



HEADLINES 5TH NOVEMBER 2021

St. Mary's Catholic School Newsletter (Issue 9 2021-22)

Inspire, Aspire, Believe and Achieve!

Acting Heads of School Update Mr Johnston & Miss McHugh



Dear Parents,

Welcome back after what I hope was a restful and relaxing half term break. It has been a very productive and positive start to the second half of the Autumn Term with students engaged in their lessons, focused on their learning and participating in a wide range of clubs and activities.

I ask that you please keep in your prayers our Y13 Students, and their University applications over the weeks ahead. Several students this week have sat their Oxbridge Entrance exams. We have also had students sitting entrance examinations for Imperial College London and preparing and sitting the BioMedical Admissions Test for Medical Schools. We are exceptionally proud of how hard our Y13 students

have studied and prepared for these highly competitive demanding exams and we wish them every success.

Next week, you and your child will be receiving their Assessment Point 1 (AP1) data to show how they are progressing in their subjects and what targets they need to focus on this half term to make sustained progress over time. It is an exciting time, we celebrate our students success to date, and work with them to stretch and challenge them even further in their learning to reach their potential. With this in mind, I do ask this weekend you take the time to speak to your child about how well they are progressing with their "St Mary's Award". All information for their targets to achieve the Bronze, Silver and Gold Award are on MSTeams for your reference. Every child is encouraged to aim and strive to achieve the award, this helps with each students aspirations, participation, social interaction and wellbeing. Please do encourage and motivate your child to complete their St Mary's Award!

You will have received information this week from the Director of Public Health Hertfordshire regarding the additional covid measures put in place. Thank God, to date, our numbers are very low, but we must not be complacent and continue to do all to keep our wider school community safe.

During the month of November, every week we will be including a page in our weekly Headlines for parents to understand how to safeguard their child whilst online. Whether that be on social media sites like snapchat, Instagram or TikTok, it is essential as parents you know the dangers, the signs and how you can keep your child safe whilst online. Page 2 on this bulletin details this weeks update on TikTok to help you keep your child safe.

Thursday 11th November we are excited to host our Sixth Form Open Evening event. With over 30 courses to choose from in Key Stage 5 this is an essential part of our GCSE students selecting the right pathway for their Sixth Form Studies. Mr Butler and the Sixth Form team are looking forward to welcoming our Y11 students and parents to this highly informative event. In line with covid measures this event is ticketed only, I encourage all Y11 parents to log on to our website to book your place.

I wish you and your families a restful and relaxing weekend.

God Bless

Miss D McHugh

St Mary's Catholic School Piano Recital



16th November 2021 7pm
Main School Hall

Tickets are now available to purchase for this event, via this link:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/piano-recital-tickets-196438120707>

This promises to be a wonderful showcase of our many pianists we have here at St Mary's, with a wide range of performances from Haydn to Einaudi and many more in between.

Miss J Matthews
Head of Music



St Francis of Assisi
CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST

www.stfrancistrust.net

UPCOMING EVENTS

16th November

Piano Recital

18th November

Y11 & Y13 Mock Interviews

11th November



SIXTH FORM OPEN EVENING

Please book your tickets to attend on www.stmarys.net

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about TIKTOK

TikTok is a video-sharing social media app which lets people create, view and download looping 15-second clips. Typically, these are videos of users lip-syncing and dancing to popular songs or soundbites (often for comic purposes), enhanced with filters, effects and text. Designed with young people in mind, TikTok skyrocketed in popularity in 2019 and has featured near the top of download charts ever since. It now has around a billion users worldwide.

AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Most videos appearing on a child's feed are light-hearted and amusing. However, some clips have been reported for featuring drug and alcohol abuse, themes of suicide and self-harm, or young teens acting in a sexually suggestive way. The sheer volume of uploads is impossible to moderate entirely – and since TikTok Jump's introduction in mid-2021, users can view third-party content outside the app.

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CENSORED

EXPLICIT SONGS

TikTok primarily revolves around videos of users lip-syncing and dancing to music. Inevitably, some featured songs will contain explicit or suggestive lyrics. Given the app's young user-base, there is a risk that children may view older users' videos and then be inclined to imitate any explicit language or suggestive actions.

W&#*!

TIKTOK FAME

The app has created its own celebrities: Charli D'Amelio and Lil Nas X, for example, were catapulted to fame by exposure on TikTok – leading to many more teens attempting to go viral and become "TikTok famous". While most aspiring stars hoping to be 'the next big thing' will find it difficult, setbacks may in turn prompt them to go to even more drastic lengths to get noticed.



HAZARDOUS VISIBILITY

Connecting with others is simple on TikTok – including commenting on and reacting to users' videos, following their profile and downloading their content. The majority of these interactions are harmless, but – because of its abundance of teen users – TikTok has experienced problems with predators contacting young people.

ADDICTIVE NATURE

Like all social media platforms, TikTok can be extremely addictive. It can be hugely entertaining – but that also makes it hard to put down. As well as the punchy nature of the short video format, the app's ability to keep users intrigued about what's coming next means it's easy for a 5-minute visit to turn into a 45-minute stay.

IN-APP SPENDING

There's an in-app option to purchase 'TikTok coins', which are then converted into digital rewards for sending to content creators that a user likes. Prices range from 99p to an eye-watering £99 bundle. TikTok is also connected with Shopify, which allows users to buy products through the app.

Advice for Parents & Carers

TALK ABOUT ONLINE CONTENT

Assuming your child is above TikTok's age limit, talk to them about what they've viewed on the app. Ask their opinion on what's appropriate and what isn't. Explain why they shouldn't give out personal details or upload videos which reveal information like their school or home address. In the long run, teaching them to think critically about what they see on TikTok could help them to become social-media savvy.

MAINTAIN PRIVACY SETTINGS

The default setting for all under 16s' accounts is 'private'. Keeping it that way is the safest solution: it means only users who your child approves can watch their videos. The 'Stitch' (which lets users splice clips from other people's videos into their own) and 'Duet' (where you build on another user's content by recording your own video alongside their original) features are now only available to over 16s. This might clash with your child's ambitions of social media stardom, but it will fortify their account against predators.

LEARN ABOUT REPORTING AND BLOCKING

With the correct privacy settings applied, TikTok is a relatively safe space. However, in case something *does* slip through, make sure your child knows how to recognise and report inappropriate content and get them to come to you about anything upsetting that they've seen. TikTok allows users to report anyone breaching its guidelines, while you can also block individual users through their profile.

ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING

'Family Pairing' lets parents and carers link their own TikTok account to their child's. Through your mobile, you can control your child's safety settings remotely – including limiting screen time, managing their ability to exchange messages (and with whom) and blocking a lot of age-inappropriate content. TikTok's Safety Centre also provides resources for parents and carers to support online safety among families. These resources can be found on their website.

USE RESTRICTED MODE

In the app's 'Digital Wellbeing' section, you can filter out inappropriate content (specific content creators or hashtags, for instance) using 'Restricted Mode'. This can then be locked with a PIN. You should note, though, that the algorithm moderating content isn't totally dependable – so it's wise to stay aware of what your child is watching.

MODERATE SCREEN TIME

As entertaining as TikTok is, you can help your child to manage their time on it in the 'Digital Wellbeing' section. Under 'Screen Time Management', you can limit the daily permitted time on the app (in increments ranging from 40 minutes to two hours). This preference can also be locked behind a PIN. That way, your child can get their regular dose of TikTok without wasting the whole day.

Meet Our Expert

Parven Kaur is a social media expert and digital media consultant who is passionate about improving digital literacy for parents and children. She has extensive experience in the social media arena and is the founder of Kids N Clicks: a web resource that helps parents and children thrive in a digital world.



NOS
National
Online
Safety®
#WakeUpWednesday

SOURCES: www.tiktok.com



www.nationalonlinesafety.com



@natonlinesafety



/NationalOnlineSafety



@nationalonlinesafety



Student Survey Results



Student voice is an integral part of our school routines to ensure all stakeholders have an input and voice in our schools development and planning. The following results are from our Student Survey which I want to share with you as parents to hear how your child's experience at school is, and this helps us planning for the next steps.

Student Feedback:

100% (99% SMCS 2019) of pupils believe that behaviour around the school is good

100% of pupils believe that they have an opportunity for spiritual growth and development

98% (96% SMCS 2019) of pupils enjoy school

94% (87% SMCS 2019) of pupils have an adult they can talk to if something is worrying them

98% (97% SMCS 2019) of pupils believe that behaviour in lessons is good

99% (99% SMCS 2019) of pupils feel safe at school

97% (88% SMCS 2019) of pupils believe that the school encourage them to look after their physical health and emotional health

98% (99% SMCS 2019) of pupils believe that the school encourages them to be independent

94% of students believe that they have opportunities to take part on daily prayer



Mrs G Tatman
Assistant Headteacher



It's All Over!



Sumdog's St Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy Trust Maths Contest is now over. The overall winner was from St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Hertford. In total 517 students answered 74782 questions correctly. It's amazing to see so many questions answered in so little time! 8x1 Mrs Vermaak came first, 8Y1 Mrs Walker came second one point behind and Mrs Brewin's year 7 class were third.

Students have thoroughly enjoyed using the Sumdog platform for the first time in a while, with its live leader board, avatars and fun animal levels, and we hope to run a second Academy Trust contest with all 8 primaries early in 2022. Thank you to everyone for embracing this so enthusiastically. All students who participated out of school time can include this in their St Mary's Award.

Mrs C Wilkin
Assistant Headteacher

My Peaceful Place: INVESTIN's Young Photographer Competition



Research also shows that the visualisation of a tranquil place can help reduce stress, anxiety and fear.

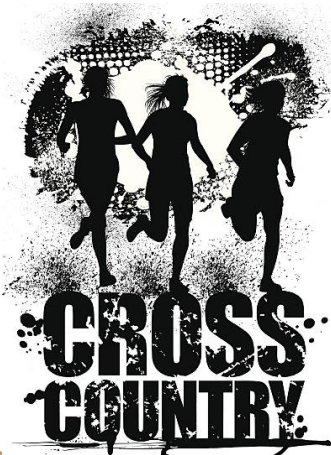
In honour of this and stress awareness week, we invite students aged 12-18 to enter our competition, [The Young Photographer Challenge](#). Students should submit a photograph of their 'peaceful place' along with a title and short explanation. Creativity is highly encouraged!

The competition is free to enter and for each entry we make a donation to "Stem4," a youth mental health charity. Just click on the link above and upload your photo.

The deadline for entries is Tuesday 23rd November.
Don't forget to include your entry in your St Mary's Award!

Mrs C Wilkin
Assistant Headteacher

Interhouse Cross Country!



A big thank you and well done to all of the students who completed the inter-house cross country and helped to raise £388 for Great Ormond Street Hospital. This has gone towards providing vital lifesaving equipment for the UK's most seriously ill children.



Mr S Wright
Head of PE



HEADLINES 5TH NOVEMBER 2021

#DedicatedtoExcellence

Menu in our Aspens Refectory

Autumn
Winter
2021

STREATERIES

Aspens

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
STREET	All American Cheeseburger Burger Sauce Wedges	Chicken Shawarma Pickled Red Cabbage	Gammon & Parsnip Yorkshire Pudding Wrap Gravy	Jamaican Jerk Chicken Wings Rice and Peas	Hand Battered Fish & Frickle
VEGGIE	Chicken Style Strips Jambalaya Cornbread	Egyptian Koshari - Macaroni, Rice, Tomato sauce, Crispy Onions	Quorn Sausage Toad in the Hole Gravy	Cheesy Macaroni Pie	Vegan Mince and Pea Slice
SIDES	BBQ Beans	Pomegranate Couscous Mezze Salad	Smokey Roasties Roasted Roots	Spinach & Coconut Slaw	Chips Peas

WEEK 2

We are hiring!

**WE ARE
HIRING!**

For all enquiries, contact:
Recruitment@stmarys.net

Current Vacancies—Teaching Staff:

Food and Nutrition Teacher (Part-time) required from January 2022

Click [HERE](#)

A Prayer for the COP26 Conference



**UN CLIMATE
CHANGE
CONFERENCE
UK 2021**

Loving God

You are present in the whole universe, and in the smallest of creatures.

We all have a part to play in looking after the earth.
May the Holy Spirit inspire all political leaders at COP26
as they make decisions for the planet and its people.

Give them the courage to think of fairer solutions
for the poorest and most vulnerable people,
so that every nation cares for our common home.

Amen



Chaplaincy News:

Month of November – Prayer for the Souls of the Faithful Departed

Praying for the dead is Christian 'act of mercy', an act of love and charity for our brothers and sisters who have gone before us on the journey of life. During this month, when we remember those who are on our November list, may I encourage you to make the following prayer a part of your daily prayer. May I also encourage you to visit a cemetery, especially the graves of relatives and friends, to light a candle for them and to pray.

Our students, during the month of November are writing the names of departed loved ones in a special book of the Holy Souls which we will have on display in our School Hall for the Month of November. Every Assembly will be focused on praying for each other and for our Guardian Angels who look over and protect us.

