



SCHOOL UPDATES

SCHOOL FUNDING CRISIS:

As you will already be aware, I wrote to you on Wednesday and shared a letter from the combined Gateshead Headteacher Associations regarding the current funding crisis facing schools – both locally and nationally. As a school, we are standing alongside our fellow learning communities in Gateshead by supporting a petition calling for adequate, sufficient and fair funding for all schools. I would urge you to share the contents of the letter (which can be found on our school website) with as many people as you can, and to encourage others to sign the petition (<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/232220>). I would also encourage you to write to your local MP and our ward councilors to make your feelings known about the state of funding for schools. This is an issue which affects our school directly, so make your voices heard: care for it, sign it, share it!

Thank you.

Mr J Wheatley
Headteacher

1st SUNDAY OF ADVENT:

As we begin the season of Advent, a time of preparation for Christmas, we begin to clear a path in readiness for the glorious arrival of Jesus in to our lives. One way of doing this is to make a renewed commitment to come and help celebrate the Mass each Sunday. Please do think about taking up this open invitation, with your family, to come to Mass each week during the lead up to Christmas (9:30am at St Mary's RC Church), and help us all to prepare ourselves in the right way for the special day.

FIRST RECONCILIATION:

A huge congratulations to all our pupils who received the Sacrament of Reconciliation in a beautiful service this week. The prayerfulness of the pupils was an inspiration to all present, and we continue to keep each of these children – and their families – in our thoughts as they continue on their journey towards Holy Communion.

TRAVELLING CRIBS:

Our Travelling Crib project has already begun, during which every family in school will have the opportunity to bring home a class crib in order to share in the wonder of the Nativity during this season of preparation.

Please remember to return the travelling cribs intact and complete to school the very next school day, to ensure that all families may share in the special journey during the lead-up to Christmas. Please try to take and send photos of your experiences in to class, along with any prayers or responses written by the children on the templates provided, to be compiled within a class portfolio of the project.

Please note, the Travelling Crib will be sent to each family once. The younger sibling will bring home the crib, but we would still encourage older siblings to engage in the sharing of the Christmas story. A good suggestion would be for older children to help lead the moment of prayer for the rest of the family, maybe by reading the story to their younger sibling, choosing a hymn to sing, finding some stilling music to play or some other responsibility like this. We would encourage all siblings to bring in a photo and prayer following the experience for their own class portfolio.

STAFF UPDATES:

Mrs Sanderson will be returning to work in her full-time capacity as Deputy Headteacher from the start of the Spring Term. Mrs Sanderson will be taking over from Mrs Ledger who aims to begin her maternity leave at the end of January. Mrs Sanderson will be in Y4 for a couple of days next week, and we're all looking forward to having her back in school.

ATTENDANCE:

YEAR GROUP	AUTHORISED ABSENCE (%)	UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE (%)	OVERALL (%)
RECEPTION	0.7	0	99.3
YEAR 1	4.1	0	95.9
YEAR 2	0.7	0	99.3
YEAR 3	0.7	0	99.3
YEAR 4	0.7	0	99.3
YEAR 5	0	0	100
YEAR 6	1	0	99
AVERAGE	1.1	0	98.9

Well done for a great week of attendance and especially to Y5 for attaining 100% attendance this week!

FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S – RAFFLE TICKETS AND MORE:

You will have received two books of raffle tickets in your child's blue bag this week. Please try and sell as many as you can to friends and family for the chance to win some great prizes. Please could any unsold tickets be returned to school by 10.12.18 so that they can be redistributed. Many thanks.

REMINDERS

FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S:

Christmas Raffle - It's that time of year again when we start organising and collecting prizes for the Friends of St Mary's Christmas Raffle. In previous years we have been very fortunate to have received some extremely generous raffle prizes from the St Mary's community including gifts, vouchers and tickets for events. If either you or your employer is able to donate a prize towards the raffle, please contact the school office or a member of the Friends. Thank you.

"Thirsty Thursday" - The Friends will continue to sell yummy hot chocolate in the school yard each Thursday from 3pm to help ward off the winter blues.

DIARY DATES (3.12.18 – 7.12.18)

TUESDAY – Final Change 4 Life breakfast club session.

WEDNESDAY – Chatterbooks session 6/6.

THURSDAY – Family Learning – Early Maths 5/5.

Reception Class eye tests.