IMPORTANT DATES/TASKS THIS WEEK:

- All pupils should come to school in full PE kit on **Monday 22nd January**. Pupils will be having a taster session for a new after-school club which we hope to get up and running on a Wednesday and Thursday soon.
- Please read the below important information regarding essential works being undertaken on Windermere Gardens next week (wb/22.1.24).
- Please see the instructions below to pay for this term's small group violin/viola tuition via the new 'school shop' on *Arbor*.
- Please return the parental consent form (by Monday 22nd January) if your Year 5 child wishes to attend the upcoming Enrichment Day at St. Thomas More.
- Please come along to our Friends of St Mary's coffee morning in support of Macmillan Cancer Support from 9-11am on **Friday 26th January** (drop-in at any point on the morning). All welcome (grandparents, friends, family etc)!
  It would be helpful to have a sense of numbers, so if you intend to come along, please complete the following (very short) form: https://forms.office.com/e/Biw1BXRqfF.
  The event will be 'cashless', but we would politely ask for any donations to be made here: https://www.justgiving.com/page/friends-of-st-marys-catholic-primary-school-macmillan-jan2024?newPage=true.

SCHOOL UPDATES & REMINDERS

PUPIL ATTENDANCE:
Thank you for your efforts this week in ensuring good pupil attendance. Attendance last week was 96.4% across the school (which is higher than our annual average so far of 95.9%). We know that this is sometimes a challenge, but we want to continue to work with you as we strive towards our target of 97% attendance for the year.

Request for leave of absence should only be made after taking into consideration all the information within our school policy. Request forms are available on the 'School Policies/Documents' page of the school website (http://www.whickhamstmarys.org.uk/school-policiesdocuments.html). If you require a paper copy, please contact the school office.

SPORTS UPDATE:
A huge well done to our Y6 'Bee Netball' squad who qualified in the gold medal position from their recent first round heat against local schools. The team have now made it through to the Gateshead finals which will take place later this term. We have a great tradition of netball at St Mary's, and under Mrs Joyce's tutelage, the future continues to look bright!

TERM DATES:
Please be reminded that our February half term break is from 12.2.24-16.2.24 (which is the same as all schools in our Trust but different from maintained schools in Gateshead).

Term dates can be found on our website: https://www.whickhamstmarys.org.uk/term-dates.html.

There are to be no further inset days this term, however there will be one final inset day allocated in the Summer Term. This date will be communicated via the school News Bulletin.

PARKING AND ACCESS TO SCHOOL:
As you will probably be aware, there are several road works around Whickham which are making access to school more problematic. We have also been advised that essential utility works will begin on Windermere Gardens (adjacent to Duckpool Lane) next week, which may limit access and parking and affect pedestrians traveling to school on this route.

To ensure safety for all, please do not park on Windermere Gardens next week (wb/22.1.24) and until the works are completed.

As ever, we would encourage you to leave your car at home (where possible) and to park safely away from the school if dropping off/picking up in the morning/afternoon.

PAYMENT FOR VIOLIN/VIOLA LESSONS:
Payment can now be made if your child is receiving small group violin or viola lessons this term (Please note, this does **NOT** include Y4 whole class string orchestra). This should be done as soon as possible.

Payments can be made via the 'School Shop' – a new section on our *Arbor* site.

To do so, please follow these steps:
- Open up the *Arbor* app or website.
- Click on the following – Quick Actions > School Shop > Spring Term Violin/Viola Tuition.
- Payment can be made by card.

Please contact the school office if you require any support with this.