



END OF SCHOOL YEAR LETTER 2026

July 2026

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 1:00pm on Friday, 17th July. We will celebrate Mass from 12:00pm with Fr. Michael Barrett 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. I do hope you will have the opportunity to take-up this offer.

Turning our attention to the return in September, staff will be in school for 2 INSET days on Tuesday, 1st September and Wednesday, 2nd September. Pupils will then return on Thursday, 3rd September, at the usual time of 8:40am. We look forward to welcoming all pupils on the 3rd, including 171 new Year 7s.

Uniform

As I'm sure you will appreciate, the recent heatwaves have created certain issues for schools to cope with, and at St Mary's it has been no different. We appreciate your co-operation when uniform has been relaxed or altered to make the working environment as comfortable as possible.

Some parents have asked if there is a set temperature at which changes to uniform may be made. In short, the answer is no, as school makes decisions based on a number of factors, not just on what temperature is forecast. For example, the building can get progressively hotter after a number of warm days, so even though the outside temperature may dip slightly, heat is retained within some rooms, despite our best efforts.

With this in mind, I would like to make you aware that the school's uniform policy does allow for tailored black shorts to be worn. This option is available to both boys and girls, and they can be worn year-round, should a pupil choose to do so. Pupils would still be expected to wear socks and shoes (not trainers) if they took up this option, but it is certainly something to consider if we face high temperatures again in the future. Additionally, in a change to our PE kit, skorts will no longer be part of the kit from September 2027. Instead, pupils will be asked to wear either girls-fit or unisex shorts.

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

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As you would expect, upon our return in September, we will be upholding our uniform expectations, so please be mindful if your child experiments during the summer with a new hairstyle, or a piercing, as all pupils are required to meet the required standard from their first day back.

Yondr Pouches

The recent move to Yondr pouches has gone very well and pupils have very quickly adapted to using them throughout the school day. Please can I remind you that the pouches are the responsibility of your child for the duration of their time at high school. This means that they will take them home during the summer holidays and may need a reminder from yourself to keep them in a safe place! Pouches will be used from the first day back, and we don't want to have to charge any family the £20 cost of purchasing a replacement.

Free School Meal Entitlement

As you may recall from an earlier letter, the government is extending the eligibility criteria for Free School Meals as of September 2026. This means that even more families may be entitled to claim assistance with the cost of school meals. We would encourage every family to use the following link to check eligibility. The process is quick, confidential and can help you with covering this daily cost:

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/schools/free-school-meals/>

Year 11

Our Year 11 leavers enjoyed an excellent night at Shaw Hill for their Leaver's Prom on Friday, 26th June. The pupils delivered some excellent speeches of their time at St Mary's, with 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 exams on Thursday, 20th August. School will be open from 9am on this day for collection of results.

70th Anniversary Celebrations

Next academic year marks the 70th anniversary of the school opening here on Royal Avenue. We will mark this occasion with a number of events throughout the year, with the highlights being commemorating the official opening date of 24th February 1957, followed the next evening by a Mass celebrated by the Archbishop of Liverpool. Please keep your eye open for events throughout the year!

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.

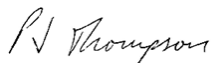
This year we bid farewell to Mrs Silcock (Science), Mrs Taylor (Maths) and Mrs Watson (Curriculum Leader for Expressive Arts). In addition, we say goodbye to Miss Bodi from the teaching support staff. On behalf of all pupils and staff, past and present, I'd like to thank our departing staff for their service to the school, and wish them well with their future away from St Mary's. We also pass on our very best wishes to Mrs Joyce (Humanities) who has recently begun maternity leave.

Joining us in September are Mr James (Music), Mr M'Bolo (Science) and Mrs Wells (cover supervisor). Mr Myers has already joined the Humanities team as maternity cover. We also welcome back Mrs Rowell and Mrs Wood as TA3 / 2. We welcome all of our new appointees to the team and look forward to working with them.

Once again, we have enjoyed a very busy and successful year. There have been a number of notable individual and year group successes this year. A number of school athletics records have been broken, as well as a number of sporting cup finals being reached. We have enjoyed wonderful musical performances, with some bands taking their talents beyond the school gates. We've also supported local charities and gala days as we work alongside our local community. Pupils have also had the opportunity of many trips locally, throughout the UK and abroad.

None of this would be possible without the support of staff members who willingly give-up their time to run events. They work hard throughout the year and, like the pupils, deserve their rest this summer. Finally, I'd like to thank you for all the support you've shown the school over the past year and, on behalf of all staff and governors, wish you all an enjoyable and restful summer.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P Thompson'.

Mr P Thompson
Headteacher