

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 23rd 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 27th 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 24th 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 16th March and Thursday 19th 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.

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

	F2	97%	
Year 1	96%	Year 2	99%
Year 3	99%	Year 4	92%
Year 5	96%	Year 6	96%

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.

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.

Hate speech refers to any communication – like talking, texting or posting online – which displays prejudice against someone's identity. Derogatory, demonising and dehumanising statements, threats, identity-based insults, offensive name-calling and slurs would all count as hate speech. Here are some common forms it takes ...

Targeting people or groups because of who they are – including but not limited to aspects such as race, sexuality, religion or a disability – and verbally abusing them with slurs and name-calling. The Equality Act 2010 has more information on this.

Content that dehumanises people based on those same attributes: referring to them as if they were animals, objects or other non-human entities, for example.

Calling for violence or hatred against certain people or groups and justifying and glorifying those actions.

Claiming that specific types of people are physically, mentally or morally inferior (or even that they are criminals) to encourage others to view them in the same way.

Making up or repeating insults about a person or group because something about their identity is different to the person who's posting.

Promoting the segregation of certain groups, or discrimination against them, because of who they are.

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 GEC app, the world's first app for diversity, equality and inclusion.

GLOBAL
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The
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#WakeUpWednesday

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