



St Mary's Catholic First School Newsletter –
Friday 19th July 2024

We love, we learn, we live.



Dear Parents and Carers,

It's hard to believe that we have reached the end of the academic year. The children have all worked extremely hard this year and deserve a well-earned rest over the summer holidays. Today, we say goodbye to our Year 4 children who have had a busy last week taking part in our Trust Celebration of Sport Event at Gateshead Stadium on Monday, Visiting the Stone Age in Wild Passport on Tuesday with Year 3, participating in their Leavers Mass on Thursday and ending today, displaying their many gifts in the Y4 Talent Show. A great way to end their time at St. Mary's, we will miss them all and wish them every success in their new middle schools!





It has been a busy week for the rest of the school too, Year 1 and Year 2 had a fantastic time at the Discovery Museum in Newcastle on Tuesday. Year 2 learnt all about the Great Fire of Newcastle and Gateshead. Year 1 learnt found out about how people travelled in the past. They had so much fun! During Celebration Assembly this week, all our children were awarded prizes for attending school and working hard. Our 100% attendance winners had a tea party yesterday, with the 10 children who had 100% attendance for the whole year having an extra treat in school this morning. Well done to all the children!

Sadly, today we say farewell to Mrs. Gormley, Ms. Sandilands and Miss. Lawson and wish them all the best in the next exciting chapter of their lives, we will miss them all terribly and can't thank them enough for all they have done for the children of St. Mary's. Mrs. Gormley and Ms. Sandilands have collectively given nearly 30 years of service to Catholic education in Hexham, making a huge impact to countless children and their families. Both ladies deserve to have more time for themselves, spending time with their families, we all wish them both a very 'Happy Retirement!'

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the children, staff and governors for their continued help and support throughout this year, I feel truly blessed to work with such amazingly dedicated individuals. Finally, I would also like to thank you as parents & carers for the continued support and encouragement that you have given to both the staff and children throughout the year. Our children's education is a partnership, and I am grateful that we can support the children's progress in working together so closely.

I hope you all have an amazing summer, spending time with family and friends and making fantastic memories. I look forward to welcoming those returning to St. Mary's on Tuesday 3rd September.

Wishing you all lovely summer,

Mrs. Oakes

Inhalers

Children with inhalers will bring their school inhaler home today. Please can any children requiring an inhaler bring a spare one (to remain in school) when school starts again in September.

Ready, Set, Read

Just a reminder that local libraries are launching their 'ready, Set, Read!' challenge for the summer. This year, the theme is **Marvellous Makers** and is all about creativity. There will be fantastic games and activities being run in libraries over the holidays, children can take part for FREE, either at the library OR online. There are certificates and medals to be won!

Follow this link for further information: [About-the-challenge | Summer Reading Challenge](#)

Year 3 & 4 Swimming

First swimming session is Monday 9th September. Can all Y3 & Y4 pupils come to school in their P.E kit. Please ensure they have swimwear, towel and a pair of goggles. There will be a termly payment set up in Arbor on returning in September.

Uniform

All children are expected to wear school uniform when they attend school. Please see the school website for uniform list: School Uniform – [School Uniform – St Mary's First School, Hexham \(bwcet.com\)](#)

Year 3 & 4 are permitted to wear their **school** PE kit on Monday & Tuesdays and only when attending sporting events. **Trainers are not permitted on days when the children do not have P.E. Thank you for your cooperation with this. Black Nike trainers do not constitute as school shoes.**

ORDER ONLINE – www.saltouk.com

Email – enquiries@saltouk.com

Tel – 01661 835240

School Uniform Recycling Service



At St. Mary's we are keen for families to utilise our recycling school uniform service, with the aim of reducing waste and recycling uniform items. School uniform is important to us and our pupils, and we want to ensure that we can make our uniform more 'eco-friendly'. Should you require specific uniform items, use the form on the school website uniform page. If you require some support with purchasing uniforms, please contact the school office. If you have any items of uniform you could donate to our recycling scheme, please hand them in at the school office at the start of the new term. All donations are greatly appreciated.

Shoe Box Appeal

Over the summer holidays many children will be getting new school shoes. Please can we ask that any shoe boxes are retained and brought into school at the start of the autumn term. We are hoping to take part in Operation Christmas Child during the autumn term, it would be great to have lots of boxes to get started with. [Operation Christmas Child | Samaritans Purse \(samaritans-purse.org.uk\)](https://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk)

Wild Passport

In September, pupils in years 1-4 will continue to take part in WILD Passport once a week. Wild passport is an outdoor learning curriculum with fully realized progressive skills. The WILD Passport provides children with weekly outdoor learning opportunities, taught by outdoor education experts. As such, we advise that children in years 1-4 have a pair of wellingtons and/or some sturdy walking boots, a waterproof coat & spare clothes in preparation for this. The sessions are due to take place each Tuesday.

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/>

Penalty Notice Information for Families

New legislation comes into force on 19th August 2024 regarding the issue of Penalty Notices to address attendance concerns. There will be a new "National Framework" which introduces consistency in the use of Penalty Notices across England by introducing a new national threshold at which they are considered. This will be met when a pupil has been recorded as absent for 10 sessions (5 school days) within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. To commence, there will be a transitional period, but this new legislation will take effect for absences recorded from the start of the new academic year commencing in September 2024. Please read the attached information from Northumberland LA Principal Education Welfare Officer, outlining the changes.

[Attendance – St Mary's First School, Hexham \(bwcet.com\)](https://www.bwcet.com)

Universal Free school Meals

Currently, pupils in reception, year 1 and year 2 are entitled to a free school meal thanks to a different government funding scheme known as universal infant free school meals (UIFSM).

If your child is in reception, year 1 or year 2 and is eligible for free school meals

We urge parents to still register because school will receive the extra pupil premium funding. In school, none of the children are aware of who is on FSM or not as they all access their lunch in the same way.

Your child might be eligible if you access:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or 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)
- See [gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals](https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals)

Pupils who are registered for free school meals don't have to eat them. If you're eligible but you want your child to have packed lunches you should still register because the school will receive the funding which can support your child in other ways. At St. Mary's Catholic First School, we receive an

extra £1480, for every eligible pupil who is registered for free school meals. This extra money could make a real difference to the quality of education we offer.

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	Evie	Felix	Jay
Year 1	Phuc	Eabha	Mikey
Year 2	Ashton	Charlotte	Miya
Year 3	Jessica	Zayn	Bao
Year 4	Kaylin	Nils	Grace

St. Mary's Class Attendance	
This Week's Winners - Year 2	
<u>Reception</u>	91.76%
<u>Year 1</u>	97.98%
<u>Year 2</u>	100%
<u>Year 3</u>	95.94%
<u>Year 4</u>	98.99%



Attendance Ladder



Diary Dates

Monday 2nd September	Start of academic year 2024-25 Teacher Training Day (no pupils in school)
Tuesday 3rd September	Pupils return to school for start of academic year 8.40am
Monday 9th September	Y3&Y4 Swimming starts

St. Mary's Safeguarding

Operation Encompass



St. Mary's is an Operation Encompass school, run in partnership with both Northumberland County Council and Northumbria Police. The project, which commenced in April 2015 aims to support children who are affected by domestic abuse. Operation Encompass aims to support children and young people who are affected by domestic abuse. Witnessing domestic abuse is really distressing for a child or young person, who often see the abuse, hear it from another room, see a parent's injuries or distress afterwards or can be physically hurt by trying to stop the abuse. Please visit the Operation Encompass for more information: [Home : Operation Encompass](#) & support services: [Northumberland-Support-Services.pdf \(bwcet.com\)](#)

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

Northumberland County Council, in partnership with the Solihull Approach, offer free access to online courses expertly designed for parents, carers, grandparents and teens living in the region. **All schools in Northumberland are in a pre-paid area for emotional health resources hub:**

<https://inourplace.co.uk/northumberland/>

This means parents can access a range of online support to better understand children's emotional health, brain development and wellbeing.

For more comms material and information you can contact vicki.collins@northumberland.gov.uk

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. Formerly 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 WORRY AND ANXIETY

Worry and anxiety are common emotions experienced by children, often triggered by uncertainty or fear. While worry involves concern about future events, anxiety is a persistent feeling of dread or apprehension. Current statistics indicate a rising prevalence of anxiety disorders among children, and this guide has some expert advice on understanding and addressing these concerns.

UNDERSTANDING WORRY AND ANXIETY

Worry and anxiety are emotional responses to stress or uncertainty. Worry is typically associated with potential misfortune, while anxiety is characterised by feelings of fear, apprehension or unease. Both can manifest physically through symptoms such as restlessness, fatigue or muscle tension. Understanding the distinction between worry and anxiety is crucial for effectively addressing these concerns in children.

DIFFERENTIATING WORRY FROM ANXIETY

While worry and anxiety share similarities – in that they both involve concerns about possible trouble – anxiety tends to be more constant and overwhelming. Worry may come and go depending on circumstances, whereas anxiety can linger regardless of the situation. It is essential to recognise when the former crosses into the latter, as anxiety can significantly impact a child's daily functioning and wellbeing.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES

Untreated worry and anxiety in childhood can have potentially lifelong impacts on a person's mental health and wellbeing. Chronic anxiety may increase the risk of developing anxiety disorders, depression or other mental health conditions later in life. Additionally, unresolved worry and anxiety can negatively impact self-esteem, confidence and overall resilience. It's essential to address these concerns proactively and provide appropriate support and intervention.

THE IMPACT ON CHILDREN

Excessive worry and anxiety can have profound effects on children's mental and emotional health. It may interfere with their ability to concentrate, sleep or participate in daily activities. Chronic worry and anxiety can also lead to physical symptoms such as headaches, stomach aches or difficulty breathing. Left unchecked, these concerns can escalate and potentially contribute to the development of anxiety disorders later in life.

THE EMOTIONAL TOLL

The emotional impact of worry and anxiety on children can be significant, affecting their overall quality of life and wellbeing. Children experiencing chronic worry or anxiety may feel overwhelmed, irritable or helpless. They may also withdraw from social activities or avoid situations that trigger their anxiety, leading to feelings of isolation or loneliness. Addressing these concerns early can help prevent long-term emotional distress and promote healthy coping strategies.

ACADEMIC & SOCIAL IMPACTS

Impacts on the academic performance and social interactions of children and young people are very possible. Frequent worry or anxiety may impair concentration, memory and problem-solving skills, making it difficult for children to succeed in education. Anxiety can also hinder social development by causing children and young people to avoid social situations or to struggle with communication and interpersonal relationships, potentially leading to feelings of isolation or exclusion.

Advice for Parents & Educators

ENCOURAGE OPEN COMMUNICATION

Parents and educators can foster a supportive environment by encouraging children to express their worries and anxieties openly. Actively listening and acknowledging young people's emotions can help them feel understood and supported, reducing the situation's intensity. Creating opportunities for regular check-ins and discussions about one's feelings can promote healthy coping strategies and strengthen communication bonds.

CREATE A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Parents and educators play a crucial role in creating a supportive environment that promotes emotional wellbeing. Establishing routines, providing predictability and offering reassurance can help relieve anxiety and create a sense of security for children. Foster a culture of empathy and understanding, where children feel safe enough to express their emotions and seek support when needed.

TEACH COPING STRATEGIES

Empowering children with effective coping strategies is essential for managing worry and anxiety. Encourage the use of relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, mindfulness or progressive muscle relaxation to calm anxious thoughts and promote a sense of composure. Additionally, teaching positive self-talk and problem-solving skills can help children develop resilience and confidence in managing challenging situations.

SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP

Recognising when to seek professional help is vital for addressing significant or persistent worry and anxiety in children. If worry or anxiety significantly impacts a child's daily functioning, interferes with their relationships or academic performance, or causes significant distress, it may be necessary to consult with a mental health practitioner. Early intervention can prevent long-term consequences and promote positive outcomes for children's psychological wellbeing.

Meet Our Expert

Adam Gillett is Associate Vice Principal for Personal Development at Penistone Grammar School and works on secondment one day a week for Minds Ahead, which collaborates with schools on improving their mental health provisions.



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Hexham Holiday Club
HIGH FIVE FEST
22nd-26th July
Hexham Holiday Club is a FREE event and open to all children aged 0-12 yrs
Please use this QR code or register at www.hexhamholidayclub.org.uk

Free Lunch for families in Hexham **With Activities and Space to Play**
Dish
Dinner in School Holidays
8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th August
@Trinity Methodist Church
DOORS OPEN 11:00AM FOOD SERVED 12-2PM
Text:- 07951 113413 to book