

St Mary's Newsletter

Friday 4th September 2026

Dear Parent/Carers,

Welcome back! I hope you all had a wonderful summer break. It has been a joy hearing about the children's holiday adventures and the memories they have made with their families this summer. We would like to extend our heartfelt congratulations to two members of our St Mary's team who celebrated their weddings over the summer holidays. Congratulations to the new Mrs Brown and Mrs Peterson, who were both fortunate enough to enjoy beautiful sunshine on their special days. We are delighted to hear that both celebrations were filled with love, laughter, and wonderful memories shared with family and friends. We are pleased to share a photograph of both brides on their wedding days and hope you will join us in wishing them every happiness as they begin this exciting new chapter of their lives.

This week, we were delighted to welcome our new Reception children, along with other new pupils and their families, to St Mary's. We would like to take this opportunity to extend a very warm welcome to you all as you become part of our school community. Starting school is a truly special milestone, filled with exciting new experiences, friendships, and opportunities for your child to grow in confidence and independence. We are privileged to be part of this important chapter and look forward to working in partnership with you as we support your child's learning and development throughout their time at St Mary's.

As part of our commitment to working in partnership with families, we will be hosting a series of curriculum workshops during the week beginning 14th September. These sessions will offer valuable insight into your child's learning for the year ahead, including curriculum expectations, key topics, and ways to support learning both in and beyond the classroom. Please see key dates & times outlined below.

Don't forget that weekly class updates are available on our website under the 'Classes' section. These posts provide a snapshot of learning, key events and memorable moments from the week, helping families stay connected with what their children are doing in school.

Although it has been a shorter week, we have been incredibly impressed with how quickly the children have settled back into school. They have returned ready to learn, approached their work with enthusiasm, and adapted to new routines with great maturity. The children have also looked exceptionally smart in their school uniforms. To help us reunite any misplaced items with their owners, please ensure that all uniform, coats, PE kits, water bottles, and lunch boxes are clearly labelled if you have not already done so.

We have been particularly proud of the warm welcome shown to our new starters across the school. The kindness, friendliness, and support demonstrated by our children have helped everyone feel part of the St. Mary's family from day one. Well done to all our pupils for making such a positive start to the term.

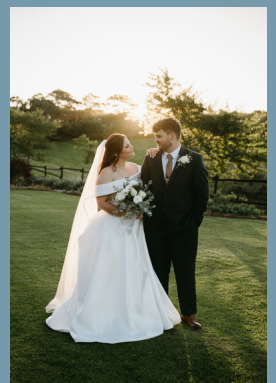
Have a lovely weekend,

Mrs. Oakes



Back to School Prayer

Lord Jesus, we ask for Your help as we begin this new school year. Allow us to experience Your presence in the many blessings You put before us. Open our eyes to the new challenges and exciting opportunities that this new school year brings. Amen.



Extra-curricular club

A new list of clubs will be shared with you next week.



Reminder

Reminder for Parents - Mobile Phones

We would like to remind parents of the Hexham Partnership's shared approach to mobile phones. In line with the Department for Education's Mobile Phones in Schools guidance, all partnership schools operate a mobile phone-free school day. Our full Mobile Phone Policy is available on the St Mary's website. We would particularly like parents of pupils moving into middle school to be aware that the expectation across the partnership is that children in these year groups will not be provided with a smartphone. Where parents feel a phone is necessary for communication or safety reasons, a non-smartphone ('brick' phone) and/or a tracking device may be used. Any device brought into school must be switched off and stored in accordance with each school's policy.

At St Mary's, children in Years 1-3 are not permitted to walk home alone. In the **Summer Term of Year 4**, pupils may walk home independently with parental consent. Parents wishing their child to do so must complete the school's Mobile Phone & Walking Home Consent Form (please contact the school office for further information). To support safe travel arrangements, Year 4 pupils who have permission to walk home alone may bring a **non-smartphone** into school. These phones, along with any tracking devices, are stored securely in the school office during the day and returned to pupils at the end of the school day. Thank you for your support in helping us create safe, focused learning environments that promote children's wellbeing, learning and positive social interaction.

Reading Books & Homework

All children in years 1-4 are currently completing their Star reading assessments and will be issued with a reading book in due course. Reading books and homework will commence on Friday 11th September, more information on reading and homework will be given at the Parent Curriculum Workshops. Following this, the Homework Policy will be shared with all parents/carers. All children In Reception and Year 1 will bring a Read, Write Inc phonics book home. Please complete and sign your child's Reading Record when you have listened to them read.

Year 3 & 4 Swimming

First swimming session is Monday 7th September. Can all Y3 & Y4 pupils come to school in their **school** P.E kit. Please ensure they have swimwear, towel and a pair of goggles. It is also essential that children have a waterproof jacket as we walk to the Wentworth Leisure Centre and back. Children will be asked to remove all earrings and jewelry prior to swimming.

Parent Curriculum Workshops

The week beginning 14th September, parents are invited into school slightly earlier to participate in our curriculum workshops to find out more about the curriculum your child will cover this academic year and how you can best support them. There will also be some informative safeguarding information being shared at these sessions. As the workshops are during school hours, the children will be supervised elsewhere in school to make the events accessible to more parents. All sessions will finish before the end of the school day. Workshops are as follows:

- Early Years (Reception)-Wednesday 16th September 2.30-3.15pm
- Key Stage 1 (Years 1 & 2)-Monday 14th September 2.45-3.15pm
- Key Stage 2 (Years 3 & 4)-Tuesday 15th September 2.45-3.15pm

If you are unable to attend the workshops and would like to hear the information, please contact the class teacher to arrange a convenient time.

Reception Welcome Mass

On Wednesday 30th September at 9:30am we have our Reception 'Welcome Mass' at St. Mary's Catholic Church, welcoming our new Reception pupils into St. Mary's. All parents and carers are invited to attend this service.

Celebration of the Word

This year, we are introducing Class Celebrations of the Word at St Mary's Catholic Church. These liturgical gatherings will provide a more relaxed and age-appropriate opportunity for children to pray, reflect, and engage with Scripture in a meaningful way. Each class will have the opportunity to lead a Celebration of the Word, supported by school staff and our parish priests. Parents, carers, and family members are warmly invited to join their child's class for these special occasions, which will take place at St Mary's Catholic Church on Wednesdays at 10.45am. We look forward to sharing these moments of prayer and reflection with our families throughout the year. Please see the rota below for your child's class date.

Year 4 Whole School Celebration of the Word

We would like to invite you to participate in Year 4's International Day of Peace Celebration of the Word marking International Day of Peace on Wednesday 16th September. Year 4 will be leading the prayer & worship in the school hall at 9.30am. All parents and carers are invited to attend this event.

MacMillan Cancer Care Coffee Afternoon

On the afternoon of Friday 25th September from 2.45pm, we would like to invite all friends and families of St. Mary's to our MacMillan Cancer Care Coffee Afternoon. We will be asking for donations of cakes and treats for this event, all funds raised will be going to MacMillan Cancer Care one of the largest British charities, providing specialist health care, information and financial support to people affected by cancer.

Year 2 Whole School Celebration of the Word

We would like to invite you to participate in Year 2's Celebration of the Word marking World Mental Health Day on Wednesday 7th October. Year 2 will be leading the prayer & worship in the school hall at 9.30am. All parents and carers are invited to attend this event.

Shoe Box Appeal

Over the summer holidays many children will have had 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.

Wild Passport

Every Tuesday, all pupils in years 1-4 will continue to take part in WILD Passport sessions. Wild Passport is an outdoor learning curriculum with fully realised 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 set of clothes (left in school) in preparation for this. We also suggest sending the children in with a spare set of clothes (to remain in school), just in case they get muddy or wet during their session!

Parents Evenings

We would like to invite parents into school to look at your child's books in the week before our autumn parents evening. School will be open for parents and children from 3.20-4:00pm on Tuesday 13th and Thursday 15th October. Children will have their school books on their desks to show their grown-ups all their hard work so far this term. Parents Evenings will be held on Monday 19th and Thursday 22nd October. Details on how to register for these events will be given nearer the time.

School Meals

If you would like to take a look at the Garden Kitchen menu, please take a look on our school website. School lunches are now £3.00 for pupils in Y3 & Y4.

Packed lunches

We would like to remind parents/carers that St. Mary's Catholic First School is a nut-free school due to children in our care who have severe nut allergies. To help us keep all pupils safe, please ensure that no nuts or nut-containing products are included in your child's packed lunch or snacks. This includes items such as:

- Peanut butter
- Nut-based cereal bars
- Chocolate spreads containing hazelnuts (e.g., Nutella)
- Cakes or biscuits with nuts



Even trace amounts can pose a serious risk, so your vigilance is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your continued support in keeping our school a safe environment for all children.

Snacks & drinks

The School Fruit & Vegetable Scheme is a government program that entitles all pupils in Early Years and Key Stage 1 to a piece of fruit or vegetable, each school day. Children in Key Stage 2 are permitted to bring in a healthy snack for break if they wish (chocolate bars & sweets do not constitute as healthy snacks). Children are permitted to bring in a labelled water bottle into school each day, containing water only. Fizzy drinks are not permitted.

Uniform

It has been lovely to see all the children looking smart in their school uniforms. Trainers are not permitted (except for KS2 on Mondays for PE). Thank you for your cooperation with this. Black Nike trainers do not constitute as school shoes. Please can children bring in a waterproof coat to school each day, the weather can be changeable and we like to get the children outside as much as possible. ORDER ONLINE – www.saltouk.com /Email enquiries@saltouk.com/Tel – 01661 835240

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).

Online applications - Reception & Middle School Starters 2027

Online Admissions Portal for First and Primary school admissions will be open on the 1st of November 2026. 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 a nursery or pre-school setting.

Year 5 (Middle) Applications for 2027/28

Online admissions portal will open on 12 September 2026.

If this is your first time applying, you will need to sign up via Northumberland County Council portal.

If you have used the system before, you will be asked to enter your username and password.

Dates for the Diary



Monday 7 th September	Start of Y3 & Y4 Swimming Lessons
Saturday 12 th September	Middle School Admissions Portal Opens
W/C 14 th September	Parent Curriculum Workshops - see info above
Wednesday 16th September	Y4 Whole School Celebration of the Word (9am in school)
Wednesday 30 th September	Reception Welcome Mass at 9.30am (In church)
Friday 25 th September	Macmillan Coffee Afternoon 2.45pm (school hall)
Wednesday 7 th October	Y2 Whole school-Celebration of the Word-(9am in school)
Tuesday 13th and Thursday 15th October	Parents to look at their child's books ahead of Parents Evening the following week (3.20-4pm)
Tuesday 13 th & Thursday 15 th October	Parents Evening 3.30-5.30pm



Date	Class CotW or Whole school CotW or Mass	Time & Location
Wed 16 th Sept	Y4 whole school-International Day of Peace CotW	School hall-9am
Wed 23 rd Sept	Y4 Class CotW	St. Mary's Catholic Church 10:45am
Wed 30 th Sept	Whole school-Reception Welcome Mass	St. Mary's Catholic Church 9.30am
Wed 7 th Oct	Y2 whole school Mental Health Day CotW	School hall-9am
Wed 14 th Oct	Y3 Class CotW	St. Mary's Catholic Church 10:45am
Wed 21 st Oct	Y2 Class CotW	St. Mary's Catholic Church 10:45am
Wed 4 th Nov	Y1 Class CotW	St. Mary's Catholic Church 10:45am
Wed 11 th Nov	Y3 whole school Armistice Day CotW	School hall-9am
Wed 18 th Nov	KS2- Class CotW	St. Mary's Catholic Church 10:45am
Wed 25 th Nov	KS1-Class CotW	St. Mary's Catholic Church 10:45am
Wed 16 th Dec	Whole school Christingle service	St. Mary's Catholic Church 11:00am

Winner Board



Class	WE LOVE	WE LEARN	WE LIVE
Reception			
Year 1			
Year 2			
Year 3	Value winners will start next week		
Year 4			



**Attendance
Matters**

Every student. Every day.



Attendance
Ted



St. Mary's Class Attendance Winners-

Well done - Y1

Reception	98.33%
Year 1	100%
Year 2	96.67%
Year 3	97.89%
Year 4	99.09%

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)

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



www.stmaryshexham.bwcet.com



[@stmaryscatholicfirstschoolhexham](https://www.facebook.com/stmaryscatholicfirstschoolhexham)



Diocese of
Hexham & Newcastle



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First Holy Communion Shop

First Holy Communion dresses
available to borrow FREE of CHARGE

Open **10am to 3pm**

Saturday 6 February 2027

BWCET Centre, Nissan Way, Barmston,
Washington, SR5 3NY

To book an appointment, please email

Ethos@bwcet.com

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