



I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me

HAVE A HAPPY HALF TERM

A half term in the life of a school is a busy and varied one and St Mary's is no exception to this. Since the beginning of this new academic year we have managed to pack a lot of things into these past 7 or more weeks and, overall, have had a good, positive start to our year.

Our Children

As a Federation we are inspired by the children we serve...all 462 of them from Nursery up to Year 6. They are our shining light and our best ambassadors. We are truly proud of them all and aim to provide the best possible education for them. They take all their responsibilities very seriously, give us good feedback on how to improve the Federation and engage with all that we do



Year 5s in a huddle before one of their games.

and, this year, we have more children enjoying extra-curricular activities than ever before. Especially with sport. There has been more sport here this year than previously and, even this week, we have had a Year 5 team represent the school at another Rugby League World Cup festival. Well done to them all.

PTFA/Governors

Huge thanks to our PTFA. Way back in September they organised and led an excellent welcome BBQ for all those families who were able to make it and generated some money for the children of the school as well. They have even more things planned so keep an eye out for dates. Meanwhile, our Governing Body, led by Mrs Wells, have met several times and are helping to strategically steer the Federation to become the best we can be. No school is able to operate to its maximum without a good PTFA or Governing Body so a massive thank you to all those who volunteer in these groups to make the Federation improve.

Staff

Big thanks to all the staff. Our job is both a joy and a challenge, a vocation to serve the Church, the parish, the parents and the children. Part of the Church's Mission. The teachers and staff who work at both schools are key to the children's success and for that I am grateful for their continued hard work, passion and dedication.

Parents/carers

Finally, gargantuan thanks to all our parents and carers. You **ARE** the most important influences on your children's learning and we genuinely appreciate your engagement with the Federation. The vast majority of parents were able to make the recent consultation evenings and gave us some positive feedback as well as some areas to improve on. We thank you for this and wish you and your families a well deserved break during this October half term. God Bless.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY—Infant School

Monday 31st October School opens

Thursday 3rd November Flu vaccinations Nursery – Year 2

Friday 4th November Y2B Collective Worship 9am in the Hall, All welcome

Monday 7th November EYFS Open evening from 4pm-6pm (Infants)

Wednesday 9th November Y2B Parents Evening, details to follow

Thursday 10th November Y2B Parents Evening, details to follow



The Queen's Green Canopy is an initiative that began in May 2021 in the United Kingdom in honour of the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II in 2022. To increase and protect the native tree cover, people are being urged to create this 'special gift' for the Queen, to mark her 70 years on the throne.

In celebration of our late Queens Platinum Jubilee our Infant Eco Club planted an apple tree in our Prayer Garden. This tree is now officially part of the Queens green canopy. You can view it online at <https://queensgreencanopy.org/>

Dates for your diary – Autumn 2 – Junior School

Mon 31st October	School reopens
Tues 1st November	9.30: All Saints Day Mass at Ss Mary and John's Church. Y2-6. Families welcome to attend
Thurs 3rd November	Y3-6 Flu vaccinations 4M swimming
Fri 4th November	Rock Hero day. To launch Times Tables Heroes competition fortnight, all children and staff are invited to dress up as a rock star – either a famous one or themselves. There is no cost involved and we just ask that the children wear sensible, non-rock star shoes as part of their outfit. Y5 and Junior Safeguarding Team First Aid Training
Mon 7th November	9.15: 4M Class Prayer and liturgy in Junior School Hall – families welcome
Tues 8th November	*Provisional* Y3 Victorian Day
Thurs 10th November	9.30: Lower KS2 (Y3/4) Mass in the Junior School Hall 10.30 and 5.30: RE consultation in the Junior School Hall – 'What does RE look like at St Mary's?' 4M swimming
WB Mon 14th November	Anti-bullying week 6D Bike right (more information to follow)
Tues 15th November	9.00/5.30: Maths workshop for parents /carers Y4 Trip to Chill Factore
Thurs 17th November	4M swimming
WB Mon 21st November	6W Bike right (more information to follow)
Tues 22nd November	Y6 Height and Weight checks
Thurs 24th November	Y3 Apple of my Eye – DT food day 4W swimming
Tues 29th November	3.30 – 4.30: 4W With You Always
Wed 30th November	3.30 – 4.30: 4M With You Always
Thurs 1st December	Y6 Apple of my Eye – DT food day 4W swimming
Mon 5th December	Visiting theatre company 'A Christmas Carol'
Thurs 8th December	4W swimming
Mon 12th December	9.15: 5R Class Prayer and liturgy in Junior School Hall – families welcome
Thurs 15th December	2.00pm and 6.00pm: Y3 Christmas Production in Junior School Hall Y4 swimming (additional lesson for some children – children will be contacted separately).
Mon 19th December	*Provisional* 6.00: Carols by Candlelight at Ss Mary and John's Church.
Wed 21st December	*Provisional* 9.30: Whole School Mass at Ss Mary and John's Church. Y2-6 School closes at 3.30.

Black History Month



As part of Black History Month, Mrs Grange held an Assembly to teach the children all about Nelson Mandela.

At the Junior School, children have learnt about Clive Sullivan, a Rugby League player who was the first black captain of a British sports team – in any sport.

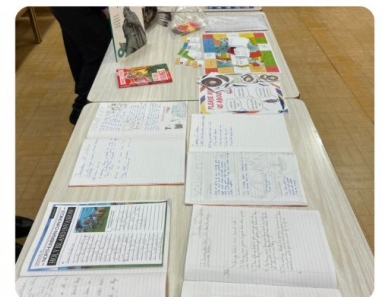
In both Lower and Upper Key Stage 2 prayer and liturgy assemblies, the children have thought about Black History Month and what it means to us all.



History Spotlight

Thank you to all our families who attended the history spotlight

event at the Juniors. Children from Years 3, 4 and 5 were on-hand to share their knowledge about the Stone Age, Roman Britain and the Vikings. Parents were wowed with the information and work that the children had done. We hope it's the first of many 'spotlight' events this year. Thank you to Mr Rowark, our history subject lead, for introducing this to St Mary's.



Poppy Appeal



Poppies will be available to purchase at both the Infant and Junior site when we return after half term. If your child would like a poppy please send them into school with a donation.

Thank you for your support.



Grapes



Outstanding Citizens Award

Infant children, one from each class were chosen for showing respect, compassion and resilience during this half term. They attend-



ed a celebratory tea party with Mrs Grange and had a wonderful time.

STARS OF THE WEEK AND BEE AWARDS

	Star of the Week	Kindness Award
Nursery	Parker	Max
RM	Poppy-Robin	Michael
RB	Ted	Marley-Shea
Y1O	Stanley	Joshua AH
Y1G	Jack B	Alex J
Y2M	Luca	Matthew W
Y2T	Oliver	Luna

Respect & Manners Award

Infants: Freya B



Could we please ask all parents to be respectful of our lovely residents and be cautious of how and where you are parking at drop off and pick up. We have had some complaints regarding parents parking on double yellow lines particularly at the Infant site.



Polite notice

Please help us to keep our paths and roads around both schools clean.

Remember to clean up after you dog,

Party Invitations

Please do not send in party invites for staff to hand out unless the invites are for the whole class.

Please note, we do not hand out class lists to parents.

Infant school request

We are running low on underwear, we would be very grateful of all donations.

Thank you.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

SENDIT

Sendit is an add-on to Snapchat, not a standalone app: it requires users to have an active Snapchat account, which they then connect to Sendit. It's important that trusted adults realise, therefore, that any risks associated with Snapchat also affect children using Sendit. Within the app, people play question games like 'Truth or Dare' and 'Never Have I Ever': users select a question to share on their Snapchat story for their friends to reply to. All responses are anonymous, although – for paying subscribers – Sendit reveals hints about who sent which messages.

Age rating:

12+ App Store
Teen Google Play

However, Sendit's own terms and conditions state that it was developed for the 17+ age group

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

ANONYMOUS RESPONSES

Anonymity online encourages people to say things and act in ways that they normally wouldn't. They're less accountable, and it's harder to track who sent a message. Research has highlighted that children perceive anonymous messages as being more severe than if the same message had come from a friend. Any app that lets children communicate anonymously should be treated with caution.

MENTAL HEALTH IMPACT

Categories of questions such as "Ask me anything" or "Rate me" – coupled with the app's anonymity – mean there is a likelihood of some friends or strangers (if the account is set to 'public') responding in a negative manner. These critical comments (especially if there are several) could ruin a young person's self-esteem – heightening their insecurities and affecting their mental health.

MEMBERSHIP COSTS

Currently costing £8.49 per week, Sendit's Diamond Membership offers clues about who sent a particular message, such as their approximate location, the type of phone used and any mutual friends. Membership also provides exclusive games and an ad-free experience. Young people may well be curious to find out who certain messages are from and therefore sign up for membership.

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

Open-ended questions which relate personally to the sender are an opportunity for malicious people to make offensive remarks, which can lead to full-blown bullying and harassment. Additionally, bullies and trolls can hide behind the anonymity that Sendit offers, feeling more powerful and able to intimidate their target – who, by contrast, feels hurt, victimised and helpless.

POSSIBLE GROOMING

If your child doesn't have their Snapchat account set to private, or they have previously added strangers as friends, there is a possibility of predators responding to their Sendit questions. They do this in an attempt to gather information about your child – or to initiate a conversation with them, seeking ultimately to form an online 'friendship' and gain the young person's trust.

REPEATED ENGAGEMENT

On Sendit, users receive trophies for reaching a particular number of responses, for answering friends' questions and for posting their own. This sense of achievement could incentivise a young person to be active on Sendit more frequently – spending more time on their phone or tablet as they may naturally want to collect all of the trophies or might be competing with their peers.

Advice for Parents & Carers

ENCOURAGE EMPATHY

If your child has already downloaded Sendit, it might be wise to have a discussion with them about the impact that saying something anonymously online could have on others. Encourage them to think about how they would feel if they were on the receiving end of a particular comment. Reminding them to stop and re-read messages before sending could reduce the number of regrettable situations.

TALK IT OVER

Before allowing a young person onto a social networking app, it's a good idea to chat with them about the possibility of receiving hurtful comments. Explain that not everyone online is nice; that people often say things they don't mean; and that posts get misinterpreted. Teach your child not to reply to any offensive users on Sendit and simply block instead them (via the three dots in the top right of the screen).

BLOCK IN-APP PURCHASES

Even if you do allow your child to use Sendit, you might want to consider talking to them in advance about whether they really need a membership subscription. Either way, it's probably safest to make sure that in-app purchases are blocked in the settings, or that you have configured your child's device to ask for your approval before making a purchase online.

ONLY PLAY WITH FRIENDS

Stress the importance of your child playing Sendit games only with their close friends and not having strangers on their contacts list. This should help to keep the nature of the questions light-hearted – and if the games are being played among a small group, it will be easier for the members to figure out who gave certain answers if someone's been left feeling hurt or uncomfortable by any responses.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



Sources: <https://www.getsendit.com/privacy> | <https://www.getsendit.com/policies> | <https://www.getsendit.com/terms> | <https://www.getsendit.com/terms> | <https://www.getsendit.com/terms>



#WakeUpWednesday