



'Together we strive for excellence, inspired by the joy of the Gospel'.

Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you for your continued support in promoting excellent school attendance. As you know, we follow our Trust Attendance Policy and, as in previous years, you can expect regular communication from school regarding attendance throughout the academic year.

I fully appreciate that every family's circumstances are different and that attendance patterns can be affected by illness, medical appointments, and other unavoidable circumstances. When reviewing attendance, we always consider the individual context and any factors that may have impacted a child's ability to attend school. Any communication from school regarding attendance is intended to be both informative and supportive. Our aim is always to work in partnership with families and offer support wherever it may be needed. I am grateful for the positive approach shown by parents and carers in ensuring that children arrive at school regularly, on time, and ready to learn.

The benefits of strong attendance are significant. Children who attend school regularly not only make great academic progress but also thrive socially through daily interaction with their peers and teachers. Seeing the children engage so positively in school each day reinforces just how important attendance is to their overall development and wellbeing.

Attendance continues to be a national priority, and schools are required to follow government guidance and statutory expectations. As part of this, any unauthorised absence must be recorded and, where appropriate, reported to the Local Authority. In line with current government policy, the Local Authority may consider issuing a Penalty Notice (fine) to parents where unauthorised absences meet the national threshold. For this reason, I would encourage all families to carefully consider requests for leave during term time, as holidays and other avoidable absences are unlikely to be authorised except in exceptional circumstances.

I am delighted to report that, within the first few weeks of this academic year, our attendance figure is already around **98.3%**, which is an excellent reflection of the commitment shown by our school community. Thank you for helping to give our children the very best opportunity to learn, grow and succeed.

Thank you once again for your ongoing support and partnership.

Kind regards,
Mr Craig

Phonics Information Meeting for Reception and Year 1 Parents

We would like to invite all Reception and Year 1 parents and carers to our Phonics Information Meeting, which will take place in your child's classroom on **Tuesday 15th September at 3:30 p.m.**

To enable as many parents as possible to attend, members of staff will be available to supervise children during the session.

This is an important meeting and provides a valuable opportunity to develop your understanding of phonics, how it supports early reading and the crucial role parents can play in supporting learning at home. We will also share practical strategies and resources that you can use to help your child become a confident and successful reader.

We strongly encourage all parents and carers to attend and look forward to welcoming you.



"It is by forgiving that one is forgiven." Mother Teresa



A gentle reminder for parents and carers

Please can we remind all parents and carers to encourage children to walk alongside their grown-up, or hold their hand, once they have been collected from school.

Recently, we have noticed a small number of children running ahead through the cars, along the embankment and down the internal footpath. The embankment can become very slippery when wet, and the footpath is often busy, making it easy to lose sight of a child.

As the path leads directly onto the road, this could quickly become a dangerous situation. We would be very grateful for your support in helping children stay close to you at all times when leaving the school site.

Thank you for helping us to keep everyone safe.

Curriculum Evenings

Our Curriculum Evenings are a wonderful way for you to gain further insight into what your child will be learning over the next academic year. Please see the list of dates below and we hope to see as many parents as possible. These meetings will begin at **4 p.m.** in your child's classroom and is for **ADULTS** only. If you are unable to attend you will be given a handout at a later date.

Monday 21st September	Nursery	Wednesday 23rd September	Year 3
Monday 21st September	Reception	Wednesday 23rd September	Year 4
Tuesday 22nd September	Year 1	Thursday 24th September	Year 5
Tuesday 22nd September	Year 2	Thursday 24th September	Year 6

Reception Class - Celebration of the Word

Children from Reception class will be holding a welcome Liturgy for their parents on Friday 25th September.

This will be held in the school hall commencing at 2.30 p.m.

Parents are welcome to attend.

Tapestry

All new parents with children in Nursery and Reception Class will receive an email soon with an invite to join Tapestry. Please check your spam boxes also as they have been known to go into them.

Tapestry will give teachers and parents the facility to exchange posts of the children's achievements via a secure site. Please note that these posts are not to be shared on any other platforms.



Arbor

Can we please ensure that all parents have completed the online consent forms, contact information and other relevant information on Arbor.

Arbor is our main communication tool that we use in school. Parents can use this to make payments for trips, school meals and book parents evenings when the time arises.

We would like parents to get familiar with Arbor and it's capabilities.

Please contact the school office if you would like any more information or help with this matter.



Date for your diary - MacMillan Coffee Morning

on

Friday 25th September in the school hall.

More information to follow in next week's spotlight.



Safeguarding Reminder

Safeguarding the children in our care is one of the school's main responsibilities, one that St Mary and St Thomas Aquinas take very seriously.

As you are already aware from previous updates, our Designated Safeguarding Lead is Mr Craig. You can speak to him by phone, make an appointment via the school office, or catch him when he's outside greeting/saying goodbye to children, if you ever have a concern. We also have our Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead in school, Mrs Bennison (Assistant Headteacher/ Year 2 class teacher and senior leader), Mrs McDonald (Year 4 teacher) and Miss Foster (School Business Manager).

If you are unable to speak to Mr Craig, you can speak to Mrs Bennison or any other member of staff about your concern (s).

The school has an updated Safeguarding policy, that can be found on the school website, or paper copies can be requested from the school office.

All staff receive annual safeguarding refresher training, as well as other training throughout the year on key areas, including record keeping and reporting. Our school also has a termly visit from our Safeguarding Consultant, who completes an audit of the school's safeguarding and identifies any future improvements or training needs.

Why do parents need to know this information?

- To reassure you that we take keeping our children safe in school very seriously at St. Mary and St. Thomas Aquinas.
- It's good to remind parents/carers of the key members of staff, in case new parents did not know who they were.
- To highlight the continual work that the school puts into keeping our children safe in school.

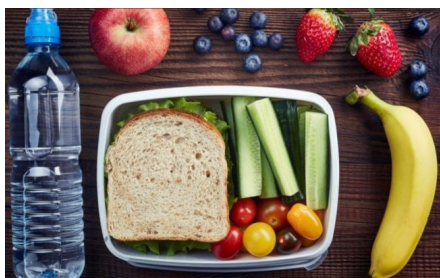
Attendance

During celebration assembly on Friday, we have been celebrating whole class attendance and each week the class with the highest attendance will receive our Attendance Trophy, well done to Year 3 who won the trophy this week.

Week beginning: Monday 7th September 2026	
Year group	Attendance percentage
Reception Class	99.59
Year 1	96.67
Year 2	98.52
Year 3	100
Year 4	99.33
Year 5	99.28
Year 6	99.28

Allergies

Throughout school we have several children with a variety of allergies, can we please ask parents to refrain from using Nutella and Kiwi in packed lunches. Can we also remind you that we are a healthy school and would like for the children to follow this rule. We have seen a lot of sweet products in packed lunches this week. Canned drinks are not suitable in school as these generally spray all over bags when opened.



After school clubs

Children will not need to bring in an extra snack for their after school activities, they will only need to bring in their water bottle which they need to have in school every day to stay hydrated.

Thank you for your help with this matter.

Spotlight Celebration

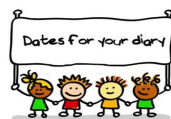
Over the summer Mason was fortunate to be accepted into the u10s Newcastle Development Centre. He has enjoyed his first training session this week and we wish him good luck for the season ahead.



During the summer holidays Dylan (Year 4) and Jessica (Reception Class) learnt how to ski. They can't wait for some snow!



Don't forget to send your images to Miss Green at hgreen@smtb.bwcet.com



Tuesday 15th September	– Parents Phonics meetings for Reception and Year 1 at 3.30 p.m.
Monday 21st September	– Curriculum Evening 4.00 p.m. Nursery and Reception
Tuesday 22nd September	– Curriculum Evening 4.00 p.m. Year 1 and Year 2
Wednesday 23rd September	– Curriculum Evening 4.00 p.m. Year 3 and Year 4
Thursday 24th September	– Curriculum Evening 4.00 p.m. Year 5 and Year 6
Friday 25th September	– MacMillian Coffee Morning 8.30 a.m. in the Hall
Friday 25th September	– Reception Welcome Celebration of the Word 2.30 p.m. in the Hall
Monday 28th September	- Year 4 Bikeability for those who signed up
Tues. 29th - Fri 2nd Oct	- Year 5 Bikeability for those who signed up
Wednesday 30th September	- School Photographer in school taking individual images
Friday 2nd October	– Year 4 Celebration of the Word 2.30 p.m. in the Hall
Tuesday 6th October	– Year 2 Assembly 9.00 a.m. in the Hall
Friday 9th October	– Year 6 Celebration of the Word 2.30 p.m. in the Hall
Tuesday 13th October	– Year 3 Assembly 9.00 a.m. in the Hall
Wednesday 14th October	– Visit from GB Athlete – Whole school assembly and activities
15th October - 21st October	- Scholastic Book fair
Friday 16th October	– Year 1 Celebration of the Word 2.30 p.m. in the Hall
Tuesday 20th October	– Reception Assembly 9.00 a.m. in the Hall
Tuesday 20th October	- Nasal Flu Spray for children from Reception to Year 6 who have signed up for it
Wednesday 21st October	– Open evening for Possible Reception parents September 2027 – 4.00 p.m.
Thursday 22nd October	– Whole School Mass 9.10 a.m. in Church
Friday 23rd October	– Year 5 Celebration of the Word 2.30 p.m. in the Hall

Half Term

Monday 26th October 2026 to Friday 30th October 2026

Thursday 5th November	– Whole School Mass 9.10 a.m. in Church
Tuesday 10th November	– Year 4 Assembly 9.00 a.m. in the Hall
Thursday 12th November	– Year 6 Mass (with Year 5 attending) 9.10 a.m. in Church
Friday 13th November	– Year 2 Celebration of the Word 2.30 p.m. in the Hall
Tuesday 17th November	– Year 5 Assembly 9.00 a.m. in the Hall
Thursday 19th November	- Year 4 Mass (with Year 3 attending) 9.10 a.m. in Church
Friday 20th November	– Year 3 Celebration of the Word 2.30 p.m. in the Hall
Monday 23rd November	– Parents Evening
Tuesday 24th November	– Parents Evening
Thursday 26th November	– Year 5 Mass (with Year 6 attending) 9.10 a.m. in Church
Thursday 26th November	- Open evening for Possible Reception parents September 2027 – 4.00 p.m.
Thursday 3rd December	– Y3 Mass (with Year 4 attending) 9.10 a.m. in Church
Friday 4th December	- Open evening for Possible Reception parents September 2027 – 4.00 p.m.
Monday 7th December	– Reception Nativity (Afternoon)
Tuesday 8th December	– KS1 Nativity (Afternoon)
Wednesday 9th December	– Nursery Nativity (Morning) – KS1 Nativity (Afternoon)
Thursday 10th December	– KS2 Carols in the Church (Afternoon)
Friday 11th December	– KS2 Carols in the Church (Afternoon)

Christmas Holidays

Monday 21st December 2026 to Friday 1st January 2027

Spring term will commence Monday 4th January 2027

Additional dates and amended dates will appear in Blue

Term Dates Academic Year 2026 - 2027

Autumn Term 1	Tuesday 1st September 2026 to Friday 23rd October 2026 (Inset day Tuesday 1st September 2026 and Wednesday 2nd September 2026)
School Holiday	Monday 26th October 2026 to Friday 30th October 2026
Autumn Term 2	Monday 2nd November 2026 to Friday 18th December 2026
School Holiday	Monday 21st December 2026 to Friday 1st January 2027
Spring Term 1	Monday 4th January 2027 to Friday 12th January 2027
School Holiday	Monday 15th February 2027 to Friday 19th February 2027
Spring Term 2	Monday 22nd February 2027 to Thursday 25th March 2027
School Holiday	Friday 26th March 2027 to Friday 9th April 2027
Summer Term 1	Monday 12th April 2027 to Thursday 28th May 2027 (Inset day TBC - Polling Day)
School Holiday	Monday 31st May 2027 to Friday 4th June 2027
Summer Term 2	Monday 7th June 2027 to Friday 16th July 2027 (Inset days on the 19th to 21st July 2027)