



SCHOOL UPDATES & REMINDERS

IMPORTANT COVID-19 REMINDERS:

- **If a household contact tests positive for Covid-19, your child must access a PCR test immediately.**
- **Your child must not come to school if they have any Covid -19 symptoms.**
- **No adult should drop-off or pick-up from school if they have Covid-19 symptoms or are awaiting outcomes of a PCR test.**
- **Caution is strongly advised with regards pupils, including siblings, coming to school if awaiting the outcome of a PCR test.**

Please ensure that you inform school via the dedicated email inbox wsmcovid@gatedu.org if your child:

- Develops Covid-19 symptoms and is isolating;
 - Is taken for a PCR test.
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IMPORTANT SAFETY NOTICE:

Please be reminded to ensure that children are under close supervision of an adult at the start and end of the school. This week, we have had a number of pupils waiting directly outside the school gates, meaning that staff have had to give direct instruction to prevent a stampede into school! It has also been noted that pupils are running behind the church hall out of sight of their responsible adult and along the cobbled road on Dockendale Lane when dismissed at the end of the day.

We would ask that all responsible adults involved in drop-offs and pick-ups are made aware of these safety issues, and adhere to the following guidance:

- Pupils should remain with their responsible adult, in an orderly, spaced manner, and should only make their way into school when a member of the school staff is at the gate.
- Pupils should walk calmly and sensibly through the gate and along the path showing courtesy and consideration for others as they do so.
- Both before and after school, pupils, or younger siblings, should not be allowed to play freely near the school gates and should not be encouraged to walk away from their parents – either alone or with friends – especially if they are in EYFS/KS1. This is a particular issue near roads on Duckpool Lane and Dockendale Lane.

Thank you.

THE FEAST OF CHRIST THE KING – WORLD YOUTH DAY:

This weekend marks the final Sunday in the Church's calendar, the Feast of Christ the Universal King. On this Feast Day, we celebrate World Youth Day – a day on which we recognise the role that young people play in the life of the Church.

This year's theme, announced by Pope Francis in his address to young people the world over in September, is: "Arise! I make you a witness of what you have seen," inspired by Jesus' words to St Paul recorded in Acts 26:16. We pray for all our young people that they may be great Witnesses to Jesus' love through their lives and that, with the support and guidance of their parents, families, parishes and schools, they go on to strengthen our Church here on earth through their prayer and good works. We thank God, our heavenly Father, for the gift of each of our children here at St Mary's, and look forward in faithful optimism toward a bright future for our Church and its young people.

CHRISTMAS SHOWS – AN UPDATE FROM MR WHEATLEY:

Dear Parents/Carers,

We wanted to give a quick update with regards our planned Christmas shows. You will, over the next week or so, undoubtedly hear about the plans for our upcoming Christmas performances (apologies in advance – you'll all be word perfect in each of the shows' songs by the end of term!).

At present, advice from our Public Health advisors is actually that open performances for parents/visitors should not take place due to the ongoing risk of transmission and spread of Covid-19 within our school communities.

Advice is changing constantly, and we continue to harbour the ambition to go ahead with all our performances which, as previously stated, will adhere to a strict event-specific risk assessment.

Dates were shared with you to give as much notice as possible however it is important to stress that we will continue to review the current situation with regards Covid-19, will take up-to-date advice and guidance from Public Health and Local Authority advisors, and will make an ultimate decision much nearer the time as to whether we are able to welcome parents in to school to share in the performances as planned.

We appreciate that the uncertainty is less than ideal, but we must be realistic and open about the reality of the situation.

We know that you will understand, and certainly hope and pray that we will be welcoming you through our doors in a (much overdue) few weeks' time.

Warm Regards,

J Wheatley
Headteacher

REMINDER – LAST CALL FOR OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD:

Please help us to support this wonderful cause by packing a shoebox of goodies for a child in need this Christmas.

You can find some information about the appeal and how to pack a shoebox here:

<https://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/how-to-pack-a-shoebox/>

Completed shoeboxes for the Operation Christmas Child appeal must be in school by Monday 22nd November. Please don't forget – where possible – to pay for the postage of the shoebox via an online donation (<https://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/follow-your-box-donation/>).

SPORTS UPDATE:

A huge well done to our Y5 and 6 basketball stars who competed this week in a hotly contested competition at St Thomas More. Both teams excelled on the night, and it is testament to the skill and standard of play from St Mary's that the standout game of the night involved both our teams battling it out against one another! We were thrilled to see one team walk away with gold medals, and they will now go on to represent the school at the next stage of the competition, but even more delighted by the attitude and behaviour of all the pupils taking part – each of whom was an absolute credit to the school! We will keep you informed as to how the tournament progresses.

REMINDER - CHILDREN IN NEED:

Thank you for your generous donations for Children in Need day. Donations can still be made via the dedicated Just Giving page at:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/whickhamstmaryschildreninneed2021>.

YEAR 4 SWIMMING:

A note for our Y4 class; pupils swimming the 'big pool' must bring a t-shirt in a separate bag each week for their lessons between now and the end of term.

ADVERSE WEATHER:

We are certainly hopeful that the recently publicised arrival of snow and ice is a little premature however it serves as a good opportunity for us all to remind ourselves of the arrangements for adverse weather.

In the event of adverse weather (such as snow and ice), school will remain open unless you are advised otherwise.

In the very unlikely event of a school closure, a message will be sent out via eschools to all contacts (please ensure school have your contact details and that you access weekly eschools messages effectively), there will be a note on the front page of the school website, we will send a tweet from the school Twitter account and, if appropriate, local radio stations will be informed.

In the more likely event that adverse weather may affect your journey to school, please take sensible precautions: if it is possible to walk, please do so, and set off in plenty of time; keep school informed of your whereabouts - particularly if you are likely to be late; ensure that your child is prepared for the elements, with changes of shoes (and clothes if necessary) brought in to school with them.

This guidance can be found at: <http://www.whickhamstmarys.org.uk/snow.html>.