

## Class Assemblies

Throughout the year each of our classes lead a prayer and liturgy assembly which parents are invited to. These are always on Thursdays. The dates for the rest of this academic year are below:

|           |                        |
|-----------|------------------------|
| Reception | 18 <sup>th</sup> June  |
| Year 1    | 30 <sup>th</sup> April |
| Year 2    | 23 <sup>rd</sup> April |
| Year 3    | 21 <sup>st</sup> May   |
| Year 4    | 7 <sup>th</sup> May    |
| Year 5    | 19 <sup>th</sup> March |
| Year 6    | 12 <sup>th</sup> March |

Towards the end of the Spring term, Year 3 and Year 4 will present the Easter story. This will be held in St. Mary's Church.

## Stars of the Week

Congratulations to each of our stars of the week: Rory, Arabella, Adrielle, Albert, Ciara, Frankie and Evelyn who have received a star of the week award for learning.

Congratulations to each of our stars of the week: Riley, Kimberley, Sofia, Charlotte, Roman, Charlotte and Harriet who have been awarded star of the week for behaviour.

Well done to all of you – keep up the good work.

|                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 27 <sup>th</sup> Jan                  | Y5/6 boys football @ STM                       |
| 27 <sup>th</sup> Jan                  | Rec and Y6 Height and Weight checks            |
| 28 <sup>th</sup> Jan                  | In school theatre – EYFS                       |
| 28 <sup>th</sup> Jan                  | Greater Manchester football finals             |
| 29 <sup>th</sup> Jan                  | Y4 Badminton Festival @National Cycling Centre |
| 29 <sup>th</sup> Jan                  | Y5/6 football -v- St John Fisher               |
| 30 <sup>th</sup> Jan                  | Relics Visit                                   |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup> Feb | National storytelling week                     |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> Feb                   | Young Voices @ COOP Arena                      |
| 12 <sup>th</sup> Feb                  | Sports hall athletics                          |
| 13 <sup>th</sup> Feb                  | Close for Spring 1 – 3:30pm                    |
| 23 <sup>rd</sup> Feb                  | Open for Spring 2                              |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> March                | RNCM to work with Y5                           |
| 12 <sup>th</sup> March                | Y6 Class Assembly                              |
| 19 <sup>th</sup> March                | Y5 Class Assembly                              |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> April                 | Close for Spring 2 – 3:20pm                    |

## Chinese New Year Lunch

On the 24<sup>th</sup> Feb we will be celebrating Chinese New Year with a special Chinese inspired lunch. You can book your child onto this event via the schoolgrid app – even if your child does not usually have school dinners.

## Safeguarding

Our safeguarding team at St. Mary's consists of Miss Johnson, Mr Knapper and myself. If you wish to discuss any concerns with us, please ask and at least one of us will be available. All of our staff are safeguard trained, and we are here to keep your children safe and happy at all times.

## **Punctuality**

We have a number of children who are arriving at school late each morning. The school gates are open at 8:40am and registers are taken at 8:50am. We expect all children to be sat in class ready to start lessons at 8:50am. Please allow your children time to come into school, take off bags and coats and make their way into class. Even if the school gate is still open, your child will still get a late mark if they are not in class by 8:50am. If the gate is closed, children need to enter school via the main entrance.

## **Attendance**

Congratulations to **Year 4** who have the highest attendance this week with an amazing 100%. Well done.

|               |            |               |            |
|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|
|               | <b>F2</b>  | <b>96%</b>    |            |
| <b>Year 1</b> | <b>94%</b> | <b>Year 2</b> | <b>97%</b> |
| <b>Year 3</b> | <b>94%</b> | <b>Year 4</b> | <b>99%</b> |
| <b>Year 5</b> | <b>95%</b> | <b>Year 6</b> | <b>99%</b> |

## **Parish News**

The parish newsletter can be viewed by clicking the link here: [Newsletters](#)

## **The Relics of St Carlos Acutis**

At the end of January, the relics of St Carlo Acutis will be visiting Salford Diocese – at St. Mary's Church in Burnley and St Patrick's Church in Collyhurst. during which time the Diocese will welcome schools and parishioners to attend a range of events. We will be taking a small group of pupils to venerate the relics on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> January. The children have all learned about St Carlos at school so this will be a wonderful, once in a lifetime experience for them.

Carlo is the first millennial saint, and is celebrated for his profound faith and his use of the internet to log Eucharistic miracles from around the world. He was passionate about spreading the teachings of the Catholic Church up until his death from leukaemia at the age of 15.

For more information and to book onto events, please use the following link: [Relics of St Carlo Acutis to Visit Diocesan Churches - Roman Catholic Diocese of Salford](#)

## **Dodgeball**

Last night, we had two Y5/6 teams representing St Mary's at the Dodgeball tournament at Laurus Ryecroft. Both teams gave their all with one team finishing runners up and the other winning their league. They will progress to the finals. All the children showed excellent sportsmanship throughout the tournament and were a credit to St Mary's. Thank you to Mr Knapper and Miss Johnson for accompanying the children. Good luck to our Y3/4 Dodgeball team who take part in their tournament tonight.

## **Young Voices**

On Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> February our KS2 choir will be attending the Young Voices concert at the COOP arena in Manchester. This is a wonderful event which all of the children always enjoy thoroughly, despite the late night. A letter detailing the arrangements has been sent to parents. Payments for contribution towards transport can be made online at p

## **Happy Birthday**

Happy birthday to Ruairi, Jasmine, Zendaya, Sofia and Grayson who have had birthdays this week. I hope you all had a wonderful day.



# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about WHATSAPP

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

WhatsApp is a free messaging service owned by Meta which allows users to send text and voice messages, make video calls, share multimedia – such as images, videos, documents and polls – and have group chats. WhatsApp messages are encrypted, meaning only the sender and the recipient can view what is sent. While this privacy may sound attractive on paper, this app comes with several associated risks that must be considered – especially for younger users.

AGE RESTRICTION  
**13+**

## GROUP CHATS

Group chats let friends talk together but can pose problems for young users. They might feel excluded – like discovering events they weren't invited to. Hurtful comments can also escalate quickly, as more people join in, amplifying the impact through a wider audience.

## EVOLVING SCAMS

WhatsApp's popularity makes it attractive to scammers. Tactics include impersonating a child in an 'emergency' to request money, or triggering a login code, then pretending to be WhatsApp and asking for it – giving them access to private messages and personal data.

## CHANNELS

'Channels' let users follow topics anonymously, interacting only through polls or emoji reactions. However, fake channels can mimic real ones, spreading misinformation, hate speech, or phishing for personal data. WhatsApp may also collect and share channel-following info with third parties, raising privacy issues.

## DISAPPEARING MESSAGES

Disappearing messages help share sensitive info, but young people may wrongly assume they're fully private. Senders can opt for their message to vanish after 24 hours, 7 days, or 90 days – or for media, after one view. However, recipients can still save them by bookmarking or taking screenshots, reducing their privacy.

## FAKE NEWS

WhatsApp's simplicity makes sharing news quick – accurate or not. To help curb misinformation, messages forwarded over five times now show a 'Forwarded many times' label with a double arrow. This alerts users that the message isn't original and may be unreliable.

## CHAT LOCK

The new 'Chat lock' feature lets users store specific messages in a separate passcode- or biometrically-protected folder. While useful for privacy, it could be misused by younger users to hide conversations or content they know parents and educators might find inappropriate, including age-restricted material.

## VISIBLE LOCATION

WhatsApp's 'live location' feature helps friends meet up or parents check a child's route home. However, anyone in a child's group chats can track their location, potentially revealing their home address or regular travel patterns to strangers.

## AI INTEGRATION

Meta AI on WhatsApp poses risks to children, including exposure to misinformation, inappropriate content, and data privacy issues. AI responses may be inaccurate, and kids might share personal information unknowingly. It can also hinder critical thinking by offering ready-made answers.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### EMPHASISE CAUTION

Encourage children to treat unexpected messages with caution. Get them to consider, for example, whether it sounds like something a friend or relative would really send them. Make sure they know never to share personal details over WhatsApp, and to be wary of clicking on any links in messages. Setting up two-step verification adds a further layer of protection to their WhatsApp account.

### THINK BEFORE SHARING

Help children understand why it's important to stop and think before posting or forwarding something on WhatsApp. It's easy – and all too common – for content sent to one user to then be shared more widely, and even publicly on social media. Encourage them to consider how an ill-judged message might damage their reputation or upset a friend who sent something to them in confidence.

### ADJUST THE SETTINGS

It's wise to change a child's WhatsApp settings to specify which of their contacts can add them to group chats without needing approval. To do this, go to 'Privacy', then 'Groups'. You can give permission to 'My Contacts' or 'My Contacts Except...'. Additionally, if the child needs to use 'live location', emphasise that they should enable this function for only as long as they need – and then turn it off.

### CHAT ABOUT PRIVACY

Have a conversation with youngsters about how they're using WhatsApp, emphasising that it's for their own safety. If you spot a 'Locked Chats' folder, you might want to talk about the sort of messages that are in there, who they're with and why they have been hidden. Also, if a young user has sent any 'view once' content, discuss their reasons for using this feature.

## 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.



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