



March 2026

END OF TERM - INFORMATION FOR ALL YEARS

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we near the end of term, I would like to update you on some school matters which are relevant to all year groups.

End of Term

We break for the Easter holidays at 1:00 pm on Wednesday, 01 April. Any pupil who is in receipt of a Free School Meal will be able to pick this up during the morning break.

In a change from tradition, we will be celebrating our Easter Service at St Mary's church on the day before we finish on Tuesday, 31 March at 2:00 pm. Parents and carers are welcome to attend. School bus runs have been arranged to pick-up both from church at 3:00 pm on the Tuesday and from school at 1:00pm on the Wednesday.

All staff and pupils return for the start of the summer term on Monday, 20 April at the usual time.

Big Lent Walk

On the last day of term, pupils in Year's 7, 8 and 9 will be taking part in the Cafod Big Lent Colourful Walk. These pupils may come to school in their full PE kit and bring colourful items to wear during the walk, for example caps, scarves, jumpers etc. Pupils have received sponsorship forms and hopefully, with your help, a healthy amount can be raised. The walk and sponsorship money is in support of Pope Leo's plea for stability, justice and peace in our troubled world, and all money collected will be donated to CAFOD, supporting our brothers and sisters around the world.

Uniform Expectations

A reminder that for the summer term, our uniform changes slightly, with jumpers no longer a compulsory part of our school uniform. Of course pupils can continue to wear one if they so wish.

Obviously, many pupils will be having their hair cut or wearing earrings and make-up during the holidays. However, please be mindful that on our return after Easter, our expectations on appearance will be in place from the first day. If prohibited items are seen they will be asked to be removed and potentially confiscated. Additionally, with the exception of individual medical cases, black shoes are required for all pupils, not black trainers. Thank you in advance for your co-operation with this.

Attendance

You will no doubt be aware that school attendance nationally has seen a decline in recent years. Thankfully, St Mary's is bucking this trend and consistently performs above national averages for secondary school. This

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ROYAL AVENUE | LEYLAND | PR25 1BS

t 01772 421909 | e head@ismchs.com | bursar@ismchs.com

HEADTEACHER MR P THOMPSON

www.ismchs.com



is due to a number of reasons. Pupils clearly enjoy school and value their time here, whilst our pastoral and attendance teams work tremendously hard to break down any barriers to attending. However, the role of parents and carers is crucial to maintaining high attendance levels, and your support is greatly appreciated. Statistics show that an attendance record of 90% throughout a child's school life can negatively affect GCSE grades. By us all working together, not only is your child able to access expert staff in school, but they are also boosting their life chances with the high probability of stronger exam grades when they leave.

Free School Meals

This Easter sees the last time that eligible families can receive Free School Meal vouchers over a holiday period. Moving forward, vouchers will no longer be distributed by schools. Instead, families who require assistance will be asked to apply for funds via a new *Crisis and Resilience Fund*. This will be managed by local district councils, and families will need to apply directly to the council for help. Lancashire County Council have informed us that further information about the new fund, and how to apply, will be made available after Easter. As soon as we have this information, we will share it with families. In the meantime, should anyone feel they are entitled to vouchers for this Easter, but have not received them, please contact school through the usual means.

Staffing Update


This Easter we say goodbye to our Deputy Headteacher, Mr Meldrum and the school Network Manager, Mr Orme, both of whom are retiring after many years of loyal service to the school. In addition, we will shortly bid farewell to Mrs Edwards, Teacher of Art, who is leaving at the end of April. Between them, the three have amassed over 60 years of service at St Mary's. I would like to pay tribute to each one and thank them for all they have done in their time at the school. They have seen many changes to St Mary's over the years, but each has remained focussed on doing the best for the children they've served. I'm sure you would like to join me in wishing them all the very best for the future.

After Easter we welcome our new Deputy Headteacher, Mrs Horridge, along with new senior network manager, Mr Holmes. Both Mrs Horridge and Mr Holmes have great experience of working in Catholic schools and will no doubt settle very quickly into their new roles.

As the end of term approaches, I would like to thank you all for the continued support you offer, it means a great deal to know we are united in wanting the best for your child. Please remember in your prayers our Year 11 pupils as they complete final preparations before starting their GCSE exams. We hope that their hard work and effort is rewarded.

Finally, on behalf of the staff and governors, may I wish you and your family a restful, happy and Holy Easter break.

Yours sincerely,



Mr P Thompson
Headteacher