



HEADLINES 8TH OCTOBER 2021

St. Mary's Catholic School Newsletter (Issue 5 2021-22)

St. Mary's Needs You!

Acting Heads of School Update Mr Johnston & Miss McHugh



Dear Parents,

This edition of the Headlines contains a lot of very useful and interesting articles from a range of staff from across the school. It also includes a number of links to school systems and further information. We had a very successful Year 7 Parents' Evening on-site on Thursday for the first time since before the pandemic; it's clear we really are in full swing now this academic year!

Join our Team! We are recruiting Parent and Foundation Governors to the school's Local Governing Body. We have a dedicated team of governors who set the strategic direction for the

school and who guide and support our leadership. If you, or someone you know could volunteer for the this rewarding and interesting role, please email the school for the FAQs and information for prospective Governors. You really could make a huge difference to the running of the school. See our website, too: www.stmarys.net/about-us/governors/

Keep Covid-secure! We have managed to maintain low numbers of positive cases so far this term, but we must not be complacent. We are still requiring students to **SELF-TEST every Sunday and Wednesday**, even if they are symptom-free as many cases in young people do not show symptoms. This is vital to our on-site control measures and I am very grateful for your assistance in this matter. If you need further test-kits, please do contact the school and we will arrange this for you. Similarly, we are still requiring students to wear a mask in busy indoor areas and so bringing these in each day is important, too.

Meditation— St John Henry Newman

God has created me to do him some definite service; He has committed some work to me which he has not committed to another. I have my mission – I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next.

I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for nothing. I shall do good. I shall do his work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place while not intending it – if I do but keep his Commandments.

Therefore I will trust him. Whatever, wherever I am, I can never be thrown away.

Have a great weekend with your families.

Tom Johnston, Acting Head of School



Cross-Country Inter-house Fundraiser for G.O.S.H.

The PE department are very pleased to announce that the annual X-Country inter-house competition will take place on Tuesday 12th November. All students will be participating in this event and will have an opportunity to challenge themselves to participate in either the 3k or 5k course. We are excited to share with our parents that this will run in conjunction with a national event organised to raise money for Great Ormond Street Hospi-

tal (GOSH), a charity that is very close to our hearts to help the families of those children who are very ill. We would like to invite parents to make a voluntary contribution via the following JustGiving page:

CLICK [HERE](#) TO KINDLY SUPPORT THIS APPEAL

Every day, more than 600 seriously ill children and young people from across the UK arrive at the hospital. Every day, doctors and nurses battle the most complex conditions. St. Mary's would like to raise as much money as possible and any help that we can give as a school will make a huge difference to seriously ill children and their families. We are aiming to inspire our students to undertake this x-country run to raise vital funds for GOSH and to teach our students according to our Gospel values that we are called to serve others. Your kindness and generosity will be the encouragement and motivation for all our students to participate, have fun and help raise vital funds to help other children and their families.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday

14th October

**Year 11, 12 & 13
Parents Evening
(Invitation Only)**

Tuesday

12th November

**Inter-house Cross
Country**



St Francis of Assisi
CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST

www.stfrancistrust.net



Reading Focus: Accelerated Reader

Across the school we are working to make sure students keep up the habit of regular, daily reading. This is especially important because of the disruption caused by COVID and the lockdowns in 2020 and the first months of this year. Students should carry a reading book with them at all times or have access to a digital book using the SORA app, provided by the school.

To this end, students in Key Stage 3 have fortnightly 'Accelerated Reader' lessons (these show up as 'AR' on the timetable). During these lessons they take part in reading skills activities and also log on to the Accelerated Reader (AR) computer program, which allows for tracking each student's reading progress, via quizzes they take when they finish reading a book or an article, a range of which are available on the AR website itself.



Students in Years 7 to 9 take a reading test four times a year (called a STAR reading test), which assesses key skills such as information retrieval, comprehension and vocabulary. The test also provides a measure of reading age, which is detailed on our regular AP reports.

You can help your child with reading at home by checking if they have read for 20 minutes or more each day. If they finish a book at home, remind them to take the quiz on the AR site and ask them about their score. They can log on to the website. Accelerated Reader can be accessed on any mobile device, allowing students to take quizzes on books and/or articles.

The link is provided below:

<https://ukhosted108.renlearn.co.uk/1893751/>

If you have any questions about your child's progress, the SORA app or Accelerated Reader, please email info@stmarys.net.



Books & Biscuits Club!





Changes to the setting of Homework

At present the system for setting homework is as follows:

Year 7, 12 & 13: Homework is set on MS Teams as an assignment.

Year 8-11: Homework is set on Show My Homework (SMHW).

**From 1st November, we are changing the setting of homework to:
Years 7-13 (ALL YEARS) Daily Homework notification via
SIMs Parent App supported with additional material on
MS Teams.**

To ensure a streamlined homework system we will be phasing out SMHW and moving to all homework being set via a notification using the SIMS Parent App. As a parent many of you will have been using this app previously to monitor your child's academic achievements, attendance records and their house points for conduct.

As a parent the benefits of using the SIMs Parent App means that you will see a daily record of the homework that is being set for each subject and the date the homework is due in. This will help you in supporting your child to manage their time appropriately in completing the homework.

Alongside the daily notifications from the SIMs Parent App, we will continue to use the MS Teams platform. This allows teachers the option to create assignments, post resources and give further guidance on the set homework. If your child's teacher sets an assignment for homework it enables the students to upload their work electronically, reducing the need to print at home.

To further support the lines of communication each week you will receive an email from MS Teams called the 'weekly digest'. In this email there will be a record of assignments that have been set and also upcoming assignments. The email is generated on a Sunday and will appear in the inbox of the email that is registered in SIMs. It is therefore vital that update the school of any changes to email addresses.

I hope this more streamlined approach allows you as parents the simplicity of one notification system to supports your child independent learning.

If you have any questions in regards to the SIMs Parent App or homework please direct them to info@stmarys.net, and we will ensure your query is responded to.

Claire McGrath
**Assistant
Headteacher**



SIMS Parent App

Follow your child's progress



Eligibility Criteria for Free School Meals



Dear Parents and Carers,

Aware that the withdrawal of furlough and cuts to benefits may sadly be negatively impacting you, could I take this opportunity to remind you of the eligibility criteria for Free School Meals and the fact that signing up for Free School Meals brings the school additional funding, allowing us to support your child with trips, revision materials and other support as required.

Your child may be able to get free school meals if you get any of the following:

- * Income Support
- * income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- * income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- * support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- * the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- * Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- * Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- * Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

If your child is eligible for free school meals, they'll remain eligible until they finish the phase of schooling (primary or secondary) they're in on 31 March 2022.

Please click on your home county, below, to access the relevant application form:



It is a 5 minute process but please have your **National Insurance number** to hand!
Please contact me via info@stmarys.net if you have any questions.

Mrs Wilkin
Assistant Headteacher



Music for All



We are so happy to be running choir, orchestra and rock and pop groups again after 18 months without the sound of music ringing across the playground!

We have our Carol service coming up in St Joseph's church on 15th December, and it would be lovely to see more students than ever before participating in the music for this celebration.

If your child plays an instrument or enjoys singing carols, please arrange for them to stay after school until 4.15pm on Mondays for Orchestra and 4pm on Tuesdays for Choir.

Next week is our special Reward Week, and everyone who comes to Choir or Orchestra (and other clubs) will get a House-Point and a bar of chocolate as a 'thank you' and 'well done'. Don't forget participation will also help towards the St Mary's Award, with first badges being presented in November.

We have some new initiatives this year too, and I would like to ask for your help with these, if possible. Music lessons and instruments are costly, but invaluable, and we really want to widen the participation in school. We have a large number of Sixth Form students who have chosen to learn a new instrument as an enrichment activity. They will then be forming bands and hopefully performing to younger students.

If you have bass guitars or digital drum-sets sitting in your loft or garage, could you perhaps donate or loan them to St Mary's ?

Likewise we are offering clarinet and saxophone lessons in registration time to selected student who we think will really benefit from this opportunity, but the initiative has proved popular and we could make excellent use of the loan or gift of any clarinets or saxophones tucked away at home. Please contact Mrs Salter-Kay and Mrs Wilkin via info@stmarys.net if you are able to help us provide for as many students as possible.



Mrs Wilkin, Assistant Headteacher

Mrs Salter-Kay, Teacher of Music

Mrs Matthews, Subject Leader for Music

Reporting Absence The Planner App



Please confirm all absences including illness using the Planner App in SMCS Student Planner.

Please notify the school in advance using the app of any pre-arranged absence medical appointments, Music, Exams, work experience interviews etc.

If a student is leaving during the school day any absence must be authorised by their Learning coordinator before they sign out at student hub reception.

To access our attendance policy please visit our website www.stmarys.net

Mrs Hopkins, Admissions and Attendance Officer



Chaplaincy News:

OCTOBER – Month of Mary

The month of October is dedicated to Our Lady. During this month, our year 7 students will be making their own rosaries in lessons in RE and we will be completing a prayer walk around the school while praying the rosary. Please take the opportunity to pray the rosary as a family at least once during this month, to pray for the needs of our community, our country and our world. May I encourage you to dedicate one decade of the Rosary to pray for our leaders at COP26.

CAFOD Harvest Fast Day – Go Green for CAFOD

A big thank you to all the students who took up our ‘Go Green for CAFOD’ fast day – green pea soup-challenge. The issues of Climate Change require our urgent response. Please see the CAFOD website for more ways to get involved in CAFOD’s work - <https://cafod.org.uk/Fundraise/Family-Fast-Day>



2021
**WORLD
MISSION
SUNDAY**

Help missionaries share
God's love with those in
greatest need today.



WORLD MISSION SUNDAY

World Mission Sunday is celebrated in every Catholic community in the world. It’s a moment of grace to express solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Christ who are living in situations of poverty, violence and oppression. This year, it will be celebrated on the 24th of October. You can find out more here

<https://missio.org.uk/world-mission-sunday/wms2021/>

You can also join together with the Missio family around the world by using the Prayer Wall online. You can add your prayer on twitter, facebook or instagram, using the hashtag #MissioPrayerWall



Menu for next week in our Aspens Refectory

Autumn
Winter
2021

STREATERIES

Aspens
🍴🍴🍴🍴

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
					
STREET	Spicy Andhra Chicken Curry	Sweet Potato & BBQ Pulled Jackfruit Burger	Roast Chicken & Stuffing Bap Gravy-naise	Mongolian Lion's Head Beef Meatballs	Hand Battered Fish & Fricke
VEGGIE	Keralan Egg Molee Curry	Veg Chilli Nachos Homemade Salsa	Quorn Roast & Stuffing Bap Gravy-naise	Korean Spicy Rice Bowl with Fried Egg	Homemade Fishless Cake Lemon Yoghurt
SIDES	Turmeric Rice Masala Roasted Cauliflower	Garlic & Herb Wedges Rainbow Slaw	Fennel Seed Roasties Roasted Carrots	Beggar's Noodles Sweet Chilli Broccoli	Chips Peas

WEEK 1

We are hiring!

Current Vacancies Teaching Staff:

Food and Nutrition Teacher (Part-Time) required from January 2022 - closing date 17th October 2021

<https://www.tes.com/jobs/vacancy/food-and-nutrition-teacher-part-time-0-52-fte-nqt-mps-ups-fte-pounds-26-948-42-780-required-from-january-2022-hertfordshire-cm23-2nq-1501169?preview=1>

Part-time Teacher Art (Maternity Cover) Closing date of 1st November 2021

<https://www.tes.com/jobs/vacancy/p-t-teacher-of-art-maternity-cover-0-6-fte-required-february-2022-nqt-mps-ups-fringe-pounds-26-948-pounds-42-780-pro-rata-actual-pounds-16-168-pounds-25-668-hertfordshire-cm23-2nq-1500777?preview=1>

Current Vacancies - Support Staff:

Finance Manager - Closing date is 11 October 2021. Enquiries

to recruitment@stmarys.net or cfo@stfrancistrust.net

<https://www.tes.com/jobs/vacancy/school-finance-manager-full-time-salary-pounds-25-000-pounds-35-000-dependent-on-skills-knowledge-and-experience-hertfordshire-1494418>

Exam Invigilators - Closing date 30 October 2021

<https://www.tes.com/jobs/vacancy/exam-invigilators-casual-st-mary-s-catholic-school-bishop-s-stortford-herts-pounds-9-95-p-h-hertfordshire-cm23-2nq-1495811>

