



St Mary's Catholic Primary School

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Headteacher: Samantha Griffiths

Assistant Headteacher: Helen Lambie

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Thursday 4th September 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back. I hope you all had a restful and joyful summer break. It has been wonderful to see the children return with such energy, smiles, and enthusiasm, ready to embrace the new term ahead.

A very special welcome goes to the new families who have joined us this September — across all year groups, we are delighted to have you as part of our school community. The children have made a fantastic start to the year, settling quickly into routines and showing great focus and positivity.



Important Announcement – Joining Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Academy

We are pleased to share some exciting news about the future of our school. After a period of careful consideration, we will be joining **Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Academy** later this academic year. With the utmost respect for Bishop Mark's leadership and intentions, we wish to express that there has been no opportunity for parental consultation, as we are being asked to join the academy in line with his directive.

This decision has been made in partnership with our governing body, the Diocese, and the local authority, and is rooted in our shared commitment to providing the very best education and opportunities for our pupils.

Joining the Academy will bring a number of benefits, including:

- Access to a wider network of experienced educators and specialist staff
- Opportunities for staff training, development, and collaboration across schools in the Academy
- Shared resources and expertise to further enhance teaching and learning
- Continued focus on our Catholic ethos, values, and mission, ensuring that faith remains at the heart of everything we do

It is important to note that:

- Our school's name, uniform, and day-to-day routines will remain the same
- The same dedicated staff will continue to teach and care for your children
- Our commitment to high standards, safeguarding, and pupil wellbeing will remain unchanged

Over the coming months, we will keep you fully informed about the transition process and any developments.

We are confident that this step will strengthen our school's future and help us continue to provide an excellent, faith-filled education for every child.



School Improvements Over the Summer

Over the holidays, we have been busy making sure the school is looking its best and ready for learning.

- The school has been freshly painted, giving it a clean, bright, and more contemporary feel
- Roofs have been re-felted and fences repainted
- Several other maintenance jobs have been completed to ensure our environment is safe, welcoming, and inspiring for the children



Safeguarding – Our Ongoing Priority

The safety, wellbeing, and happiness of your children remain our highest priority. Our safeguarding procedures are both rigorous and responsive, and include:

- Secure access to the school site, with monitored entry points and strict visitor protocols
- Vigilant supervision during arrival and departure times
- Regular site security checks and risk assessments
- Ongoing coordination with the local authority, including the police and safeguarding teams when necessary
- Staff training and pupil rehearsals for emergency procedures

These measures are reviewed regularly to ensure they meet the highest standards of care and protection.



Policy Updates

As part of our ongoing commitment to pupil wellbeing and school standards, we are updating our policy to reflect issues that have arisen over the past twelve months. This includes expectations around personal presentation and items brought into school:

- Beauty or hygiene products may be confiscated and returned at the end of the day
- Make-up (including lip gloss, eyeliner, contouring products, or mascara) will need to be removed in school
- False eyelashes must be removed at home — parents will be contacted if needed
- Artificial acrylic nails are not permitted; pupils will be sent home to have them removed or cut short before returning

Safeguarding Concern – Online Safety

Last year, we became aware of a serious safeguarding concern involving some of our oldest pupils. Unfortunately, they had accessed inappropriate websites, including pornography, and shared explicit images and videos with others. In some cases, screens were shared and content viewed simultaneously in groups.

This behaviour is deeply concerning and may indicate issues around supervision and online safety at home. In such cases, both the child and their parents may be referred to external safeguarding agencies for further support.

We strongly urge all families to:

- Speak openly with children about responsible internet use
- Ensure parental controls are in place
- Supervise online activity where possible

We will continue to educate pupils about digital safety and respectful behaviour online, and we value your partnership in reinforcing these messages at home.

After-School Clubs

We are pleased to announce that our after-school clubs will begin on Monday 15 September. More information, including the full timetable and sign-up details, will be sent home shortly. We look forward to seeing many of our pupils getting involved in these opportunities.

Attendance and Punctuality

Good attendance and being on time are essential for every child's learning and progress. Arriving on time ensures that children are settled, ready to learn, and do not miss important introductions to the day's lessons. We ask all families to:

- Aim for 100% attendance wherever possible
- Arrive at school before the morning bell so children are ready to start promptly

- Arrange medical and dental appointments outside school hours whenever possible

Every day in school counts, and together we can help children make the most of every learning opportunity.

Parking in the Bus Lane

We have been made aware that some parents are stopping or parking in the bus lane outside school during drop-off and pick-up times. This area must be kept clear for school transport and emergency access. Parking in the bus lane is not permitted and you are running the risk of receiving a parking ticket from enforcement officers. Please use designated parking areas or nearby legal spaces to help keep our pupils safe and ensure traffic flows smoothly.

Reminder

Please ensure that all children arrive at school on time each day, wearing the correct uniform and ready for learning. Labelling all clothing and personal items helps us return lost property quickly. Children should also be provided with a drink for the day — either plain water or diluted no-added-sugar squash — to help them stay hydrated and focused during lessons.

Happy News

On a lighter note, we are thrilled to share that Mr Freeman is expecting his second child. He will be taking his paternity leave over the next few weeks. During this time, his class will be taught by our experienced Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs), ensuring continuity and high-quality learning. We wish Mr Freeman and his family every happiness during this exciting time.

Thank you for your continued trust and support. Together, we can ensure our school remains a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment where every child can thrive.

Warmest regards,

Mrs Griffiths

Headteacher