

## Chaplaincy News

This week, our **assemblies and tutor group prayers** have focussed on the theme, ‘Teach us to Pray’, and particularly the section in Luke’s Gospel where Jesus taught the *Our Father* to His disciples. The week before, our theme was care of the environment, with particular reference to St Francis of Assisi, a well-timed focus given that Pope Francis has just released a new document about the environment.

On **Open Evening** we asked visiting Year 6 pupils to write their name on a ‘leaf’ for the prayer tree in the Emmaus Room, and we’ll keep them in our prayers throughout this year.

The **Rosary Group** has been meeting on Mondays, and there is still time to make prayer requests before the end of May using this link or scanning the code

<https://forms.office.com/e/UZQKWYsn1M>

Photographs, as promised, of our magnificent choir and musicians as the **Welcome Mass**, and of three of the four **CAFOD Young Leaders** receiving their certificates at the cathedral.

Deacon Paul



### Year 7 Mass of Welcome

Our Mass of Welcome for Year 7 took place on 28<sup>th</sup> September and was a wonderfully joyful event. Our school choir and musicians led the music beautifully and their enthusiasm was inspiring. Thank you to Mrs Edwards and Mr Hodsdon for the amazing work they do with our pupils throughout the year, as well as preparing them for the Mass of Welcome. Our Year 7 pupils made the school proud in the way they conducted themselves throughout the Mass, making sure that they joined in with the prayers and hymns, with some of the pupils reading our their Spiritual Poetry, which they had prepared in their RE lessons. A big thank you to Fr. Kieran, Fr. Carl and Fr. Paul who celebrated Mass and Deacon Paul who assisted.



“ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me to be a safe, happy, proud, loving person who flourishes in life. ”



### Key Stage 3 News

Our Key Stage 3 students have been completing their settling in surveys and they have been overwhelmingly positive with so many students happy with how their first term has gone so far. We are excited to welcome back our Year 7 parents and carers into school next Thursday for our Settling In evening and were so impressed by how many students volunteered their time for the Open Evening. Year 9 have had an introduction to the options process via zoom this week and we will be sending a copy of this home.

### Key Stage 4 News

Our Key Stage 4 students were well-represented at Open Evening guiding and helping in departments; we were delighted to have so many of them volunteering and revelling in their BELONGING to our community.

This week we have been asking for volunteers for the Year 11 Prom Committee whose duties include decoration decisions, fundraising and awards. Names should be given to Mrs Ball.

Year 11 were surveyed last week about revision ahead of their mocks starting week commencing 13th November. Some stated that they have forgotten how to revise; all students have had the form time revision programme from Y10 resent to their emails and SMHW to help them.

Year 10 survey closes this week and more updates will come out soon.



**St. Mary's**  
Catholic High School  
& Sixth Form College

## SIXTH FORM OPEN EVENING

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023  
5.30pm - 8.00pm

For more info visit our website  
[www.stmaryschs.org.uk](http://www.stmaryschs.org.uk)

Manchester Road, Astley, M29 7EE  
01942 884144 [sixthformenquiries@smchs.org.uk](mailto:sixthformenquiries@smchs.org.uk)



## SAVE THE DATE

St. Mary's Sixth Form would like to invite you to our Open Evening on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023 at 5.30pm



### A Level Subjects

Biology  
Business  
Chemistry  
Computer Science  
Economics  
English Language & Literature  
Geography  
History  
Mathematics  
Physical Education  
Physics  
Psychology  
Religious Studies  
Sociology  
Spanish  
EPQ

St. Mary's reserves the right to alter the courses on offer without prior notice.

### Level 3 Vocational Subjects

Applied Art  
Applied Human Biology  
Business  
Construction  
Criminology  
Engineering  
Health & Social Care  
Media  
Music  
Performing Arts  
Sport  
Travel & Tourism

### Level 2 Subjects

Science  
ICT  
GCSE English  
GCSE Mathematics  
Workskills

## Co-Curricular News



The Music department were excited to take part in the annual Year 7 Welcome Mass held at St. Joseph's Church, Leigh on 28<sup>th</sup> September. The Year 7 Choir meet every Tuesday lunchtime and spent the month practising their song "Believe" which they performed at the end of the Mass. The Year 7 Choir were supported on the evening by St Mary's Choir (pupils from Years 8 – 13).

A special thank you also goes to the Year 12 Rockschoool Music class and Alfie in Year 13 for his beautiful piano playing throughout the Mass. As this is his final year at St Mary's it will be Alfie's final Mass; we will definitely miss him next year.

The Music department is now excited to be preparing for the Advent service and also the Christmas Concert.

The **Year 7 Co-curricular Fair** took place last Friday in school allowing students to gather information regarding our co-curricular programme. The most well attended club last week was the Library and Homework Club at a lunchtime and the Year 7 Football club afterschool.

The KS3 Book Club ran on Monday evening and the students really enjoyed it. This will now take place every **Week B Monday** after school. During the session students played a "getting to know you" dice game, talked about some of our recent reads, then made origami corner bookmarks. Future plans include watching author talks, more craft, and more chatting about what we have loved reading.

In sporting news, the Girls U15 Football team took on St Bede's last Tuesday in the English Schools Competition. They fought hard with only 10 players and with 2 of them playing 2 years up, and they secured a win 4-1 with two goals from Freya, one from Poppy and another from Miley.

This week there has been a Year 7 dodgeball tournament taking place at lunchtimes raising money for the charity MND.

Well done to everyone involved!

## Introductions from our Pupil Leadership Team

### **Benjamin R – Head Pupil, Y13**

Hi, my name is Ben. I am Year 13 and St Marys' Head Pupil for Key Stage 5. I really wanted to have this role as I love to help others and ultimately want to make our school community a better and kinder place for all, no matter who they are. My favourite subjects are music and history and I love to sing as it makes others happy and also evokes creativity. In the future, I don't know what I want to do for certain, however I hope to go to university to study history as an undergraduate student.

### **Aoife A – Head Pupil, Y11**

Hi, my name is Aoife and I am the Head Pupil representative of Saint Mary's High School for the class of 2024. When I was in Year 6, I visited Saint Mary's and I told my Mum and Dad that one day I wanted to be Head Girl. I applied for the position not only because it has been a goal of mine since I was young, but also because I wanted to strive to make a positive impact on our school community- one that has done so much for me. I think it is so important that Saint Mary's is a community where everyone feels included and able to flourish to their full potential, and also feels comfortable to be themselves. My favourite subjects in school are English, History, and Drama. I take part in the Drama Club, I represented the school in a Public Speaking competition, and I also performed 'Six' from Six The Musical with a group of friends at the Summer Concert. Outside of school, I thoroughly enjoy reading, writing, singing, and baking (I also love to bring my bakes into school to share with my friends and teachers). I volunteer at my local girl guiding troupe, First Hindley Brownies, as a Young Leader; I really enjoy working with the girls and getting an opportunity to give back- that was the Brownies I attend when I was a little girl! I aspire to go to college and university, and hopefully become a lawyer or English teacher when I'm older! I'm incredibly grateful for the opportunities that Saint Mary's has provided me with, and I am so, so proud to be Head Pupil.

### **Samuel S – Deputy Pupil, Y11**

Hi, I'm Sam and I am Deputy Head Pupil here at St Mary's. I am looking forward to getting to know you all and pushing myself to my limits through this role and helping our school community in the best way that I can. I hope I can make a real change to our school to help make everyone feel as safe, happy and in the best learning environment as possible. My favourite subjects are health & social care and history, and my dream job when I am older would be to become a nurse within the NHS. In my spare time I am part of a drama group called Nados which puts on shows regular, I dedicate a lot of my time in school to the drama department.

### **George C – Deputy Pupil, Y10**

Hi, I am George and I will be serving as KS4 Deputy Head Pupil for this year. I enjoy History and Geography. As KS5 Deputy Head Pupil I plan on increasing sustainability within our school and promoting trust / cooperation between staff and pupils to ensure all members of our community feel safe and able to flourish.

### **Jayden F – Pupil Leader, Y11**

Hello my name is Jayden and I am one of our school leaders in school. The reason I wanted the role of leader in school is to make students feel that they can talk to us if they can't tell the teacher in school. My favourite subject in school has to be PE because you are not sat at a desk, you are doing exercise and doing different sports, and it just is the highlight of my week. When I am older, I would like to either be a teacher or an electrician.

### **Samu S – Deputy Pupil, Y8**

I am Samu in 8M, currently a Deputy Head Pupil for KS3. My role covers a magnitude of responsibilities. From ensuring a positive and inclusive environment for all pupils within the St Mary's community, to helping in school functions. I'm approachable and respectful, so please do not hesitate to come and speak to me about anything. I will ensure that your voice is heard, and I will liaise with the rest of the leadership team and teachers to try and meet everyone's needs. I cannot promise to solve every problem, but what I can promise is that every issue will be looked at and I will do my best to bring it to attention.

### **Ramzan A – Deputy Pupil, Y8**

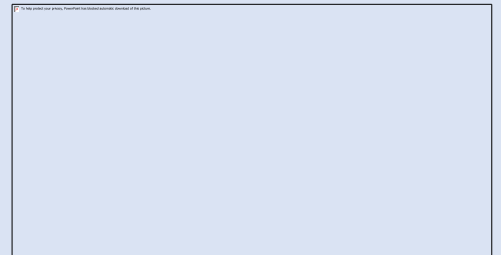
Hi my name is Ramzan and I am a KS3 Deputy Head Pupil. Why I wanted this role you may ask? Well, I wanted this role to help others and guide them in the right direction as well as suggest new things to do in the school. Some of my hobbies are like going to army cadets helping I and some of my favourite subjects are technology computing and when I am older, I wish to go into the army but if that doesn't work out, I might become an engineer.

## Attendance

Thank you for your support around attendance. Attendance learning time is gained by attending school and accessing all lessons whilst students are here.

We continue to reinforce routines of punctuality and attendance and the importance of being in the right place at the right time. At St Mary's, we want all our pupils to have attended school 97% or more of the year. Being around teachers and friends at St Mary's is the best way for pupils to learn and reach their potential. Time in school keeps your children safe and provides extra-curricular opportunities and individual pastoral care. It is usually appropriate for parents and carers to send their children to school with mild respiratory illnesses. This would include general cold symptoms: a minor cough, runny nose or sore throat. Please read the information from the NHS for further details:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>



## Conduct Around the Site

During form assemblies (<https://stmaryschs.org.uk/Information/Letters-to-Parents/>) as part of 'Mental Health' week, pupils have been discussing creating the right stress-free climate in school, particularly in corridors and social times. Whilst behaviour is very good for the vast majority, a tiny minority of pupils are less respectful of each other. Our expectations are that pupils walk around the site, do not engage in any rough play with each other and use respectful language. Form assemblies will continue to challenge this and explain the consequences of this anti-social behaviour which will not be tolerated. Any poor behaviour as pupils move around the site will be sanctioned as well as truancy from lessons.

Banned items - as a reminder - any drugs paraphernalia, including vapes are banned from the school site, if students are found with these there will be significant sanction. Aerosols are also banned from the site as they may lead to allergic reactions for some students. It is also important that pupils know we are a mobile phone free site. Phones should not be seen anywhere on the premises. This safeguards students from unnecessary distractions though out the day and safeguards against any issues that have developed at home that then spills into school.

As the half-term is approaching, please monitor your child's online usage. We are finding an upsurge in online safety issues in school that have started outside of school, this is always particularly prevalent after a longer break. Please access the NSPCC parental guidance to ensure you are monitoring your child.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/#advice>

### Keeping children safe online

Understanding online safety is tricky for all ages - we have advice and guides to help you learn about staying safe online as a family.

[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)



## Open Evening

We were delighted to open up our school to prospective pupils and their families at our Open Evening on 5<sup>th</sup> October.

The evening was extremely busy and we really enjoyed showcasing our school to the local community.

Our students were an absolute credit to the school and their families; helping in departments and showing guests around and we have had lots of lovely feedback from our visitors.

Well done and thank you to everyone involved!





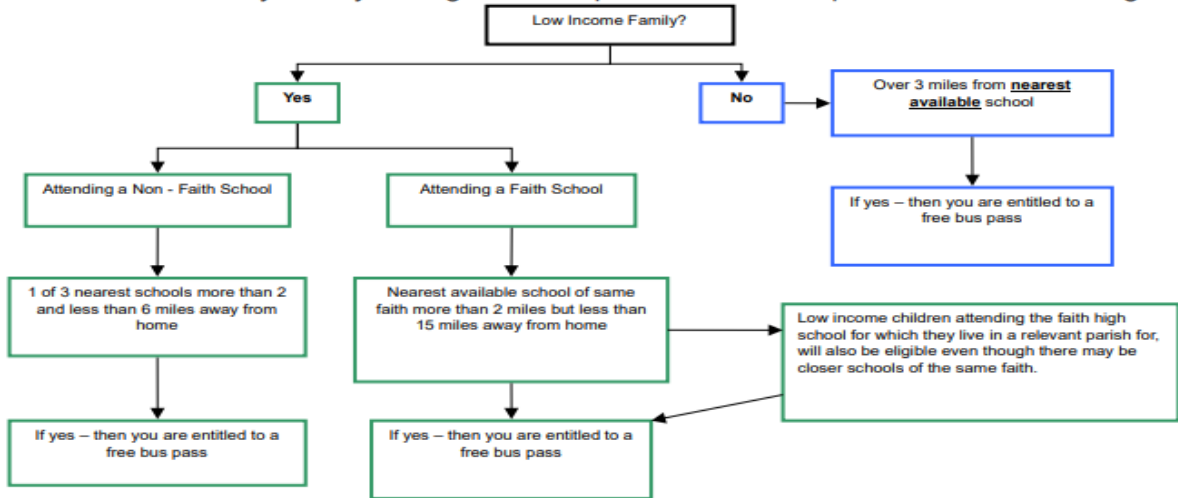
## Help With Travel Costs To School



Some of our families may be entitled to support with travel costs to school. Please see the chart below to see if you may be eligible:

### Help with travel costs

To find out whether you may be eligible for help with travel costs please see the following chart:



### Families may be eligible if:

1. You are considered low income and you live in a parish belongs to St Mary's:  
**St Mary's Catholic High School, Astley**

#### Relevant Parishes

St Ambrose Barlow, Astley  
St Joseph's, Leigh  
Sacred Heart, Atherton  
Sacred Heart, Leigh  
Holy Family  
XII Apostles, Leigh  
Our Lady of the Rosary  
St Richard's  
St Gabriel's

OR

2. You are considered low income and attend one of the three nearest schools of the same faith (over the statutory walking distance of 2 miles from home to school)

*Low income families are classed as those who:*

*Get the full amount of working tax credit or other forms of benefits such as ESA, JSA or income support or*

*Have children who get free school meals (regardless of whether benefits received) or*

*Receive Universal Credit and get free school meals*

*(Applications for Free School Meals can be made via <https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Benefit-Grants/Free-school-meals.aspx> )*

OR

3. You live more than 3 miles from the nearest available school (regardless of faith) and attend this school.

If you think that your child may be eligible for a free school travel pass, you can apply to Wigan Council by filling in the [Travel Pass enquiry form](#). If you would like any assistance from school to apply please don't hesitate to contact Mrs Joanne Henson our Family Support & Pastoral Outreach Lead on 01942 884144 or at [j.henson@smchs.org.uk](mailto:j.henson@smchs.org.uk)

“ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me to be a safe, happy, proud, loving person who flourishes in life. ”

## Online Safety

The news frequently includes content relating to issues which can be upsetting or troubling, including most recently events in Gaza and Israel. We hope this information will help you support your children to deal with upsetting issues.

All National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one of many apps which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit [nationalonline.org.uk](https://nationalonline.org.uk) for further guides, facts and tips for adults.

# SUPPORTING CHILDREN TO DEAL WITH UPSETTING CONTENT

## A Guide for Parents and Carers

Raising children in the digital age seems to be getting tougher, with the world currently experiencing so many uncertainties. From climate change to the war in Ukraine and the conflict in Israel, right now children across the globe can scarcely go online without being exposed to unsettling stories, images and ideas. Reassuring a concerned child can be difficult, especially when bad news feels omnipresent. We've put together some advice to help you in discussing upsetting events with young ones.

### FIND OUT WHAT YOUR CHILD KNOWS 1

There are many ways that children are exposed to upsetting content in the media, both online and offline. Before swamping your child with information, find out what they know already. Show them you're interested in what they have to say, practice active listening and try to gauge how much your child has been impacted by what they've seen.

### RIGHT TIME, RIGHT PLACE 2

Starting a conversation about upsetting content probably isn't the best idea when your child is studying for an exam or about to go to bed. Choose a time when they're relaxed and open to talking, be sure you have their full attention. Remember, these conversations can become emotional, so choose somewhere your child feels safe and comfortable.

### KEEP IT AGE APPROPRIATE 3

With younger children, try and keep the conversation more general and avoid leading questions and complex details. You can go slightly deeper into the specifics with young teenagers but keep monitoring their emotional response. With older teens, you can be more open about the realities and consequences of what's happening – but again, be stay aware of their emotional state.

### EMPHASISE HOPE 4

Upsetting content can make anyone feel angry, scared, sad or overwhelmed. Try to find stories of hope, generosity and strength related to the content you're discussing. Children often feel reassured when they know they can do something to help, so encourage your child's sense of control through activities which make them feel they're positively impacting the events they're concerned about.

### MONITOR REACTIONS 5

All children react differently, of course, and young people might not directly say that they're scared, angry, anxious, confused or uncomfortable. Emotional reactions are natural when discussing upsetting topics, so take note of your child's body language and reactions. Allow them to express their feelings in a non-judgmental space, and try to stay mindful of how they might be feeling.

### CONSIDER YOUR OWN EMOTIONS 6

It's not only young people who find upsetting news difficult to process: adults also have to deal with strong emotions in moments of stress. Children develop coping strategies by mirroring those around them, so staying on top of how you appear to be regulating your emotion on the outside is important for supporting your child through worrying times.

### SET LIMITS 7

Managing screen-time and content can be difficult even in normal circumstances, but especially in unusual or stressful periods (at the start of the pandemic, for example). It's virtually impossible to keep children away from upsetting content completely, but it's important to try to limit exposure by using parental controls, talking about the dangers of harmful content and enforcing screen-time limits.

### TAKE THINGS SLOWLY 8

Try not to overwhelm your child with information all at once; instead, take the discussion one step at a time. You could make the first conversation a simple introduction to a potentially upsetting subject and then wait until your child is ready to talk again. Opening the door to the conversation and demonstrating that your child can talk to you about this type of issue is a vital first step.

### ENCOURAGE QUESTIONS 9

Online, troubling images, posts, videos and stories are shared across multiple platforms, many of which your child might access. Even if the content is usually inappropriate, encourage your child to discuss what they see instead of being angry at them for seeing it. Children are still learning that not everything online is accurate – you want to be their ultimate source of information, not their device.

### FIND A BALANCE 10

There's often a tremendous compulsion to stay right up to date with events. Our phones frequently send us push notifications urging us to read the latest article or view the most recent video on social media. It's essential to remind your child that it's healthy to take regular breaks, and to focus on positive events instead of 'doomscrolling' and risking becoming overwhelmed by bad news.

### BUILD RESILIENCE 11

News has never been more accessible. While our instinct may be to shield children from upsetting stories, it's important that they're equipped with the tools to manage this content when they are exposed to it. Talk about upsetting content more generally with your child and emphasise that they can always tell you or a trusted adult if something they see makes them feel uneasy.

### IDENTIFY HELP 12

It's hugely important that children know where to find support if they encounter upsetting content online. Encourage them to open up to an adult that they trust, and make sure they're aware of who their trusted adults are. It is essential that children understand that they're not alone, and that help is available if and when they need it.

### Meet Our Expert

Cayley Jergensen is the director of FaceUp South Africa, which is a reporting system that is currently being used by schools and companies to fight bullying around the world. FaceUp helps give a voice to bystanders by encouraging them to speak up and get the help they not only want but need.



**NOS** National Online Safety  
#WakeUpWednesday

[www.nationalonline.org.uk](https://www.nationalonline.org.uk) for more information on this topic. High quality free site offering support for children and young people.



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We had a surprise visit from the Environmental Health Officer on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October, and we are very pleased to inform all of our parents/carers, pupils, students and staff that we were awarded the highest Food Hygiene Rating of 5!

We have an excellent Catering team in school who work extremely hard to produce the lovely food we have on offer for our pupils in school. This year we have been enhancing our offer for those people who may have a food allergy. We are proud to be able to cater for our community, however, whilst we will advise and guide customers to safe choices, we cannot guarantee that any food cooked or prepared on the premises do not contain any allergens.



## SEN - Additional Learning Support

We are always working with teachers towards improving understanding of SEND needs and identification of needs. If you receive an email or call from a teacher letting you know that they feel a referral to our department would be beneficial, it is so we can check how pupils are doing and help teachers improve practice and support our students better.

A referral does not always lead to a diagnosis but so we can look into any areas of concern and strategies to support in class by looking at issues across curriculum areas. This may lead to further communication with you to sign post to other agencies for further external assessments.

Staff have received refresher training this week about strengths and strategies for pupils with ADHD, ASC and dyspraxia. We have been looking at making classrooms more learner friendly and a more inclusive learning environment.

If you have any concerns about pupils please contact [SEN@st-maryshigh.wigan.sch.uk](mailto:SEN@st-maryshigh.wigan.sch.uk)