



School Newsletter

With Christ, we live, love, learn and grow

27.11.20

Dear parents/ carers,

This weekend, we will move into the new liturgical year and the season of Advent with this Sunday being the First Sunday of Advent. The season of Christmas is now very much on the horizon and the excitement is clearly building with the children. We all know it is going to be a very different Christmas this year at home for families, in Church and at school. We will, of course, be celebrating the birth of Christ and making it a special time for the children in school.

Open Evening for Prospective Parents

I hope you had a chance to watch the school's open evening video. If you know anyone who is looking for a place for their child at St Mary's or who would like a place a Catholic primary school next September, please direct them to the video.

<https://www.chorleystmarys.lancs.sch.uk/our-school/admissions>

Those of you looking for a place at nursery or know someone who is, keep an eye out for a nursery video. It was filmed this week and should be available in the next couple of weeks.

Parental Questionnaire

We are sending out our **annual parental questionnaire** to you this evening via GroupCall. I would be very grateful if you were able to spare a few minutes to have a look at and complete it. Your feedback helps us in our continuing efforts to improve the school for your children and those that attend in the future. This year, perhaps unsurprisingly, there is an additional section regarding COVID.

COVID Control measures –warm clothing

I have mentioned a few times in recent newsletters that one of our control measures, to minimise risk of COVID infection in school, is to maximise ventilation. This means having windows open in classrooms throughout the day. Although the heating remains on in the daytime, it can still get quite cold in the classrooms. I imagine as we head deeper into winter, that this will become the case more and more.

Therefore, from Monday next week, I have told the children that they can bring a jumper or a fleece to wear over the top of their school uniform jumper in class. In order to minimise clothes being

brought backwards and forwards from home to school, this fleece/ jumper should be brought in on Monday and left in class all week ready to take home on Friday.

I would also highly recommend that children wear a vest e.g. thermal vest or long sleeved white/cream top under their shirts too.

In addition, I have made it clear to the children that these warm fleeces/jumpers **are not instead of** uniform just something to put on top of their uniform if they are feeling cold. If they don't want to wear them they do not have to; they can put them on the back of their chairs in class.

Christmas Presents and Christmas Cards

Because of our COVID control measures, I am going to ask parents/ carers and children not to send Christmas gifts or cards into school for children or for staff this year. This is because we want to minimise the transfer of items from home to school and school to home thereby minimising the risk of virus transmission. I am sorry if this is disappointing news for you but I hope you can understand the general principle.

I realise that some parents may have already made some arrangements that they cannot unmake, if this is the case, please contact me at school and we'll see if we can come up with a solution.

Value of the week - *Humility*

Well done to the following children who demonstrated an understanding, in their behaviour and attitudes of the value of **humility** this week in school.

YR	Ariana
Y1	Emily
Y2	Freddie
Y3	Faith W
Y4	Zach
Y5	Isla
Y6	Mason

Own clothes Day on Friday December 4th in support of Christmas Joy New Toy Appeal

We are having an own-clothes day **next Friday 4th December** in support of a Chorley-wide new toy appeal. If you feel you are able to support this cause, then please see below for details. Please note children are not required to bring in toys in order to wear own clothes; we do not want to place any of our families under undue pressure. As with the harvest gifts, please could you leave donations in the allotted spot in the car park and I will take to St Laurence's Church where they are being gathered, disinfected and quarantined for the appropriate time period.

As part of The Christmas Joy Project, co-ordinated by Chorley Borough Council, most of the Catholic Primary schools in Chorley, along with Holy Cross High School, St Gregory's, St Bede's and St Chad's, and St Joseph's Withnell parishes, have committed to collecting new toys for distribution to families in Chorley.

If you want to donate new toys, then please

- *wrap them in Christmas wrapping paper and*
- *label them as M/F or N (for Neutral) and*

- the appropriate age range and
- bring them into school.

Chorley Buddies, a part of the SVP National Network, will collect the toys from school and arrange for their distribution to families who might need some help this Christmas.

And thank you for bringing some Joy into people's lives this Christmas!



Chorley, St Mary's Attendance League 2020/2021



CURRENT POSITION	CLASS	CURRENT %
1 st	YEAR 2	99.11
2 nd	YEAR 1	99.05
3 rd	YEAR 3	99.02
4 th	RECEPTION	98.45
5 th	YEAR 4	98.13
6 th	YEAR 6	96.86
7 th	YEAR 5	96.46

W/E 27/11/2020

Well done **Year 2** on their **100%** attendance award this week!

STARS OF THE WEEK w/e 27.11.20

Class	Name	Star of the Week for ...
YN	Keira	For super phonics work !
YR	George	For super descriptions in his writing.
Y1	Veronica	For her excellent answers and relevant use of vocabulary showing clear understanding.
Y2	Alice	A very moving piece of history homework where she visited the houses of WW1 soldiers who had died.
Y3	Alex	For some brilliant homework pieces on the <i>Iron Man</i> and <i>Plague Doctors</i> .
Y4	Zach	For always working hard to learn his spellings and for getting full marks this week.
Y5	Isla	For working really hard on division in maths this week.
Y6	Isaac	An amazing improvement in his handwriting and presentation this week.

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).****

School COVID Risk Assessment

Please see school website for the most up-to-date COVID risk assessment for school.

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.

P Smyth 27.11.2020