



Dear parents, carers, friends and governors,

Welcome to our second newsletter of this school year. It is lovely to see our new Reception and Nursery children settling into school life so well so early in the year and all children across the school back into the full flow of "school". We appreciate your ongoing support of the current arrangements around the start/end of the school day. Please remember to call school if your child is unwell and, if leaving a message, give the reason for the absence. Thank you!

Applications for High School

If your child is currently in Year 6 you need to make an application for the next phase of their education by 31 October. You are able to express up to 4 choices and we would encourage you to do this, given the pressure on secondary school places over the last 2 years.

St Mary's, in common with most other secondary schools will be unable to host their usual Open Evenings this term. Information has been sent last week to current Year 5 and 6 parents about how to access their virtual Open Evenings this year. These will include a virtual tour of the school. St Mary's will also be providing each child in Year 5 and 6 at St Catherine's with a copy of their latest prospectus in the next few days.

Applications for Reception Sept 2021

It is now possible for parents to apply for spaces in Reception Class for September 2021 at www.newcastle.gov.uk. The deadline for applications is 15 January 2021. Whilst we are currently restricting visits to the school we are happy to take any phone-calls or emails where we can direct prospective parents to further information and a guided video tour.

Nut Allergies

Can we ask for your support please in ensuring that if your child has a packed lunch that it is nut-free? Just to be clear this includes energy bars and other items which may contain nuts. We have an increasing number of pupils with nut allergies, including children whose allergy is triggered by nuts in the environment. Any products containing nuts will be removed from the dining hall and handed over to parents at home-time.

Thank you to parents who have sent in individually wrapped cakes/biscuits when celebrating your child's birthday. We understand that in the absence of children's parties generally at the moment, school may be the only place where children can celebrate with their friends. Can we politely request that you restrict items to the above-mentioned cakes/biscuits and not to extend to sweets/party bags.



School Grounds

As you will know we are blessed to have beautiful school grounds with many green spaces, a forest school area and a lot of mature trees.

In light of the tragic events at a Newcastle school recently it is worth sharing with you that our trees are surveyed every 6 months. We receive a written inspection report about the condition of each tree and any remedial work that may be required.

France 2021

Earlier this week we wrote to parents of children who had signed up for the France trip in February 2021 to inform them of the inevitable cancellation of the trip. Government advice prevents schools organising trips abroad or overnight residential visits within the UK at present.

We are keeping a keen eye on this advice as we know how much our pupils benefit from their outdoor adventure weeks. As soon as this advice changes we will let you know as we will then look to organise something for our current Year 6 class.

Relationships and Health Education

Please look out for information relating to our revised RHE policy and programme which we will be consulting upon over the next few weeks. It is a statutory requirement that all primary schools now teach this key subject from January 2021.

Whilst we have always taught this subject within the context of the teachings of the Catholic Church, which will continue, the launch of the new programme from Ten Ten gives us the opportunity to share with you what we will cover and to seek the views of parents about the programme.

Fundraising for Forest School

In the absence of the Sponsored Walk and the income that generates (usually more than £1000) could we please ask you to consider donating to the school's Forest School fundraising project? And inviting/encouraging/cajoling extended family members to contribute to this too? Perhaps your child could create their own sponsored walk challenge and ask family members to sponsor them? If they do, let us know please.

<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfundin g/st-catherines-forest-school>

Harvest

Our annual Harvest mass is a lovely occasion when we welcome new children and families to our school community. We also collect items of food and donate them to a local charity, food bank. Whilst we can't have a Mass at the moment our Y6 children would like to coordinate the collection of tinned food that we can donate to the People's Kitchen. We'll have a collection box in each class so if you are able to send in any tinned foods that will be very much appreciated.

Highlight of the Year so far? We had a Zoom Well-Done Assembly streamed into each class on Friday afternoon. It was lovely to hear the cheering and laughter across the school as we connected like this for this first time this year. We'll explore putting them on the website for you to view at home.

Best wishes

M Ewing
Headteacher