

**IMPORTANT DATES/TASKS THIS WEEK:**

- All pupils will be taking part in our Big Lent Walk for CAFOD on Monday 25th March. Pupils should come in to school in appropriate outdoor clothing and footwear with a change of shoes for indoors. Reception class and KS1 will be walking a route through Chase Park whereas KS2 will be walking through Washingwell Woods. **Please could all volunteers come to school for around 9am.**
 - We are trying to make as much money as possible for CAFOD, as part of our Lenten almsgiving; please give generously – if you are able – here:
<https://www.justgiving.com/page/whickhamstmarys-cafod-walk-2024>.
 - We will be celebrating whole school Mass for the end of term at 9:30am on Tuesday 26th March. All welcome!
 - Reception and Y6 heights and weights to be taken on Tuesday.
 - Y5 Bikeability session 5 on Thursday – this will be the last session for pupils.
 - Last day of the Spring Term – Thursday 28th March.
 - Tennis, Happy Feet and Wednesday/Thursday Multi-Sport clubs all on this week.
 - Please read the enclosed notes on Attendance and School Uniform in advance of the start of the Summer Term; these apply to all pupils.
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SCHOOL UPDATES & REMINDERS**LENT:**

Over the past five weeks, we have been journeying together throughout this Lenten season: a time of 're-setting' our faith lives through prayer, action and giving. Our pupils have enjoyed a wonderfully spiritual and meaningful Lent during which they have developed new ways of praying, have given generously to those in need and have answered their *Missio Dei* – their Catholic calling – with joy and hope.

We now move into Holy Week, the most special 7 days in the Church's calendar, and it would be lovely to see many of our pupils and their families taking part in the events planned for the week within our Parish.

Holy Week Events in the Parish of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and St Philip Neri:

- Palm Sunday (24.3.24) – usual parish Mass times (9am at St Mary's/10:30am at Immaculate Heart)
- Tuesday of Holy Week (26.3.24) – Whole School Mass, 9:30am at St Mary's
- Holy Thursday (28.3.24) – Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, 6:30pm at St Mary's
- Good Friday (29.3.24) – Celebration of the Passion of the Lord, 3pm at St Philip Neri
- Holy Saturday (30.3.24) – Vigil and First Mass of Easter, 7pm at St Mary's
- Easter Sunday (31.3.24) – Easter Sunday Mass, 10am at Immaculate Heart

As we draw ever nearer to the joyous celebration of the risen Lord, we give thanks to God for all that He has made. Let us rejoice that through the power of Jesus' resurrection, all things are made new.

May this renewal inspire us to do what we can to bring about a change for the better in our lives and in our world. Throughout this Holy Week, may we continue to be generous in our giving, purposeful in our prayer and courageous in our action, so that – come Easter Sunday – we may be truly ready to celebrate Christ's glorious resurrection. Praise and honour to You, Lord Jesus Christ!

ATTENDANCE:

Thank you all for your continued efforts with pupil attendance this term.

Attendance for the year is as follows:

Year Group	% Attendance YTD
Reception	96.7%
Year 1	95.7%
Year 2	96.3%
Year 3	96.1%
Year 4	95.7%
Year 5	96.9%
Year 6	96.4%
TOTAL	96.26%

As you will know, we have been monitoring several pupils whose attendance for the year was below the 95% threshold at February half term (without significant reason to be). We are pleased to say that most pupils passed their monitoring; we will be writing to parents/carers to inform them of the outcomes of the monitoring.

Let's see if we can make the Summer Term even more successful and try to attain our school target of 97% attendance for the year!

UNIFORM REMINDER:

Please be reminded, summer uniform items may be worn from start of Summer Term but are not compulsory.

As you ready your child's summer uniform, and acquire any items requiring replacement, please ensure that you make purchases in line with the school's uniform policy.

In particular:

- Pupils should not be wearing black trainers to school. School shoes should be black leather (or leather substitute), polishable and easily fastened.
- Pupils should not be wearing leggings or legging shorts as PE kit. All pupils should be wearing plain, navy tracksuit/jogging pants or plain, royal blue shorts.

Please also ensure that any summer haircuts are in line with school policy.

In particular:

- There should be no shaved designs in hair.
- There should be no dyed hair.
- Shoulder length hair should be always tied back.

STEM WEEK:

Pupils enjoyed a range of amazing experiences last week as we celebrated all things STEM across school. Pupils were engaged and enthused thanks to our wonderful visitors with many of the pupils talking excitedly about their plans to forge careers in the sciences in the future! We certainly hope that these experiences will help to inspire many of our pupils to become the next generation of scientists, engineers,

healthcare professionals, ecologists, researchers and so on. Thank you to all our wonderful parents who volunteered their time to help us out; we're sure this won't be the last time we put out a similar plea for friends and family of the school, so please be sure to get in touch if you think you could help us out.

There are loads of great photos of our STEM week on our X page – why don't you check them out (@whickhamstmarys). Don't worry if you're not on social media, you can see the photos on the landing page of our school website (www.whickhamstmarys.org.uk).

GATESHEAD SCHOOLS DANCE FESTIVAL:

A massive well done to our Happy Feet dancers who stole the show with their incredible *Hairspray* inspired dance medley as part of the 2024 Gateshead Schools Dance Festival. The group have been working so hard on their routine and they performed it with aplomb – twirling, flipping and high-kicking through the number with amazing skill and togetherness.

We're already looking forward to what the group have in store for 2025!

REMINDER – DIARY DATES:

Please note that Thursday 28th March is the last day of the Spring Term.

All pupils will return to school on Monday 15th April.

Our final Inset day of the academic year has been set for Monday 3rd June. School (and Duckpool Pre-school) will be closed to all pupils on this day.

Term dates for academic year 2024-25 can be found on the school website (<https://www.whickhamstmarys.org.uk/term-dates.html>).

A LOOK AHEAD:

We are on the look out for volunteers to help Years 3, 4 and 5 with their participation at the Gateshead Fun Run on Friday 25th May. If you would like to help, please contact the school office (info@stmw.bwcet.com).