



December 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we approach the end of the term, we have the opportunity to look back on recent events. The final weeks before Christmas always seem both hectic and enjoyable in equal measure as we journey through Advent. Our recent Christmas BINGO night was a huge success, with the Drama Theatre packed to the rafters, and a healthy amount raised for the school's Cotton Fund. Our inaugural Christmas Market was very well attended, with a large range and variety of stalls on display. We are hopeful that this can become an annual event moving forwards.

Following on from the market was our Christmas concert, where all who attended were treated to a series of wonderful performances from our talented pupils, and it was impossible not to get into the Christmas spirit hearing them! Finally, our whole-school Mass, celebrating and giving thanks for this term saw St Mary's church full to capacity, and it was lovely to see many parents, carers and friends of the school attend as well.

Christmas Closure and New Year Re-Opening

A reminder that school closes for the Christmas holidays on **Friday, 20 December**. As we have already celebrated Mass, please be aware that all pupils are in school and will be dismissed home at **1.30pm**.

In the New Year, staff will be holding an INSET day on Monday 6 January, so we reopen for pupils on **Tuesday, 7 January 2025 at 8:40am**. Please note that this is a normal school day for all, so regular timetables for Week B will be followed.

School Term and Holiday Pattern

For your information, the school term dates for 2025/26 have been confirmed by the Governing Body and are on the back of this letter.

Free School Meal Vouchers

Once again, the government have provided funding for schools to be able to provide Free School Meal vouchers for eligible families over the Christmas holidays. If you feel that you are eligible for these vouchers, but have not received them, please do contact school through the usual means.

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

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New Catering

Upon our return in January, we will welcome our new catering suppliers to the school. After a rigorous process, Aspens Services won the contract to be the school caterers moving forwards. Whilst the same catering team will remain on site, pupils and staff will notice new menus and food choices, which hopefully will be to everyone's satisfaction and taste. As a school, we would welcome any feedback as we look to improve the catering offer to your child.

Year 11

On Wednesday, 22 January, we will be holding our Year 11 Progress Evening (3:30-6:30pm). Please do all you can to attend on the night and gain valuable updates on your child's current performance, plus crucial pointers on how they can make further progress in the final months. This evening builds on the recent mock exams that pupils sat. The invigilators were keen to praise the pupils for the way in which they approached the exams and conducted themselves in the exam hall. All mock results will be distributed to pupils on Friday, 10 January.

Year 10

The Year 10 post-16 Mock Interviews will be held on Tuesday, 11 February. This is an important event for all the pupils and reminds them that they will be school leavers in just 18 months. Every pupil in Year 10 must have completed a Personal Statement by Friday, 17 January, and returned these to their form tutor. These statements will be sent off to the prospective interviewer in good time before the event, so please encourage your child to have their statement ready upon our return. These mock interviews are an excellent way of preparing for the college or apprenticeship interviews which pupils will be undertaking before they leave school.

In addition, pupils in Year 10 will be taking part in a full week of work experience. This will take place from Monday, 17 March to Friday, 21 March. Pupils are asked to have secured their own suitable placement by Monday, 13 January, but help and advice, if necessary, is available from our Careers Adviser, Mrs McVey; e.mcvey@lsmchs.com

Year 9

As we enter the New Year, attention in Year 9 turns to the Option's process. You will be able to discuss this further with staff at the Year 9 Progress Evening on Wednesday, 5 March. However, the week before, Tuesday, 25 February, Mr Meldrum will be holding a session to explain the Options process in more detail. This will be held in the Drama Theatre at 6pm.

Year 8

Information has been distributed to Year 8 pupils about the Pilgrimage to Liverpool in July next year. We would encourage as many members of the year group to sign-up as they will enjoy a fabulous experience. The total is £165 and a payment plan to spread costs is available. In addition, if any family is struggling to meet the full price, please contact school to see what help may be available.

Year 7

Similarly, information has been distributed to Year 7 pupils about the enrichment visit to London next year on Friday, 7 February through to Saturday, 8 February.

Food Bank Donations

We recognise that this time of year can be difficult for families, so we were overwhelmed with your generosity when collecting for the local food bank at St Mary's Church. Your donations will undoubtedly be most welcome and we thank you for your contributions.

Uniform & Attendance Expectations

Parents and carers will be well aware that at St Mary's we take great pride in the appearance of pupils. With this in mind, please be reminded that jumpers remain a compulsory element of school uniform up until the Easter holidays.

Similarly, excellent attendance is the cornerstone of any child's education. Can I stress that you continue to work with us to ensure that your child is in school, on time, every day, and that minor ailments which, for example, would not be enough for an adult to be off work, are not used as a reason to miss school.

Staffing Information


Looking forwards to the new term, we will be welcoming Miss Robinson to the English teaching team, who will join us on a full-time basis. You may well be aware that Mrs Moore recently left on maternity leave, and as such this letter allows me the opportunity to officially welcome Mr Tucker who has joined the Religious Studies department as her maternity cover. In this final week, we are also saying farewell and thank you to Mrs Bowdler (MFL) and Mrs Akers (PE), both of whom have covered recent maternity posts. Finally, our SEND department has recently also been bolstered by the appointment of three Teaching Assistants, Miss Pilkington, Ms Simmonite and Miss Fields. We welcome all of our new appointees to the school.

I would also like to take this opportunity to pay recognition to Mrs Reader, our longest serving member of the Senior Leadership Team, who celebrates her 25th year at the school, as well as our network manager Mr Orme who marks his 20th year at St Mary's. Such long service is commendable!

Thank You

As ever, your continued support for the school is much appreciated, thank you! And, on behalf of all the staff and governors at St Mary's, I would like to wish you and your families a peaceful Christmas and a healthy and Happy New Year.

Yours Sincerely,



Mr P Thompson

Headteacher



St Mary's Catholic High School, Leyland

TERM DATES

2025/2026

Autumn Term 2025

Staff Inset Day	:	Monday 1 September 2025
Staff Inset Day	:	Tuesday 2 September 2025
Re-open on	:	Wednesday 3 September 2025
Mid Term Closure	:	Monday 27 – Friday 31 October 2025 (incl)
Closure after school on	:	Friday 19 December 2025

No. of Openings: 73 + 2 INSET days

Spring Term 2026

Re-open on	:	Monday 5 January 2026
Mid Term Closure	:	Monday 16 – Friday 20 Feb 2026 (incl)
Closure after school on	:	Wednesday 1 April 2026
Staff Inset Day	:	Thursday 2 April 2026 (<i>Spirituality</i>)
Staff Inset Day	:	Friday 17 April 2026 (<i>as twilights</i>)

No. of Openings: 58 + 2 INSET days

Summer Term 2026

Re-open on	:	Monday 20 April 2026
May Day Closure	:	Monday 4 May 2026
Mid Term Closure	:	Monday 25 – Friday 29 May 2026 (incl)
Closure after school on	:	Friday 17 July 2026
Staff Inset Day	:	Monday 20 July 2026 (<i>as twilights</i>)

No. of Openings: 59 + 1 INSET day

Total No. of Openings: 190 + 5 INSET days