



School Newsletter

With Christ, we live, love, learn and grow

08.01.21

Dear parents/ carers,

Good evening parents/ carers,

It has been an exhausting week for all of us. New Year's Day (a week ago today) seems like a million years ago now! I am going to keep this brief tonight but will obviously be in regular communication with you over the coming days and weeks.

I would like to say a big thank you and well done to all the members of our school community:

Parents/ carers, you have found yourself thrown in the deep end again with home learning and all the stresses and strains that places on you. Well done – you've made a great start and thank you.

Children, whether at school or at home, you have adapted amazingly well and worked really hard this week.

Teachers, thank you for getting up and running so quickly with your high quality teaching and learning activities – great job!

Teaching assistants you have looked after the children in school so well and worked hard to adhere to our risk assessment measures – you have kept the children happy and safe.

Our amazing Nursery team of teachers, TAs and welfare staff have similarly done an wonderful job in keeping the nursery going in very difficult circumstances – thank you.

Our breakfast and after school club staff have provided outstanding care as always - thank you!

Welfare staff, kitchen staff, caretaker, cleaners and school business staff have kept the school going. It has been an incredible team effort. Well done and thanks.

Well done one and all, we made it through the week. Now on to the next!

Remote learning

We all recognise that lockdown and the fact that most children are not attending school is far from ideal. Children learn best when they are in class with their teacher, supported by teaching assistants and learning alongside their friends. Anything else is at best, second best. However, we are trying to do the best we can and that's all we can ask of you and the children – whatever that best is, given your own unique circumstances.

Thinking back to the first lockdown, the way we delivered remote learning continued to evolve and I am sure that it will do so this time as well. There are notable differences this time as well. As well as school being open to all the Nursery children, we have many more children in school because their parents are critical workers or they are regarded as vulnerable children. Some classes have half the children in at one time. We have got to be very careful about the numbers in school we have in school or the actual purpose of restricted attendance, i.e. reducing virus transmission, is defeated. I would therefore ask parents to think very carefully about whether a place in school each is essential given the purpose of school closure to most pupils.

Our remote learning approach across school is a common one and it is outlined in the guidance shared at the start of the week. However, within that approach there will be differences in delivery, depending on teachers' preferred styles, the age and nature of the classes and the number from a class who are actually in school. E.g. there might be different balances of live v. recorded teacher input. One way is not better than another, and it will need a mix of styles going forward. We need to accept that. What is guaranteed though, is that the staff are doing their very best to make sure that the children are given best possible education in these unique times.

Finally, I would also like to say thank you to parents for their good wishes and words of support this week. It is very much appreciated.

I wish everyone a restful weekend and we'll go again on Monday.

2021 SCHOOL ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES – PRIMARY

Nursery Pupils/Primary School Admissions: If your child is in their last year of pre-school/nursery you can now apply for their primary school place at:

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/schools/apply-for-a-school-place/>

It's quick and easy to do and you will receive email confirmation of your application.

VERY IMPORTANT: You must apply even if you already have siblings in school. If you live in Lancashire you can include out of area preferences on your online application.

The closing date for primary applications for September 2020 is **15 January 2021.**

****Please remember that admissions to St Mary's, or any Catholic primary schools, also require the completion of the separate supplementary information form (SIF).****

Free School Meals – Are you missing out?

Free School Meal Eligibility and Pupil Premium Funding

Because all children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to a free school meal, many parents do not realise that they might be entitled to something called **free school meal eligibility**. And we understand why this might be the case because the system is confusing! At St Mary's, we have noticed a fall in the number of infant children whose parents have claimed eligibility since the introduction of free school meals for all infants – other schools have noticed the same.

This free school meal eligibility can be applied for in Reception, Year 1 and in Year 2 even though children are receiving a school meal anyway. And parents in Y3, 4, 5 and 6 can also apply.

Why bother applying if your child is receiving a free meal anyway?

If you think you might be eligible it is very much worth applying for two reasons:

1. Your child will continue to receive free school meals on leaving the infants in Y3, Y4, Y5 and Y6 and beyond
2. The school receives additional money (pupil premium) for children eligible for free school meals (over £1 300 per pupil).

If you receive any of the benefits below, St Mary's School can access this extra funding, called pupil premium.

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit

How can you find out if you are eligible?

Apply by phone – and you can find out in a matter of minutes!

You can ring the local **Free School Meals and Pupil Premium team on 01772 531809**

It must be the person claiming the benefit that rings.

You will need to provide your:

- Name

- Date of birth
- National insurance number

They will confirm whether you are entitled over the telephone.

Apply by post

Download the application form from <http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/schools/free-school-meals.aspx> and return it to your local area education office.

South Area Education Office

Level 1 Christ Church Precinct
County Hall
Preston
PR1 8RJ

Free milk If you receive benefits, your child could also get free milk. Contact us to find out what arrangements we make for school milk.

A message from the Yarrow Teaching School - Alliance Open Event – Autumn Term 2020

With open events not possible in person, we have decided to publish a video which offers an insight into the training course and our offer to Associate Teachers. We will put this all over our social media platforms and advertise on Facebook shortly. **Our next Zoom open event is on Tuesday 1st December.**



This Autumn, with face to face open evenings not possible, the Yarrow Teaching School Alliance invite you to a zoom open event. Have questions about our Initial Teacher Training Course answered, meet the team and see an Alliance school. email a.hitchen@st-georges.lancs.sch.uk to RSVP and receive log in details

<http://www.yarrowteachingschoolalliance.co.uk> @YarrowTSA

St Mary's is part of the Yarrow Teaching School Alliance. If you have a degree and interested in becoming a primary school teacher, visit the website above.

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