

Newsletter

Friday 16th December 2022



St. Mary's Catholic
Primary School

Dear Parents and Friends

End of term...

As we finally come to the end of not only another very busy term but 2022, it is always a good time to stop and reflect on what we have achieved. I have been showing prospective parents around our wonderful school and when I ask the children what makes St Mary's so special, I am always humbled by their responses:

You always
have friends
to play with.

Teachers
make
learning
fun.

There is
always
someone
who you can
talk to.

*Everybody
is kind.*

We are indeed a 'Small School with a Big Heart'. The events during the last few weeks allow us as a school to really celebrate our faith, with our thought provoking Advent Day of Faith, reflective Advent Liturgy and traditional Nativity. It was really special to be able to share the Nativity with so many of you over the last couple of days. I felt quite emotional, sharing our first proper Christmas together as a school family.

In addition to this, the children have enjoyed a Christmas Disco, Christmas Lunch and Christmas Jumper Day, the Dick Whittington Panto and will end the term with Christmas parties. It has been a great combination of spirituality, reflection, fun and learning.

I would like to take this chance to thank our fantastic PTFA who, supported by you our parents, have worked hard over the course of this term to organise events which are not only fun but which benefit all our children too.

Parents, in such a time of austerity, your generosity has continued to know no bounds from fundraising for the PTFA as well as those in the wider community. It is greatly appreciated and the school benefits enormously from having such dedicated and involved parents. It was lovely to see so many of you at our Nativity performances.

I'm sure you will all join me in thanking all members of the staff-team – Mrs Baldwin, Mrs Bealing, Mrs Beaumont, Mr Cato, Mrs Chapman, Mrs Finch, Miss Gould, Ms Hunter, Mrs Myatt, Mrs Sanda, Miss Smith and Mr Young for all their hard work this term.

Our fabulous children have worked so hard this term, always trying their best, and looking out for everyone on the playground. I love welcoming them into school each day and their eagerness to show me the learning they are proud of makes my heart sing. I want to thank the children for being so amazing!



Reflection

Joy is the true gift of Christmas, not expensive presents that demand time and money. We can transmit this joy simply: with a smile, with a kind gesture, with some small help, with forgiveness. Let us give this joy and the joy given will be returned to us. Let us seek in particular to communicate the deepest joy, that of knowing God in Christ. Let us pray that this presence of God's liberating joy will shine out in our lives.

— Homily of His Holiness Benedict XVI, Fourth Sunday of Advent, Dec. 18, 200

Homework

The children have all worked so hard this term therefore, I would ask that for the Christmas Holiday homework your child has a rest and perhaps manages to tick off a few of the following:

- Watch a Christmas film with your family
- Make snowflakes out of paper and put them up in your window
- Sing your favourite Christmas song really loudly
- Feed the birds in your garden or local park (they can't find much food this time of year)
- Wear your pyjamas all day!
- Make something (like a monster or an ocean) out of discarded wrapping paper
- Help your family to cook a delicious meal
- Go to a Christmas service at your local church
- Make a den out of duvets and blankets
- Read as many minutes as you can each day and record on your reading log
- Stay up late telling spooky stories or silly jokes
- Make a paper chain with a friend or your family
- Go on a hunt around your local area to find the best Christmas lights or decorations
- Have a warming hot chocolate or put on cosy socks when you come in from the cold
- Snuggle up with a good book
- Write a prayer thanking God for the blessings of this year and ask for one thing in the New Year
- Make a New Year's resolution on New Year's Eve

Reception places

Do you have a child due to start school in September 2023? The closing date for applications on 15th January 2023 so please remember to apply!

Dorset School Admissions Contact:

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/education-and-training/schools-and-learning/apply-for-a-school-place/apply-for-a-school-place>

If you know of any families who are looking for school places, please encourage them to come and visit!



Keeping Safe online

As many children may be receiving new electronic gear for Christmas, please be aware of keeping them safe online – check your parental settings etc.

At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one issue of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

"Inappropriate" means different things to different people. What's acceptable for one age group, for example, may be unsuitable for a slightly younger audience. Online, young people can chance upon inappropriate content in various ways – from pop-up ads to TikTok videos. The increasingly young age at which children become active in the digital world heightens the risk of them innocently running into something that they find upsetting or frightening. Trusted adults need to be able to help children be aware of what to do if they're exposed to age-inappropriate content.

WHERE IS IT FOUND?

SOCIAL MEDIA

Age-inappropriate content is easily accessible through many social media platforms. TikTok, for instance, is hugely popular with young people but is arguably best known for clips featuring sexualised dancing or profanity. Some social media users also express hate speech or promote eating disorders and self-harm, which could cause lasting damage to a child's emotional and mental health.

GAMING

Gaming is an enjoyable source of entertainment, but many popular titles can expose children to inappropriate material such as violence, horror, gambling or sexually explicit content. Playing games unsuitable for their age risks normalising to children what they are seeing. Some games also include in-game chat, where other (usually older) online players often use language that you probably wouldn't want your child to hear or repeat.

STREAMING

The range of video streaming services available online means that users can find almost anything they want to watch on demand. Children are therefore at risk of viewing TV shows and movies which contain nudity, drug and alcohol abuse, explicit language and extreme violence. Unfortunately, these streaming platforms can't always determine that it's not an adult who's watching.

ADVERTS

Online adverts frequently include age-inappropriate content: usually gambling and nudity or partial nudity, although adverts for alcohol or e-cigarettes are also common. Some search engines also feature adverts that are responsive to your search history: so if you've recently looked up a new horror movie, shopped for lingerie or ordered alcohol online, then the ads appearing on screen could reflect this the next time your child borrows your device.

18

Advice for Parents & Carers

TALK IT THROUGH

Embarrassment or fear of getting into trouble can make it difficult for children to talk openly about age-inappropriate content they've watched. Remind your child they can always come to you if they're troubled by something they've seen online, without worrying about consequences. Before offering advice, discuss what they saw, how they felt and how they came to find the content in question.

CONNECT, DON'T CORRECT

If your child's been particularly distressed by exposure to content that wasn't suitable for their age, it's important to offer guidance to prevent them from repeating the same mistake – but it's equally vital to help them deal with the emotions that the situation has raised. You could tell them about any similar experiences you might have had at their age, and how you dealt with it.

BLOCK, REPORT, CONTROL

After discussing the problem, you and your child can take action together. This could include blocking any inappropriate sites and reporting any content which violates a platform's rules. To further safeguard your child online, set up parental controls on internet-enabled devices that they use. This will significantly reduce the chances of your child being exposed to age-inappropriate content in future.

GET SPECIALIST HELP

Age-inappropriate content can potentially have a negative impact on a child's mental health, which is sometimes displayed through changes in their behaviour. If the problem becomes more severe, you might consider reaching out to a mental health professional or an expert in this field who can provide you and your child with the proper support.

STAY CALM

Even though it is obviously difficult to stay rational in a situation where your child has been put at risk, it's essential to think before you react. Your child may well have hesitated to open up to you about watching inappropriate content for fear of the consequences, so being calm and supportive will reinforce the notion that it would be easy to talk to you about similar issues in the future.

Meet Our Expert

Cayley Jorgensen is a Registered Counsellor with The Health Professions Council of South Africa, and she runs a private practice offering counselling to children, teenagers and families. Her main focus is creating awareness and educating the community on the mental health pressures of today's world, as well as resources and techniques to understand and cope better.



Sources: <https://www.education.gov.uk/documents/about/programmes/bullying/online-inappropriate-content> | <https://www.nationalonlinesafety.com/parents-and-carers/age-inappropriate-content> | <https://www.nationalonlinesafety.com/parents-and-carers/age-inappropriate-content>



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#WakeUpWednesday

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 01.12.2021

Winter Water and Ice Safety

Following the tragic events at a lake in Solihull this week, Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service would encourage you to talk to your children about their safety around ice and water during this cold weather.

Please use this link [Winter Water Safety \(office.com\)](https://www.dorsetfireandrescue.com/your-safety/winter-water-safety/) to look at the advice and discuss their safety with them, according to their age and independence.

Stay off the ice and if someone is in trouble call 999 and ask for the fire and rescue service.



School Uniform

Please can you ensure your child returns to school with appropriate school uniform – there has been an increase in trainers and boots being worn. We have lots of pre-loved uniform – please ask one of the PTFA members.

Winter Wear

Boys	Girls
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medium grey long trousers or shorts• Red school sweatshirt with school logo• White button through shirt• Tie – red with blue stripes• Grey socks• Sensible black or dark brown shoes. No trainers or boots	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medium grey skirt, pinafore dress or trousers• Red school sweatshirt or cardigan with school logo• White button through shirt• Tie – red with blue stripes• Sensible black or dark brown shoes. No trainers or boots

Busy Bees After School Club has 3 sessions:

3:15 - 4:15pm - £3.50

3:15 – 5:00pm - £7.50

3:15 – 6:00pm - £10.00



Please note that from January 2023, we cannot accept pre-school children on a Wednesday in After School Club. Please use School Money to book your child in for any sessions, but note that you can't book through School Money on the day. Children being picked up after 5pm, will be charged until 6pm. Thank you.

Please remember that we have Breakfast Club which starts at 8am every day and costs £2.50 per session.

After school clubs

Teacher clubs will restart on Monday 9th January 2023.

Day	Clubs
Monday	Art & Craft Club – Miss Smith
Wednesday	Book Club – Mrs Betts
Thursday	Eco Club – Mrs Myatt Football KS2 – Mr Young

Attendance and punctuality

I am again asking for your support in improving whole school attendance and punctuality. Children are arriving at school later and later. The bell rings at 8:45 and that is when I am supposed to close the gates, but there are too many families arriving after this time, some as late as 9:00.

Attendance Matters



Whilst I understand that there have been several bugs doing the rounds, it is important that we work together to ensure that attendance improves next term. Government departments track school attendance figures. We have a whole school attendance target which is 96.5%. Currently, our attendance is well below that figure.

In the new year, I will be sending out a letter to parents of children with attendance lower than 95% in order to keep you up to date with what percentage your child has, and alerting you if they are at risk of persistent absence. This is so that we can work together in ensuring your child does not miss out on valuable education. Thank you for your support in this matter.

Change in timetable

Please check Class Dojo for updated timetables as PE days may have changed due to unavoidable amendments to timetables.

Hot school meals

Please remember that from 1st January 2023, the price of a hot school meal will now be £2.60.

School Dinners

Is your child entitled to free milk? www.coolmilk.com/register



FREE and subsidised school milk

Register your child today!

Is your child entitled to FREE milk?

Child under 5?

Every child under the age of five is entitled to FREE school milk.

Register your child online for FREE school milk today.

Child over 5?

Every child over the age of five is entitled to milk at a subsidised price of around £18 per term.

Register online now and you can pay straight away!



Register your child for school milk today.

Sign them up in a few clicks...

Go online and quickly register your child for school milk at www.coolmilk.com

Need help? Contact our Customer Service team on 0800 321 3248 or via email at registrations@coolmilk.com

Cool Milk
www.coolmilk.com

The UK government continues to support school milk. Milk for under-5s is fully funded by DEFRA via the Nursery Milk Scheme. Milk for over-5s is subsidised by DEFRA via the School Milk Scheme.
Company registration no. 1603430 England

Cool Milk
www.coolmilk.com

Register your child for school milk. Simply visit the website above - it's very easy and your child can benefit from a nutritious drink of milk to keep them hydrated until lunch.

Celebration Assembly

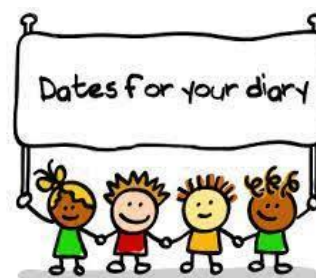
We are continuing to invite the parents of one class at a time to attend our Celebration Assembly. Please arrive at 2:50pm and park on the playground, so we can start at 2:55pm. Thank you.



Celebration Assembly - 2:55pm	Class
Friday 13 th January	Explorers and St Anthony's
Friday 20 th January	St Mark's
Friday 27 th January	St Francis
Friday 3 rd February	St Alban's
Friday 10 th February	Explorers and St Anthony's
Half term	
Friday 24 th February	St Mark's
Friday 3 rd March	St Francis
Friday 10 th March	St Alban's
Friday 17 th March	Explorers and St Anthony's
Friday 24 th March	St Mark's
Friday 31 st March	St Francis

Dates for your diary:

- **Friday 16th December** – last day of the Autumn Term
Christmas Holidays
- **Tuesday 3rd January 2023** – children return to school
- **Friday 10th February** – break up for Half Term
- **Monday 20th February** – INSET Day
- **Tuesday 21st February** - children return to school
- **Wednesday 22nd February** – Ash Wednesday – Lent begins
- **Friday 31st March** – last day of Spring Term
Easter Holidays
- **Monday 17th April** - children return to school



On behalf of the staff-team and the Governors, I would like to wish you all a very happy, holy and peaceful Christmas and look forward to seeing and working with you all in the New Year.

God Bless

Sharon Betts
Headteacher



Please follow us on Twitter @stmarysmarnhull