

# St Mary's Newsletter

Spring Term – Friday 22nd September 2023

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Attendance Weekly 96.7%

Attendance Year 97%



*Our motto: Let Your Light Shine... as You Grow Matthew 5: 15-16*

**Friendship**

**Trust**

**Truthfulness**

**Compassion**

**Perseverance**

**Respect**

Dear parents, carers and friends of the school,

## A Message from the Chair of Governors

Dear Parents and Carers

First let me welcome you all to a new school year whether you are new to St. Mary's or an old stager. As usual the weather, having been rather mediocre for the holidays, picked up when the children had to return to school. Nevertheless it was nice to start the new school year in the sunshine even if it proved short lived.

I've been a governor here for 5 years now and I can't remember a time when so much is happening. Thank goodness we seem to have seen the back of COVID and now we can concentrate on all the exciting developments we have underway. But before I talk about them, and I know it's been reported in the Newsletter before, I still want to shout about our Ofsted success. The school leadership team and governors went through about 15 months of agony waiting for our Ofsted turn but when it came all the waiting, preparation and hard work was worth it as we came through with flying colours. Well done everybody.



That helped keep our mindset in a great place and after a couple of years debate about if, where and how we could extend the school to improve our offering for the children we decided on our two 'log cabins'. Funding the work has been a major challenge but Mr Jarmain and his team have done a great job negotiating with the Diocese and the County Council to secure a big chunk of the money required. I've had the pleasure of watching the cabins being installed as I walk my dog each morning and it looks like we'll be there soon. Won't it be great to have a new library and flexible meeting rooms to use wherever there is most need.

I realise it's no more than you would expect to have a properly lit, insulated and heated school and we managed well with our somewhat dated infrastructure. Having a new air-source heat pumps might not be the most exciting thing to mention here but along with new radiators, lighting, solar panels etc the school will be a much more comfortable place to come to everyday and we expect to make significant savings on our energy bills. This money will help us deliver a balanced budget which all schools, especially primary schools, are finding it so difficult to achieve. Financially, it continues to be hard work but although we aren't overflowing with riches neither are we in too bad a place. Our Finance Officer and the school leadership team work very hard to keep it that way and the PTA also play a big part keeping much needed funds flowing in.

So, exciting times ahead as these developments come to fruition. And, dare I mention it, it will soon be Christmas!

Best Wishes

John Westnedge  
Chair of Governors at St Mary's

## Reflection time by Maire O'Regan, Diocesan Advisor



Even though it is not the start of a new year, it feels like, 'a new beginning.' The excitement of the summer is over; holidays, travel chaos, late bedtimes during the long, bright evenings, time off work, children off school and time to enjoy the warm outdoors, are all coming to an end.

The evenings are getting darker, and Autumn is creeping in quietly. However, Autumn can bring with it; organisation, back to school, evening classes and structure. How do we keep focused and positive when the evenings are shorter, the temperature has dropped, and we are getting less sunlight every day? Having a positive mindset is needed to get through the months when you go to work, school or college in the dark and come home in the dark. Detachment is important too, even for people who are kind and caring. Understanding that to stay focused, detaching yourself mentally from things you have no control over is vital. Staying physically active, benefits the mind and body during these cold months.

What else can we start in this, 'new year?' Surprisingly enough, helping others has a great, 'feel-good factor.' Acts of kindness benefit the recipient but also uplift people who do them. When you help others, you reduce your own stress as well as improve self-esteem, mood, and happiness. Helping others also puts your personal difficulties into perspective.

Positive mindset, detachment and being physically active are all great actions to take but may take some organisation and effort. However, being kind is an action you can easily start today.

The Bible is full of stories about helping others. The Good Samaritan is probably the most obvious choice, but it is an amazing story, that can be discussed with children of a very young age or with older adults in a deep, philosophical discussion. Another favourite of mine is Jesus and the Tax Collector. Here in this story, Jesus did not just speak about being kind, he showed us how to be kind. So, let's embrace the dark evenings and the joy that, 'a new start' can bring to us all. Take the first leap of faith to get you through the next season and take on one kind act today. 'You don't have to see the whole staircase, just the first step.' And always remember, 'Do not fear, for I am with you.' Isaiah 41:10

### Special Census Day Menu

Dolce will be offering a special Census Day menu on **Thursday 6th October**. All details of this change can be found on the School Grid, the St Mary's Facebook page or using the link below to the school website. <https://www.stmaryssw.org.uk/school-dinnerhealthy-snacks/>

**Please remember orders must be placed no later than 08.55 on the 6th October.**



### WhatsApp

We have recently been made aware that some of our KS2 pupils are using WhatsApp. Please can we politely remind you that WhatsApp has a age rating of 16+. If your child is using WhatsApp, the best way you can keep them safe is to have lots of conversations about how they and others are using WhatsApp, what they have seen, anything that has surprised or worried them, and what the risks might be. Encourage them to be kind to others, and to think carefully about what they share. — especially pictures, photographs and videos.

Whilst we continue to educate the children regarding e-safety in school, as a parent / carer you also have a duty to keep your child safe, and that includes closely monitoring how they are using their phones and devices, what they see and share, and setting appropriate boundaries for your child.

If you haven't already visited the 2Johns website please do, information can be found here [www.esafetytraining.org](http://www.esafetytraining.org) or search for them on Facebook - EST E safety Training and sign up for their free training session.

Have a great weekend  
Warm regards

*Mr C. D. Garmain*

Headteacher of St Mary's Church of England Primary school, Saffron Walden



# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

# WHATSAPP

UK AND EUROPE  
**16+**  
13+ REST OF THE WORLD

WhatsApp is the world's most popular messaging service, with around two billion users exchanging texts, photos, videos and documents, as well as making voice and video calls. Its end-to-end encryption means messages can only be viewed by the sender and any recipients; not even WhatsApp can read them. Updates to its privacy policy in 2021 (involving sharing data with parent company Facebook) caused millions to leave the app, but the new policy was widely misinterpreted – it only related to WhatsApp's business features, not to personal messages.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### SCAMS

Fraudsters occasionally send WhatsApp messages pretending to offer prizes – encouraging the user to click on a link to win. Other common scams involve warning someone that their WhatsApp subscription has run out (aiming to dupe them into disclosing payment details) or impersonating a friend or relative and asking for money to be transferred to help with an emergency.

### DISAPPEARING MESSAGES

Users can set WhatsApp messages to disappear in 24 hours, 7 days or 90 days by default. Photos and videos can also be instructed to disappear after the recipient has viewed them. These files can't be saved or forwarded – so if your child was sent an inappropriate message, it would be difficult to prove any wrongdoing. However, the receiver can take a screenshot and save that as evidence.

### ENABLING FAKE NEWS

WhatsApp has unfortunately been linked to accelerating the spread of dangerous rumours. In India in 2018, some outbreaks of mob violence appear to have been sparked by false allegations being shared on the app. WhatsApp itself took steps to prevent its users circulating hazardous theories and speculation in the early weeks of the Covid-19 pandemic.

### POTENTIAL CYBERBULLYING

Group chat and video calls are great for connecting with multiple people in WhatsApp, but there is always the potential for someone's feelings to be hurt by an unkind comment or joke. The 'only admin's' feature gives the admin(s) of a group control over who can send messages. They can, for example, block people from posting in a chat, which could make a child feel excluded and upset.

### CONTACT FROM STRANGERS

To start a WhatsApp chat, you only need the mobile number of the person you want to message (the other person also needs to have the app). WhatsApp can access the address book on someone's device and recognise which of their contacts also use the app. So if your child has ever given their phone number to someone they don't know, that person could use it to contact them via WhatsApp.

### LOCATION SHARING

The 'live location' feature lets users share their current whereabouts, allowing friends to see their movements. WhatsApp describes it as a "simple and secure way to let people know where you are." It is a useful method for a young person to let loved ones know they're safe – but if they used it in a chat with people they don't know, they would be exposing their location to them, too.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

[CLICK HERE](#)

### CREATE A SAFE PROFILE

Even though someone would need a child's phone number to add them as a contact, it's also worth altering a young person's profile settings to restrict who can see their photo and status. The options are 'everyone', 'my contacts' and 'nobody' – choosing one of the latter two ensures that your child's profile is better protected.



### EXPLAIN ABOUT BLOCKING

If your child receives spam or offensive messages, calls or files from a contact, they should block them using 'settings' in the chat. Communication from a blocked contact won't show up on their device and stays undelivered. Blocking someone does not remove them from your child's contact list – so they also need to be deleted from the address book.



### REPORT POTENTIAL SCAMS

Young people shouldn't engage with any message that looks suspicious or too good to be true. When your child receives a message from an unknown number for the first time, they'll be given the option to report it as spam. If the sender claims to be a friend or relative, call that person on their usual number to verify it really is them, or if it's someone trying to trick your child.



### LEAVE A GROUP

If your child is in a group chat that is making them feel uncomfortable, or has been added to a group that they don't want to be part of, they can use WhatsApp's group settings to leave. If someone exits a group, the admin can add them back in once; if they leave a second time, it is permanent.



### THINK ABOUT LOCATION

If your child needs to use the 'live location' function to show you or one of their friends where they are, advise them to share their location only for as long as they need to. WhatsApp gives a range of 'live location' options, and your child should manually stop sharing their position as soon as it is no longer needed.



### DELETE ACCIDENTAL MESSAGES

If your child posts a message they want to delete, WhatsApp allows the user seven minutes to erase a message. Tap and hold on the message, choose 'delete' and then 'delete for everyone.' However, it's important to remember that recipients may have seen (and taken a screenshot of) a message before it was deleted.



### CHECK THE FACTS

You can now fact-check WhatsApp messages that have been forwarded at least five times, by double-tapping the magnifying glass icon to the right of the message. From there, your child can launch a Google search and decide for themselves whether the message was true or not.



## Meet Our Expert

Farven Kaur is a social media expert and digital media consultant who is passionate about improving digital literacy for parents and children. She has extensive experience in the social media arena and is the founder of Kids N Click: a web resource that helps parents and children thrive in a digital world.



**NOS**  
National Online Safety  
#WakeUpWednesday

## Year 5 Residential

This is a polite reminder to secure a place for your child on the Year 5 Residential trip, all permission slips must be handed into the school office and/or deposit paid by **Friday 29th September**.

If you have any questions regarding this, please do not hesitate to contact the school office.



We are looking for new member of the Dolce family to work with us in the school kitchen

- Kitchen assistant 20 hours
- Kitchen assistant 10 HOurs
  - Cook 27.5 hours

Full training including safeguarding training and uniform will be provided

If you are interested please contact me at [tara.cooper-mynott@dolce.co.uk](mailto:tara.cooper-mynott@dolce.co.uk)

All offers are made subject to an enhanced DBS check and applicant's eligibility to work in the UK

Mental Health Support Teams in Schools  
West Essex

mind  
in West Essex

NHS

JOIN THE  
**MHST**  
Mental Health Support Team  
**BOOK CLUB**

Reading with your child not only strengthens the parent-child bond but also helps children to develop empathy and emotional awareness, teaching children that it is okay to feel emotions and how to cope with their feelings in healthy ways.

Each term receive our MHST bookclub newsletter with 4 wellbeing book recommendations, as well as, prompts and questions to think through and/or discuss with your child. Book recommendations will be made for these age groups:

- 5-8 years old
- 9-12 years old
- 12-14 years old
- 15-19 years old

To sign up to the newsletter  
scan this QR code or email your area's administrator

**SPACE DAY**  
5<sup>TH</sup> OCT

CENSUS DAY

**MAINS**

- Asteroid Chicken Nuggets
- Meteor-Bite Burger
- Venus Veggie Burger (VG)
- Big Bang Baked Potato Bar (V)

**SIDES**

- Guardian Fries of the Galaxy (VG) (GF)
- Planetary Peas
- Black Hole Beans
- Tomato Ketchup
- Solar System Salad Bar
- Fresh Bread

**DESSERTS**

- Jupiter Jelly & Ice Cream
- Cosmic Cookie (VG)
- Fresh Fruit (VG) (GF)

dolce

## Harvest Festival and Church Service



Years 1—6 Parents and Carers are invited to come along to the Harvest Service at St Mary's Church on **Tuesday 26th September at 2.00pm.**

This year's donations will be going to the Foodbank. Please bring in foods from the list below **up until Friday 29th September.**



# HARVEST FESTIVAL LIST

CEREAL

TINNED VEGETABLES

UHT MILK

COOKING SAUCES (NOT PASTA SAUCE)

INSTANT MASH

TINNED FRUIT

CUSTARD

TABLE SAUCES E.G. KETCHUP, MAYO,  
BROWN SAUCE

VEGETARIAN OPTIONS (E.G. TINNED VEG  
CHILLI)

NOODLES/POT NOODLES

SAVOURY SNACKS - BREAD STICKS, RITZ  
CRACKERS, CRISPS ETC

WASHING-UP LIQUID

TOILET PAPER

NAPPIES SIZE 4 UPWARDS

DOG FOOD

DEODORANT/SHAVING FOAM

JAM/PEANUT BUTTER/

RICE PUDDING

STUFFING

STEAMED PUDDINGS

THANK  
YOU



# Diary Dates



## Key Dates for the Autumn Term 2023:

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Tuesday 19th September    | - Parent/Carer Workshops—Phonics and Independence (9.00am and 6.00pm)                    |
| Thursday 21st September   | - 9.00am—12.30pm Yrs 3&4 Football Festival<br>- 12.30pm—3.03pm Yrs 5&6 Football Festival |
| Tuesday 26th September    | - Yrs 1—6 Harvest Service at St Mary's Church (2pm)<br>Parents/Carers invited            |
| Thursday 12th October     | - Kittle Photographic - Individual and Sibling photos                                    |
| 23rd—27th October         | - HALF TERM BREAK  |
| Tuesday 31st October      | - Light Day—children can wear bright/light clothes                                       |
| Tuesday 7th November      | - Parent Consultations—Years R—Year 6  |
| Wednesday 8th November    | - Parent Consultations—Reception Only  |
| Thursday 9th November     | - Parent Consultations—Years 1—Year 6  |
| Friday 10th November      | - Remembrance Day assembly/service at St Mary's  |
| Wednesday 15th November   | - Governors Day  |
| Thursday 16th November    | - Reception 2024 Open Morning (9.30—11.00)   |
| Monday 20th November      | - Reception 2024 Open Morning (9.30—11.00)   |
| Thursday 23rd November    | - Flu vaccines (delivered by NHS Immunisation Team)                                      |
| Saturday 3rd December     | - Spirit of Christmas Choir Performance (St Mary's Church) at 1.30pm                     |
| Wednesday 20th December   | - 1.30pm—school breaks up for the Christmas holiday                                      |
| 21st December—5th January | - Christmas holiday closure period   |
| Monday 8th January        | - Pupils return to school for the Spring term  |

*\* new or amended items added are in blue*

