



SCHOOL UPDATES

THE END OF A BUSY HALF-TERM:

Well where did the last seven weeks go!?! That's life at St Mary's for you, and how lucky we are to be part of it! We've had a hugely successful, and I have to say *relatively* calm start to the school year, and it has been a joy to see how well all our pupils have settled back in to their learning (and play!) in their new classes. We have lots to look forward to in the coming 8 weeks of Autumn 2, and I look forward to sharing some very memorable occasions with you and your family; whether they be, interesting learning opportunities, prayerful faith experiences, positive progress meetings or nostalgic class performances in the lead up to (*whisper it quietly*) Christmas. Have a restful, safe half-term break, and I look forward to seeing all pupils back at school on Monday 30th October.

NORTHERN CHILDREN'S BOOK FESTIVAL:

The Northern Children's Book Festival will be celebrated from 6-18th November. To mark the event, we have been fortunate enough to secure a visit from celebrated author Guy Bass (*Stitch Head, Atomic, Dinkin Dings*) who will be coming to school on Wednesday 8th November to talk to KS2 about his new book *Spynosaur*. We will write to you after half term to let you know what the children can look forward to on the day, and of course report back after the event to let you know how Guy gets on at St Mary's.

You can also be part of the Gala Day of this year's festival at *The Word, National Centre for the Written Word* (South Shields) on Saturday 18 November for a fantastic free day of inspiration, challenges, fun, and wonder. More information can be found here: <http://www.northernchildrensbookfestival.org.uk/>.

SPORTS UPDATE:

Well done to the pupils in Years 3 and 4 who participated in the tag rugby event at Ryton Rugby Club this week. The pupils, who have demonstrated wonderful commitment in preparation for the event, represented the school amazingly well displaying the sporting values of fair play, respect and enthusiasm which are so important to us at St Mary's.

MINI-FENCING FOR Y3:

Year 3 pupils will be receiving a six-week block of 'Mini Fencing' starting on Tuesday 31st October. Pupils will need their PE kit and trainers each Tuesday (and Thursday) next half term.

PARENTS' EVENINGS:

You will receive a slip in your child's blue bag with information of your assigned Parents' Evening appointment. If you are unable to make this appointment, or indeed require more than one slot, please get in contact with the school office.

RE-START HEART DAY:

Unfortunately, our Re-Start Heart session was postponed at the last minute, and will now be held on 15th November.

WISH TOKENS:

It's that time again: *The Chronicle* will be starting to print their wish token each day from 11th October through to January 2018, so could we ask you to support **HCPT Group 41** (which provides opportunities for vulnerable, disadvantaged and disabled youngsters to go on pilgrimage to Lourdes, France) again this year; there is a collection box in school, and we would love to better our incredibly successful 2017 campaign this year! Thank you!

FRIENDS' SCHOOL CALENDAR:

In order to raise funds for school, the Friends of St Mary's will be selling calendars this Christmas with photos including all pupils (and staff) on the month of their birthday. The group photos will be taken on Monday 30th October.

Mrs Noble will be in contact with parents who have previously asked us not to use their child's image in school publications to see whether or not they would like their child to be included; however, if you have any objections to your child's inclusion in the calendar (and haven't already expressed this in writing to the school) please get in contact either by phone (0191 4205828) or email (stmarysrcprimaryschool@gateshead.gov.uk) before 30/10/17.

REMINDERS

ESCHOOLS:

As you will be aware, St Mary's News Bulletins are now sent out via our new eschools system. If you fail to receive our bulletins via email, please get in contact with the school office with up-to-date email details. All emails, messages and the shared calendar are available at <https://stmarys-whickham.eschools.co.uk/login>, or the dedicated eschools app to download (available on iOS and Android).

If you have mislaid login details, please get in contact with school, and similarly paper copies of the News Bulletin will be available at the main office each week.

MARVELLOUS ME:

As you will have read already in the weekly News Bulletin, we have signed up to a new service called 'Marvellous Me' which will allow parents to receive news of the child's ongoing success at school. The system allows parents to download an app, with an individual code, and to receive photos, videos and other positive news about your child – including special awards and badges that pupils may receive from teachers and school staff.

We are getting to grips with the system as a staff, so please bear with us if your child either: a) seems to be getting hundreds of badges a week, or b) hasn't received one badge before half term! We do envisage that all pupils will receive badges fairly regularly for a range of different successes once we're totally *au fait* with the app.

Please remember to get the parental consent form back to us if you wish to opt-out of your child's image/video/voice being used with the app.

The system only generates one code per child; this can be set up on multiple devices if necessary. Please get in contact with the school office if you do have not received a code for your child.

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.

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

MUSIC TUITION:

We're still on the look-out for pupils to participate in small group cello tuition. Mrs Watson, our cello teacher, is now looking for pupils from Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 who may be interested in beginning/continuing lessons with her on a Monday afternoon. All pupils will receive an instrument to practice on at home, and the weekly lessons cost £65 per term. Please get in contact with school if you're interested in this opportunity for your child.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION:

A reminder that dates for the upcoming masses during which there will be a special liturgy for pupils preparing to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be as follows:

Sunday 22nd October (changed from the original date of the 15th)

Sunday 5th November

Sunday 19th November

(All during 9:30am Mass at St Mary's RC Church)

The date for Reconciliation service is Tuesday 29th November (6pm start), and the date for the 1st Holy Communion is Saturday 16th June (10am start).

DR BIKE:

Ben Tweedie will be in school on Tuesday 31st October to deliver an assembly about the benefits of travelling actively, followed by a 'Dr Bike' session during which he will cast his eye over any bikes or scooters brought in to school, to ensure that they are road-worthy, performing any simple repairs where necessary. All bikes and scooters to be left in the bike racks/sheds in the school playground.

REMEMBRANCE DAY:

We have been invited, as with previous years, to be part of this year's Remembrance Day parade through Whickham on Sunday 12th November. If there are any pupils/families who would like to represent St Mary's at the parade, please get in contact with school; a letter will be sent out after half term with more details for those representing the school at this important event.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD SHOEBOXES:

A reminder that all filled shoeboxes must be returned to school by **Tuesday 14th November**. Please ensure that the boxes are wrapped, secured with a rubber band and labelled to show the intended recipient of the box.

ADULT'S CHOIR:

Mrs Sanderson will again be running a community choir for parents, grandparents, family and friends of the school. The choir meet on regular Wednesday evenings from 6-7pm in the school hall. All are welcome: young and 'experienced', men and women, talented and 'enthusiastic' alike – so please come along and give it a go!

The dates for the upcoming Term are as follows:

1/11/17
15/11/17
22/11/17
6/12/17
13/12/17

THE WEEK AHEAD (30.10.17 – 3.11.17):

- MONDAY –** Photos for Friends' calendar
- TUESDAY –** Dr Bike session
- Y3 Mini-Fencing (whole class, 1 of 6)
- WEDNESDAY –** All Saints' Day (whole school Mass)
- Y1 Trip to the Hancock Museum
- KS1 Indoor Athletics, 10am – 2pm (pupils involved will receive further information by letter)
- Y2 Great Fire of London Workshop
- Northern Cross girls' football 4pm at Ryton and Crawcrook Albion FC (pupils involved will receive further information by letter)
- Adult choir 6-7pm
- THURSDAY –** All Souls' Day
- Y1 Forest School (am)
- Y2 Forest School (pm)
- Bishop's Cup 2nd Round 3pm at St Patrick's, Consett (pupils involved will receive further information by letter)