

# LOVE-RESPECT-FLOURISH

St. Mary's Catholic School Newsletter

Issue 17 - 20th January 2023



**'In the simplicity of my heart I have joyfully offered all to God.'**

**Mr Neves**  
**Executive Headteacher**

The thing I love about working in a school is that it's such a dynamic environment; there is always so much going on. As a result, the days pass very quickly. In the past I remember talking to students in assemblies about the small amount of time they spend in school. During term time, in a typical week - 7 lots of 24 hours - less than 20% of that time is spent in school. Apart from sleep and recreational activities, that does emphasise the importance of homework to support the relatively small amount of study time provided in the classroom. In school the time is filled, not just by lessons, but by a full, well planned schedule of activities: themed assemblies, tutor time activities and extracurricular pursuits. At St Mary's it is clear to see that, every week, excellent opportunities are offered to enrich the educational experience of all our students. As a well organised community, we are good at adapting to change. One change that has taken effect this week is a change of some leadership responsibilities. Mr Palmer has resumed his role as Head of the Maths Department, replacing Mrs Brewin and Miss Velani who had taken on shared leadership at the end of last year. I am grateful to them for their work leading the department during this school year. As a result, Mr Palmer's role as Head of Sixth Form has been taken over by Miss McHugh, a role with which she is very familiar and very experienced. There has been a seamless transition in these roles and students will continue to be well supported in the future.

I have played host to two visitors new to the school this week. Both toured the site during the working day, during lessons and lunchtime, and both were highly complimentary of the welcome they received and the positive atmosphere generated by all in the community. I also welcomed a visit by someone who is no stranger to St Mary's: former student and teacher at the school, Sister Judith Russi. She remarked on how lovely the renovated T block looked, together with the beautifully decorated wall outside the chapel, with its image of St Mary and the school mission statement, and the bible quotes displayed on the floors of the corridors. Sister Judith reminded me of the charism of the school's founders, the Sisters of St Mary of Namur: 'In the simplicity of my heart I have joyfully offered all to God.' This is also displayed outside the chapel. All these additions to the fabric of the school buildings remind us every day that there is something distinctive about our school - a place imbued with the Catholic faith.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Monday 23rd January 2023**  
KS3 Enrichment Day

**Monday 30th January 2023**  
Year 8 Mass

**Wednesday 1st February 2023**  
Year 9 Options Evening

**Week Commencing Monday**  
**6th February 2023**  
National Apprenticeship Week

**Wednesday 8th February 2023**  
B House Feast Day - St Josephine Bakhita



St Francis of Assisi  
CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST



## School Attendance



Dear Parents

### St Mary's School Attendance Flowchart for Parents

At St Mary's we believe children must be at school every day to enable them to learn, thrive and succeed. They cannot learn if they are absent from school, therefore, we aim to ensure that all our children and young people take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and will strive to raise standards by promoting the regular attendance and punctuality of our pupils. We believe the foundation of securing good attendance is that our school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where our pupils will want to be and are keen and ready to learn. It is essential that all students are present each and every day. Every child should aim for attendance of 96% and above. A child with good attendance is a child that is happy, confident in school, secure and making excellent progress.

The aims of the school attendance policy and procedures are:

- To demonstrate that improving attendance is everyone's business and embed a 'support first' approach.
- To develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance aiming for 96% attendance or better and is an integral part of the school's ethos.
- To work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships

#### Please note:

Evidence for a period of absence may be requested and if this cannot be provided absence will be unauthorised. Leave of absence requests for medical appointments must be made 48 hours before the appointment, in writing supported with the appointment card/email/notification. Evidence must be provided for these appointments. Without this evidence, the absence will be unauthorised.

To support you as parents an **Attendance Flowchart** has been created for you to make reference to and the school **Attendance Policy** and **Sixth Form Attendance Policy** can be found on the school website.

## ST MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL ATTENDANCE FLOW CHART



Daily monitoring of attendance led by the Attendance Officer and Learning Coordinator will involve checking for regular absence patterns and sending home truancy alert for pupils who are absent and no reason has been provided.

**PUNCTUALITY:** Students who arrive after the registers have closed at 8:55am and not before 9:30am will have their absence recorded as unauthorised unless evidence can be provided.

Attendance Officer and Learning Coordinator will conduct a wellbeing call home to the parent of any pupil who has had three consecutive days off school with illness.

Pastoral Leads (AHT i/c Pastoral, Pastoral Support Worker and Learning Coordinator) will escalate a safeguarding concern if a reason for absence has not been provided within 48 hours of absence. This will also trigger a home visit by the school.

If absence persists and falls below 96% a Letter 1 will be sent (unless the reasons are COVID related or other medical reasons and evidence has been provided) An individual pupil checklist will be used to support the pupil.  
*Please note absences will only be classified as authorised where medical evidence is provided and is at the schools discretion.*

The Attendance Officer will issue a Fixed Penalty Notice Warning Letter will be issued on the first day of an unauthorised absence within a term.

If absence persists and falls below 93% a Letter 2 will be sent (unless the reasons are COVID related or other medical reasons and evidence has been provided) The school will consider whether medical evidence for absences may be required.

Any unauthorised holidays taken during term time will lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice Warning letter being issued on the first day of absence. After the second day of unauthorised holiday county will be contacted to request a Fixed Penalty to be issued.

A meeting will be scheduled with the Attendance Officer and Learning Coordinator for the Parent and Pupil to attend to discuss attendance concerns and complete an individual pupil checklist (Assess/Plan/Do/Review).

Attendance contract will be implemented to improve the pupil attendance. This will be reviewed every two weeks.

If parents or pupils do not engage with the strategies put in place by the school and absences continue and are unauthorised the Local Authorities will be contacted and a FPN application will be submitted.

When 15 sessions of unauthorised absence are reached (this can include absence from a previous term), the school will apply to the Local Authority for Fixed Penalty to be issued.

**Severely absent pupils – Pupils with 50% attendance or below the local authority and external agencies will be notified. Support will be requested which may include a whole family plan, consideration for an alternative form of educational provision etc. A Service Request Form will be completed by the school**





## Youth Conference ~ Flame 2023



### Flame 2023 Catholic Youth Ministry event Saturday 4 March 2023

We would like to take a group of St Mary students to Flame 2023.

This is an amazing event where thousands of Young Catholics gather.

It is open to those students in Year 9 and above, so if you are interested or want more information then please speak with Mr Wright.

## FREE Online Talks

Join Bangor University on Zoom at 10:00am  
Saturday mornings

to hear fascinating talks on  
Philosophy, Ethics and Religion

### FREE ONLINE TALKS SATURDAY SESSIONS

Join Bangor University on Zoom at 10:00  
Saturday mornings to hear fascinating talks on  
Philosophy, Ethics and Religion!

- **21 January:** Living the Existential Life: Introduction to Existentialism.
- **28 January:** Wittgenstein and the Environment.
- **4 February:** Ecofeminism.
- **11 February:** The ethics of cannibalism.
- **18 February:** Witches and the Bible.

To register, e-mail: [j.andrews@bangor.ac.uk](mailto:j.andrews@bangor.ac.uk)

## Year 11 Reward Event

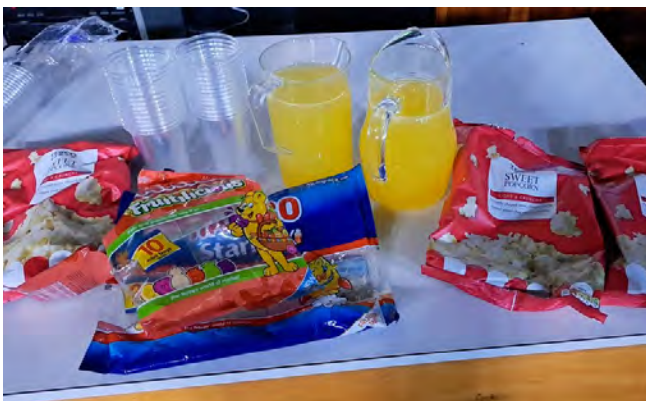
### Year 11 Reward Event

A select number of Year 11 students were invited to attend a special reward event to recognise their fantastic academic progress last half term.

The students were given the choice of either watching a movie or playing sport.



Both events were very well attended and the students also enjoyed a treat of popcorn, sweets and refreshments.



**Well done to all involved**

*Mr Eddleston (Learning Coordinator Year 11)*



## KS3 Enrichment Day

### Preview of our KS3 Enrichment Day, Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> January

We are very excited to be able to invite back to St Mary's all those guests we had booked in for December before the snow came!

**It promises to be a valuable and varied day for all!**



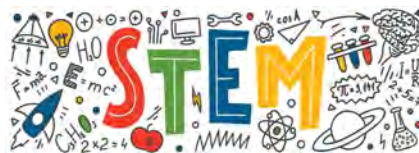
- ◇ Shakespeare Workshops
- ◇ a visiting author
- ◇ Science Shows



- ◇ plus a visiting speaker from the Bank of England



- ◇ a Sumdog Maths contest
- ◇ Interhouse Spelling Bee
- ◇ workshops on Calligraphy, Japanese, Chinese New Year
- ◇ STEM activities



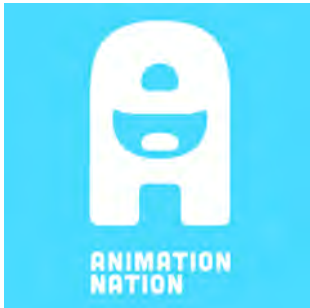
- ◇ plus just for our Year 9 students, tasters of GCSEs in Business Studies, PE and Drama.



**All students in Years 7, 8 or 9 should bring pencil case with coloured pens or pencils, scissors and glue stick, laptop and, of course, a reading book, in order to get the most out of the day.**



## “Animation Nation” visited St Mary’s!



**Michael from the company Animation Nation made a visit to St Mary’s to teach a group of Year 7 students the art of stop motion animation.**

The full day workshop was brilliantly run and the Year 7’s involved were an absolute credit to the school. Students shared their animations with the group at the end of the session and we were all impressed with the fantastic levels of fun, humour and creativity on show.

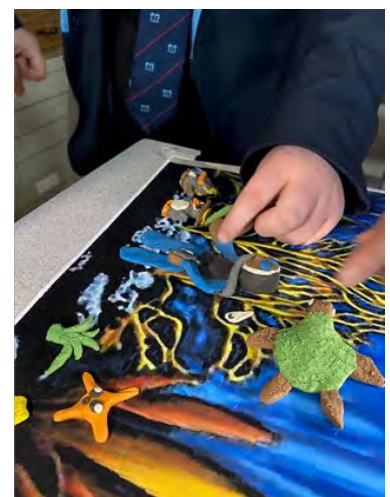
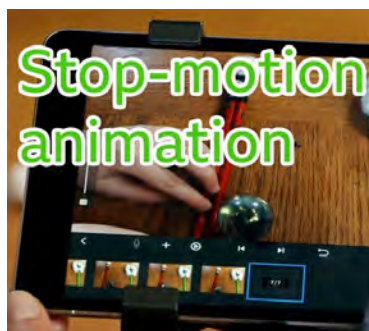


My thanks go to both Michael and our Year 7 students for making the day so fun and worthwhile.

As soon as the animations are available digitally I will put a link in Headlines so parents and students can watch them again, but until then here are some shots from the day.

**Well done Year 7!**

*Miss Nairn  
Art Department*







## St Mary's Award



### St Marys Award



### How to get your award:

12 categories in total (see next slide for examples)

Academic progress, Attendance, Common good/Charity, School community, Competition, Extra-curricular, Leadership, Literacy, Personal development, Physical fitness, Spiritual life, Super-curricular



To achieve a **bronze award** you must have completed something in **4** of the above categories (Nov after AP1)

To achieve a **bronze award/silver award** you must have completed something in **8** of the above categories (Jan after AP2)

To achieve a **bronze award/silver award/gold award** you must have completed something in all **12** categories (April after AP3)





## St Mary's Award

	ST MARY'S AWARD
St Mary's Focus	Examples
Academic progress	A2L >1 or improved by 0.25%
Attendance	95% + or attendance improved by 3%+ since last AP
Common good/charity	Random Acts of Kindness (RAK), Red Wednesday, Cardinal Hume, reading buddies, peer mentoring
School community	Open evening, peer mentoring, student librarian, careers, school shows/concerts (drama and music)
Competition	Royal Science society Book competition, Olympiad Science competitions, Maths challenge, Poetry competition, Geography
Extra-curricular	Lunch time and after school clubs, Attendance at GCSE/A level booster sessions, peer mentoring
Leadership	Peer mentoring, Anti-bully rep, student council and any other form roles, Coaching
Literacy	Library activity, Book review, accelerated reader, lexia progress for student engaged in this, reading books, specialist magazines and journals
Personal development	Attendance at GCSE/A level sessions, Careers carousel, enrichment activities, coaching, peer mentoring, reading books, specialist magazines and journals, academic competitions, trips, work experience, Music, Drama, DOE
Physical fitness	IH, sports, after school extra-curricular PE, DOE
Spiritual life	Liturgy, Charity events, assembly, class prayer, retreat
Super-curricular	Online webinars, reading books, specialist magazines and journals, visiting museums and galleries, watching films and documentaries, listening to podcasts, attending online seminars and lectures, entering academic competition

## WHAT'S COMING UP?

- ☐ KS3 Enrichment day (January 23<sup>rd</sup>)
- ☐ Battle of the bands (Year 9)
- ☐ Year 10 and 11 GCSE Music concert
- ☐ Liturgies
- ☐ Year 10 and 12 IH Quiz
- ☐ World book day
- ☐ Careers week
- ☐ Science week
- ☐ Rotary Interschool Quiz
- ☐ Spring Music Concert
- ☐ KS3 Poetry Competition



## Beautiful Minds Group

### Handmade Christmas Mugs

By our Beautiful Minds group

A lovely outcome from our talented students!  
A great opportunity to get to know everyone in a relaxed environment and reflect upon their first full term at St Mary's School.



## Year 12 & Year 13 ~ Law Enrichment Trip

### Law Enrichment trip to Chelmsford Crown Court



Last Thursday a small group of Year 12 and 13 students went on a trip to Chelmsford Crown Court to get a first-hand experience of the legal profession in action.

A truly eye opening experience of watching how criminal cases are heard in court and observing the role of Barristers, Court Clerks, Ushers and the Judge.

Three of the attending pupils had previously been in Mrs Knight's Law Enrichment class last year and were able to observe their legal knowledge when it came down to classification of offences and mitigating circumstances taken into consideration during sentencing of criminal cases.

Hopefully the experience will help our students when they take on similar roles for the Mock Trial taking place on 31 January.

#### Student Report:

##### **My Trip to Chelmsford Court by Chinasa, Year 12**

*I currently study Sociology, Politics and English literature. I have always had an interest in law from a youthful age. Growing up I have always aspired to become a Barrister and study criminal defense law or human rights and social injustice law. Recently I had the opportunity to be able to go to Chelmsford Court with a few other students and I can say certainly how grateful I am to be able to receive an opportunity like this, not only was this trip an eye opener for me but also gave me a head start as to how the Barristers work in court.*

*This trip for me was very inspirational. When we first arrived at Chelmsford Court, I did not know what to expect but all I knew was that I was going to enjoy this trip. When we first got there, we were greeted with a very warm welcome from the Judges Clerk. She then proceeded to tell us all the interesting court cases that were taking place on that day. I wanted to visit all the court cases happening on that day but unfortunately due to time we were only able to visit four cases; the first case was on attempted murder which me and the rest of my peers found remarkably interesting and incredibly sad. Whilst we sat there and watched the case going on I made sure I paid close attention to both Barristers in the courtroom and how they presented themselves and as well as how they projected their voice towards the Judge in order to defend their clients. Following the summary round up from each representing Barrister, we were at the point in court where it was time for the criminal who was found guilty to receive his sentence. After having heard all the things the criminal did the Judge came to a conclusion that he deserved 27 years in prison. In my opinion I think it is well deserved for the criminal, it was such an emotional case as we had to see the victim who was nearly murdered distraught in front of us. An exceptionally raw and emotive moment. Seeing how the Barristers behave in court was exciting for me, as that is my dream job when I am older.*

*I could sit here for days and write about how much I enjoyed this trip and elaborate more on the other cases we were able to see, but I would take up your whole day. Overall, this trip was very eventful, and if I had the opportunity to go again I definitely would, without a doubt, be the first person to put my name forward. Hopefully we are able to have many more trips like this again in the future.*





## Inter House Chess Competition



We had an excellent turnout at the Inter House Chess Competition

With so many students playing at a high standard, Year 7, Year 9 and Year 11 has had to be postponed until this coming Friday!

The photo shows our Year 8 Champion, Dominic, and Runner-up Theodore. Congratulations also to Year 10 Winner, Dominic S, and Sixth Form Champion Joseph H.



Watch out next week for news of our overall Senior and Junior Champions!



## Extra Curricular Club



### Chess Club

Why not join our thriving Chess Club  
Whether you are either new to the game or  
experienced and want more match practice?

**Every Tuesday at 3.15pm in H10**

## Sociology News...



At the recent Sixth Form Open Evening, Sociology was a popular choice among the Year 11 students who queued to talk to the Year 12 students, who could offer their perspective on their experience of sociology so far.

The Year 12 sociology topics covered last term included culture, where students have studied different societies and how they function together as a group.

Sociology branches out to numerous career paths and opens up a range of careers in areas such as welfare, education, social research, local and central government.

Many of the students engage well in lively and topical discussions on the key themes studied for A Level.



## The Duke of Edinburgh's Award



### Student Report: *Holly M, Year 12*



As part of our Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award – before our expedition in the summer - we have to practice a skill, volunteer, and take part in some form of physical activity once a week. Two of these activities must be upheld for three months and one must be upheld for six months.

For my skill, which I have chosen as my six month activity, I am having weekly piano lessons. I have just started working on my Grade 8 piano pieces and my goal in my lessons is to continue working towards my piano exam, which I hope to take at the end of 2023 or early 2024.

For my physical activity, I am going swimming at my local leisure centre once a week. My goal for my physical activity is to develop my fitness and to see progress in my swimming ability every week.

For my volunteering, I am helping with GCSE lessons in the school's French department. Once a week, I work with a small number of students, helping them with a number of things, whether that be preparing for their upcoming GCSE speaking exams or helping them with their French grammar. My aim in this volunteering is to help the students to feel more confident in their French before their GCSE exams.





St Mary's Clubs			
January – February 2023 (lunchtime clubs highlighted in yellow)			
CLUB	VENUE	SUPERVISOR	YEARS
<b>Monday</b>			
Lexia	E2	G.Benvenuto	All Years
A Level Chemistry drop-in	H6	A.Nicol	Year 12 and 13
IT Club (early lunch)	H5	G.Benvenuto	Year 7 and 9
RE drop-in clinic NEW CLUB	K8	RE Teacher	Year 11
K53 Science club	H7	T.William/A.Acheson	Year 7 and 8
Drama club	Hume	C.Hayles	Year 7-9
A Level Geography (Week A)	D2	C.Hughes	Year 12 and 13
Art GCSE/A Level	C6	H.Nairn	Year 11,12,13
Further mechanics	K5 (lessons)	M.Brewin	13FM
Maths Booster	TO2	S.Antwi	11Ma2
Boys Rugby	PE	PE Department	Year 7-9
<b>Tuesday</b>			
Chess Club	H10	G.Benvenuto	All Years
Spiritual Life club NEW CLUB	K8	A.Creus	Year 7
ECO club	F1	A.Briggs	Year 8,9,10
Business and Finance support	C1	E.McElhinney	Year 10-13
Craft club (early lunch)	C2	T.Lee	Year 7 and 9
RE drop-in clinic	K7	D.Guidera	Year 11
Hockey	PE	PE Department	Year 7-10
Homework club	B1 and B3	Mrs Wilson/G.Benvenuto	All Years
A Level Maths mechanics	K2 (lessons)	S.Hutchin	Year 13
GCSE Science Booster	Science Block	J.Ryan/P.Winter/A.Nicol	Year 11
<b>Wednesday</b>			
Embroidery club	C2	G.Benvenuto	All Years
A Level Geography (Week B)	D2	C.Hughes	Year 12 and 13
Greek Mythology and Philosophy	K7	D.Guidera	All Years
Homework club	B1 and B3	C.Henderson/Mrs Wilson	All Years
Year 11 Maths	On Teams 5pm	M.Atanassova	Year 11
Debate club	E5	T.Juliff	All Years
Arabic lunchtime club	H5	P.Dolman	Year 7,9,11
A Level Biology drop-in	H8	J.Campbell	Year 12 and 13
History GCSE/A Level	E4	P.Dolman	Year 11,12,13
Lego club	F1	J.Knight	Year 7-9
Design club	C4	T.Webb	Year 8-10
Orchestra	Music Block	J.Matthews	All Years
GCSE Geography Booster (lunchtime)	D2/D3	S.Riddler	Year 11
GCSE Geography Booster (afterschool)	D2/D3	C.Hughes	Year 11
Maths Booster	K3	J.Mason	11Ma1
Maths Booster	K1	C.Palmer	11Ma3
Maths Booster	K5	M.Brewin	11Ma6
Maths Booster	K2	S.Hutchin	11Ma7
Maths Booster	K4	D.Velani	11Ma4
Choir (early lunch starts 12:35pm)	Music Block	J.Matthews/K.Salter	Year 7,9,11
<b>Thursday</b>			
Japanese Culture club (early lunch)	D3	S.Riddler	Year 7
Maths Society club (late lunch Week B)	K Block	M.Atanassova	Year 8
Photography club	Library	L.Frino	Year 7,8,9
Homework club	B1 and B3	C.Henderson/Mrs Wilson	All Years
Craft club (early lunch)	WkA C2/ WkB C6	T.Lee	Year 8 and 10
<b>Friday</b>			
Girls Rugby	PE	PE Department	Year 7-10
RE drop-in clinic (Week A)	K8	A.Creus	Year 11
GCSE/A Level DT club	C4	M.Hunt	Year 11-13
Books and Biscuits club	Library	L.Frino	All Years
Geography Changemakers (Week A)	D2	C.Hughes	Year 7 and 9



## Extra Curricular Club



**Come along and join in  
an exciting New Club  
starting this half term**



### JAPANESE CULTURE CLUB YEAR 7

**THURSDAY LUNCH 1**  
START DATE: 12<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2023

LOCATION: D3

Interested in talking about, and exploring, all things Japanese?  
This lunchtime club will cover:

風 火  
WIND FIRE

土 水  
EARTH WATER



- \* Japan: facts and fiction
- \* Japanese language
- \* Anime & manga
- \* Japanese history and disasters
- \* Japanese mythology/ anime/manga
- \* Traditional clothes and martial arts
- \* Japanese Festivals, religion and food



## Climate Change Enquiry



### Calling all citizen scientists!

If you want to find out more about the effects of climate change and how you can help to contribute to scientific research by investigating the biodiversity of your local area, then sign up for the live climate enquiry sessions on 15<sup>th</sup> February and 5<sup>th</sup> April at this link.

[Field Studies Centre Climate Enquiry](#)

Let your Geography Teacher know that you have taken part to gain St Mary's Award points!



## Family Lives Spring Term Programme



Worried about your child? Join our free online and face to face groups and get support to help your child feel more confident and happier. The groups are for six weeks and delivered via Microsoft Teams or face to face.

### Time to Talk about Pre Teens / Teens

#### Face to Face in Hatfield

Tuesday 21st February to 28th March 2023  
from 9.30am to 11.30am

### Bringing up Confident SEN Children

Online Wednesday 25th Jan – 8th March 2023  
from 7.00pm to 9.00pm

### Bringing up Confident ADHD/ASD Children

Online Tuesday 21st Feb – 28th March 2023  
from 7.00pm to 9.00pm

### Bringing up Confident ADHD/ASD Children

Online Thursday 26th Jan to 9th March 2023  
from 7.00pm to 9.00pm

**For more information, contact  
Louise on 0204 522 8700/8701 or  
email [services@familylives.org.uk](mailto:services@familylives.org.uk)**

**We build better family lives together**

[www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)



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Family Lives is registered as a company limited by guarantee in England and Wales No. 3877762. Registered charity No. 1077722.  
Registered address: 15-17 The Broadway, Hatfield, Hertfordshire, AL9 5HZ.



## Parent School Governor Election

Owing to current parent governors coming to the end of their fixed terms of appointment, we have a vacancy for a Parent Governor on the school's governing body.

If you would like to stand for election please complete and return the nomination form (*which is being sent by email to all parents this week*) by the end of the school day on **Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2023.**

Your completed nomination must be returned to the school office or emailed to [headspa@stmarys.net](mailto:headspa@stmarys.net) by the end of the school day on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2023.



## We are hiring!



St Francis of Assisi  
CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST

**Click Here For Latest Vacancy Information**

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