

We have reached the end of Spring 1 half term. It has been an extremely busy half-term with lots of fantastic learning in each class and it is wonderful to see all of the children flourishing. School closes today at normal time and reopens on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February. All of the staff look forward to welcoming everybody back. I hope you all manage to spend some time with family; either holidays, days out or just some time at home together. We will pray for some nice weather over Denton as the forecast does not look great.

## Nursery Applications

If you have a child who would like to attend St. Mary's Nursery in Sept 2026, the closing date for applications is 27<sup>th</sup> February 2026. Our school nursery will be offering full time places from September – running alongside our main school day. We will continue to offer morning only places to those who prefer this option. If you know anyone looking for nursery places, please share this information with them.

## 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.

## Spring Term Parents' Evening

Our Spring Term Parents' Evening is planned to take on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March and Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March. Details of the times and how to book a slot with your child's teacher will be sent out to parents nearer the time

## Parish News

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

## Happy Birthday

Today's list included children who have had a birthday this week, or will be having one during the school holidays: Happy birthday to: Theodore, Reggie and Ben.

## 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.

<b>18<sup>th</sup> Feb</b>	Ash Wednesday
<b>23<sup>rd</sup> Feb</b>	Open for Spring 2
<b>6<sup>th</sup> March</b>	Y2 class assembly
<b>11<sup>th</sup> March</b>	RNCM to work with Y5
<b>13<sup>th</sup> March</b>	Y1 class assembly
<b>16<sup>th</sup> March</b>	Parents Evening
<b>19<sup>th</sup> March</b>	Parents Evening
<b>11<sup>th</sup> March</b>	Football North of England finals
<b>12<sup>th</sup> March</b>	Year 6 class assembly
<b>19<sup>th</sup> March</b>	Year 5 class assembly
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> April</b>	Close for Spring 2 – 3:20pm
<b>13<sup>th</sup> April</b>	Open for Summer 1
<b>23<sup>rd</sup> April</b>	Year 2 class assembly
<b>30<sup>th</sup> April</b>	Year 1 class assembly
<b>7<sup>th</sup> May</b>	Year 4 class assembly
<b>11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> May</b>	Y6 SATs week
<b>21<sup>st</sup> May</b>	Year 3 class assembly
<b>18<sup>th</sup> June</b>	Reception assembly



## Sports Success

This was another busy week for our sport teams.

On Tuesday, our Year 5/6 Dodgeball team played brilliantly at the Tameside finals. They managed to get all the way to the final before narrowly losing and finishing as Tameside runners up. Well played everyone and a big thank you to Miss Horosczak for taking them.

On Wednesday, Our Year 3/4 football team played their first tournament of the year organised by First Sport Coaching. All the children tried hard in extremely difficult, wet conditions and got all the way through to the semi finals before being knocked out. Well done to everyone who took part. Thank you to Mr Tomkinson for taking the team to play.

On Thursday, our Year 5/6 Sportshall Athletics team took part in a Tameside qualifier event. The team performed brilliantly, winning the majority of the races culminating in winning against 4 other schools. They now go on to the Tameside finals after half term. Well done everyone and a big thank you to Miss Peart for accompanying the team.

## Ash Wednesday

This year, the start of Lent falls during our half-term holidays. If school was open, we would take all of the children over to Mass to receive ashes on their foreheads. The ashes, made from burning last years palm leaves, are a symbolic reminder of the need to repent and to prepare for the most important Christian festival – Easter. During Lent we will be holding a range of different services in school – especially during Holy Week where we will reflect on the final days of Jesus' life.

Fr Joe will be celebrating Mass at St. Mary's Church at 9:30am and 6:30pm – he would love to see as many children there as possible.

## Confirmation

The Sacrament of Confirmation now takes place when your child is in Year 8. If you have a child in Year 8, at St. Thomas More or another high school, (who is baptised and received the Sacrament of First Holy Communion) and they wish to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation they will need to collect a letter and application form from the back of St. Mary's Church. The closing date for forms to be returned is Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March.

## Stars of the Week

Congratulations to each of our stars of the week: Ruairi, Kirsty, Pearl, Reuben, Emily, Daniella and Lottie who have received a star of the week award for learning.

Congratulations to each of our stars of the week: Oakley, William, Demi, Albert, Lucas, Aria and Miller who have been award star of the week for behaviour.

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

## Attendance

Congratulations to **Year 2 and Year 3** who have the highest attendance this week with an superb 99%. Well done.

	<b>F2</b>	<b>97%</b>	
<b>Year 1</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>99%</b>
<b>Year 3</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>92%</b>
<b>Year 5</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>Year 6</b>	<b>96%</b>

# What Children & Young People Need to Know about **FREE SPEECH VS HATE SPEECH**

Everyone in the UK has the right of "freedom of expression". That's the right to voice your opinions and share information and ideas with others. It's not the right to say whatever you want without regard for others' feelings and values. We all have a responsibility to use this right properly: being respectful and inclusive to others. Whether online or offline, communication attacking or discriminating against groups or individuals (because of protected characteristics like race or religion) is hate speech, not free speech.

Free speech is a person's legal right to share information, opinions and ideas without fear of retaliation, censorship or legal consequences. This freedom of expression is recognised in international human rights legislation, and here's what it does for us in our day-to-day lives ...

The Human Rights Act 1988 states that everyone has the right to express themselves freely – even if their views are unpopular and might offend others.



Freedom of expression encourages listening to others and allowing opposing views to be heard. It's important to respect someone's opinion, even if we disagree with it. Free speech lets us engage in meaningful discussions with people who feel differently.

Any concept could potentially offend someone. Galileo's ideas were incredibly offensive to many at the time, while not everyone agrees with Darwin's theory today. Freely exchanging ideas promotes progress.

**FREEDOM**

Free speech allows us to engage people we disagree with in a debate. The ability to challenge others' views is healthy – while having ours challenged helps us learn how to deal with criticism and think deeply about what we say and believe.

Free speech is a powerful tool for change, justice and reform. Many modern UK rights – such as women being allowed to vote or decent working conditions – couldn't have been achieved without it.

Freedom of expression includes the right not to do something, like not standing up for – or singing – the national anthem. Even though some people would find that offensive, it isn't illegal.

## Meet Our Expert

The Global Equality Collective is an online community for homes, schools and businesses, a collective of hundreds of subject matter experts in diversity, equality and inclusion, and the organisation behind the DEC app, the world's first app for diversity, equality and inclusion.

**GLOBAL EQUALITY COLLECTIVE**

**The National College**

**National Online Safety**  
#WakeUpWednesday

Source: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/42/schedule/14#text> [Everyone's 20 has a 20 the 20 right 20 to 20 freedom 20 of 20 expression]