



Dear Friends and Family,

I am writing to you at the end of a fantastic first half term to the current academic year. The past seven weeks have absolutely flown by, and as we take a brief moment to pause and reflect on the term thus far, there are so many successes to celebrate already.

The October half term break will, of course, provide a welcome opportunity for pupils and staff to recharge their batteries before the big push towards the end of the calendar year and all the excitement that this invariably brings. I wish you all a safe and restful week and look forward to seeing pupils back at school on Monday 31st October.

It is with heavy hearts that we bid farewell to a much loved servant of the school this week. Dawn Kelly our very own 'wonder woman' supervisory assistant will be leaving us after 17 years at St Mary's. We thank Mrs Kelly for her tireless service to the pupils of St Mary's; we will miss her formidably caring nature and humble dedication, and wish her every happiness in her future exploits. We hope to see her back over coming weeks and months as a forever friend of the school.

October is a month dedicated to our blessed mother, Mary. As a school and parish family named in honour of the mother of Our Lord, we pray that Mary constantly guide and comfort us, leading us in prayer to know the love of her son more intimately; we ask that she intercede on behalf of those most in need of a mother's love and serve for us as an inspiration and perfect model of faithful service.

Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

I look forward to sharing in the continuing journey of the school year with you and your family.

Yours in Faithful Optimism,

Mr J Wheatley
Headteacher

IMPORTANT DATES/TASKS FOR WB/31.10.22:

- The October half-term break will take place from Monday 24.10.22 to Friday 28.10.22. All pupils return to school on Monday 31st October 2022.
 - Secondary admissions to be completed by 31.10.22 (<https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/2797/Secondary-school-admissions>).
 - Pupils in Years 1 to 6 will be attending 9:30am Mass at St Mary's RC Church on Tuesday 1st November in celebration of the Feast of All Saints. All welcome.
 - Make a note of your child's 'Explore the Curriculum' session; contact the school if you are unable to attend to arrange an alternative time to look at your child's books with them.
 - Sign up for your child's Autumn Term parents' consultation from 9:30am on Wednesday 2.11.22 (bookings will close at 5pm on Wednesday 9.11.22).
 - Complete the following form (<https://forms.office.com/r/4c609yC9C8>) if you would like your child to represent the school at the Remembrance Sunday parade and wreath laying ceremony in Whickham (13.11.22).
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SCHOOL UPDATES & REMINDERS

LUNCHTIME SUPERVISOR POSITIONS:

We are currently aiming to recruit two lunchtime supervisors to join our team. The position is Monday – Friday (1 hour per day minimum) though there is scope for further hours dependent on the circumstances of the successful candidates.

If you are interested in finding out more about the position, or know someone who may be, please get in contact with Mr Wheatley for a further chat.

EXPLORE THE CURRIUCLUM:

After the half-term break, we will be hosting our first ‘explore the curriculum’ open events of the year. During these sessions, parents will be able to share in some of the learning that has taken place over the first half term of the new school year and look at their child’s school books with them. These sessions will take place on the following dates:

| CLASS | DATE |
|-----------|--|
| Reception | Tuesday 8 th November, 9am |
| Year 1 | Friday 4 th November, 9am |
| Year 2 | Thursday 3 rd November, 9am |
| Year 3 | Thursday 3 rd November, 2:30pm |
| Year 4 | Wednesday 2 nd November, 9am |
| Year 5 | Wednesday 2 nd November, 2:30pm |
| Year 6 | Tuesday 1 st November, 2:30pm |

If parents are unable to attend a session, another family member is more than welcome to attend in their place. Parents unable to attend their child’s session should contact the school office to make us aware of this; alternative appointments can be made to come in to school and look at your child’s books with them.

PARENTS’ CONSULTATIONS:

As communicated at the start of term, we will be trialling a new format for parent/carer consultations (‘parents’ evenings’) this year. Teachers will now be available throughout the day for morning, afternoon and evening appointments, which can be in person or by telephone. Pupils’ targets will be shared in advance of the meetings, and of course parents/carers will have had the opportunity to look at work in the books during our ‘explore the curriculum’ sessions. Appointments will take place between 9am and 6pm and can be booked via eschools (<https://stmarys-whickham.eschools.co.uk/login>) from 9:30am on Wednesday 2.11.22. Bookings will close at 5pm on Wednesday 9.11.22.

The parents’ consultations will take place on the following dates:

| CLASS | DATE |
|-----------|--|
| Reception | Monday 14 th November 2022 |
| Year 1 | Wednesday 16 th November 2022 |
| Year 2 | Thursday 24 th November 2022 |
| Year 3 | Tuesday 15 th November 2022 |
| Year 4 | Tuesday 22 nd November 2022 |
| Year 5 | Monday 21 st November 2022 |
| Year 6 | Wednesday 23 rd November 2022 |

Nb. The date for the Year 2 Parents’ Consultations has changed due to unforeseen circumstances.

If you would prefer a telephone appointment at your allotted time, please contact the school office (0191 4205828/ stmarysrcprimaryschool@gateshead.gov.uk) to express this preference giving the preferred telephone number to use on the day.

Please note that the appointments will be kept strictly to 5 minutes; should there be a particular reason that you require a longer discussion with your child's class teacher/a senior leader, please contact the school office to make an alternative appointment.

Given the flexibility of offering both 'in-person' and virtual appointments, we would anticipate that most parents will be able to timetable their appointment in to their working day. Please only contact the school for an appointment on an alternative date where exceptional, unavoidable circumstances prevent a parent/carer from attending an appointment on the allocated day. Thank you.

SPORTS UPDATES:

We have been updating you – almost weekly it seems – as to the rapid progress of the school football team through the stages of the Durham Schools FA County Competition. We are all hugely proud to report that the team were crowned county champions (for the first time in our school's history) on a night of fierce competition at Chester-Le-Street C of E School this Wednesday. The team ended the night with three wins from three games and were awarded the rather impressive Daniel O'Hare Trophy for their efforts – which we will now display proudly in our trophy cabinet for the upcoming year. The team will now go on to represent the Durham Schools FA in the North of England finals which will be held in March 2023.

A huge well done goes to each member of the squad who competed with determination, skill and – most importantly – fair play and respect. It has been a remarkable start to the season, and we look forward to seeing how the team get on when they pit their talents against the best that the North has to offer!

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY PARADE:

After a hiatus over recent years, the Remembrance Sunday parade and outdoor service at the cenotaph on St Mary's green will return on Sunday 13th November.

As per tradition, representatives from local schools have been asked to take part in the parade and wreath laying ceremony at the cenotaph. We know that many pupils will be in attendance with other groups and organisations (eg. Brownies, guides, cubs and scouts), but it would be lovely to have a number of pupils representing the school community on the morning. More information will be sent to those expressing an interest, but the parade will start at around 10am and will last around 1 hour. Pupils taking part in the parade will be expected to be in full school uniform and a supervising adult must be in attendance to drop-off and pick-up at arranged meeting points. Due to the nature of the event, pupils would be expected to parade and observe the outdoor ceremony respectfully, so it may not be most appropriate for some of our younger pupils. Parents should take this into consideration as only school staff and pupils themselves may participate in the parade.

Parents who would like their child to represent St Mary's Catholic Primary School on the morning are asked to indicate this intention via the following short online questionnaire:

<https://forms.office.com/r/4c609yC9C8>

REMINDER – SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION:

Parents who would like to nominate their child (Year 4 upwards) to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion for the first time this year should complete the following short questionnaire to indicate their intentions: <https://forms.office.com/r/xJq61DxX78>.