



School Newsletter

With Christ we live, we love, we learn and we grow

13.09.23

Dear parents/ carers,

Smartphone free childhood

I mentioned this topic in a newsletter towards the end of last term. In June, a Y6 parent wrote a very powerful letter to me telling me about the negative and very worrying impact on her child of being given a smartphone towards the end of Y6. The parent then directed me to the May 2024 edition of the online safety leaflets which we send out [this month's edition is sent out today]. The leaflet described a parent-led movement called Smartphone Free Childhood.

For full details check out the website <https://smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk/>

Smartphone Free Childhood say ...

'Parents have been put in an impossible position. **Either** we give our children access to an adult product that opens the door to harmful content, addictive algorithms and the anxiety machine that is social media **or** we risk alienating them from their peers at a crucial stage of their development. It's a lose-lose; for parents, children and society. And we're on a mission to fix it.'

Our mission

We're on mission to change the cultural norm that children are given smartphones, and challenge Big Tech's ever-increasing colonisation of childhood. We'll do it by:

- Growing the national conversation about the harms of smartphones for children.
- Empowering parents and schools to take collective action and create change at a local level.
- Putting pressure on government and tech companies to help us protect our children.

Just as we marvel at the fact cigarette companies used to market their products as healthy, people will look back on this era and ask why children weren't better protected from Big Tech. Let's get together and create the change our children need.

Can you help?

I will keep referring to this in newsletters over the next few weeks. *Smartphonefree Childhood* is a grassroots parent-led movement, so I am interested in meeting any parents who would like to take a

lead on this at St Mary's. Can you help? If you would like to get involved, please contact me at smartphonefree@chorleystmarys.lancs.sch.uk

If we can achieve a consensus, among parents in different year groups, not to give children smartphones, that would reduce the pester power and the guilt parents feel about having to get them for their children. In this way, we could collectively delay the time children receive smartphones to a point when they are intellectually and emotionally ready. I would be interested to hear your views.

EYFS Breakfast Stay & Play - Wednesday 18th September 0830 -0930

The EYFS classes are having a breakfast stay and play session for Reception and Nursery children on Wednesday 13th September, from 8.30am - 9.30am. The staff said that it will be lovely to meet all the parents and for them to get to see what their little ones get up to.

Sacramental Class Meeting – Cheese and Wine evening 6pm Tuesday 24th September at 6pm

There is a meeting in school for parents and carers of children receiving the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion during the coming school year.

The meeting will take place in the school hall on September 24th at 6pm. At the meeting Mrs Grzeczynska, Lead Catechist and School Governor, will introduce herself and share some information regarding the Sacramental Programme (Family Catechesis) for the coming year. It will also provide an opportunity for parents and carers to ask any questions that they may have.

Democracy in action ... the election of house captains, vice-captains and sports captains

The democratic process has been in full swing at St Mary's. This week, Y6 children were invited to stand for the positions of House Captain, House Vice-Captain and Sports Captain for their respective houses. The children gave their speeches and took part in elections. In assembly today, we were notified of the results. I will share details in next week's newsletter.

As ever, I would like to applaud all the children who took the time and made the effort to prepare and deliver speeches to persuade their fellow house members to elect them. I know having spoken to many children and parents how much it means to them. Congratulations to those who were elected and commiserations to those who were not. For those who were not elected this time, I know how disappointing this might feel and I would strongly encourage you to take up similar opportunities in the future. Well done and thank you for putting yourselves forward.

Today, in assembly, we applauded everybody who put themselves forward – we are very proud of you all. A great effort!

We are having a General Election for the St Mary's Pupil Parliament on our very own polling day on Thursday 26th September. We will, of course have ballot papers and private polling booths. School will be open as usual!

Start of school year Mass at St Mary's - Wednesday 11th September at 9am.

Children in KS2 attended 9.00am Mass at St Mary's on Wednesday to celebrate the start of the new school year and Our Lady's birthday. Thank you to Fr Marsden for celebrating the Mass and for speaking to us about our patron, Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Mrs Grzczynska, parish lead catechist and governor, also spoke to the children at the end about important features of the Church building while we waited for a gap in the downpours. A gap came and we managed to get back to school relatively dry. Thank you to all the parent helpers who accompanied us on the walk back to school.

Volunteers

We really appreciate the help we receive from parents and grandparents who come in to help with reading, supporting children's learning, clubs etc. We have had a couple of parents in recent years who started off volunteering and then have decided to pursue a career in teaching! A big thank you to all our returning volunteers this year – you make a massive difference! Thank you to all those who have offered their services this year, we will be in touch soon.

If you feel you can spare half an hour or more a week please get in touch with the school office. Many thanks.



Some beginning of school year and nursery year reminders

Earrings and Jewellery - For safety reasons, earrings are not to be worn in school. If parents wish their children to have their ears pierced then please have them done at the beginning of the six-week break to allow ears to heal. The only form of jewellery children are permitted to wear is watches.

Hair styles

We expect pupils to have sensible hair styles. Cuts, dyed hair or styles which in the judgement of the school are extreme, are not acceptable. Please keep the school a fashion-free zone!

Shoes



Pupils are expected to wear plain black shoes. Again, we want school to remain a fashion-free zone. Some sports companies make black trainers for children. We ask you not to use these for school. They are trainers and not shoes and of course, the children will prefer to wear them! However, once one has them this puts pressure on the other children to ask their parents for them. Many thanks for your co-operation in this matter.



Labelling Uniforms



The children really look smart in their uniforms but so that bits and pieces do not go missing please ensure that **all items** are labelled clearly with your child's name. Thank you. If items do go missing then the lost property box is available on **Tuesdays** after school by the front entrance.

Health and Safety notices

Grapes in lunch boxes



If your child brings grapes to school either as a snack or as part of their packed lunch, it is very important that grapes are halved first. This is because whole grapes present a significant risk of choking hazard to children.

Parking

By way of a reminder at the start of the school year, I would appreciate your co-operation in parking safely and considerately at drop-off and pick-up times. **Please do not park on the staff carpark, the yellow zig zag lines** outside the gates and please do not park **across resident's driveways**. Thank you.



School entrance

At the start and end of the school day there are two entrances to the school in use: Walgarth Drive and Warton Place. The Warton place entrance can also be accessed from Hornchurch Drive via the alleyway that runs parallel to the staff car park. **Please do not use the path in the staff car park entrance.** This may only be used during the school day when the other entrances are locked.

PTFA Notices

Ladies Night 2024 – 27th September

The PTFA are holding a Ladies Party Night on Friday 27th September at Chorley Football Club from 7.30 p.m. This is a change of event from the Ladies Nights that have been held in the past.

Instead of a formal evening, the party night will consist of dancing, a quiz, nibbles and of course the raffle!! There will be no formal seating plan, so groups can sit together. The aim of the evening is to bring mums (and their friends) together having a lovely social evening whilst raising much needed funds for school.

As such, tickets are only £10 per person. For those wishing to attend - please send CASH payments, in an envelope addressed FTAO PTFA. Please put on there, how much is in the envelope and the names of the people who will be attending.

So get your dancing shoes at the ready, get your gang together and let's have a party!! They hope to see you all there!

Parentkind

Parentkind – the charity that supports school PTAs - have teamed up with Asda, who is making millions of pounds available to donate to primary schools across the UK through their 'Cashpot for Schools' initiative – all you have to do is, opt in through the Asda Rewards app, choose our primary school and shop and scan in store or shop online at Asda.com, between 2nd September and 30th November 2024

Asda will donate 0.5% of the value of your shop to our Primary school. Also, every time somebody opts in, Asda will give an additional £1 to the school Cashpot. Plus, it doesn't stop there – Asda are also giving £50 to every school to get them started.

The supermarket has joined forces with Joe Wicks to support the initiative – look out for the TV advert, radio ads and social media coverage. Asda does the rest, all money raised will be donated to schools to spend on the things they need the most.

INVITATION St Joseph's Guide Unit sent the following invitation:

Girl Guide Open Evening

16th Chorley St. Josephs Girl Guides invite you to take part in an Open Evening. We currently have spaces available for girls aged 9.5 to 14 years of age.

Girl Guiding offers fun, challenging and educational opportunities. Using weekly meetings and larger events to support learning and empowering girls to be brave, confident and try new things in a safe environment.

We extend a warm welcome to you to come and join us at the Open Evening to see what we do and ask questions. This will take place at St. Joseph's Primary School Hall on Tuesday 24th September 2024 from 7.30pm to 8.15pm. Please come along and get to know us and our girls.

If you are interested in attending please contact Zoe Hall Unit Leader on 07927277905. We look forward to seeing you

Free School Meals – Are you missing out?

Find out if you are eligible and find out how to apply – follow this link.

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/schools/free-school-meals/?page=2>

High School Open Evenings

Holy Cross Catholic High School



The poster is a composite image. On the left, a young boy in a school uniform smiles, holding a yellow pencil. On the right, two students in lab coats and safety goggles work in a chemistry lab. The central text is on a dark background. At the top, it says 'YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND OUR' in small white letters. Below that, 'Open Evening' is written in large white font. Underneath, 'at Holy Cross Catholic High School' is in smaller white font. A red banner contains the text 'Join us between 4.30pm - 7pm'. Below the banner is the Holy Cross logo (a red cross with a green circle) and the school name 'Holy Cross CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL'. At the bottom, the website 'www.holycross.lancs.sch.uk' is listed. In the top right corner of the lab image, there is a quote: 'AN OUTSTANDING CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL' with 'A ROCHESTER REPORT' below it.

YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND OUR

Open Evening

at Holy Cross Catholic High School

Thursday 10 October 2024

Join us between 4.30pm - 7pm

Holy Cross
CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

www.holycross.lancs.sch.uk

'AN OUTSTANDING CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL'
A ROCHESTER REPORT

St Michael's CE High School

St Michael's CE High School are holding an open morning on Thursday 10th October 9:30am-12 noon. This is open to all prospective families and there is no requirement to book.

Applying for a place at high school

The window to apply for a secondary school place is now open. To apply for a place in a Lancashire secondary school please check the following link:

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

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 arrangements for the transfer of pupils to secondary schools in September 2025 will, as far as possible, conform to the following timetable. The deadline for applications is **Thursday 31st October**, which is during our half term break.

Star of the Week 13.09.24

Class Name		Star of the Week for ...
YN	Theo	A fantastic week in Nursery – setting an example of how to follow all nursery rules
YR	Maggie	being a super role model to Reception Class
Y1	Thomas J	Thomas has completed some fantastic independent writing in our new English topic.
Y2	Rory TJ	A wonderful, positive attitude in Y2.
Y3	Layla C	Can always be relied upon to be doing the right thing - a real model pupil to her classmates
Y4	Myka	her wonderful work in all our mathematics lessons
Y5	Archie R	a superb start to Year 5! He has shown enthusiasm towards our new topics and participated well.
Y6	Logan	making a fantastic start to his time at St. Mary's

ATTENDANCE NEWS



Chorley, St Mary's Attendance League

2024/2025 13.09.24



CURRENT POSITION	CLASS	CURRENT %
=1 st	Year 3	100.00
=1 st	Year 6	100.00
=3 rd	Year 1	99.79
=3 rd	Year 2	99.79
5 th	Year 4	99.58
6 th	Year 5	98.44
7 th	Reception	97.76

A record five classes had **100%** attendance this week – wow! Congratulations to Y1, Y2, Y3, Y4 and Y6. Special congratulations must go to Y3 and Y5 because they have had 100% since the first day of term. Can they keep up this record-breaking streak?

An update on Penalty Charge Notices issued for unauthorised absence

These changes came into effect on 19 August 2024.

- Penalty notices issued for offences that take place after 19 August 2024 will be charged at a new rate of £160 per parent per child. This can be paid at £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days with no option for a discounted rate.
- The threshold at which a penalty notice **must** be considered is set at 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school week period. This may include absences as a result of arriving late after the register closes. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or school years.
- A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another course of action will need to be considered (such as prosecution or one of the other attendance legal interventions).
- Only penalty notices issued for absences taking place after 19 August 2024 will count towards the above thresholds.

Best wishes,

Patrick Smyth
Headteacher