

Newsletter

Friday 17th December 2021



St. Mary's Catholic
Primary School

Dear Parents and Friends

End of term...

As 2021 finally draws to a close we are grateful that we have had such a busy, action-packed, happy and productive autumn term at school. The events during the last two weeks allow us as a school to really celebrate our faith, with our:

- celebration of the Feast of the Annunciation with the parish
- beautiful Advent Day of Faith
- fantastic Nativity
- reflective Advent Liturgy this morning



Combined with our Book Fair, PTFA Christmas Raffle, Christmas lunch and party day, it has been a great combination of spirituality, reflection, fun and learning.

Our fabulous children have worked so hard this term, trying their best, bravely facing new challenges – daring to 'have a go'. They have looked after each other, put others before themselves and helped to make our school a lovely place to come each day. I want to thank the children for being so amazing!

I would like to say a huge thank you to our parents, who have supported our school over the course of this term. Your generosity has been greatly appreciated and the school benefits enormously from having such dedicated and involved parents. Thank you for your help, support and kindness throughout this term.

I would also like to thank our fantastically supportive PTFA. We are so fortunate at St Mary's to have such an interested and caring family community that wants to help ensure the happiness and very best outcomes for our children. The PTFA have organised some wonderful fundraising events this term and, thanks to your generous support, have raised money which will go directly to our children.

I'm sure you will all join me in thanking all members of the staff-team – Mrs Baldwin, Mrs Bealing, Mrs Beaumont, Mrs Chapman, Mrs Finch, Miss Fletcher, Miss Gould, Miss Horton, Mrs Myatt, Miss Smith, Mrs Tytheridge and Mr Young for all their hard work this term.

Reflection

Loving God, during this holy season of Christmas we ask for your blessing on our all families.

Let Mary's openness to your wondrous ways be an inspiration to place all trust in you.

Let Joseph's courage provide hope during times of anxiety and uncertainty.

Let Jesus' life ignite all families with a spirit of light and love.

May the grace that encircled the Holy Family widen to embrace all families.



Amen.

Homework

The children have all worked so hard this term therefore, I would ask that for the Christmas Holiday homework your child has a rest and perhaps manages to tick off a few of the following:

- Watch a Christmas film with your family
- Make snowflakes out of paper and put them up in your window
- Sing your favourite Christmas song really loudly
- Feed the birds in your garden or local park (they can't find much food this time of year)
- Wear your pyjamas all day!
- Make something (like a monster or an ocean) out of discarded wrapping paper
- Help your family to cook a delicious meal
- Go to a Christmas service at your local church
- Make a den out of duvets and blankets
- Read as many minutes as you can each day and record on your reading log
- Stay up late telling spooky stories or silly jokes
- Make a paper chain with a friend or your family
- Go on a hunt around your local area to find the best Christmas lights or decorations
- Have a warming hot chocolate or put on cosy socks when you come in from the cold
- Snuggle up with a good book
- Write a prayer thanking God for the blessings of this year and ask for one thing in the New Year
- Make a New Year's resolution on New Year's Eve



Save the Children Christmas Jumper Day

Thank you for your support for raising money for Saving the Children Christmas Jumper Day on Friday 10th December, we raised £62.15!

Reception places

Do you have a child due to start school in September 2022? The closing date for applications on 15th January 2022 so please remember to apply!

Dorset School Admissions Contact:

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/education-and-training/schools-and-learning/apply-for-a-school-place/apply-for-a-school-place>

If you know of any families who are looking for school places, please encourage them to come and visit!



Coronavirus (COVID-19)

January return

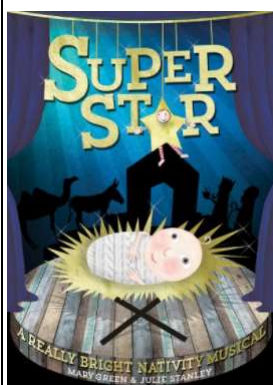
The current government guidance states:

We continue to learn more about the impacts of the Omicron variant.

For those in settings closing over Christmas, all staff and students should test over the holidays in line with national guidance. This means that they should test if they will be in a high-risk situation that day and before visiting people who are at higher risk of severe illness if they get COVID-19.

Staff in all educational and childcare settings, should take one self-test at home either the evening or morning before they return in January. Then they should continue to test in line with government guidelines.

As we learned from earlier this year, events happen quickly. Teachers are setting up Google Classroom for the new classes and are getting prepared should schools have to switch to remote learning. Please inform school if you have any problems accessing learning platforms. I hope that this will be unnecessary – but it's good to be ready.



Christmas Nativity

We have recorded the children performing 'Superstar' – thank you again for your understanding with this. We have used Vimeo as we did last year, which is password protected. You will have received an email with the link and password. Please do not share this on social media.



GIFT Team

On Thursday the 9th of December the whole school participated in our Advent Day of Faith. It was an opportunity to remind the children of the importance of pausing, reflecting in preparation for Christmas. The day was based on the virtues Faith, Hope and Charity and was led by our Growing in Faith Team. These children planned a whole school liturgy and organised prayer stations for their peers. The prayer station led the children through the events of the first Christmas and help them reflect on some important issues facing our world today. Each child made a star of hope, and these were hung on our Christmas tree. These included hopes for a safe place for those without homes and an end to climate change. The children also continued to support Gillingham Foodbank, having visited them earlier this year, collecting more donations for their Christmas appeal. They also had the opportunity to investigate the works of other charities with the plan to widen the charitable work later in the year.

As many children may be receiving new electronic gear for Christmas, please be aware of keeping them safe online – check your parental settings etc.

"Inappropriate" means different things to different people. What's acceptable for one age group, for example, may be unsuitable for a slightly younger audience. Online, young people can chance upon inappropriate content in various ways – from pop-up ads to TikTok videos. The increasingly young age at which children become active in the digital world heightens the risk of them innocently running into something that they find upsetting or frightening. Trusted adults need to be able to help children be aware of what to do if they're exposed to age-inappropriate content.

Age-Inappropriate content is easily accessible through many social media platforms. TikTok, for instance, is hugely popular with young people but is arguably best known for clips featuring sexualised dancing or profanity. Some social media users also express hate speech or promote eating disorders and self-harm, which could cause lasting damage to a child's emotional and mental health.

Gaming is an enjoyable source of entertainment, but many popular titles can expose children to inappropriate material, violence, horror, gambling or sexually explicit content. Playing games unsuitable for their age risks normalising to children what they are seeing. Some games also include in-game chat, where other (usually older) online players often use language that you probably wouldn't want your child to hear or repeat.

The range of video streaming services available online means that users can find almost anything they want to watch on demand. Children are therefore at risk of viewing TV shows and movies which contain nudity, drug and alcohol abuse, explicit language and extreme violence. Unfortunately, these streaming platforms can't always determine that it's not an adult who's watching.

Online adverts frequently include age-inappropriate content, usually gaming and nudity or partial nudity, although adverts for alcohol or cigarettes are also common. Some search engines also feature adverts that are responsive to your search history: so if you've recently looked up a new horror movie, shopped for lingerie or ordered alcohol online, then the ads appearing on screen could reflect this the next time your child borrows your device.

Embarrassment or fear of getting into trouble can make it difficult for children to talk openly about age-inappropriate content they've watched. Remind your child they can always come to you if they're troubled by something they've seen online, without worrying about consequences. Before offering advice, discuss what they saw, how they felt and how they came to find the content in question.

If your child's been particularly distressed by exposure to content that wasn't suitable for their age, it's important to offer guidance to prevent them from repeating the same mistake – but it's equally vital to help them deal with the emotions that the situation has raised. You could tell them about any similar experiences you might have had at their age, and how you dealt with it.

After discussing the problem, you and your child can take action together. This could include blocking any inappropriate sites and reporting any content which violates a platform's rules. To further safeguard your child online, set up parental controls on internet-enabled devices that they use. This will significantly reduce the chances of your child being exposed to age-inappropriate content in future.

Age-inappropriate content can accidentally have a negative impact on a child's mental health, which is sometimes displayed through changes in their behaviour. If the problem becomes more severe, you might consider reaching out to a mental health professional or an expert in this field who can provide you and your child with the proper support.

Even though it is obviously difficult to stay rational in a situation where your child has been put at risk, it's essential to think before you react. Your child may well have hesitated to open up to you about watching inappropriate content for fear of the consequences, so being calm and supportive will reinforce the notion that it would be easy to talk to you about similar issues in the future.

Cayley Jorgensen is a Registered Counsellor with The Health Professions Council of South Africa, and she runs a private practice offering counselling to children, teenagers and families. Her main focus is creating awareness and educating the community on the mental health pressures of today's world, as well as resources and techniques to understand and cope better.



**National
Online
Safety®**
UpWednesday

[illegible]

School Uniform

Please can you ensure your child returns to school with appropriate school uniform – there has been an increase in trainers and boots being worn. We have lots of pre-loved uniform – please enquire at the office.

Winter Wear

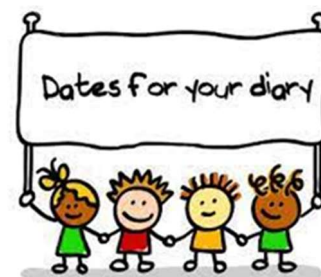
Boys	Girls
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medium grey long trousers or shorts• Red school sweatshirt with school logo• White button through shirt• Tie – red with blue stripes• Grey socks• Sensible black or dark brown shoes. No trainers or boots	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medium grey skirt, pinafore dress or trousers• Red school sweatshirt or cardigan with school logo• White button through shirt• Tie – red with blue stripes• Sensible black or dark brown shoes. No trainers or boots

Change in timetable

Please check Class Dojo for updated timetables as PE days may have changed due to unavoidable amendments to timetables.

Dates for your diary:

- Friday 17th December – last day of the Autumn term
- Tuesday 4th January 2022 – children return to school
- Thursday 6th January 9:30 - Whole School Mass in church
- Monday 10th January 9:30 - Open day for Reception
- September 2022
- Tuesday 15th February – parents' meetings
- Wednesday 16th February – parents' meetings
- Friday 18th February – last day of Spring Half term
- Monday 28th February - INSET Day
- Wednesday 2nd March - Ash Wednesday service
- Thursday 3rd March - World Book Day
- Friday 18th March – Red Nose Day
- Friday 8th April – last day of Spring term



On behalf of the staff-team and the Governors, I would like to wish you all a very happy, holy and peaceful Christmas and look forward to seeing and working with you all in the New Year.

God Bless

Sharon Betts
Headteacher



Please follow us on Twitter @stmarysmarnhull