



School Newsletter

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

17.12.21

Dear parents/ carers,

We have made it to the end of the longest term of the school year. Thank you for all your support. The children have once again been a credit to you and the school, in their attitude to their work and in their excellent behaviour. I also want to thank all of our staff for their commitment and effort over the last term; it has been a huge effort by our whole school community. Well done, all!

From everybody here at Chorley St Mary's, we wish you a happy, holy and peaceful Christmas and we look forward to seeing everybody back here on **Tuesday, 4th January, 2022**. Keep safe.

COVID - update

By the end of this week, we had no recorded positive COVID cases, which I think is excellent news. However, like the rest of the nation, we are bracing ourselves for the impact of the Omicron variant. We are preparing for a return as normal on 4 January unless instructed otherwise. If there are any updates to share with you about this over the next two weeks, I will do so. We have contingency plans to ensure learning continues whatever the situation will be.

Once again, I would like to thank you parents/ carers for your support in arranging tests when asked to, either due to your child having symptoms or as part of a whole class testing process. I believe that this is one of the most important measures, if not the most important, we can take in preventing the spread of the virus in school.

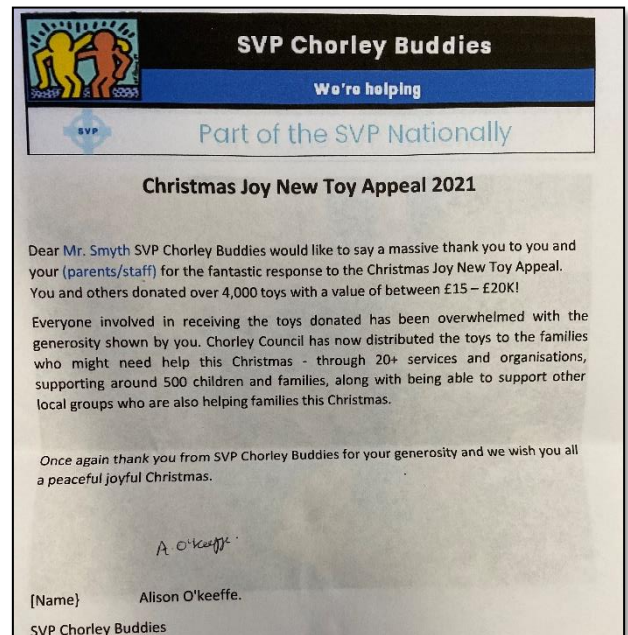
Living Waters Christmas Food Donation – Tins of Meat/ Selection Boxes – Tuesday 14 December

Thank you very much for your donations of tins of meat and selection boxes. They were gratefully received by the volunteers at the foodbank, one of whom is a parent of children who left St Mary's over recent years. Thank you very much, again for your generosity!



Car boot full of tins and chocolates

Christmas Joy Toy Appeal – Toy Collection – Thank you from SVP Chorley Buddies



Some of the bags of toys donated from schools across Chorley and letter of thanks from Chorley SVP Buddies

Nativity and Christmas Performances

I hope you have the chance to watch this year's Christmas performances. The EYFS Nativity was beautiful and very professional. Year 1 and Year 2 celebrated by giving us a wonderful rendition of *Christmas Alphabet*. Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 each took a part of the Nativity story, with readings from the Gospels, news reports, interviews and songs. Well done to all the teachers and children for their ingenuity in making these performances happen. They give us another opportunity for the children to learn the Christmas story in a meaningful and celebratory way.

Book sale - Monday 13th December – A big thank you

Miss Hesketh asked me to pass on her thanks for your support of the book sale last Monday. There were hundreds of books up for grabs. The sale raised nearly £150 which will be used to replenish class libraries around the school. Thank you also to Miss Hesketh and Mrs St John for organising and to all the children and families for supporting.

Christmas Party Celebrations

The children enjoyed their annual Christmas party day yesterday. They looked great in their Christmas outfits. They enjoyed party food and games. They had a film session with their Frederick's ice cream. Thank you to PTFA and Mrs Wilson for helping Father Christmas supply the presents this year. Thank you especially to Mrs Grime for wrapping up each Christmas present and thank you, of course, to Father Christmas for coming to St Mary's yesterday, delivering the presents and speaking with the children.

Messages from the School Office:

School term dates 2022- 2023

Please see attached the term dates for the school year 2022 – 2023. They are pretty much in line with Holy Cross and the other Catholic primary schools.

ParentPay

Please could we ask all parents to ensure that their *ParentPay* accounts are paid in full by the end of December. Payments relating to extended day and uniform should be cleared and lunch payments should be in credit for January.

Toast

Please also be aware that if you have ordered toast for your child for the spring term (4th January to 8th April), payment must be made before 4th January to ensure that your child receives toast on the first day back.

Governor Vacancies

If you or anyone you know would be interested in the role of Governor at St Mary's, even if you have expressed an interest before, please contact me at school for an informal chat and I also can put you in touch with the Chair of Governors, Kath Smith who may be able to answer some of your questions.

And please don't think yourself under any obligation if you do express an interest. Have a chat and find out if the governor role is something for you.

Our Governors are a very strong, very experienced and very welcoming group who are committed in its support of the school and in wanting to drive it forward.

Below is from the LCC web page on school governance:

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/schools/become-a-school-governor/>

Become a school governor

School governors are volunteers who work together with the headteacher, the archdiocese and the local authority to improve education and other outcomes for all pupils.

You could become a school governor if you are aged 18 or over and:

- Want to make a positive difference to the education of local children
- Can get on with other people and work as part of a team
- Have some time to spare to attend meetings and to read necessary papers
- Are ready to learn and open to new ideas
- Are willing to put something into your local community
- You don't need any formal qualifications, you'll get full training and support to make sure you are fully equipped to carry out the role successfully.

What we expect from governors

Effective governors do not need educational expertise but do need to be committed to their school, willing to ask questions and act as a critical friend. They also need to be able to work as an enthusiastic member of the governing body team.

You do not need specialist knowledge or training to become a governor. It is your lay and community experiences that the governing body requires. However you will become knowledgeable by being a governor and this can help you to participate more fully in your local community or even open up opportunities for you personally, for example involvement in a Parents Teachers and Friends Association (PTFA), voluntary work within school or an awareness of new employment opportunities.

Realistically, as a school governor, you will need to attend one full governing body meeting each term. You will also be asked to serve on at least one committee which will probably meet once or occasionally twice a term. So, that is about two or three meetings per term maximum.

You will need to get to know your school well (if you don't already) preferably by visiting when the school is in session and the pupils are in school. However this may not always be possible and some governors keep in touch with school life through after school events such as fundraising or charity events, Parents Teachers and Friends Association meetings, sports days, school parties and holidays.

Christmas Mass at St Mary's Church – from parish newsletter

- CHRISTMAS EVE falls on the Friday and our CHRISTMAS NIGHT MASS IS AT 19.30.
- CHRISTMAS DAY MASS is at 10.00 on the Saturday morning.
- No Saturday evening Mass on 25th.
- Sunday 26th is the Feast of the Holy Family with Mass at 10.00 as usual.



PLEASE PICK UP A TICKET IF YOU WISH TO COME FOR THE CHRISTMAS EVE MASS. Tickets are available after weekday Masses and weekend Masses. We can seat 130 people within the Health and Safety requirements. Please wear a mask to all the Masses and make sure your family or visitors wear a face mask also.

You can email Kinga Grzeczynska at the parish office at: stmaryschorley@yahoo.co.uk . Kinga asked me to ask people not to come to Church if they are displaying COVID symptoms, cold symptoms or even if they are generally feeling all unwell. Many parishioners are quite vulnerable due to their age.

Chorley Schools Sports Partnership (CSSP) Christmas Sports Camp

Please see attached a flyer for a Christmas holiday sports camp on the 20th and 21st December.

Chorley Number 1 Food Club – Chorley SVP

Please see the poster attached to this newsletter from the Chorley SVP. The poster says - *Over 2 million tonnes of good food goes to landfill EACH YEAR... Join The Club! Help Divert That Food from Landfill! For £3 per week, you will receive up to £25 of food of your choice. Yes, you read that correctly.*

2022 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 2022 is on 15 January 2022.

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

Lancashire Cards for Kindness Campaign

The Cards for Kindness Christmas campaign will once again be running across Lancashire, Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen and South Cumbria from Wednesday 1 December. Voluntary, community and faith groups across the area are invited to take part.

This campaign aims to tackle loneliness in our care homes by encouraging people to send a festive card to a local home to brighten up someone's day.

Cards for Kindness is now in its fourth year and each Christmas, community groups across the area send in fantastic cards and gifts that they've made to help brighten someone's day.

The theme for this year's campaign is *'What Warms Your Heart This Winter'*

There're plenty of opportunities for people to use their creativity and last year's activities ranged from fantastically designed cards made by adult learning groups to friendship rocks designed by Cub Scouts. There is a serious side too as campaigns like this help to tackle loneliness, which has the same effect on people's health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

Opening the cards and discussing the messages also prompts conversations among residents and brings back memories, bringing many health benefits, particularly for people living with dementia.

To find out how Cards for Kindness works, visit: <https://www.healthierlsc.co.uk/CardsForKindness>. Cards for Kindness is run by The Lancashire and South Cumbria Health and Care Partnership and Lancashire County Council, in partnership with Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and South Cumbria councils.

We'd love to see and hear about your Cards for Kindness creations so we can use them on the media and in social media to help promote the scheme.

If you're happy to share photos, please send them to CardsforKindness@lancashire.gov.uk. Please send them by Wednesday 15 December stating you are happy for us to share your image.

Use of your photos

In sending your photo you are confirming that you do not object to the photograph of you being published by Lancashire County Council on its internet and intranet pages, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, or being shared with the media. In doing so you acknowledge that images shared on social media are open to comment by the general public and may be circulated by third parties. If you change your mind about using the images please email to let us know, though please be aware that LCC will have limited ability to remove photographs shared through social media channels. Please view [LCC's Privacy Notice](#) for further information.

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.

COVID symptoms – however mild

If your child has:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

they must not come into school, you should get a PCR test (test that is sent to a lab) to check if they have coronavirus and stay at home until you get their result, even if the symptoms are mild.

One of the recent changes for this term means that if your child is a 'close contact' of someone, e.g. a parent, who has tested positive for COVID, but has no symptoms themselves the child no longer needs to self-isolate, they may come to school. However, in this instance, we would also ask that your child has a PCR test (but they can still come to school while awaiting result – if no symptoms).

Sickness/ Diarrhoea

If your child is suffering from sickness and/ or diarrhoea, then the minimum absence must be 48 hours. This is to prevent the spread of any infection such as norovirus (winter vomiting bug).

Absence

If your child is absent, please inform the office directly by calling in or by telephone. Please do not pass messages on via siblings or *Class Dojo* or indeed class teachers, thank you.

 **Medical absences**

If your child has an appointment with the doctor or dentist, please inform the office prior to the absence where possible. Thank you.



Chorley, St Mary's Attendance League
2020/2021

17.12.21



CURRENT POSITION	CLASS	CURRENT %
1st	YEAR 4	97.22
2nd	YEAR 3	96.64
3rd	RECEPTION	95.89
4th	YEAR 5	95.86
5th	YEAR 1	95.51
6th	YEAR 2	95.45
7th	YEAR 6	94.93

No classes had 100% attendance this week.

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.

Best wishes,

P Smyth 17.12.21