	5	7			Fr	2	3	5	7	1	6	4
		0	19	21	15	16	26	0			12	21	10	20	4	14	4
9	Ba	3	2	7	5	6	4		9	Ba	7		6		5	4	
	Br	6	2	3	4	5	7			Br	6		4		7	5	
	Fl		4	6	5	3	7			Fl					7	6	
	Fr	3	6	4	5	2	7			Fr			6		5	7	
		12	14	20	19	16	25	0			13	0	16	0	24	22	0
10	Ba	6		5	7				10	Ba		6				7	
	Br	6			7		5			Br		6				7	
	Fl	5			6		7			Fl						7	
	Fr	5			6		7			Fr		7				6	
		22	0	5	26	0	19	0			0	19	0	0	0	27	0
7	Freestyle	4	7	3	6	5			7	Freestyle	2	4	6	5	3	7	
8	Freestyle		4	6	3	5	7		8	Freestyle		7		5		6	
9	Freestyle	3	2	6	5	4	7		9	Freestyle					7	6	
10	Freestyle	5			6		7		10	Freestyle		6				7	
		12	13	15	20	14	21	0			2	17	6	10	10	26	0
7	Ind Medley	3	7	4	6	5	2		7	Ind Medley	2	4	6	7	3	5	
8	Ind Medley		6	5	3	4	7		8	Ind Medley	5	7		4		6	
9	Ind Medley	3		4	6	5	7		9	Ind Medley					7	6	
10	Ind Medley	5	5		6		7		10	Ind Medley	5	5		6		7	
		11	18	13	21	14	23	0			12	16	6	17	10	24	0
Year 7		21	36	26	28	32	10	0			16	26	31	33	20	34	0
Year 8		0	29	32	21	25	40	0			17	35	10	29	4	26	4
Year 9		18	16	30	30	25	39	0			13	0	16	0	38	34	0
Year 10		32	5	5	38	0	33	0			5	30	0	6	0	41	0
Total		71	86	93	117	82	122	0			51	91	57	68	62	135	4
Grand Total		122	177	150	185	144	257	4									

