**St Mary's Catholic Primary School**

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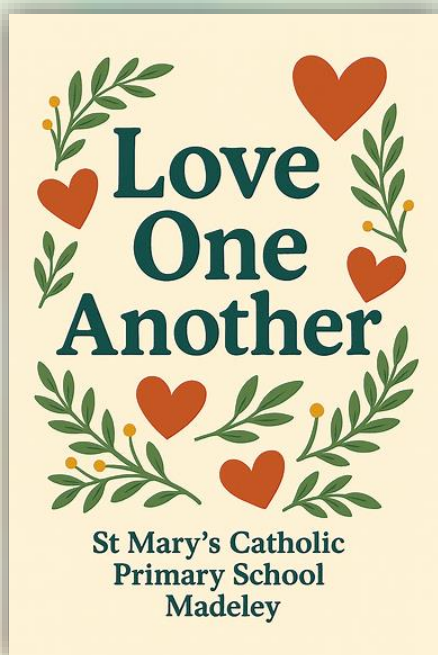
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Headteacher: Samantha Griffiths

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St Mary's Catholic Primary School Newsletter



At St Mary's, we deeply value our partnership with parents and carers, knowing that a child's learning and faith formation begin long before they enter school. Many parents have shared that they appreciate guidance in understanding the important role they play in their child's development - academically, spiritually, and

emotionally. To support this, we have included a detailed section below explaining the meaning behind the phrase 'Parents as First Educators', and how this forms a central part of our mission, identity, and daily practice at St Mary's.

Parents as First Educators – What This Means for Our Families

At St Mary's, we often talk about parents being the first educators of their children, but we know that not every parent is familiar with what this means in practice. Before children ever enter a classroom, they have already learned so much from home - love, trust, routines, faith, language, curiosity, and the values that shape

who they are. As a Catholic school, we honour this by working with families, not separate from them. The Church teaches that the home is the 'domestic church,' the first place where children encounter love, faith, forgiveness, and belonging. This means parents are not expected to be teachers in the formal sense, but rather the most important and consistent influence in a child's life.

The following section explains how St Mary's supports parents in this role and how, together, we form a strong partnership that places each child's wellbeing, faith, and development at the centre of everything we do.



Safeguarding Reminder: End-of-Day Collection Procedures

The safety of every child at St Mary's is our highest priority, and we kindly ask all parents and carers to support us by following

our end-of-day procedures.

Recently, some parents have been coming right up to the classroom doors at collection time. This makes it very difficult for staff to see clearly, to match children safely with their adults, and to ensure every child is handed over correctly.

For safeguarding reasons:

Please wait on the playground and not near the classroom doors.

Staying back on the playground allows staff to:

- see all parents and carers clearly
- release children safely, one at a time
- ensure children leave with the correct adult
- maintain a calm and secure dismissal routine

Your cooperation with this is not only appreciated — **it is essential.** Safety comes first, and we must all work together to ensure safe, smooth and secure drop-offs and collections for every child.

Thank you for your continued support.

Celebrating Progress in Writing

I regularly spend time looking at the children's books alongside them, and this week I have been truly delighted by the progress I have seen in their writing. From improved letter formation to growing confidence in structuring sentences, it is wonderful to witness their God-given talents developing day by day. Their hard work is shining through beautifully.

Thank you for the support you give at home, your encouragement nurtures not only their learning but their God-given potential. Working together in this way reflects our shared mission to help every child flourish in the light of Christ.

Uniform Reminder

We kindly ask parents to ensure children come to school wearing their correct school uniform each day. Recently, some children have been arriving at school wearing their own jumpers and hoodies. Please ensure that these items are only worn on Dress-Down Fridays. Thank you for supporting us in maintaining standards and ensuring children are dressed appropriately for learning.



Safe Parking Outside School

Keeping the area outside school safe is a shared responsibility, and we kindly ask all parents and carers to support us by avoiding parking in the bus stop directly outside the school gates. Parking in this space creates several risks:

- **Reduced visibility** for both children and drivers, making it harder to see pupils crossing safely.
- **Obstruction of school buses and emergency vehicles**, preventing them from pulling in where needed.
- **Increased congestion** at already busy times, forcing cars to manoeuvre around parked vehicles.
- **Children crossing between cars**, which is one of the most common causes of accidents near schools.
- **Unsafe habits becoming normalised** if more cars begin parking in the same area.

I would also like to offer a sincere thank you to the parents who have come to speak with me personally and have committed to no longer parking in the bus stop going forward. Your cooperation, understanding and willingness to make positive changes are very much appreciated. These small but important steps make a real difference to pupil safety.

Thank you to everyone for your continued support.

Liturgy this month

In the week beginning 2nd February, children are introduced to Jesus' teaching in Beatitudes, learning that true happiness comes from friendship with God and choosing ways of living that reflect the Gospel. Through the example of St Pier Giorgio Frassati, children see how we can put others first through simple, thoughtful choices, allowing the Beatitudes to guide our own words and actions. *With your child/ren, you may also like to...*

- *Talk about the word "blessed" in the context of Jesus' words (which is also translated as 'happy') and what this might mean in everyday life.*
- *Share examples of people who, like St Pier Giorgio, show kindness quietly and consider small ways to put others first during the week.*

Who Was Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati?

Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati was a young man from Italy who lived a little over 100 years ago. He is often called "**the saint for young people**" because he showed that you can love God joyfully while also living a normal, fun, everyday life.

Here are some things children might like to know about him:

✿ He loved helping others

Pier Giorgio spent a lot of his time helping the poor, visiting people who were lonely, and secretly giving money, food, and warm clothes

to families who needed them. He believed that every person is loved by God and deserves kindness.

He loved adventure

He enjoyed hiking, mountain climbing, skiing, and being outdoors. He often said that being in nature helped him feel close to God. One of his favourite sayings was:

"To the heights!"

He meant that we should always try to climb higher in our faith and in the way we treat others.

He was joyful

His friends said he was funny, friendly, full of life and always trying to include everyone. His joy came from his love for God and for people.

He had a strong faith

Even though he came from a wealthy family, he lived very simply. He went to Mass, prayed the Rosary, and tried every day to make choices that pleased God.

Why the Church loves him

Pier Giorgio shows us that holiness is not only for adults - children and young people can be saints too by being kind, generous, joyful, and brave.



Half-Term Reminder

Please remember that we break up on Friday 13th February for half term. We hope all families enjoy a safe, restful, and joyful week together.

FREE February Urban Games – Telford & Wrekin Council

There's plenty to do this half term with Telford & Wrekin Council's FREE Urban Games! No booking is needed—simply head to your local park, playground, MUGA, or Nature Reserve for sports and activities for ages 0–16, all led by professional coaches. Visit www.telford.gov.uk/WhatsoninTelford for the full programme.



Healthy Lunchboxes – Supporting Children's Wellbeing

At St Mary's, we are committed to supporting children's health and wellbeing, and we know this is something families care deeply about too. As part of this commitment, we are working hard within school to reduce sugar in both our breakfast offer and our lunchtime meals. We want to help children start the day in the best possible way, with foods that support steady energy levels, concentration and overall wellbeing.

Increasingly, however, we are seeing children come to school having already eaten sweets, biscuits, cake or bakery items for breakfast. We completely understand the pressures of busy mornings, but sugary foods first thing can make it harder for children to settle, learn and maintain focus throughout the day. A more balanced breakfast, whether at home or through our school provision, really does make a noticeable difference.

Similarly, staff have noticed that some children are bringing lunchboxes containing large amounts of




sugary food. While treats are absolutely fine in moderation, too much sugar at lunchtime can lead to the same challenges with energy levels and concentration during the afternoon.

We also understand that preparing lunchboxes every day can be challenging, especially with busy family routines. With this in mind, we wanted to offer some simple, affordable and nut-free ideas that help keep children energised and ready for learning.

Healthy, Nut-Free Lunchbox Ideas

Here are some balanced options that children usually enjoy:

Fruit & Veg Options (nut-free):

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- Apple slices, grapes, satsumas, berries
 - Carrot sticks, cucumber sticks, cherry tomatoes
 - Raisins or dried apricots (in small portions)

Protein Ideas (nut-free):

- Sliced chicken, ham, turkey or cheese
- Hard-boiled egg
- Hummus (check packaging to ensure nut-free) with crackers or veg sticks

Carbohydrate Choices:

- Sandwiches, wraps or pitta
- Pasta salads
- Rice cakes or savoury crackers

Snacks with Less Sugar:

- Yoghurts (low-sugar varieties where possible)
- Breadsticks
- Popcorn (plain)
- Cheese portions

We politely ask parents to avoid sending in foods containing **nuts**, as we have children in school with allergies and must keep everybody safe.

Thank you for your continued support. Working together, we can help the children build healthy habits that support both their learning and their long-term wellbeing.

Headteacher Letters

This week, a Headteacher letter was sent to a very special someone in Year 1...



Dear Parents,

*I am writing to share how wonderfully **M** has settled into school and to celebrate the exceptional start she has made. It has been an absolute joy to watch her grow in confidence and flourish within her new environment.*

*From the very beginning, **M** has shown herself to be a caring, thoughtful and enthusiastic member of the class. She is consistently kind to others, always ready with a smile, and has already become a positive role model to those around her. Her gentle nature and warm interactions make a real difference to the classroom atmosphere.*

***M** listens carefully, follows instructions beautifully, and always tries her hardest in every task she is given. Her determination to do well shines through, and it is wonderful to see her taking pride in her learning. These are qualities that will carry her far, both academically and personally.*

*This week, we were especially proud to see **M** awarded Star Player in PE. She has approached PE sessions with enthusiasm, effort, and*

a willingness to persevere – qualities we are delighted to celebrate. This achievement is thoroughly well deserved and reflects her positive attitude and growing confidence.

She is a credit to herself and to you, and we feel incredibly lucky to have her as part of our school community.

Warmest regards,
Mrs Griffiths
Headteacher

