

# LOVE-RESPECT-FLOURISH

St. Mary's Catholic School Newsletter

Issue 2 - 15th September 2023



## Love, Respect, Flourish

*Mr Johnston - Headteacher*

This week we have had the photographers in school to take pictures and videos of the students and school in action for the new prospectus and marketing materials. It's been a true pleasure to see so much happening across the school site that means that being at St. Mary's not only develops students academically, ensuring that each student reaches their potential in the curriculum, but also artistically, physically, culturally and spiritually. Fr. Peter and Fr. Lazzaron (newly arrived in the parish) featured as we celebrate proudly our Catholic values and ethos. It's these three values of 'Love, Respect and Flourish' that I will continue to refer to—they underpin all of our work as a community and our mission of being dedicated to achieving excellence for all.

Open Evening is on 27th September, and I confirm that **school closes at 1pm on this day**, but that most students are expected to assist on the evening so we can ensure all future students and their parents can experience an insight into everything we have to offer. With thanks and God Bless.

Tom Johnston, Headteacher



A small  
sample of  
the photos  
taken this  
week!



### OPEN EVENING

St Mary's Catholic School

**Wednesday 27th September**

**Our Open Evening is for Year 7 entry  
in September 2024.**

Speeches at 6pm, 7pm and 8pm

The Eventbrite link to book tickets for the open evening.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/open-evening-2023-tickets-713044123167?aff=oddtcreator>



St Francis of Assisi  
CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**Thursday/Friday 21st & 22nd September 2023**  
School Photo's by Pret a Portrait

**Thursday 21st September 2023**  
Year 13 Oxbridge Meeting for Parents and Students

**Tuesday 26th September 2023**  
Year 13 Geography Fieldwork,, Hatfield Forest

**Wednesday 27th September 2023**  
School Opening Evening—**1pm finish for students**

**Thursday 28th September 2023**  
Late Start for Students  
**School Starts at 10.00am**

## Notification of Absence and School Attendance

### Reporting



### Absences

### Absence

If you need to report your child absent please do notify the school using the Absence telephone line **01279 654901** or by contacting the following email address: **attendance@stmarys.net** before 9.00am on the day of absence.

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

### Requesting Leave of Absence - Medical Appointments

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.

We ask parents to only request leave of absence for such appointments in exceptional circumstances and to do so in advance by emailing **info@stmarys.net**.

### Applications for 'Leave of Absence' for other circumstances

e.g. Attending a family members graduation, attending a funeral, dance and music examinations etc. must be applied for in advance by requesting a 'Leave of Absence' form from **HeadsPA@stmarys.net** This application should be returned with a supporting letter and evidence if required to the HeadsPA for authorisation.

Further information can be found on the St Mary's website: [www.stmarys.net](http://www.stmarys.net)

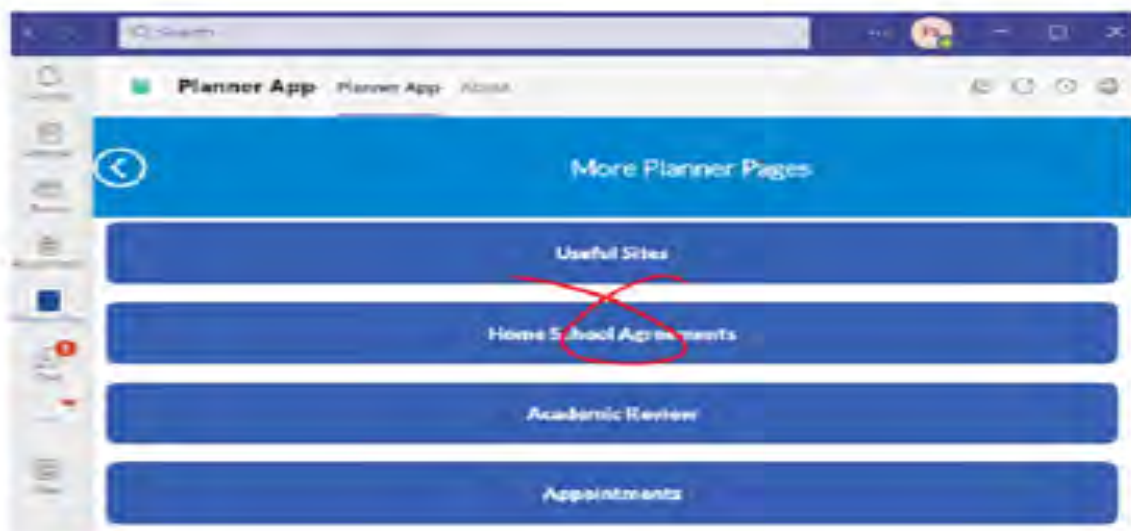
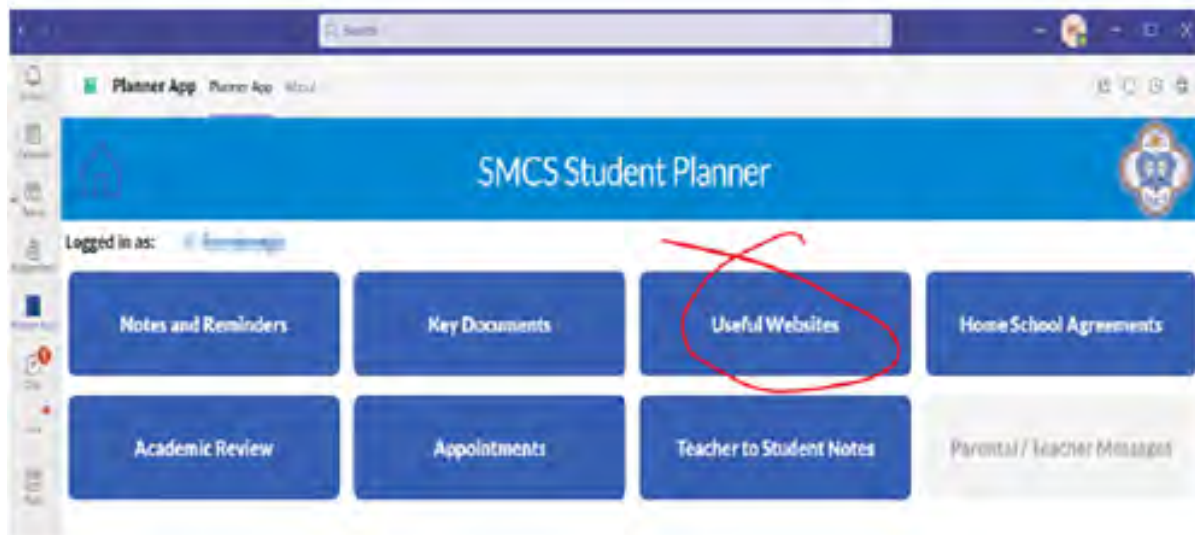


School success starts  
with attendance

## Home School Agreements

Home School Agreements are ready for signing.

These agreements are now ready and live in the student planners or can be accessed using the links below:



KS3 & KS4 - <https://forms.office.com/e/j3MPACrxit>

KS5 - <https://forms.office.com/e/4bZT6E38vF>

Students are required to sign into Office365 with their school email address to sign the agreements.

Parents and students sign by reading and checking all the required sections.

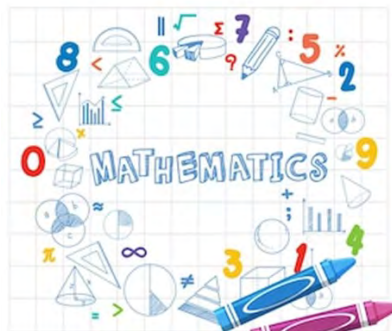
Home School agreements require both a student and parental Digital Signature.



## Maths Department

### Year 7 Maths in everyday life project

This is a project where you can show how people use maths in their everyday life.



Use your imagination - it can be a poster (A4, A3 or even bigger) or a 3D representation like a model of where maths is used, it can be a poem or an essay. If you are good at baking or cooking and you want to show how maths is used there, you can do a step by step list supported by some photographs (can be done as a poster).

Be creative. There will be a lot of house points awarded for sure!  
**You have until Friday 22nd September to bring your design to your maths teacher.**

### Year 7 and Year 8 Maths baking/decorating competition

The Maths Department Team are very excited about launching a new Maths competition that involves everyone's favourite: cake!



We are calling all Year 7 and Year 8 bakers and/or cake decorators to show off their skills. Cakes, cookies or any other bakes should be done at home (including decorations) and brought to the Maths Department **on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> September for judging.**

There is just one requirement: it has to be full of **Maths** - so put your creative hats on! And no nuts please as there may be some sampling.

Get creative! There will be great prizes for the winners!!!!



United Kingdom  
Mathematics Trust

### Coming up! UKMT Senior Maths Challenge for Year 11, 12 and 13s

Date 3<sup>rd</sup> October – more details to follow.

Keep practising your problem solving skills!

Follow the link to access past papers:

<https://ukmt.org.uk/current-past-papers/jsf/jet-engine:free-past-papers/tax/challenge-type:76/>



## Theology Essay Competition

**St Mary's University Strawberry Hill invited students to submit essays on the subject of Trans humanisation.**

All of our students were encouraged to research and submit. Nyaradzo C, Year 13, has consented to us publishing her entry.

The RE team are all very proud of her and all the other entrants.

### Student Work by Nyaradzo C

#### 'Transhumanism is Satanic'

To a moderate extent I believe that transhumanism is satanic. As although I do believe technology such as mobile phones, scanner pens, cosmetic procedures, pacemakers and prosthetic legs for example can be complimentary to the physical human form. I also believe transhumanism is a spectrum and on its extreme side, technology that completely neglects and abandons our humanity can be considered satanic as we are all made in God's Image with humanity, that must be preserved.

The main problem arises when technology and science is used as some archetype of salvation in the absence of God. The need to become "posthuman" by avoiding the sufferings that come with being human through Godless means is satanic. God does give us gifts and talents such as science to endure woes of humanity such as medicine and we can continue to explore the possibilities on this but when we seek be in complete independent control of how own mortality, we ultimately attempt to damage the plan of God and that's where the issue lies. Moreover, Jesus became our salvation and that is the core of Christianity and so if we reach this posthuman state the core element of Christianity ceases to be. Another example of God's plan being negated is the idea we can achieve wisdom through enhanced cognitive capacity, again absent from God, but our knowledge and wisdom are sourced from God. Therefore, one consequence of all this is the divides on who can access this "posthuman" state and who can't, as all are humans are welcome to God's promise, but this might not be the case in accessibility within transhumanism. We already see this in who has access to basic needs like food and water but also who's most impacted by climate change, access to medicine, education, electronics, cosmetic products/procedures (e.g., anti-aging agents) and furthermore the divides of accessibility of those resources between countries, regions and classes. And with the addition of things like immortality, "super-human" abilities etc the idea that one could have all and some with none could lead to quite dystopian future. This being not on God, mixed with human greed and vulnerability to corruption, may mean that divisions of opportunity, resources and security are quite plausible.

However, transhumanism does offer potential benefits such as being a catalyst to agricultural and medicinal breakthroughs. Innovations in healthcare technology may mean the increase of survival rates of extreme conditions like heart disease and cancer and even detecting early signs of these illnesses arising. And so, if utilised correctly transhumanism

can target the most vulnerable and deprived groups who can seek resources and knowledge to better their living conditions such as produce of food and access to medicine. In this I believe 1 Corinthians 10:23 "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial" best fits the principle that should be upheld when navigating trans humanism because although new discoveries and findings should be celebrated, limitations and regulations should be established to ensure these findings better people's lives rather than threaten them. If transhumanism seeks to enrich people's lives rather than just add surface level enhancements than one can view this as a gift from God rather than satanic practice.

Nevertheless, a more pessimistic approach of human nature would suggest that even with laws and regulations on the ethics and the practice of transhumanism, the sheer level of power this type of technology would bring may lead to an expedient increase in conflict and devastating consequences. Such as tyranny of the "posthumans" whereby those who opt out of enhancements for various reasons such as religious, personal, legal and health reasons are left inferior and thus obstructed from opportunities in their lives. This may cause tensions in employment, sporting events and income rates cultivating a culture of "have" and "have-nots" and thus potentially and ultimately leading to an extinction of those "have-nots" for simply opting out of these additional enhancements. We see this already in the argument about whether it is right to use certain drugs in sporting as it disregards the efforts of those who have trained and compete without those enhancements or the use by students of ChatGPT to write up their essays and coursework. If law is made that people can opt out posthuman enhancements much like certain vaccines, then the idea of a meritocratic society ever being achieved is completely disregarded. Contrastingly, if made a compulsory for all to go through this posthuman transformation in order to level this playing field, being man-made posthuman population may lack the diversity and uniqueness that comes with God's creations. We may have the same "super" human abilities such as speed, strength and intelligence but lack that uniqueness that comes with each and every one of our weaknesses and strengths that come with simply being human. And even if given options on what human variations we may desire, there will be abilities more favourable than others supporting the idea we risk becoming clonelike and lacking individuality.

In conclusion, I do not wish to demonise scientific and technological advances as a whole because there are benefits to be celebrated as, if utilised right, can enhance our well-being and living conditions. However, the satanic element arises when we believe there is a need to completely neglect our humanity in the fear of the darker sides of being human. Facing and accepting things like our inevitable mortality, fragility and weaknesses is just as important as aiding and enhancing our quality of life.



## Introducing some of our new staff...



### **Mrs Anderson** **Assistant Subject Leader - Maths**



My name is Victoria and I have recently joined St. Mary's as a full time maths teacher. I got my maths degree at UEA and then did my teacher training in Portsmouth.

I then moved to Bishops Stortford and worked at Leventhorpe for nine years, taking on different roles throughout my time.

My hobbies include reading, knitting, kayaking and rock climbing.

I have enjoyed my start at St Mary's Catholic school, everyone is really friendly and helpful. I look forward to being able to join in with the extra curricular activities that St Mary's provides for its students and support everyone as they have supported me in the last two weeks.

### **Mrs Catmur** **Subject Leader - MFL**

My name is Tamzin Catmur and I have recently joined St Mary's as Head of MFL. After university, I worked in industry for a number of years and completed my PGCE when my youngest son was at nursery. Since then, I have taught MFL at schools in Essex, most recently at Felsted where I taught GCSE, A level and IB curriculums. My hobbies include swimming, cycling, kayaking, yoga, reading and spending time with family and friends.

I am a practising Catholic and delighted to be working at St Mary's Catholic school. It is amazing to say the "Hail Mary" in a foreign language with the students and to see them all praying together. The students are helpful and respectful and I am sure we are going to thoroughly enjoy our language learning together and I will enjoy watching them take huge strides in this area. I am sure that their faith will give them the resilience to face any challenge!

I really look forward to getting to know the students and to working with my colleagues in the MFL department and with supportive parents to ensure that your children achieve their potential in languages.

Language learning is a gradual and exciting process. It's not just about the words, but the culture and the understanding of another people. It is so exciting to go to a foreign country and to be able to talk to people in their own language and to be able to understand them. Languages develop globally minded people who can make real change. It is a privilege to prepare the St Mary's students to be able to make a difference.







## RE Curriculum



**This term RE sees the launch of a new curriculum .**

Below is the official and accurate press release for the Curriculum. We commence at St Marys with this exciting new curriculum in a few weeks' time – launching with Year 7. We are looking forward to the changes to our already robust and vibrant curriculum.

**New Religious Education (RE) Directory for Catholic schools, colleges and academies in England and Wales has been launched at an event in Westminster.**

The directory was introduced at Cathedral View on 25 January by speakers including Dr Margaret Carswell, Senior Lecturer at the Australian Catholic University; Baroness Barran MBE, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Education; the Rt Rev Marcus Stock, Bishop of Leeds and Chairman of the Catholic Education Service (CES); and Paul Barber, CES Director.

*Titled To Know You More Clearly* the directory sets out the purpose of RE from Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 9 and features a programme of study with a model curriculum, corresponding to the six half-terms of the school year.

The new directory replaces previous editions published in 1996 and 2012, and states that RE is to be taught for at least 10% of curriculum time up to age 16 in Catholic schools and academies, and 5% in sixth forms.

It was drafted by experts including the late Professor Anthony Towey, Head of Theology, Philosophy and History at St Mary's University; CES Religious Education Adviser Philip Robinson; Senior Policy and Education Adviser Dr Nancy Walbank; and representatives of the Association of Teachers of Catholic Religious Education and the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers.

Based on the constitutions of the Second Vatican Council and rooted in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the objective of the curriculum is religiously literate and engaged young people, with the knowledge, understanding and skills to reflect spiritually, think ethically and theologically, and recognise the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.

In his preface, **Bishop Marcus writes: "As well as seeking to assist parents with the education and religious formation of their children, Catholic schools strive also to be of service to society. Religious education plays its part in this endeavour by enabling all pupils to be confident and secure in their religious faith and knowledgeable and respectful of other religions, and so play a crucial role in building a cohesive society.**

**"This new edition of the Religious Education Directory strives to embody these inspiring objectives."**

Baroness Barran thanked those present and highlighted "the important role Catholic schools, and schools with a religious character more generally, play in giving children a moral compass, guiding them with values that will be integral not only through their school journey, but beyond that into adulthood, into the workforce and into society."

Other attendees at the launch included Schools Commissioners from the Catholic dioceses; and representatives from the Church of England Education Office; Board of Deputies of British Jews; Religious Education Council; National Association of Standing Advisory Councils of Religious Education; Culham St Gabriels; Catholic Union; and from the London Jesuit Centre.

While nurturing the faith of Catholic pupils, the curriculum prepares all pupils to play their part as critical citizens in a plural and diverse culture. It develops in them a dialogical attitude, through the content that is presented and through the modelling of respectful dialogue in class, a particularly powerful witness in a context where social media has had such a detrimental impact on the civility of public discourse.

**Topics covered include the relationship between faith and science; the problem of evil; nature of human freedom; rights of the unborn; plight of refugees and asylum seekers; war and peace. There is also a focus on the beauty of Catholicism and its influence on culture through art, music, literature, science, and architecture, equipping young people to engage with the Church beyond intellectual remits, and approach the transcendent.**

**A series of training workshops on the directory and model curriculum for dioceses are also being planned to take place throughout the year. [Download the new Religious Education Directory](#)**



## Courses for Parents

**ADD-vance**  
The ADHD and Autism Trust



Are running free courses throughout September for parents and carers of those with ADHD or autism. For further information, please follow this link:

<http://www.add-vance.org/>

*ADD-vance is a dedicated group of professionals, who also happen to be parents of children affected by ADHD and/or Autism. Their mission is to support the families of children affected by these conditions and the professionals involved in their care. ADD-vance want to increase understanding, provide support and change perceptions of these complex neurological conditions, so as to improve the wellbeing and reduce the social isolation of these young people and their families.*

Mrs McGorrell  
Pastoral Care and Safeguarding Lead

## We are hiring!



St Francis of Assisi  
CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST

Click Here For Latest Vacancy Information

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





**LOVE-RESPECT-FLOURISH**

*#DedicatedtoExcellence*



## APPLE DAY 2023

**30th September, 11am - 3pm**

Apple Picking | Stalls & Games | Live  
Music | Kids Activities | History Talks

Chance to buy apples or donate them back!

**Free entry & fun for all the family**

For more information please contact  
[fundraising@stelizabeths.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@stelizabeths.org.uk)



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

Positive living and learning for people with epilepsy and other complex needs

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**Register now**