

ST MARY'S NEWSLETTER

FRIDAY 7TH NOVEMBER 2025

Dear parent/carer,

Welcome Back!

We hope you all had a restful and enjoyable half term. It was lovely to welcome the children back this week and to see them looking so smart for their school photographs on Wednesday—thank you for your support in preparing them so well.

On Thursday, children in Years 3 and 4 took part in a fantastic hockey session, where they learned key skills of the game including passing, dribbling, and teamwork. It was wonderful to see their enthusiasm and growing confidence on the pitch.



Just a reminder that we will be participating in Children in Need on **Friday 14th November**. To mark the occasion, children are invited to wear their spottiest outfits and anything Pudsey-themed in exchange for a £1 donation. Throughout the day, pupils will engage in a variety of activities linked to Children in Need and anti-bullying awareness.

Next week, we are also taking part in Anti-Bullying Week, which includes celebrating Odd Socks Day. We will be marking Odd Socks Day on **Monday 10th November** as part of Anti-Bullying Week. Children are invited to wear odd socks alongside their usual school uniform to celebrate individuality and kindness.



No donations are required for this event. This is simply a fun and inclusive way to highlight the importance of celebrating differences and promoting kindness and respect in school.

On **Tuesday 11th November**, year 3 will lead us in a whole school Celebration of the Word for Armistice Day. All families are welcome to join us at 9.30am in the school hall for this event.

Thank you for your continued support. We're looking forward to a busy and exciting half term ahead!

Mrs. Oakes



Share the love of Jesus, through the power of a simple gift, with children around the world.



The National Collection Week for the shoebox appeal is next week from the 10th-14th Nov. Any donations would be greatly received.



PTA Weekly Cake Winner- Frankie H
Thank you to Gracie and her mum Lois for donating this beautiful cake!



Homework-Regenerators Application form

Homework will commence today, Friday 7th November. This week, children in Years 2 to 4 have a slightly different English task: they are invited to complete an application form to become one of our school Regenerators (our combined School Council and Eco Council). This is a wonderful opportunity for pupils to express their ideas and take on leadership roles with environmental responsibility within our school community. Following the application process, successful candidates will be invited to attend an interview for the Regenerator posts.


As part of our commitment to embedding careers-related learning into the curriculum, we aim to help children begin thinking about their futures from an early age. This initiative supports that goal by encouraging aspiration and responsibility.

Shoe Box Appeal Reminder

We're supporting the Shoe Box Appeal again this year!

Collection Week starts Monday 17th November. We don't expect everyone to make a complete shoebox, any small donation that could be added to a shoebox would be appreciated. If you are preparing a shoe box, we kindly ask that you bring it to the school office by **Friday 14th November** so we can get everything ready in time for collection.

Your generosity helps make a big difference—thank you for your support!

 Operation Christmas Child Class Suggested Donations	
Reception	Toys: Small cuddly toys, dolls, toy cars, small musical instruments, yo-yos, skipping ropes, balls, small puzzles etc
Years 1 & 2	School Supplies: Pens, pencils & sharpeners, crayons/felt pens, stamps & ink pad sets, writing pads/notebooks, solar calculators, colouring/picture books etc
Years 3 & 4	Hygiene Items: Toothbrush, bars of wrapped soap, comb or hairbrush, flannel etc Other Items: Hat, gloves, scarf, cap, socks, T-shirt, flip-flops, hair accessories, jewellery set, wind up torch.
	Please do not include the following items: Toothpaste, sweets, lotions and liquids, used or damaged items, war-related items, seeds, gum, chocolate or food items, medicines, aerosol cans, sharp or fragile items.



Basketball Opportunity with Shooting Stars North East

We're delighted to share that Anthony Forrester, founder of Shooting Stars North East, will be visiting our school on Friday 14th November to work with children in Years 2 to 4. Anthony brings a wealth of experience, having spent seven years as the Primary Age Specialist at Newcastle Eagles. Now based in Hexham, he's keen to connect with local schools and share his passion for basketball. During his visit, he'll lead engaging sessions where every child gets a ball and a chance to enjoy the sport in a fun, inclusive way. He'll also speak during our whole school assembly and hopes to introduce evening coaching opportunities for interested pupils. We're excited to welcome him and explore how this could enrich our sports programme. On the 14th November, Year 2 can change into their PE kit in school. Children can come to school wearing their school PE kit or change into their PE kit if they would rather wear a Children In Need themed outfit that day.

Jubilee Celebration Day

Jubilee Celebration Day is on 21st November. This day is part of the Holy Jubilee Year celebrated by the Catholic Church, focusing on themes of hope & community. To mark the day, school will celebrate Mass on **Friday 21st November** at St. Mary's Church at 9.30am (all families are welcome to join us for mass). As part of our Jubilee celebrations, we are delighted to invite parents and carers to join us in school for another special art activity with their child on **Wednesday 26th November 2:00-2:45pm**. The art activity will be a wonderful opportunity to share in the spirit of the Jubilee, celebrate our school community, and create lasting memories together. We look forward to welcoming you into school and sharing this special time with you and your child.

Regenerators Clothes swap

After the huge success last year, our Regenerators club are organising an in-school clothes swap as part of their whole school recycling mission. If you are having a clothes sort out over half-term, the Regenerators would appreciate any donations of unwanted / preloved children's clothes. On **Wednesday 26th November 2:45pm** (following on from the Jubilee art afternoon), parents/carers will be invited into the school hall and take whatever clothing they would like. **We are especially looking for donations of any pre-loved Christmas jumpers in advance of Christmas jumper days in December.** This is a **FREE** event which our Regenerators hope can help reduce clothes waste. Please can any clothing donations be brought to the main reception clearly labelled as 'Clothes Swap'.

Key Stage 2-Tyne Rivers Trust-

On Friday 28th November, years 3 & 4 are participating in a fully funded learning session with the Tyne Rivers Trust interactive river model based at the Queen's Hall, Hexham. Thanks to funding from the Reece Foundation, the interactive model of the Tyne catchment helps pupils explore how climate change affects river systems. Featuring flowing water, rainfall zones, and interchangeable parts, the model demonstrates how land management techniques—like leaky dams, tree planting, and peatland restoration—can slow water flow and reduce flooding. It highlights how upstream actions impact downstream outcomes, encouraging thoughtful discussion on natural flood management and climate resilience. Children will attend the event during the afternoon, returning to school for the usual home time.

Scholastic Book Club

For every £1 you spend on this month's Book Club, our school will earn 20p in Scholastic Rewards. Please place your order online by **November 14th, 2025**. A link has been sent to your email today.

Christmas Class Advent Celebration of the Word

On the morning of **Thursday 4th December**, we would like to invite parents into classes to participate in the children's RE Advent topic Celebration of the Word. These are short classroom-based celebrations where the children, gather, listen, respond and say how they will 'go forth' with their Advent mission. The children love seeing their parents/carers in class, so please join us if you are available. Timings are as follows: • Year 1: 9.30-9.40am • Year 2- 9.40-9.50am • Year 3-9.50-10.00am • Year 4- 10:00-10:10am • Reception-10:10-10:20am

Christmas Fair

On Thursday 4th December, the PTA are holding a Christmas Fair in the school hall. Families are invited into the hall from 2.45-3.15pm (before the children are dismissed at 3.15pm). Once children are dismissed, families can return to the fair with their children to look at the stalls. Donations for tombola items, cuddly toys, gift bags, toys, books etc. would be greatly appreciated, just drop off at the main school office.

If you can help out on the day please contact the school office.

Each class will be having their own stall, the class teachers will send out more information.

Santa Dash

On **Friday 5th December**, children can come to school wearing their school uniform, exchanging their usual school jumper/cardigan for a Christmas jumper if they wish. As the children are taking part in a Santa Dash fun-run that day, we also recommend that children also bring their trainers into school too (Reception & KS1 can use PE trainers kept in school). If anyone has donations of pre-loved Christmas jumpers that they would like to donate to other children in school, then please deliver these to the main school office in time for our 'Clothes Swap' on the 26th November.

Nativity Performances

We are having two repeat performances both at 9.30am in the school on **Tuesday 9th and Wednesday 10th December**. Information on tickets will be sent out in the coming weeks.

Christmas Jumper Day (Save the Children) & School Pantomime Trip

On **Thursday 11th December**, children can come to school wearing their usual school uniform along with their Christmas jumper as it is Christmas Jumper Day. We are asking for a donation of £1 for the charity 'Save the Children'. The children will also be visiting the Queen's Hall in the morning to see the pantomime Red Riding Hood at the Queen's Hall.

Christmas Lunch

On **Wednesday 17th December** we are having our school Christmas lunch in school. Children who are not usually on school dinners will be permitted to purchase this meal for the one day, whilst remaining on packed lunch for the rest of the week. If your child is usually on packed lunch but wishes to have a Christmas dinner, please let the office know as soon as possible and before Friday 29th November. Children are permitted to wear their school uniform, exchanging their usual school jumper/cardigan for a Christmas jumper on this day if they wish.

Christingle Making & Christingle

Families are invited into school early (2:45-3:15pm) on **Wednesday 17th December**, for a cup of tea and to make their own Christingle in readiness for our Christingle service on **Thursday 18th December** at 9.30am in St. Mary's Catholic Church. School will provide all the resources, but if you do have any spare red ribbon, sweets, oranges and/or birthday cake candles feel free to bring them along. We will be taking donations for Save the Children too (feel free to wear your Christmas jumper!) for anyone who wishes to contribute.

Friday 19th December

Friday 19th December is the last day of the autumn term and in line with the Hexham Partnership St. Mary's will be closing at the earlier time of **1.30pm**.

School Meals

If you would like to take a look at the Winter & Spring 25 Garden Kitchen menu, please find our school menu's on the school website.

Penalty Notice Information for Families

Since 2024, the government introduced legislation regarding the issue of Penalty Notices to address attendance concerns. There is a "National Framework" which introduces consistency in the use of Penalty Notices across England by introducing a 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. For further information please see our website 'Attendance' page: Attendance – St Mary's First School, Hexham (bwcet.com)

Reception Starters 2026

Online Admissions Portal for First and Primary school admissions will be open on the 1st of November 2025.
https://schadm.northumberland.gov.uk/CitizenPortal_LIVE/en

(You need to register as a new user if you haven't used the Portal before. If you've forgotten your password, click on forgotten password link) - (for late applications see below). You must complete an application for a place in a Reception class even if your child attends the school nursery or pre-school setting.



Mini Vinnie's - Miss Baird (Y1-Y4)	Wednesday Lunch
Singing Mrs Stansfield (Y1-4)	Tuesday lunch
Games Miss Wright (Y1-Y4)	Wednesday 3.15-4pm
Regenerators Miss Stoves (Y2-4)	Thursday lunch
Dance Mrs Hogg (Y1-4)	Thursday 3:15-4pm
Well Being Club Mrs Stoves (Y1-Y4)	Friday 8.20am
Colouring Miss Carr (Y2-Y4)	Friday lunch

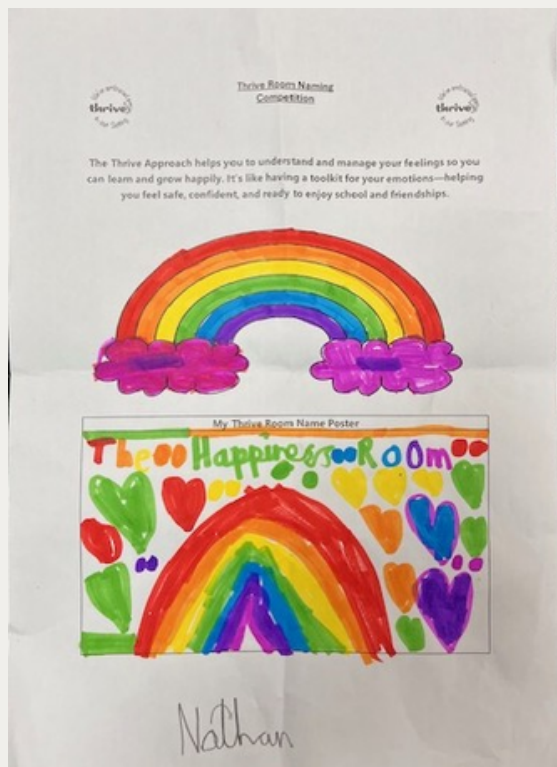
**Updated clubs and activities for next term.
Clubs will start w/c Monday 10th November.**



Class Masses

Throughout the year each class has the opportunity to attend Mass at St. Mary's Catholic Church. Mass is lead by our Parish Priests Fr Jeff and Fr. Paul. Class Masses are usually held on Fridays at 9:30am and all parents/carers and families are welcome to attend these events. Please see rota below for details of dates for each class.

14 th November	Cancelled -Y3 Class Mass St. Mary's Catholic Church 9.30am. Y3 attending with Y4 on the 7 th Nov instead.
21 st November	Whole school Jubilee Day Mass St. Mary's Catholic Church 9.30am
28 th November	Rec and KS1 Mass St. Mary's Catholic Church 9.30am
Thursday 18 th December	Whole School Christingle Service St. Mary's Catholic Church 9.30am



Thrive Room Naming Competition Winner

Nathan Y3

The children had to design a Thrive Room Poster, this will be displayed in Mrs Stoves' room for everyone to enjoy. Well done!



Monday 10 th Nov	Odd Socks Day-Start of Anti-Bullying Week runs from 10 th -14 th Nov, aimed at celebrating individuality & embracing differences. No donations required, just school uniform and odd socks to be worn on Monday 10 th November.
Tues 11 th Nov	Y3 Armistice Day Celebration of the Word in school hall 9.30am. Parents/carers welcome to join us for this event.
Friday 14 th November	Shooting Stars Basketball Assembly and coaching-Years 2-4. Pupils to wear PE kit for the sessions. Year 2 can change in school. KS2 can come to school wearing their school PE kit and/or change in school if dressed for Children In Need.
Friday 14 th November	Children In Need-Raising money for disadvantaged children & young people around the UK. Suggested donation £1. (Scholastic Book Club Ends- all orders will be sent to school and handed out.)
Fri 21 st Nov	Jubilee Celebration Day-Parents/carers welcome into school from 2-2.45pm to support their child(ren) in art activity. Further information to follow.
Wed 26 st Nov	Jubilee Celebration Day-Parents/carers welcome into school from 2-2.45pm to support their child(ren) in art activity. Further information to follow.
Wed 26 th Nov	Regenerators Clothes Swap in hall 2:45pm-parents/carers only. (Follows on from Jubilee Art Afternoon)
Friday 28 th Nov	Key Stage 2-Tyne Rivers Trust Learning Trip.



Thursday 4 th December	<p>Christmas Fair in school hall. Parents/carers invited from 2.45pm (children remain in school until 3.15pm) Following school pick-up, children can attend the fair with parents/carers after school. Donations needed - Tombola items, cuddly toys, gift bags, toys, books etc.</p> <p>If you can help out on the day please contact the school office.</p> <p>Each class will be having their own stall, the class teachers will send out more information.</p> <p>Class Advent Celebration of the Word. Parents welcome to join their child(ren) in class to participate in their end of Advent RE topic celebration. (Timings outlined above)</p>
Friday 5 th December	<p>Santa Dash-Children can wear school uniform and Christmas jumper/Christmas accessory if they wish. Children will need trainers for this event.</p>
Tuesday 9 th & Wednesday 10 th December	<p>Nativity performances at 9.30am in school information. Further information to follow nearer the time, just to allow parents to book time off work if needed. Just a reminder that on the 10th December, there will be no parking in the church car park due to their Mass.</p>
Thursday 11 th December	<p>Christmas Jumper Day (& usual school uniform)- Save the children-suggested donation £1.</p> <p>Queen's Hall Whole School Panto - Red Riding Hood. Payments of £10.50 are now live on the Arbor app, found under 'Trips'. The deadline date for payment is Friday 21st November. This will secure your child's place on the trip.</p> <p>Bag2School Collection 8am - can all bags be brought to the school office by Wednesday 10th December.</p>
Wednesday 17 th December	<p>Forum Christmas Movie Trip £8.00 per pupil. For whole school. Payments are now live on the Arbor app, can the trip be paid no later than 21st November. This payment secures your child's place on the trip. (U movie TBC)</p> <p>Christmas Lunch day- After the Forum Cinema trip. <u>Pupils are welcome to wear their usual school uniform along with their Christmas jumper if they wish.</u></p> <p>Christingle Making for parents/carers 2.45-3.15pm in school hall. Time for a cuppa and a catch up too!</p>
Thursday 18 th December	<p>Whole school Christingle service in St. Mary's Catholic Church 9.30am-all families welcome to join us.</p>
Friday 19 th December	<p>Last day of autumn term. School closes early at 1.30pm.</p>



Value Award Winners



Class	WE LOVE	WE LEARN	WE LIVE
Reception	Loriea	Robson	Lottie
Year 1	Luna	Lola	Zeke
Year 2	Evie	Josie	Fraser
Year 3	Florence	Lumen	Jacob
Year 4	Heidi	Ollie	Kaciey



St. Mary's Class Attendance Winners- Well done Reception & Year 2	
Reception	100%
Year 1	93.21%
Year 2	100%
Year 3	98.33%
Year 4	98.41%



St Mary's Safeguarding Information

Pupil Support & Safeguarding

Designated Safeguarding Lead- Mrs. Oakes

Deputy Safeguarding Lead-Miss. Baird, Mrs. Stansfield & Miss. Stoves

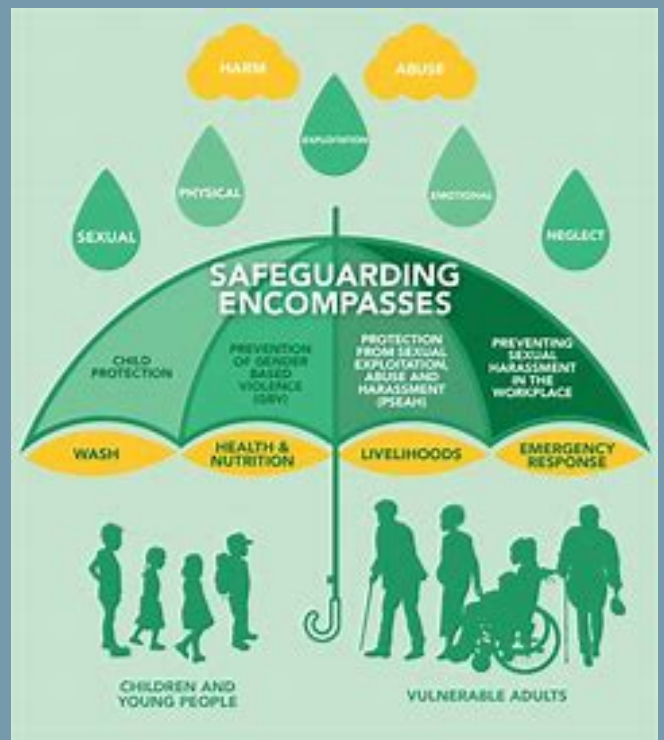
Assistant Safeguarding Lead-Mrs. Stoves

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 (info@smfs.bwcet.com)

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)



10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators
GUIDING YOUNG VOICES TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Bullying impacts the lives of many young people. In the UK, one in five pupils aged 10 to 15 report being bullied. The effects can be long lasting, affecting mental health, school attendance and self-esteem, and can impact long-term development into adult life. Adults play a key role in building young people's confidence to speak out, support one another, and stand up to unkind behaviour. This guide offers ways to help youngsters make a positive difference.

- 1 CELEBRATE DIFFERENCES**
Help young people value diversity by showing that what makes us different is what makes us strong. Encourage them to learn about different cultures, identities, and abilities through books, stories, and activities. Only supporting young people in their differences can create a more inclusive and welcoming environment.
- 2 MODEL RESPECT**
Children watch and learn from how adults behave. Use respectful language, show respect in disagreements, and treat others with fairness – especially in front of children. By modeling inclusive behavior and challenging unkindness, adults set a lasting example that respect should be part of every interaction, whether online, at school, or at home. Be the change you want to see.
- 3 SPOT THE SIGNS**
Adults and young people should learn how to recognise signs that someone may be experiencing bullying. This might include withdrawal from friends, hobbies or interests, changes in mood, reluctance to go to school or unusual injuries. Helping young people recognise these clear warning signs can be offered sooner and problems do not go unrecognised.
- 4 VALIDATE FEELINGS**
When a child shares something that worries them, it's important that you listen carefully and validate how they feel. Recognise that it's okay to feel upset or confused. Offering reassurance and understanding helps young people feel safe about opening up, and builds the trust needed to talk openly in future.
- 5 TEACH ALLYSHIP**
Show children how to stand up for others in safe, respectful ways. Allyship might look like sitting next to someone who is being excluded, reporting hurtful behaviour, or speaking up when they witness bullying. By practicing these responses together, you're helping children develop the courage to be kind and to take action when it really counts.
- 6 PROMOTE REPORTING**
Ensure young people know how to report bullying and feel confident that they'll be taken seriously. Talk to them about who they can speak to and what to expect when they do, such as reporting school incidents to teachers, and out-of-school bullying to parents or teachers. Reassure them that reporting is a brave and helpful choice – not tattling – and that it plays a vital role in keeping everyone safe.
- 7 ENCOURAGE KINDNESS**
Everyday acts of kindness can make a big difference in creating safer, happier spaces. Encourage children to look out for one another by being helpful, saying kind words, or including someone who feels left out. These small actions set a strong example that kindness matters, and that it plays a vital role in keeping everyone safe.
- 8 USE YOUR VOICE**
Encourage young people to speak up for themselves and others. Whether through starting school campaigns or peer-led projects, children can learn that their voice has power. Support them to express themselves confidently and safely, helping them understand that sharing experiences can challenge injustice and inspire real change in their communities.
- 9 BUILD COMMUNITY AND BELONGING**
Children thrive when they feel supported. Help them build strong friendships, join clubs or teams, and connect with trusted adults who care. These networks offer comfort, encouragement, and protection – particularly during challenging times. Remind children that they don't have to face difficulties alone and that support is always within reach.
- 10 SUSTAIN THE CONVERSATION**
Bullying awareness shouldn't be limited to one week each year. Create regular opportunities to talk about kindness, respect, and inclusion. Use books, news stories, and personal experiences as conversation starters. Embed anti-bullying messages into the school, and make tackling bullying a shared, ongoing commitment.

Meet Our Expert
Robert Allery is an experienced pastoral and safeguarding practitioner, specialising in tutorials, behaviour interventions, and attendance management. A member of the House of Commons, he has helped raise standards and improve student outcomes in some of the country's most challenging schools and colleges.

Wake Up Wednesday
The National College

See full reference list on our website:
@wake_up_weds | www.thenationalcollege | @wake.up.wednesday | @wake.up.weds
Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 08.11.2023

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