



St Mary's Catholic First School Newsletter –
Friday 24th May 2024

We love, we learn, we live.



Dear Parents and Carers,

Unbelievably, we have reached the final half term of this academic year! On Thursday, we enjoyed a French themed lunch of Creamy French chicken casserole, baguettes and French fries.



Today in school we have been celebrating 'World Children's Day' [World Children's Day Rome, St. Peter's Square, 2024 \(worldchildrensday.org\)](https://www.worldchildrensday.org). Pope Francis has asked that we set aside a day each year for the Catholic church to celebrate the importance of children and young people in the life of the church.

**'We need to see each child as a gift to be welcomed,
cherished and protected.'**

-Pope Fra

World
Children's
Day



Today in school, the children have completed various activities learning about our global family and praying for other children around the world.



Wishing you all a relaxing half term, see you when we return after half term on Monday 3rd June.

Mrs. Oakes

Holiday Homework

We do not usually set homework over school holidays, but after some requests from parents (& pupils!) we have prepared some revision materials for those children due to take the Phonics Screening Check and the Multiplication Tables Check following half term.

In preparation for the Phonics Screening Check, we are providing year 1 (& some Y2) children with some revision materials to look at over the half term holidays. These materials are designed to be used for up to ten minutes at a time and we would recommend that, if possible, the children use these daily. This will ensure that the children remain familiar with the phonics sounds in readiness for the phonics screening assessment which will take place in school week beginning Monday 10th June.

Over half term, Year 4 will be provided with a multiplication revision pack. The materials in this pack will be familiar to the children as they use them regularly in school. We would encourage the children to complete daily practice, no longer than 10 mins, to ensure the children remain confident with quick recall of their times table facts. The Multiplication Tables Check window opens the week beginning 3rd June and children will be completing their assessment in school during this time.

Attendance Updates

This week parents/carers will have received an attendance letter as per our Trust Attendance Policy- [Trust-Attendance-Policy-Template-Updated-Feb-2024-2-1.pdf \(hexhamstmarys.uk\)](#)

'The school will also routinely send correspondence to parents, on a half-termly basis, to keep them abreast of their child's attendance'

The purpose of the letters is to keep parents updated on their child's attendance. As a school, our aim is to support families with attendance.

Sun protection & waterproof coat

We were lucky to be blessed with a couple of sunny days this week. Just a reminder to send children in with a hat or cap for sun protection during the summer term. Please can we ask that children have suncream applied prior to coming to school to avoid children having to bring suncream into school.

Please can we ask that all children bring some form of raincoat to school each day, although the weather is improving, we are still prone to the occasional light shower and children are encouraged to play outside each day.

Year 3 & 4 Swimming

The Summer swimming payment is now available on the Arbor app, (under Clubs). Please ensure these payments are paid before Friday 12th July.

Year 4 Quad Kids event

On Monday 3rd June, Year 4 are attending a Quad Kids event at St Joseph's Middle School. The event focusses on key skills such as running, jumping and throwing. It is a great opportunity for those who are attending St Joseph's as their middle school to familiarise themselves with the school grounds and meet some of the staff. All pupils in year 4 will attend this event, regardless of what middle school they are moving to in September. Please ensure your child arrives to school with a water bottle and wearing their **school** P.E kit as usual for a Monday (Year 4 pupils will not require their swimming things on this day). The event is in the afternoon and children will be back to school for normal home time.

Year 4 Transition

On Thursday 6th June, Eleanor Stoves will be coming to St. Mary's to talk to those year 4 pupils moving to St. Joseph's in September. On the afternoon of Tuesday 11th June, Mrs. Stoves will escort these pupils to St. Joseph's for a transition visit and a tour of the school. The children will be back in time for the end of the school day. The remaining year 4 pupils will remain in school as normal.

Y4 Leavers Celebrations

To celebrate their final days at St Mary's, there will be a range of activities taking place for Year 4. On Thursday 18th July, there will be a Leavers Mass in the school hall. Parents and carers are invited into school to celebrate their children's first school journey. In the afternoon, year four will also have a class tea party where each child in the class can bring in a donation of party food to enjoy together.

Year 4 Leavers Photos

To mark their final day at school, the Year 4 will be hosting a talent show on Friday 19th July at 1:30pm, in the school hall. Children who wish to perform, will showcase their talent to the whole school as well as their parents and carers. Following the talent show, there will be a PowerPoint presentation dedicated to our year 4 leavers. We are inviting parents of Year 4 to email in pictures of their child on the first and last day of School (maximum 2 photographs please). This will be displayed in an end of year presentation celebrating their time throughout school. If you have any photos you wish to contribute, please email them to parentcontact@smfs.bwcet.com. After the talent show, parents and carers of year four children, are welcome to take their child home.

Summer School Trips

Year 3 End of year trip

For our end of year trip, Year 3 will be going to Wentworth Leisure Centre on Tuesday 2nd July for an afternoon of bowling. Following this, on Wednesday 3rd July we will be attending the Forum Cinema to watch a movie (movie title will be confirmed closer to the time). On both days, children will be in school for normal lunches however, if they wish to bring a **healthy** snack and a drink (not fizzy) for the cinema, they are more than welcome to. Payment of £10.70 has now been set up on Arbor.

Reception Visit to Hall Hill Farm

On Thursday 4th July Reception will be visiting Hall Hill Farm as part of our Understanding the World curriculum. It is an exciting opportunity where the children will be able to feed animals, learn about animals and their young and even experience a ride on a tractor! There is now a payment of £21.50 to be made through the Arbor app. The deadline for this payment is Monday 24th June.

Year 4 Trust Sporting Event

We are excited that our Year 4 pupils will be able to take part in the first ever Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust 'Celebration of Sport' event. This is being held on Monday 15 July. This is a sports celebration event being held at Gateshead International Stadium with over 1,200 pupils being invited to take part. This is a wonderful opportunity for pupils to take part in a range of sports and activities in an internationally recognised arena. We are writing to Year 4 pupils and parents after half term with more information and look forward to sharing details in the coming weeks!

Year 1 and Year 2 Visit to the Discovery Museum in Newcastle

On Tuesday 16th July Year 1 and Year 2 will be visiting the Discovery Museum in Newcastle to learn all about History and to be able to see the current exhibitions on display. Both classes will be attending a workshop hosted by specialists and will be able to see and use historical artefacts to support their learning. Year 1 will be taking part in a Transport in the Past workshop and Year 2 will be learning all about the Great Fire of Newcastle and Gateshead. There is now a payment of £17.50 to be made through the Arbor app. The deadline for this payment is Monday 8th July.

School Meals

If you would like to take a look at the new Summer Garden Kitchen menu, please use the following link-

<https://www.hexhamstmarys.uk/parents/school-meals/>

Free school Meals

Universal free school meals - All pupils in reception, year one, and year two are entitled to a free meal, without having to apply for this option.

Eligibility for free school meals - The government has made amendments to the eligibility criteria since April 2018. This is to reflect the introduction of Universal Credit

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Education/Schools/Meals.aspx>



Extra-curricular clubs

Clubs will begin week beginning 22nd April. Summer 1 clubs are:

Fitness club	Tuesday lunch Y2-4
Singing club	Tuesday lunch Y1-4
Running club	Wednesday Morning 8.15-8.40 Y2-4
Eco-club	Wednesday lunch
Times table club	Thursday lunch – Y4 only.
Mini Vinnies –	Monday 29 th April (3.15-4.30pm) & Monday & Monday 20 th May (3.15-4.30pm)

Class teachers will ask children to sign up for the clubs they wish to join. If your child would like to join running club, please inform the office to sign up.

Mission Statement Value Award Winners:

If you would like to celebrate your child's achievements out of school and would like us to give them a mention in Celebration Assembly on a Friday, then simply fill out one of the Mission Statement Value Cards that have been sent home with your child or ask for one at our school office. We love to hear about all the children's wonderful achievements, both in school and out!

Class			
Reception	Felix	Ella-May	Alfie R
Year 1	Dexter	Raffy	Dani-Skye
Year 2	Kacey	Heidi	Phoebe
Year 3	Parker	Harrison	Bao
Year 4	Kaylin	Alfie	Zach

St. Mary's Class Attendance	
This Week's Winners: Year - Year 2	
<u>Reception</u>	95.29%
<u>Year 1</u>	88.52%
<u>Year 2</u>	97.22%
<u>Year 3</u>	93.18%
<u>Year 4</u>	92.73%



Attendance Ladder



Diary Dates

Monday 27th –Friday 31st June	Half term
Monday 3rd June	School re-opens at 8:40am for Summer 2
Monday 3rd June	Year 4 Quad Kids event at St. Joseph's Middle School (All year 4 pupils attending, please can children come to school in their P.E kit and have a bottle of water)
Wednesday 5th June	Years 3 & 4 Celebration of the Word in hall 9.30am- World Environment Day-Parents/carers invited.
Thursday 6th June	Y4 Transition Talk St. Joseph's Middle School

Friday 7th June	Reception Mass in church at 9.30am. All welcome.
Tuesday 11th June	St Joseph's Middle School transfer visit 1:30-2:45 pm
Friday 14th June	KS2 Mass in church at 9.30am. All welcome.
Friday 21st June	Y2 Mass in church at 9.30am. All welcome.
Wednesday 26th June	St Joseph's Rounders Afternoon (Children transferring to St Joseph's) 1.30-2.45pm
Friday 28th June	Y1 Mass in church at 9.30am. All welcome.
Tuesday 2nd July	Y3 Bowling after lunch.
Wednesday 3rd July	Y3 Cinema in the morning.
Wednesday 3rd July	Years 1 & 2 Celebration of the Word in hall 9.30am- Aspirations-Parents/carers invited.
Thursday 4th July	Reception class end of year trip to Hall Hill Farm. Arbor payments are now live on the app.
Mon 8th-Fri 12th July	Healthy Schools Week
Thursday 11th July	Sports Day (weather permitting) 9.30am-12pm Parents/carers invited. More information to follow.
Tuesday 9th July	Hexham Partnership Transfer Day

Friday 12th July	Reception Class Mass at 9.30am
Monday 15th July	Y4 Trust Sport Event-Gateshead Stadium
Tuesday 16th July	Year 1 and Year 2 End of Year Visit to the Discovery Museum
Thursday 18th July	Y4 Leavers Mass in the school hall at 9.30am- Parents/carers invited. Y4 class tea party in the afternoon-party food donations welcomed-Pupils only.
Friday 19th July	Y4 Talent show in the hall at 1:30pm

Safeguarding

St. Mary's Safeguarding

This month our E-safety theme is 'Privacy & Security'. The children will discuss the importance of privacy settings on the networks, devices, apps and sites they use.

Please take a look at the following information and advice for parents and carers on supporting your child in discussing 'Privacy & security': [Parental controls & privacy settings guides | Internet Matters](#)

Pupil Support & Safeguarding

Designated safeguarding Lead- Mrs. Oakes

Deputy safeguarding Lead-Miss. Baird & Mrs. Stansfield

Assistant safeguarding Lead-Mrs. Stoves

SENDCo/Assistant SENCo-Mrs. Stansfield & Mrs Stoves

Please remember that we are here to support you and your child at any time. You can contact us via the main office (01434 603791) or by email (parentcontact@smfs.bwcet.com)

Online Safety

At The National College, our **WakeUpWednesday** guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Form early delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about SCHOOL AVOIDANCE

School avoidance refers to reduced attendance or non-attendance at school by a child or young person. In 2022-23, more than one in five children in England were found to be absent from school over 10% of the time. This guide focuses on school avoidance with an emotional basis, offering expert mental health advice. However, it's important to remember that school avoidance is a hugely subjective experience which requires a tailored, individual approach.

UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL AVOIDANCE

REASONS FOR ABSENCE

School avoidance is sometimes underpinned by several factors (rather than one single cause). This could include something going on for the child or young person within the family or at school. It could also be a result of anxiety, depression, bullying and friendship difficulties, or a school pressure to achieve, school closures and moving from primary school to secondary school.

PATTERNS OF ABSENCE

You may notice patterns in regular absences or children regularly expressing that they don't want to attend school (particularly being reluctant to leave home on school days), if a child or young person is homebound, there is some evidence to suggest there are more aspects of school life which can cause distress – such as changes in the environment, changes of routine and sensory stimuli.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

There may be an increase in a child or young person's complaints about physical symptoms, particularly on school days or the evening before school. These could include tummy aches, headaches, or saying they feel ill when there doesn't appear to be a medical cause. Always check with the GP first to rule out medical causes or illness.

IMPACT OF SCHOOL AVOIDANCE

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

School refusal can negatively impact a young person's learning and development. Attending school can be a challenge, but not attending school can impact academic attainment but it is also important for the development of life skills and the growth of children and young people as citizens.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

The difficulties associated with school non-attendance can be for teaching and may have a negative impact on long-term outcomes. It may, for example, lead to reduced future opportunities, poor emotional regulation, mental health difficulties, limited academic progress and restricted employment opportunities.

CYCLE OF ABSENCE

Consistent absences may contribute to mental health difficulties. The longer a pupil is out of education, the more likely it is that they are at risk of their ongoing need to avoid the negative making them worse – increasing their desire to stay at home.

Advice for Parents & Educators

WORK TOGETHER

If there's a concern about a child's absence and emotional wellbeing, it's important that there is a clear communication and a consistent approach between the child's parents and the school, so you can take a child-centred approach together towards a plan of support or intervention. This involves a consistency of approach from both home and school, creating better outcomes for the child.

MANAGE OVERWHELMING FEELINGS

Acknowledge the child's worries, listen and discuss coping strategies together to help them manage difficulties. These could include mindfulness, using breathing or going for a walk. This helps them understand that you are working together towards a common goal, and that these strategies can be used when bigger feelings arise.

FOLLOW REGULAR ROUTINES

Children can benefit from a regular and consistent routine. This could be a morning routine, from waking up and having breakfast through to getting dressed, packing their bag and leaving the house. A consistent evening routine which is calm and sporty can also give children much needed predictability and consistency. Schools can help create a timetable routine for the child's school day, if required.

RECOGNISE POSITIVE STEPS

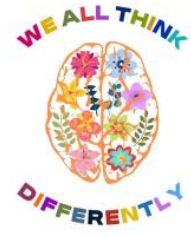
Drawing attention to a child's successes – be they big or small – can help to give them some much-needed confidence and motivation. Celebrate these daily victories – both in getting out of bed on time or completing school work – and don't hesitate to let the child know when you're impressed or proud of them, such an approach can go a long way.

Meet Our Expert

With 10 years' experience as a teacher, teacher consultant and interim executive board member, Anna Bateman has a superb understanding of what works in psychology, school improvement and leadership. She has also advised the Department for Education on their mental health green paper.

Source: See full reference list on guide page at nationalcollege.com/guides/school-avoidance
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Autism Family Drop In Sessions



Do you have a child aged 0-19 years? Come along for a cuppa and chat and to meet other parents. No diagnosis needed!

Join us on:

Tuesday 4th June 2024 1-3pm

Hexham Family Hub - Hexham First School, Beaufront Avenue, NE46 1JD

Wednesday 12th June 2024 1-3pm

Haltwhistle Family Hub -Haltwhistle Primary Academy, Park Avenue, NE49 9BA

Monday 17th June 2024 1-3pm

Prudhoe Family Hub - Broomhouse Lane, NE42 5FT

Facilitators - robyn.robinson@northumberland.gov.uk and adelle.hicks@northumberland.gov.uk

Inclusive Education Services

