



ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

NEWSLETTER

No. 191

A Community Where we Live, Learn and Laugh Together in God's Love

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MESSAGE FROM MR BRENNAN

Most of you will now have heard that I am finishing my role as Headteacher of St Mary's in the summer. I have not taken this decision lightly and it has only come about after lots of prayers and consultation with my wife and family. But it is the right decision for me personally. I have been very lucky in my career, having worked in 7 Catholic schools over 36 years. All my roles, including the three headships, have been extremely rewarding and enjoyable, but of course my 12 years at St Mary's have been the 'icing on the cake'!

We are a blessed school community, where we constantly try to live our ambition of living, learning and laughing together each day in God's love. When I do finally walk out of the gates sometime at the end of July I will say a quiet prayer for you all and thank God for the wonderful children, staff, parents and governors I have had the privilege to work with.

Between now and then we have lots of work to do, to get our children back into school and to start the tough job of getting them back on track in their learning and their young lives, which have been so drastically damaged by the Covid pandemic. We will also be focussing on the future, as we join the Blessed Peter Snow Catholic Academy Trust in May (hopefully) and we appoint a new Headteacher for this beautiful school. Thank you, as always, for your support and prayers.

PRAYERS It was with very great sadness that we heard of the death of Mrs Elaine Collins last week. Elaine was a Teaching Assistant at our school for nearly 28 years and was very much loved by all the children and staff that knew her and worked alongside her. We will miss her so much. Her funeral will be on the **18th February at 11.30am at St Mary's Catholic Church in Halifax**. Unfortunately, because of Covid restrictions attendance is very limited and by prior arrangement with the family. If you would like to make a donation in Elaine's memory the family have asked that people donate to the **ICU Ward at Halifax Royal Infirmary**. Please spare a moment to say a prayer for her and the family.



LENT The beginning of Lent 2021 is fast approaching. **Ash Wednesday - 17th February** – will mark the beginning of 40 days of Fasting, Prayer and Charitable Giving. We hope that for at least some of this time we will have all the children back in school and we will be able to make sure they have lots of opportunities to take part in activities at school to fulfil these obligations. Of course you might like to make sure they get Lent off to a great practical (and delicious) start by making pancakes with them on the 16th February – Shrove Tuesday.

HALF-TERM There are currently no plans for us to be open to Critical Worker or Vulnerable families during the forthcoming half-term break. We close on **Friday 12th February** and will open again to these children on **Monday 22nd February**.



ACADEMY UPDATE The Governing Body is applying to join the Blessed Peter Snow Catholic Academy Trust and we hope the actual conversion will be completed in May 2021. Membership of the BPSCAT will bring us greater strength as a Catholic school, as we will be able to work even more closely with the 15 other Catholic schools in Kirklees and Calderdale. It will also secure our future legally and financially as the support available to us from the LA is increasingly diminished. We are very excited about the change in our status, but we also want to assure parents and our children that it is very likely you won't even notice this change. We will continue to provide exactly the same ethos, spirit and support we always have. The biggest change you are likely to notice might be a couple of minor tweaks to our School Entrance sign with addition of the word 'Academy' rather than school. There is absolutely no intention for the uniform or school badge to change or for our Admission arrangements to be any different.



RETURNING TO A 'NORMAL' SCHOOL We have no news at the moment on when we will be able to welcome all children back to school. You will be aware that the Government have promised to give us two week's notice of changes to the current situation, so if we are going to be opening again from the 8th March (as has been suggested by the PM) we should be told at the end of the half-term holiday. In the meantime, please continue to support your child's learning online and at home.

Y6 RESIDENTIAL TO KESWICK (w/c 17th May 2021) We have not changed anything concerning this trip. Parents should continue to pay instalments through School Money. If we have to cancel the visit to the Lake District for our Y6 children we will let you know immediately the decision is made and we will of course return all payments made up to that point. We are very keen to go ahead and for all the children to attend if we are allowed.



OFFICE REQUESTS

- It is obviously always important that you inform us of any changes to your contact details so that we can get in touch with you for administrative reasons, but also in case of an emergency situation with your child(ren). Please make sure you update your details with us if necessary.
- We have had a few calls to the school office where parents are trying to solve issues with their child's online learning. In most cases all we can do is take a message and pass it to your child's teacher or our ICT technician. Please make contact with your child's teacher first, before speaking to us. All teachers have the same email format: Initial of their first name, followed by their surname, ending with: @st-marys-halifax.calderdale.sch.uk.

EG: jbloggs@st-marys-halifax.calderdale.sch.uk.

All teachers are happy to be contacted between 9am and 4.30pm on school days, and will reply if necessary during the same working times and days.

PLEASE KEEP EVERYONE SAFE BY FOLLOWING COVID SAFETY MEASURES

