

Newsletter



St. Mary's Catholic
Primary School

Friday 9th December 2022

Dear Families and Friends

We are nearly coming to the end of the Autumn term, and what a busy time we have had since I last wrote to you ...

Advent Day of Faith

Last week, Mrs Myatt and our GIFT team organised a wonderful day for us to reflect on the importance of Advent, a time of waiting for Christmas. Fr Francis joined us for our Liturgy in the hall. During the day, the children had the opportunity to reflect on the Christmas story in our prayer space. They all made their own baby Jesus and took home a good deeds manger. They also made cards for people in our local community who may not get Christmas cards.



As part of this day, the GIFT team had arranged for donations of boxes of biscuits for Gillingham Foodbank and for The Vale Pantry to be placed in Christmas hampers and given to families in need.

On Wednesday, Mrs Myatt delivered the biscuits and this is what Gillingham Foodbank said: "Please give our thanks to the children for the magnificent donation this morning. The total weight of the goodies was 22.2 K and attached are a couple of photos to share with them. The large amount of bags is all 60 hampers waiting to go out later next week."



Thank you so much for your generous donations.

Colder weather

As the weather is getting even colder and is forecast to remain so, please ensure your children bring their coats, hats and gloves etc. into school – we are **still** having children coming to school without coats. This is especially key when there are so many coughs and colds around.



Scarlet Fever

You may have seen reports in the national media about a rise in cases of scarlet fever and Strep A. Though national figures are higher than expected, there are processes in place in Dorset to help reduce the spread should cases appear in our school.

Scarlet fever is caused by a bacteria called group A streptococci, or “group A strep”. It is very contagious for people who are in close contact with one another through infected droplets in coughs, sneezes, mucus and saliva. Typically, it causes a mild illness for most people however treatment with antibiotics is important to avoid complications.

Some symptoms of scarlet fever include:

- sore throat
- headache
- fever
- a fine, pinkish or red body rash that feels like sandpaper

You can read more about the symptoms of scarlet fever on the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website & see clinical photographs on the [NHS website](https://www.nhs.uk).

Winter is a time where several viruses, coughs and colds spread easily and most people will recover with self-care at home. We continue to encourage good infection prevention control measures such as regular hand washing, covering your mouth when you cough and sneeze and to throw tissues in the bin when used.

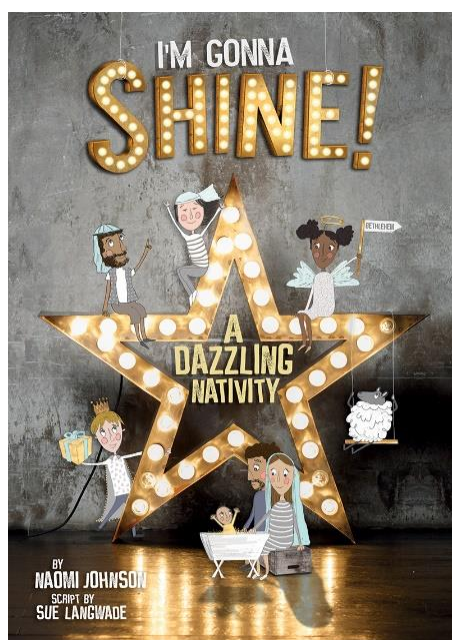
Advice for parents

We would encourage parents to keep their children off school and nursery if they are feeling unwell, and to contact their GP practice or NHS 111 if they have concerns that their condition is worsening. Children who have been prescribed antibiotics should stay home for 24 hours after starting the antibiotics to avoid spreading infection to others.

You may find it helpful to refer parents to this advice for the public from Public Health Dorset and NHS Dorset: [Advice on Scarlet Fever and Group A Strep - Public Health Dorset - Dorset Council](#).

Staffing update

Mr Cato will be leaving St Mary's at the end of the Autumn term. To ensure continuity for the class, I will be the class teacher for St Mark's from January, which I am very much looking forward to! In order for me to have time out of class to carry out my leadership role, I am in the process of recruiting a teacher to join our team. I'm sure you will join me in thanking Mr Cato and wishing him every success in his future ventures.



Nativity

We will be performing our school Nativity, "I'm Gonna Shine!" at 2pm on **Wednesday 14th** and 6pm on **Thursday 15th December**.

Please be aware that tickets will be limited to two tickets per performance, meaning each family will get four tickets. Two for the afternoon performance and two for the evening performance.

Tickets can be collected from the office and these will be handed in on entry to the performance.

To ensure all people have an opportunity to see their children, please only attend the one performance.

Thank you for supplying costumes and supporting your child in learning their lines.

Hot school meals

Unfortunately, Chartwells, our food provider, have had to increase their prices. As has been widely reported, the UK is facing inflation levels not seen for over 40 years, with the cost of food rising significantly.

These figures are reflected in our own purchasing. In addition to this food price inflation, they are also experiencing significant increases to labour. **Therefore, from 1st January 2023, the price of a hot school meal will now be £2.60.**

Please make sure that if you want to order hot school meals for the first week back in January, you need to do so by Monday 12th December. Thank you.

School Dinners



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. 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

There will be no Teacher clubs now until the week of 9th January 2023.

They 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

Christmas Party

We will be having our Christmas parties on the afternoon of Friday 16th December. On that day, the children can come to school in their party clothes, but please ensure there are no open-toed sandals and that the children are dressed appropriately for playing outside in this cold weather.



Christmas Jumper Day

It was great to see the children and staff looking festive as they wore their Christmas jumpers in support of Save the Children. At the time of writing this, we have collected £54.35, which will equate to £108 with the Government's promise to match fund. Thank you for your generosity.

Attendance

I am again asking for your support in improving whole school attendance and punctuality. Children are arriving at school later and later.

Whilst I understand that there have been several bugs doing the rounds, it is important that 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.

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.

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



www.coolmilk.com

The UK government continues to support school milk. Milk for under-5s is fully funded by DHSC via the Nursery Milk Scheme. Milk for over-5s is subsidised by Defra via the School Milk Scheme. Company registration no. 380430 England



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.

PTFA

What an amazing couple of weeks we've had!



Our Christmas wreath making workshops were a huge success and so much fun. Everyone created their own beautiful wreath to take home.

This was followed by our first Christmas gift fair in the village. It was so lovely to see so many of you there and we hope you enjoyed browsing through the different range of stalls we had as well as sampling the hot chocolate and cakes.

We have also had our Christmas disco this week, which was a huge success. We really hope the children enjoyed it as much as we did. Just the pantomime, Dick Whittington left for this term!

We'd like to thank everyone who has donated raffle prizes, resources for the wreath making, volunteered their time to help us plan, set up and run events and to everyone who has come along and supported our events. As soon as we know our total raised we will let you know.

If you have any suggestions or ideas for future events, please drop them into our suggestions box in the school foyer or bring them along to our next meeting on Thursday 5th January at 6.30pm

Merry Christmas from the PTFA



ParentLine 5-19

The School Nursing team have a service which is currently running term time only and they are unable to respond to messages during school holidays.



ParentLine 5-19

A confidential text messaging service for parents and carers of children aged 5-19.

Available
during
school term
time only.

Message a member of the School Nursing team
for confidential advice on: 07312 263131

We can help with:

- healthy eating
- toileting
- development
- behaviour and more.
- weight management
- Sleep
- hearing

We might inform someone if we were concerned about your safety but we would usually speak to you first. Your messages are stored and can be seen by other health care staff who follow the same confidentiality rules. We aim to reply to you within one working day and you should get an immediate message back to confirm we have received your text. Text will only be seen between (9am and 4pm). If you need help before you hear back from us contact your GP, nearest walk in centre or dial 111. Our text number does not receive voice calls or MMS picture messages. We support messaging from UK mobile numbers only (which does not include messages sent from landlines, international mobile numbers and some 'number masking' mobile apps). To prevent the health professional from sending messages to you, text STOP to our number. Messages are charged at your usual rates.



Celebration Assembly

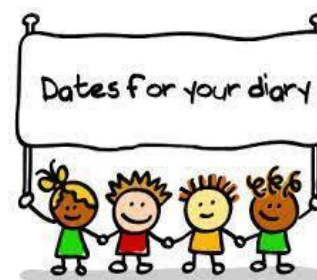
We are continuing to invite the parents of one class at a time to attend our Celebration Assembly. Please arrive at 2:50pm and park on the playground, so we can start at 2:55pm. Thank you.



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:

- **Monday 12th December – Panto for children**
- **Wednesday 14th December – Nativity afternoon performance 2pm**
- **Thursday 15th December – Nativity evening performance 6pm**
- **Friday 16th December – Christmas Party**
- **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**



Thank you for your continued support,

Sharon Betts
Headteacher