

I cannot believe that we are at the end of another week. This week the children have been reflecting on loved ones who may have died or people close to them who have needed their prayers. On Monday you will be able to see a 220 crosses on display by the playground – each one representing a different prayer. These will remain in place for the rest of November.

The children in F1, F2, Year 1 and Year 2 have been busy this week starting rehearsals for their Nativity concerts – It is lovely to hear their singing coming out of the classrooms and filling the school with joy. You will be in for a treat if you are planning to come and watch one of the concerts.

At school we value the voice of the pupil's and have many groups where they can have an impact on school life. One of these groups is the GIFT (Growing In Faith Together) team. These pupils help to lead the school's spiritual life. Today they were fortunate enough to participate in an event at St. Anne's Audenshaw where they, alongside pupils from St. John Fisher, reflected upon their role and devised an action plan of how they can have an influence on the faith life of the school. It was lovely to hear from other headteachers that their behaviour was excellent. Thank you to Mrs Nickleas for supporting the children at today's event.

Mr Price

Safeguarding

Our designated safeguarding team are Miss Johnson, Mr Knapper and myself. If you have any concerns at all please do let one of us know. Safeguarding is the responsibility of all of our school community and we welcome all your support in helping us achieve our best.

This week, I have attached a useful poster on Roblox – one of the most popular online video games. As always, this poster contains many handy tips about keeping your child safe online.



Key dates

- Mon 20th Nov** – Parents Evening
- Weds 22nd Nov** – Parents Evening
- Tues 28th Nov** – Hockey tournament
- Tues 5th Dec** – KS1 Nativity
- Weds 6th Dec** – KS1 Nativity
- Thurs 7th Dec** - Christmas Dinner
- Weds 13th Dec** – F1/F2 Nativity
- Thurs 14th Nov** – Selection box raffle
- Fri 15th Dec** – Christmas parties
- Fri 15th Dec** – School closes for Christmas.
- Weds 3rd Jan** – School reopens

Christmas Dinner

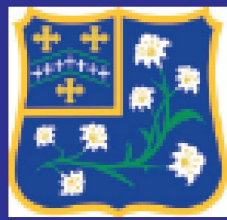
School Christmas Dinner is on the 7th December. I know that children like to have a Christmas Dinner who may usually be on packed lunches. A letter has gone out with details of how this can be booked. Please make sure you do this before next Friday (24th) as the school kitchen needs to place their order on this date. I would not like any child to miss out.



Parish News

The latest parish newsletter can be viewed by scanning or clicking here:





Parents' Evening

Next week we have our first parents' evening of the new term. This year parents' evening will take place in the school hall. All of the teachers will have an allocated space around the outside of the hall, with waiting places around the middle. If you wish to view your child's work – this will be available on the main corridor.

Thank you to everyone who booked through the new online system – if you have any feedback (positives or issues) I am always willing to listen and make changes where needed.

Sports Events

On Monday, the Year 6 hockey team played a qualifier tournament in very windy conditions at Astley Village. The team played really well throughout and improved with every game played. They didn't manage to get through to the next round but showed great sportsmanship throughout.

On Tuesday, a combined force of the year 5/6 girls played in the Catholic Schools Football Tournament at St Thomas More High School. The tournament itself was very close and the girls managed to get two battling draws and narrowly lost the other matches. Everyone contributed really well with some playing a game for the first time and they should be all really proud of their efforts.

Thank you to Mr Tomkinson for supporting both teams.

Stars of the week

Congratulations to Imaan, Kaden, Alfie, Aiden, Ciara, Ethan, Lucy, Louie, Malcolm, Maisie, Issy, Hallie, Daisy and Una who have been nominated as stars of the week by their class teachers. Well done and keep up the good work.

Attendance

Good attendance at school gives your child the best possible chance to succeed. Congratulations to Year 1 (for the 2nd week running) who have had the highest attendance this week with an excellent 99.3%



	Reception	94%		
Year 1	98%	Year 2	97%	
Year 3	97%	Year 4	95%	
Year 5	95%	Year 6	97%	



School uniform and PE Kit

As a school we are always proud of how smart our children look. There is a lot of research into school uniform and these highlight many positives (and some negatives) around the wearing of school uniform. I want St. Mary's to be a school where everyone is proud to be a member of the community. One way of expressing this is through conformity to the school uniform policy. Over the past few weeks we have had quite a few children who have been coming to school with the incorrect PE kit or no PE kit at all. Please can I remind parents that our PE kit consists of a white polo shirt and navy blue shorts/tracksuit bottom.

There are also a number of pupils who are wearing trainers instead of school shoes.

A copy of the school uniform policy can be found on the school website if needed.



Happy Birthday

Happy birthday to Kiera, Jack and Logan who have celebrated their birthdays this week.

PE stars of the week

Congratulations to Alfie, Niall, Imani, Bryan, Emily, Kenji, Esme, Theo, Charlotte, Indie, Sophie, Ted, Ellie, River, Faith, Hallie, Layla, Lily, Maya, Nancy, Usman and Isla who have been nominated as PE stars of the week by their class teachers. Well done and keep up the good work.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

ROBLOX

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Roblox is one of the most popular video games on the market. By 2020, the game's makers were claiming that more than half of children in the USA play it. As a 'sandbox' title, Roblox offers a huge amount of creative freedom: it lets players create their own gaming experiences with the Roblox Studio to build custom levels and games, which can then be shared with other players online. Roblox fosters creative thinking and enjoys a robust online community of fans.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

Roblox encourages players to communicate online (including a group chat facility). This could expose children to risks such as scammers, online predators, harassment, griefers and more. The in-game chat has some filters, but isn't perfect: players can still send harmful messages to others – such as general hostility – while predators can reach out to children directly.

PUBLIC SERVERS

Roblox has private or VIP servers which allow people to play exclusively with their friends, but this costs money. Most Roblox players will instead be on public servers that anyone can join. Servers can host games which focus on all kinds of aspects, including direct player interaction. Some games and servers, therefore, will put children more at risk of contact from strangers than others.

ONLINE DATERS

These are also called 'ODers' and are quite common in Roblox. An ODER is an individual who joins a game with the intention of finding someone to date online – and eventually meet in person. Such online dating is against the Roblox community guidelines, but this usually doesn't deter ODERs. Some player-built Roblox game worlds have even been designed with online dating specifically in mind.

IN-APP PURCHASES

Roblox is actually free to download and play, but bear in mind that there are some hidden costs. Players are encouraged to make purchases in the game, for example, using real money. People can also buy extra Robux (the in-game currency) to spend on cosmetic items in the game, and some private or VIP servers also have a cost.

Advice for Parents & Carers

SET PARENTAL CONTROLS

Roblox comes with several parental control options, which are explained well on the game's official website. It's essential to enter the correct date of birth for your child, as that allows Roblox to automatically apply the appropriate chat filters. The game also allows parents and carers to set monthly spending restrictions and monitor their child's account.

DISABLE PRIVATE MESSAGING

Roblox's private messaging function raises the risk of children being contacted by people they may not want to speak with – potentially leading to bullying, harassment, toxicity and scam attempts. The game allows you to disable messages from anyone who hasn't been added as a friend on your child's account.

PRIVATE SERVERS

If your child has genuine friends who they play Roblox online with, paying for a private or VIP server decreases the risk of contact from strangers. Even then, however, some players could invite other people – who might not necessarily be child friendly – into the private server. If your child is a Roblox fan, it's important to talk with them regularly about who they are playing the game with.

MONITOR SPENDING

If they don't understand they're using real money, it's easy for children to accidentally spend a sizeable amount in the game. Using parental controls to place limits on their spending will help avoid any nasty financial surprises. Ensuring that you have two-factor authentication on your payment accounts also makes it harder for your child to spend money inadvertently.

DEALING WITH STRANGERS

At some point in their development, your child will need to learn how to deal with strangers online. Show them how to block and report any users who are upsetting them or asking uncomfortable questions. Talking to them about what's OK to discuss – and what they should never tell a stranger online – will help them understand how to communicate with others safely in the digital world.

Meet Our Expert

Clare Godwin (a.k.a. Lunawolf) has worked as an editor and journalist in the gaming industry since 2015, providing websites with event coverage, reviews and gaming guides. She is the owner of Lunawolf Gaming and is currently working on various gaming-related projects including game development and writing non-fiction books.



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