



Dear Parent/Carer,

And so, we journey towards the end of an action-packed Autumn term. It doesn't seem two minutes since the start of September, and it never ceases to amaze just how much progress our pupils make in these first months of the academic year. Needless to say, it has been a genuine pleasure and privilege to share in the daily lives of our young people, and I would like to congratulate them all for their individual and collective efforts.

It has been a particularly uplifting time in school throughout this season of Advent, made all-the-more special with us being able to open our doors to friends and family to share in our Christmas Nativity shows. Our pupils have loved every minute of rehearsing and performing their plays, and it has been a true joy to see the culmination of their hard work over the past week. A huge thank you, on behalf of all the staff, for your kind words and ongoing, unwavering support – as school staff, our working lives are about so much more than personal gain or recognition, but it does mean a lot to be thanked for the hours put in over the year, and your collective and individual generousities are truly humbling.

Throughout Advent, our children have journeyed with hope and excitement in their hearts, waiting expectantly to receive our Lord anew this Christmas. We will continue our final preparations by coming together as a community in joyful song on Tuesday and in worship on Thursday at our carol service and whole school Mass. Hopefully, I will see many of you in St Mary's church on those occasions; they promise to be wonderful celebrations.

If I do not get the chance to say so in person over the coming week, I hope that you all have a restful, safe and joyous Christmas with your nearest and dearest, and that the hope and expectation of our children bears much fruit on the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus.

I look forward to seeing all our pupils back at school in 2024. May the blessings of Christmas be with you and your loved-ones.

Yours in Faithful Optimism,

Mr J Wheatley  
Headteacher

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#### **IMPORTANT DATES/TASKS THIS WEEK:**

- Please return all 'Reverse Advent Calendar' donations by Monday 18.12.23.
- There will be no PE (or swimming for Year 4) this week.
- There are no clubs this week.
- We will be having our annual Christmas Dinner on Wednesday 20.12.23. If you would like your child in KS2 to have a dinner, please pay in advance via Arbor (<https://stmw-bwcet.uk.arbor.sc/>).
- Pupils are also invited to come into school in their own clothes (Christmas jumpers if they wish) on Wednesday 20.12.23. This is free of charge.
- Please come along to our Carol Service at 2pm on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December and our whole school Mass at 9:30am on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> December – both at St Mary's RC Church (see notes below).
- 'Toy day' – pupils can bring a toy/game into school to share with friends on Friday 22.12.23. Please do not send them in with anything of significant financial or sentimental value. Toys/games should be in a bag clearly labelled with your child's name.
- A huge congratulations to Mrs Sordy and all the team at Duckpool Pre-School for their recent **Outstanding** Ofsted report. You can now read the report in its entirety (see attached).

## SCHOOL UPDATES & REMINDERS

### ATTENDANCE:

Please do all you can to ensure pupils' good attendance over the last week of term.

Pupils' attendance across the Autumn Term (taken from 8.12.23):

Year Group	No. of Pupils	% Attendance YTD	Persistent Absence (10%) YTD	Severe Absence (50%)
Reception	21	96.4%		
Year 1	29	94.8%	17.2%	0.0%
Year 2	30	95.9%	13.3%	0.0%
Year 3	30	95.6%	13.3%	0.0%
Year 4	30	95.7%	16.7%	0.0%
Year 5	32	97.1%	6.3%	0.0%
Year 6	31	96.0%	3.2%	0.0%
<b>AVERAGE</b>	29	95.93%	11.67%	0.00%

Evidently, we have been affected quite badly by seasonal illness in recent weeks which as meant that a larger number of pupils than normal have dropped below the 90% attendance mark (thus being defined as 'persistent absentees'). It is particularly important moving forward that pupils continue to be in school each day which will see their attendance percentage approve over the coming term.

### PARKING:

Thank you to all those who have responded so positively to our recent communications regarding parking near school. Please continue to this message in mind for the remainder of term and into the start of the new year. Please also share this message with all those who may be accessing school at any point.

### CHRISTMAS CRAFTS WITH THE KIDS:

Parents/carers who have indicated that they would like to be involved in our Christmas crafts on Monday 18.12.23 have been contacted with details of the event. If you have not received this information and believe that you should have, please contact the school office by email ([info@stmw.bwcet.com](mailto:info@stmw.bwcet.com)).

### CAROL SERVICE:

We would love to see as many friends and family at our Christmas Carol Service at St Mary's RC Church at 2pm on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December. The service will finish at around 3pm, and we will dismiss pupils as normal on the school yard. We anticipate that the event will be popular, and unfortunately, we will be unable to reserve seating for those in attendance. Please note that the parish carpark will be closed so those in attendance will need to walk to church via Dockendale Lane.

### WHOLE SCHOOL MASS:

Please also come along to our whole school Mass at St Mary's RC Church on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> December. There will be a reception for friends and family back at school after Mass during which we will have performances from our school choir and our small group violinists from Years 5 and 6.

All welcome.

### TERM DATES:

Please be reminded that school will close for Christmas on **Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2023**.

The first day of term for pupils is **Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024**.