



SCHOOL UPDATES

CURRICULUM EVENING:

I'd like to extend an invitation to all parents/carers to attend our annual curriculum evening, taking place at 5pm on Monday 18th September. At this session, you will have the opportunity to meet your child's class teacher, to have a look around your child's new class, and to receive important curriculum information regarding the year ahead. I will be giving a short presentation to share some of the special things we've got in store this year, and teachers will be on hand to have a chat about anything important you need to share at the outset of the term.

Look forward to seeing you there!

Mr J Wheatley
Headteacher

PINOCCHIO:

Our pupils from Years 1 to 6 enjoyed a fantastic theatrical performance of Pinocchio on Wednesday morning, as a bit of a treat at the start of the new school year. As well as a lot of cheesy gags, the pupils were treated to a particularly interesting 'dance-off', starring two all-too-keen members of staff! Following the performance, Year 6 took part in a workshop session, seeing behind-the-scenes how a theatrical performance is put together: from the set, to the audio and lights, to some of the 'tricks of the trade.' I'm sure the experience will stand the pupils in good stead when preparing future performances.

GREAT NORTH RUN:

Well done to all our pupils who took part in the Mini and Junior Great North Run. It was fantastic to see so many medals being worn in school demonstrating the achievements of our aspiring athletes, who could well be giving Mo a run for his money some day!

REMINDERS

SECONDARY ADMISSIONS:

Please be reminded that the deadline for the online application is 31st October 2017. Feel free to get in contact with the Gateshead School Admissions team, or indeed the school office, if there is anything you would like to discuss about the process.

UNIFORM:

Thank you for your ongoing support in maintaining the high standards we have for dress and appearance at St Mary's.

Please be reminded that, for health and safety reasons, all earrings (including studs) must be taken out before the start of the school day. This includes recently pierced earrings, and it is not sufficient for ears to be taped.

Our full school uniform requirements are available to view on the 'Parents - School Documents' area of the school website (www.whickhamstmarys.org.uk).

SCHOOL COATS:

Especially in light of the particularly inclement weather we've been facing this week, it is important that all pupils have a waterproof coat in school each day. Hoodies do not suffice as a school coat.

MEDICAL FORMS:

Please ensure school has been made aware of any changes/updates regarding your child's medical needs; this can be done by completing a medical form (available from the school office). Please also ensure that all medication in school is up to date for the new school year.

REQUESTING A LEAVE OF ABSENCE:

A polite reminder about requesting leave of absence for your child; any parent wishing to remove their child from school (for whatever reason) is asked to complete a request for absence form explaining the reasons for the leave of absence, and to return it to school in good time. School will respond with a set letter explaining whether the leave has been authorised or not. Please remember, Governmental guidelines (amended in 2013) are very clear that leave of absence may only be granted in very exceptional circumstances, and it is at the discretion of the Headteacher to consider each case on an individual basis. Request forms will be available from Mrs Noble in the School Office or from the 'School Documents' page of the school website.

MOBILE PHONES:

If any pupils in Years 5 or 6 are required to bring a mobile phone with them to school for safety purposes (ie. they arrive/leave school by themselves), please could parents/carers complete a mobile phone consent form (available from the school office or school website); all mobile phones must remain switched off during the school day, and be handed in to the school office first thing in the morning.

LINING UP IN THE YARD:

Thank you for continuing to ensure pupils make a safe and orderly entrance in to/exit from school by allowing your child to line up independently in their class line and for keeping walkways to KS1 and 2 clear at the start and end of the day.

MUSIC TUITION:

If there are any pupils in KS2 who are keen to receive small group tuition in Violin, Viola, Cello or Guitar, please get in contact with school to register your interest (if you don't already receive tuition in school); Mrs Cuggy and Mrs Watson are particularly interested in pupils in Y5 who were part of the string orchestra project last year who would like to continue with their chosen instrument. Information regarding payment etc from the music service will go out in the coming weeks.

AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS:

At present, these are the clubs on offer to pupils at St Mary's (please contact school for more details):

- Monday – Tennis (KS1 and 2)
Spaces available for the upcoming Term; sessions will run from 18th September to the 4th December (excluding Film Night).
- Tuesday – Happy Feet dance (KS1 and 2)
Already started.
- Wednesday – Choir (Y2-6)
Already started.
- Thursday – Irish Dancing (KS1 and 2)
Already started.
- Friday – Gymnastics (KS1 and 2)
Starting Friday 15th September; there is currently a waiting list for Gymnastics.

PARKING:

A polite reminder at the start of the year for all users of the church car park that parking spaces are incredibly limited, and that parents/carers are encouraged to walk – where possible – or indeed to park well away from school in order to ease congestion at the start and end of the day. I would like to make a particular plea that parents/carers make a big effort this year to:

- Avoid double parking and 'blocking-in' other users of the parish car park (there really is only space for parking in two parallel rows) – so that we don't end up with the 'sardine' scenario at the end of the day.
- Refrain from parking on the pavement outside church (an obvious health and safety risk to pedestrians – many of whom are children).
- Avoid arriving after 3:10pm and trying to get a parking space in the parish car park (as traffic flowing in opposite directions on Dockendale Lane poses real difficulties and risks to pedestrians and other road users).
- Refrain from attempting to park in the staff car park (unless attending an arranged appointment taking place within the school day).
- Refrain from parking on Duckpool Lane.
- Refrain from 'double-parking' on streets opposite and adjacent to school (which can cause obvious difficulties for residents).

These requests should ensure, first and foremost, that children and other pedestrians are safe, that the parish car park continues to be a viable option for some of our parents and carers who may have more significant reasons for needing to park closer to school (limited mobility etc), and that we continue to maintain a positive relationship with our neighbours.

If there is anything you'd like to discuss regarding parking arrangements at school, please feel free to give Mr Wheatley a call at the school office.

UPCOMING EVENTS

RECEPTION CLASS OPEN MORNING:

For anyone who has a child who will start school in September 2018, there is an open day on Wednesday 4th October. There will be two sessions, one starting at 9:30am, and one at 1:30pm; each session will consist of a tour of the school, to see the school in full swing, and an opportunity then to have a chat with Mr Wheatley and ask questions you may have about the school or the admissions process. Please spread the word to other interested parties, and if you are unable to attend on this day, please just get in contact with school to arrange a mutually convenient alternative. Applications for children who attend Duckpool Pre-school, or whose parents/carers have already expressed interest in applying for a place at St Mary's, will receive a pack outlining the admissions process, and copies will be available at our open day. The deadline for Admissions to Reception 2018-19 is 15th January 2018.

MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING:

On Friday 29th September, The Friends of St Mary's will be hosting and taking part in the World's Biggest Coffee Morning with all donations going to Macmillan Cancer Support. Invitation is open to everyone, so please bring as many friends and family along and join us in the school hall from 9-10.30 for a cuppa and slice of cake. We are asking you to lend your support by baking or buying a cake to sell on the day; you can find plenty of ideas and inspiration at www.coffee.macmillan.org.uk. We look forward to seeing as many people as possible on the day.

THE WEEK AHEAD:

MONDAY – Curriculum Evening for Parents/Carers (all classes); 5pm start.

WEDNESDAY – Cross-country event at Watergate Park (pupils involved will receive an individual letter with details of the event).

THURSDAY – Blaydon and District League football (pupils involved will receive an individual letter with details of the event).

FRIDAY – Re-arranged whole school Mass (9:30am, St Mary's RC Church; all welcome).

