

Newsletter

Friday 3rd December 2021



St. Mary's Catholic
Primary School

Dear Parents and Friends

December days...

It seems to me that this term is flying by, and we still have so much happening between now and the end of term! Whilst the children have been excited about opening their Advent calendars, we have still been reflecting on the true meaning of Advent. I read this from our Diocesan Schools Service, and found that it struck a chord:



'Over the years we've all heard myriad reflections on Advent and I was wondering what I might say that was vaguely fresh or new, so I used a thesaurus to

find synonyms for the word 'Advent' – There are a plethora! So, maybe that's the really special nature of Advent; that it has so many meanings and nuances under

the umbrella of the understanding of His 'coming'.

Everyone is at different stages on their own spiritual road, whether they be adults or children and the wonderful thing about Advent is it can reach out to all of us – a bit like Our Lord does himself.

Advent can mean 'emergence' as our faith is developing, it can mean 'materialisation' as we come to know the real meaning of Christmas, it can mean 'looming' if our own preparedness is not sufficiently developed to ready us for the

celebration of the incarnation. But whatever it does say to us in any given year, it says it because that is what God wants it to say to us, and we rest easy knowing that as we travel this path of preparation, He holds our hand, guides us along and

whispers, 'You are loved'.

As we race towards the end of this long term, I hope that you hear Our Lord reminding you that 'you are loved'.'



Congratulations!

As you will probably already know, Mr Young welcomed his baby girl Orla Mary Young into the world on 23rd November and we were blessed with a short visit this week! She is beautiful! Her parents both send their thanks for all the well wishes.

Mr Young will be back on Tuesday which I'm sure will be a great relief for his class as they have really missed him – as have we all!

PTFA

Our fabulous PTFA have been working hard behind the scenes and have agreed the details for their events running up to Christmas. I can't thank them enough for everything this small team have already done! It certainly bodes well for the future of our PTFA but of course these events can only be successful with your support too, so thank you for your donations.



Reading – the gateway to learning! As you will know from our last newsletter, we are keen to ensure our children develop a love of reading and what better way to encourage this than by attending our book fair! Members of the PTFA will be supported by staff to run the book fair after school every day from Tuesday 7th December.

Due to COVID restrictions, we will have to limit numbers – the PTFA will be arranging a signing up sheet for you to attend on a specific afternoon. You can also buy books online. The children will also be given opportunities to visit with their class.

Thank you to Mr Phelps for donating the Christmas tree this year. It's a stunner!

Thank you for your donations for the Christmas Hampers – these will be made up by the PTFA very soon and more details about the different hampers will be shared – look out for details on their Facebook page! Tickets for both raffles are on sale from 1st December, make sure you get yours!

On Monday 13th December, there will be a mini competition for the children in each class to guess the amount of sweets/chocolate in the jars – 20p a guess.



Children in Need

Thank you for your support for raising money for Children in Need, on Friday 19th November, we raised £110.07!



Reception places

Do you have a child due to start school in September 2022? The closing date for applications on 15th January 2022 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!



Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Please remember, that as we come into the season of coughs and colds, it is still imperative to get your child a **PCR** test if they have developed a **new** cough.

Government guidance:

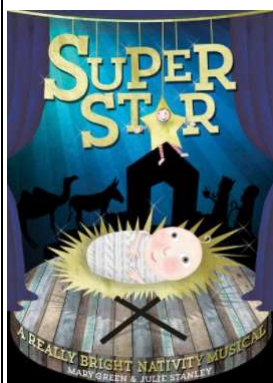
The main symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are:

- **a high temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- **a new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- **a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

What to do if you have symptoms

If you or your child has any of the main symptoms of COVID-19, **even if they're mild:**

1. Get a **PCR test (test that is sent to a lab)** to check if you have COVID-19 as soon as possible.
2. Stay at home and do not have visitors (self-isolate) until you get your test result – only leave your home to have a test. [Check if people you live with need to self-isolate](#). **Get a PCR test to check if you have COVID-19 on <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>**



Christmas Nativity

On Saturday 27 November 2021, the Prime Minister announced that due to the new variant, Omicron, we need to tighten up our restrictions with re-introducing face coverings in shops and public transport. On the same day the DfE announced that 'Nativities, plays, concerts and other festive events can go ahead but it is a matter for schools and early years to decide if they want to host them.' This of course leaves schools in an unenviable situation where regardless of the final decision, not every parent will be happy. That being said, and I have also spoken to the children about this, we are **planning** to still go ahead with two live

performances to parents – one in the afternoon 2pm and one in the early evening 6pm - but there will be stipulations in place.

We will ensure that there is good ventilation, although there will be draughts if you are sitting next to an open door or window. Audience members will have to wear face coverings and will be required to take a rapid lateral flow test (as they will be coming into contact with people they don't normally meet). You can order tests online or visit a pharmacy. If your test is positive you should isolate immediately and get a PCR test.

If we find that we are getting increased numbers of positive cases in the school community, or we are advised to by the local authority or Trust, we will resort to recording the performance and you will be able to see it virtually.

Thank you for your understanding and co-operation in this matter.

Help with costumes...

Pre-school would really appreciate any STAR costumes – if you have any we could borrow, please let Miss Gould know.



GIFT Team update

Our Pupil Chaplains are planning an Advent Day of Faith on the 9th December. The day will be based upon the virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity. It would be wonderful if the parishioners could play some part in the day however, we wouldn't want to put anyone

at risk even though we would have visitors wearing masks, increased ventilation and maintaining social distancing.

Donations for Gillingham Foodbank

As part of our effort to carry out charitable works, the GIFT team have decided they would like us to collect gain for the local foodbank in Gillingham.

The following items have been requested:

- tinned ham, tinned salmon, Christmas puddings and cakes for standard food parcels

but they are really short at the moment of cartons of:

- UHT milk and fruit juice; sponge puddings; instant packet mash; tinned meat and small jars of coffee.

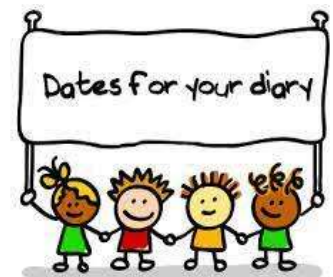
The Foodbank currently has plenty (more than enough!) of dried pasta, tinned veg, tinned soup and baked beans.

Please bring items to school from Monday 6th until Friday 10th – thank you in advance.



Dates for your diary:

- **Monday 6th December 9:30 - Open day for Reception September 2022**
- **Tuesday 7th - Monday 13th December -Book Fair**
- **Wednesday 8th December 9:30 - Whole School Mass in church**
- **Friday 10th December – Christmas Jumper Day**
- **Wednesday 15th December 2pm - Christmas Nativity performance**
- **Wednesday 15th December 6pm - Christmas Nativity performance**
- **Thursday 16th December – Raffle Draw**
- **Thursday 16th December – School Christmas Lunch**
- **Thursday 16th December 2pm – Blessing of the Crib and carols in church**
- **Friday 17th December – last day of the Autumn term**
- **Tuesday 4th January 2022 – children return to school**
- **Thursday 6th January 9:30 - Whole School Mass in church**
- **Monday 10th January 9:30 - Open day for Reception September 2022**



Thank you for your continued support,

Sharon Betts
Headteacher



Please follow us on Twitter @stmarysmarnhull