



END OF SCHOOL YEAR LETTER 2024

July 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we approach the end of this school year, I would like to update you on school developments.

School closing and September re-opening

School finishes for the summer at 1:30pm on Friday, 19 July. We will celebrate Mass from 12:15pm with Father Joe Bibby at St Mary's parish church, and all pupils will be asked to make their own way home from there. School busses have been arranged to collect from the church. As ever, parents and carers are very welcome to join our end of year celebration. It has been delightful to see more and more adults take-up this opportunity in recent years.

Turning our attention to the return in September, staff will be in school for 2 INSET days on Monday, 2 September and Tuesday, 3 September. Pupils will then return on Wednesday, 4 September, at the usual time of 8:40am. We look forward to welcoming all pupils on the 4th, including 167 new Year 7s.

Timetable

From September, the school will be operating a two-week timetable. This will ensure that we are fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Catholic Bishops' Conference, which requests that Religious Studies forms 10% of a pupils' timetable in all year groups. For the most part, a child's timetable will remain the same from week-to-week, but there may be some differences between Week A and Week B. Please work with your child when they receive their new timetable so that you are all well-prepared for the week ahead.

Parental Communication

As parents and carers, your input is vital, and we always listen to the points you put forward. Following your feedback, we will be hosting a number of Parental Support Evenings in the next academic year. These will cover a number of issues which you said you would like more information on, from vaping to internet safety and from careers to sustainability. We hope that you will find these sessions useful.

In addition, next academic year we would like to create a Parent's Forum, featuring representatives from each year group. We see this as an excellent way for two-way communication between home and school to be strengthened. More information on this, and how to express your interest, will be available at our Parent Information Evening on Tuesday, 10 September (6pm).

Uniform

A reminder of the high expectations we have for all pupils in terms of uniform and appearance. The summer holiday often means that children experiment with hair dyes, piercings and other alterations which would be regarded as too 'extreme' for school! As you would expect, upon our return on September 4, St Mary's expectations will be in force from the start, so please ensure that your child is looking 'school smart'.



LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

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Year 11

Our Year 11 leavers enjoyed an excellent night at Preston North End for their Leaver's Prom on Thursday, 27 June. The pupils delivered some excellent speeches of their time at St Mary's, giving humorous and touching recollections about the staff who have helped them in their 5 years at secondary school. We wish them all the very best for their future, and keenly await news of their exam results on Thursday, 22 August.

Parental Co-Operation

Good communication with parents is vital. However, we have sadly witnessed a rise in a small number of parents and carers who are becoming increasingly rude and aggressive to staff. As a school, we don't claim to always get things right, but there is always a manner in which concerns can be raised, and being abusive to any member of staff is not the way, and is not acceptable. All secondary schools in South Ribble have signed up to a '*Policy for Cooperative Parental Interaction*'. Please note the following from the policy:

We do not expect staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour by complainants or by members of both the school and wider community. Unacceptable behaviour includes behaviour which is abusive, offensive or threatening and may include:

- *Using abusive or foul language on the telephone*
- *Using abusive or foul language face to face*
- *Sending multiple emails*
- *Leaving multiple voicemails*

All schools will take action to protect staff from such behaviour. If a complainant behaves in a way that is abusive, unreasonably persistent or vexatious, they will follow this policy. The agreement can be found on Edulink.

Staffing Information

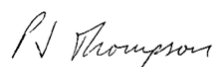
As is often the case at the end of a term we take a moment to thank those staff members who are leaving us and also introduce new colleagues.

This year we bid farewell to Miss Collins (Music), Dr Batty and Mr Barnes (both Maths) and to our long-standing Teaching Assistant, Mrs Moss. All of these colleagues leave with our best wishes for the future, in particular Mrs Moss who retires after 17 years at the school! On behalf of all pupils and staff, past and present, I'd like to thank our departing staff for all for their service to the school, and wish them well with their future away from St Mary's.

Joining us in September are Mr Haslam (Maths), Mrs Latiff (Maths, part-time), Miss Williams (Art) and Miss Gannon (Music, part-time). We welcome all of our new appointees to the team and look forward to working with them.

Finally, as a school, we can look back on this year with pride. There have been a number of successful school trips, most notably the Arts trip to Barcelona and the sports trip to Lisbon. In March, we celebrated receiving a 'Good' grade in our Catholic School Inspection. Our pupils have been fantastic ambassadors in the local community, helping with South Ribble Council's 'Big Clean-Up', whilst also taking part in our very own General Election vote. We have even welcomed our latest member of staff with Rocket, our therapy dog, who has been a huge hit! We look forward to another successful year when we return in September, but before then, I'd like to thank you for all the support you've shown us over this year and, on behalf of all staff and governors, would like to wish you all an enjoyable and restful summer for you and your family.

Yours sincerely,



Mr P Thompson
Headteacher