



St Mary's Catholic First School Newsletter –
Friday 7th June 2024

We love, we learn, we live.



Dear Parents and Carers,

Hope you all had a lovely half term break; it is difficult to believe that we are in the final half term of the academic year-how the time flies!

We have had a busy start to the half term, Year 4 were up at St. Joseph's Middle School at the start of the week taking part in the Quads Kids sporting event. On Wednesday, key stage 2 held a joint whole school Celebration of the Word in school, it was lovely to read all the positive comments from the parents who attended. We have shared one of the children's prayers, taken from this event:



Dear God,

Thank you for this beautiful planet. Bless it and keep it safe from harm. We pray for the protection of the animals, the soil, air and water. May we care for all you have made. Help us to love the Earth as you do. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.



On Thursday, pupils moving to St. Joseph's Middle School were visited by Mrs. Stoves who spoke to the children about what to expect when joining the middle school. The children also had lots of opportunities to ask questions too. Reception class visited Mass this morning and as usual were a credit to the school with their amazing behaviour!

Have a lovely weekend,

Mrs. Oakes

Staffing Changes

As we return for the last part of the summer term, we look ahead to staffing changes for the end of the school year. Mrs. Gormley is taking early retirement after 15 years at St. Mary's to spend more time with her family, especially her new granddaughter who was born earlier in the summer term. Teaching Assistant, Ms. Sandilands is also hanging up her lanyard and retiring at the end of this academic year after 11 years working for both St. Mary's and St Joseph's, with the last 6 years being at St Mary's. Both ladies will be sorely missed by both the staff and the children, and we can't thank them enough for all their hard work and dedication to the children and families of St. Mary's. We will have plenty of opportunity to say our farewells in the coming weeks and to wish both ladies all the best with their respective retirements.



Sun protection & waterproof coat

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 Transition

Following her transition visit on Thursday 6th June, Mrs. Stoves will be returning on the afternoon of Tuesday 11th June. Mrs. Stoves will escort pupils moving to St. Joseph's Middle School 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.

Year 4 Rounders Afternoon

Both St. Joseph's Middle school and Hexham Middle Schools have coordinated their respective rounders afternoon on Wed 26th June. Staff from St. Mary's will be escorting the pupils to both schools so there is no requirement for parents to do so. Children will need to wear their school PE kit, have a water bottle and waterproof coat as well as a hat/cap and have suncream applied before school if we are blessed with good weather on the day.

On Tuesday 9th July it is our Hexham Partnership Transfer Day. Parents/carers will be responsible for dropping and collecting their child at their respective middle school on this day.

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. **Your child should have returned home with a letter this week informing you about this event. Please can we ensure all letters are returned to school no later than Monday 10th June.**



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/>

Extra-curricular clubs

Clubs will begin week beginning 10th June. Summer 2 clubs are:

Fitness Club	Tuesday Lunch Y2-4
Singing club	Tuesday lunch Y1-4
Running club	Wednesday Morning 8.15-8.40 Y2-4
Times table club	Thursday lunch – Y4 only.
Mini Vinnies –	Monday 17 th June Tuesday 2 nd July

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.



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>

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	Jay	Elsie	Elizabeth
Year 1	Jacob	Noah	Olivia
Year 2	Ollie	Olivia	Ashton
Year 3	Jessica	Ellie	Zayn
Year 4	Ariella	Alfie	Ollie

St. Mary's Class Attendance	
This Week's Winners: Year 1 & 2	
<u>Reception</u>	98.18%
<u>Year 1</u>	100%
<u>Year 2</u>	100%
<u>Year 3</u>	95.45%
<u>Year 4</u>	98.18%



Attendance Ladder



Diary Dates

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 'Copyright & Ownership.' The children will learn that work they create using technology belongs to them and understand that work created by others does not belong to me even if I save a copy.

Please take a look at the following information and advice for parents and carers on supporting your child in discussing 'Copyright & Ownership':

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

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about PALWORLD

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

MATURE CONTENT (18+)
While Palworld may look cute and cuddly, the game does have its more mature moments. For example, if you try to catch a Pal and don't succeed, the game displays a mild swear word. There are also minor references to in-game mechanics like slaying when getting your pals to perform certain tasks for you. While the profanity is intended to be humorous, this could still be seen as being in poor taste.

VIOLENCE
Palworld has been referred to as "Pokémon with guns" and "Minecraft meets Farm Heroes". As the game progresses, Pals can be given firearms, and players can use them to fight back against them to fight by the player's side. There are some similarities to Minecraft in that players can use tools to kill other Pals or fight against bosses. The violence is cartoonish and stylized, but it's present.

SUGGESTIVE WRITING
Some of the descriptions found in the game menu - can be very suggestive and tend to be vulgar. The game makes a great balancing act on the line between age-appropriate and mature content, playing on the contrast between the two while never being outright explicit, which is possible that younger players won't notice this content, it's just as noticeable that they will.

ONLINE PLAY
Palworld can be played with other people online. On Xbox, players can only play with people on their friends list. On PC, however, up to 32 players can share in the same game, meaning in a large online world, and these players may not necessarily be known to the host before hand, it can be quite complicated to set up these servers. However, it can be quite complicated to set up these servers (online worlds) and they can be easy to keep online.

DIFFICULTY
Despite its endearing visuals, Palworld is actually an extremely difficult game in terms of defeating bosses, catching Pals and exploring the environment. It can be very tricky to take a lot of skill - or working together with a friend - to be successful, which may be off-putting or even aggravating to a player expecting something more like Minecraft or Pokémon.

Advice for Parents & Educators

WATCH GAMEPLAY
Watching gameplay and reviews for Palworld on sites like YouTube is the best accessible means of gathering information on it, second only to playing it for yourself. Currently, there are plenty of videos showing this game off to the internet at large, along with detailed breakdowns of what can be found or done within it.

LEND A HAND
By learning the basics of the game - for catching, tending, crafting items and building up a base - you can help to lower the difficulty for younger players. This, in turn, decreases the likelihood that such players will need to look online for tips and tricks, where they could quite easily stumble across more violent and mature content associated with the game.

SET CONTENT LIMITS
As Palworld is available on Xbox Game Pass, it's easy for players to access it. Any player subscribed to this service can simply find the title on Game Pass and the download button. If a child or young person isn't allowed to play Palworld, the best way to prevent them downloading it is regarding to be made age limits on their account. Setting the limit below 12 will not allow users to install Palworld.

PLAY TOGETHER
By playing Palworld yourself, you'll have the best chance of catching any content that you don't think is suitable for children, as well as getting an idea of how violence is presented in the game. The conflict is cartoonish in nature - wild players and Pals have the ability to use items, at which point it can become more intense, it's likely best for you to give it a look and form your own opinion.

PLACE BOUNDARIES
Limits options when it comes to online play. For players on PC, they'll still be able to cooperate with friends through the game's in-game options, much like Xbox users. Just because they have the option to run a dedicated server that's open to anyone doesn't mean they need to take it. The risk of interacting with strangers can be significantly lowered or even eliminated entirely by playing on servers which are restricted to friends only.

Meet Our Expert
Editor in Chief of gaming and experts site G4Geek, Lloyd Coombes has worked in the games media industry for five years. He's played every 3rd-gen title since the series began and, as a parent, also values the importance of online safety. Writing mainly about both both and fitness, his articles have been published on influential sites including IGN and TechRadar.

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