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December 2023 Newsletter

Dear Parents, Carers and Friends of St Mary's,

Another busy term with lots going on. It is always exciting seeing children looking forward to Christmas. We have so much going on – thank you for your support with each trip, performance, activity. We do appreciate it.

St Mary's Christmas Fair

Firstly, a huge thank you to everyone who supported St Mary's Christmas Fair. It takes a huge amount of effort to put on such an event. The staff worked really hard behind the scenes to pull it all together, especially Mrs Ramanouski, Miss Roberts and Mrs Furnival so special thanks to them and to our volunteer helpers. The Fair was a huge success and was extremely well attended. We appreciate that there are lessons to be learnt but we hope you agree that the children had a fabulous time. Funds raised are still being counted as the main raffle is still open but the total at the last count was over £1800!! so thank you once again.

Attendance

St Mary's is dedicated to supporting strong attendance for all children so that they receive an excellent education. The benefits of being in school are numerous and we know children are at a disadvantage when they miss out on lessons. We would ask all parents to follow the steps below.

What YOU must do:

Try to telephone the school before 8.30am each day of your child's absence.

Tell the school in advance, of any medical appointments and bring in appointment cards/letters.

If you are not sure whether your child is well enough to attend school, send them in anyway as they often perk up on arrival. We will always call if we feel your child is struggling in school.

Have a backup plan for if you are unable to bring your child to school, call on a family member, neighbour or friend.

If you and your child are experiencing difficulties with school attendance, then talk to us as a first step so we can help! Please speak with Mrs Bain our Family Support Worker or Mrs Tainsh.

What WE will do:

Check your child's attendance every day.

Phone home to discuss your child's attendance with you.

Invite you into school for attendance meetings if we are concerned.

If we cannot establish a reason for absence, then we may make a welfare home visit.

Members of the Attendance Action Alliance have worked with the Department for Education to develop this short guide which helps parents understand how they can work with their school and local authority to support their children to attend school and get the right support.

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/back-into-school/resources-for-families/>

Did you know?

- **If a child misses a Friday – they are missing 1/5 of the learning week.**
- **If a child misses a Friday – they are missing their celebration assembly and not getting the praise and encouragement, they deserve.**

‘Tis the season... for coughs and colds!!!

The season for coughs and colds has well and truly arrived since we returned from our half term break. Many members of staff are parents of young children so we do understand that playing the ‘tough parent’ and sending children into school when they’re feeling under the weather can be hard on our emotions. But we also know that most children who have common cold symptoms soon pick up when they see their friends and they have their minds occupied on other things. We encourage you all to send children in and ‘see how they go’ rather than keep them at home ‘just in case’ - a dose of Calpol always seems to do wonders! We promise we will always phone parents if children are too unwell to be in school.

We have also recently seen a rise in the number of requests to leave early at the end of the day. Again, this is disruptive to your child’s learning and would request that you avoid making these requests.

School Spaces

We do now have spaces in many year groups. If you know of someone who is looking for a school space, please talk to the school office.

Acting with respect

It is with a heavy heart and sadness that I write to you about this. As a general rule, schools are orderly, safe places, where relationships between staff and visitors, especially parents/carers, demonstrate mutual respect and recognition of shared responsibility for pupils’ welfare and educational progress. Parental involvement is an important factor in educational success and in dealing with emerging problems at an early stage.

However, on occasion, the behaviour of a few parents/carers has caused severe anxiety and upset due to inappropriate and often confrontational calls, emails, meetings with staff. This is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. We have even had an incident when a parent was shouting so much on the phone to office staff, that staff just passing through the office, heard the conversation.

No staff member intentionally upsets a parent/carer and I would ask that you remember this. We know it is a minority of parents, but the numbers are growing.

If an incident happens in the class, you need to address this firstly with the class teacher. Other staff and office staff will not necessarily know what has happened and they are not best placed to deal with your concerns. If you are not satisfied with the response from the class teacher, you then involve senior leaders – Mr Davies or myself.

We really do want to work with each one of you and we do appreciate your support. Our primary focus has to be the Teaching and Learning of all pupils.

After school clubs

Last year our uptake on after school clubs was disappointing. We are currently also looking at running clubs in the lunch hour too so that children have several options.

Sad Goodbye

Mrs Emison will not be returning as we had hoped. She is taking a break due to health reasons. In her short time here she has made a big impact and we are very grateful to her for that.

Important Dates

- Monday 11th December – Christingle Service, 3.30 p.m. St Mary's Church
- Tuesday 12th December – KS1 (infants) Nativity Performances, 9.30 a.m. & 2.00 p.m.
- Wednesday 13th December – Flu vaccination catch up sessions (for those who were not in or have since given permission)
- Thursday 14th December – KS2 (juniors) Christmas Service – St Mary's Church 1.30 p.m.
- Tuesday 19th December – Panto trip for years 1-6
- Tuesday 19th December – Reception Fun Morning
- Tuesday 19th December – Disco, KS1 (infants) 3.15 – 4.15 p.m. KS2 (juniors) 4.15 – 5.30 p.m.
- Wednesday 20th December – Christmas Lunch & Christmas Jumper Day
- Friday 22nd December Finish for Christmas Holidays at the earlier time of 1.30 p.m.