



St Mary's RC Primary School
Called to love as God Loves



DECEMBER

Newsletter

As we begin the holy season of Advent and approach the festive season, we are delighted to share with you the exciting events taking place at our wonderful school.

Christmas Fair

Our parish Christmas Fair was a roaring success! The children had an absolute ball meeting Santa. A massive thank you to all who contributed for their efforts. The PTA raised over £800 for school. Thanks so much to our volunteers. Your spirit and dedication makes events like this possible, a special thanks to our student council who gave up their Saturday to support the school by working on one of our stalls.



Parliament Week Assembly

Our Student Council marked UK Parliament week by preparing a special assembly educating our children in KS2 on how decisions are made in our parliament and how MPs are democratically elected.



Parents Survey

Many thanks for completing our recent parents' survey. Seventy Seven families contributed and the results are overwhelmingly positive. We will provide the results and our response to your comments in a '**You Said, We Did**' letter before term ends. We value all of your contributions and are proud of the relationships that we have with our amazing families

Pantomime Trip

All our children were able to experience the festive fun of a pantomime the older children enjoyed Aladdin at Middleton Arena and our EYFS children Cinderella in school. All had a wonderful time and this was a lovely way to kick off the festive period. As always our children were impeccably behaved. Well done all!



After School Clubs

Our list of after school clubs will open on the website on Monday 15th December. Book early to avoid disappointment. There are still places in wrap around provision, for both breakfast and after school care, to support all of our working families from 7.45am - 5.30pm. Please contact the office if you require further information.



KS2 House Point Winners

Our KS2 children are grouped into houses named after significant people born in our locality – Turing (WW2 codebreaker), Pankhurst (Suffragette), Lowry (significant artist) and Walkden (first female police officer in the GMP). Each house captain counts their house points, with a treat awarded to the house with the most points at the end of term. If your child is in the winning house you will receive an email outlining the reward for this term – it's a Christmas extravaganza!



Arbor and Communications Update

Thank you to everyone who took part in our recent survey. Many of you told us that the school currently sends too many messages and that information can be spread across too many platforms. We've listened to your feedback and are making some changes to help streamline how we communicate. From now on, text messages will only be used for urgent information. All other updates and letters will be sent via email through Arbor and as in-

app messages. In addition, all letters will continue to be uploaded to our school website on the Letters to Home page.



Parking Reminder

Our school gets very busy both in the morning and at collection time. Can we gently remind you not to park across resident's driveways or on the zig zags outside school which are there to keep our children safe. Please use the church car park at these busy times.



Key Dates for Your Diary: Autumn Term 2025/Spring Term 1 2026

	Autumn 2 2025
05.12.25	Parish Feast Day Mass and Celebrations
09.12.25	EYFS Nativity. Letter sent on 20.11.25
10.12.25	EYFS Nativity. Letter sent on 20.11.25
11.12.25	KS1 – Y1 Nativity
11.12.25	KS2 Carol Concert in Church 7.00pm
12.12.25	KS1 – Y2 Nativity
12.12.25	Y4 Cornet Concert at 2.30pm
15.12.25	Reception/KS1 Christmas Jumper Day (please see poster for times)
15.12.25	KS2 Secret Room
15.12.25	Nursery Craft Morning 9.00am
15.12.25	Year 1 Miss Green's Craft afternoon 2.30pm
16.12.25	KS2 Christmas Jumper Day
16.12.25	Year 1 Mrs McDougall Craft afternoon 2.30pm
17.12.25	Nursery/Reception Year 5/6 Christmas Parties
18.12.25	Reception Craft Morning 9.00am
18.12.25	Year 1/2/3/4 Christmas Parties
19.12.25	School Closes 1.30pm

	Spring 1 2026
05.01.26	School Opens
06.01.26	The Feast of the Epiphany. Whole School Mass 9.30am in Church
13.01.26	Parenting Workshop in Meeting Room
14.01.26	Football Tournament Oldham Leisure Centre
16.01.26	Year 6 Class Mass 9.30am in Church
23.01.26	Year 2 Class Mass 9.30am in Church
30.01.26	Year 3 Parents' Assembly
30.01.26	Pupil Chaplains Visit To The St Carlos Acutis Relics
30.01.26	Year 4 Class Mass 9.30am in Church
02.02.26	Mental Health Awareness Week
04.02.26	Y2 Trip to Blackpool Zoo. Letter to follow.
06.02.26	School Closed Emmaus INSET Day
12.02.26	PTA Red and Pink Own Clothes Day
12.02.26	School Closes for Half Term
13.02.26	School Closed Staff INSET Day

December is the Month of Advent



Advent starts right at the beginning of December this year. It is a special time of year and more than just the 'busy run up to Christmas'. Why not take some time, amongst all the preparations and celebrations that anticipate the coming of Jesus, to pause, reflect and get ready to welcome Jesus with open minds, open hearts and open lives.

During Advent, your child will be bringing home their class advent folder, which contains an Advent story to read and prepare to welcome Jesus into your family on Christmas Day

We strive to keep parents/corers informed about school events as early as possible. If a new event is added to the list, we will inform through text message and included in the next newsletter.

Class Assemblies

Please see our remaining class assembly dates. Assemblies start at approximately 9.15am to allow time for the children to be registered and ready for the performance.

Year 3	30.01.26
Year 5	27.03.26
Year 2	22.05.26
Year 1	26.06.26
Year 6B	15.07.26
Year 6M	16.07.26

***Glory be to the Father
And to the Son
And to the Holy Spirit
As it was in the beginning
Is now and ever shall be
World without end
Amen***

School Website/Twitter (X)

December is such a busy time in the school year and a very memorable month in the lives of our children. There are so many wonderful activities Christmas activities and events. Make sure you don't miss out on the festivities by checking in on our school website and our Twitter (X) account to keep up to date with the many lessons, events and activities that take place weekly here at St Marys.

twitter (X) - @StMarysRCFW

School Website - <https://stmarysrc-primaryschool.co.uk/>

At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one of many issues which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about GROUP CHATS

Occurring through messaging apps, on social media and in online games, group chats are among the most popular ways that young people engage with their peers online. Involving, by definition, three or more individuals, these groups allow users to send messages, images and videos to everyone in one place. While they are useful for helping friends, people with shared interests or members of a club to communicate and coordinate activities, they can also leave young people feeling excluded and bullied – as well as providing opportunities for inappropriate content to be shared and viewed.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

BULLYING

Unkind comments or images which are purposely aimed at an individual can be shared freely in a group chat – allowing and often encouraging others to join in the bullying behaviour. If this content is shared in a group of their peers (especially a larger group), it serves to amplify the hurt, embarrassment, anxiety and isolation that the victim feels.

EXCLUSION AND ISOLATION

This common issue with group chats can happen in several ways: starting a new group, for instance, but deliberately excluding a certain child. Likewise, the chat may take place on an app which one child doesn't have access to, meaning they can't be involved. A child can also feel isolated when a group chat is used to discuss or share images from an event that everyone else but them attended.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some discussions in group chats may include inappropriate words, swearing and unsuitable images or videos. These could be viewed by your child if they are part of that group, whether they actively engage in it or not. Some chat apps have a disappearing message function, so your child may be unable to report something they've seen because it can only be viewed once or for a short time.

SHARING GROUP CONTENT

It's important to remember that – while the content of the chat is private between those in the group – individual users can easily share a message, photo or video with others outside of the group or screenshot what's been posted. The risk of something your child intended as private becoming public (and potentially going viral) is higher if there are people they don't know well in the group.

UNKNOWN MEMBERS

Within larger group chats, it's more likely your child will be communicating with people they don't really know. These strangers may be friends of the host, but not necessarily friendly toward your child. It's wise for young people not to share personal details and stay aware that they have no control over the messages and images they share after they've put them online.

NOTIFICATIONS AND FOMO

A drawback of large group chats is the sheer number of notifications. Every time someone in the group messages, your child's device will be 'pinged' with an alert; potentially, this could mean hundreds of notifications a day. Not only is this highly distracting, but young people's fear of missing out on the latest conversation results in increased screen time as they try to keep up with the chat.

Advice for Parents & Carers

CONSIDER OTHERS' FEELINGS

Group chats are often an arena for young people to gain social status. This could cause them to do or say things on impulse, which could upset others in the group. Encourage your child to consider how other people might feel if they engaged in this behaviour. If your child does upset a member of their group chat, support them to reach out, show empathy and apologise for their mistake.

GIVE SUPPORT, NOT JUDGEMENT

Remind your child that they can confide in you if they feel bullied or excluded in a group chat. Instead of responding to the person who's upset them, validate their hurt feelings and help to put them back in control by discussing how they'd like to handle the situation. On a related note, you could also empower your child to speak up if they're in a chat where others are being picked on.

BLOCK, REPORT AND LEAVE

If your child is in a chat where inappropriate content is being shared, advise them to block the users sending the material, report them to the host app or platform and exit the group. If any of this content could be putting a minor at risk, contact the police. Emphasise to your child that it's OK for them to simply leave any group chat that they don't feel comfortable being a part of.

PRACTISE SAFE SHARING

In any online communication, it's vital for young people to be aware of what they're sharing and who might potentially see it. Discuss the importance of not revealing identifiable details like their address, their school or photos that they wouldn't like to be seen widely. Remind them that once something is shared in a group, they lose control of where it may end up and how it might be used.

AVOID INVITING STRANGERS

Sadly, many individuals online hide their true identity to gain a child's trust – for example, to gather information on them, to exchange inappropriate content or to coax them into doing things they aren't comfortable with. Ensure your child understands why they shouldn't add people they don't know to a group chat – and, especially, to never accept a group chat invitation from a stranger.

SILENCE NOTIFICATIONS

Having a phone or tablet bombarded with notifications from a group chat can be a massive irritation and distraction – especially if it's happening late in the evening. Explain to your child that they can still be part of the group chat, but that it would be healthier for them to turn off or mute the notifications and catch up with the conversation at a time which better suits them.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing Internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.

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