



St. Mary of the Angels Catholic Primary School

Following Jesus in all we think, do and say

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Headteacher: Mrs Mary Wilson

Newsletter: 13th January 2022

Dear Parents, carers, pupils, staff and governors

Feast of the Epiphany

The children and staff prayed together throughout the first week of term to prepare for the Feast of the Epiphany which celebrates Jesus being revealed to the Wise Men after their long journey following the star. Discovering Jesus brought them great joy and they gave Him gifts to honour Him. We gave thanks that Jesus has revealed Himself to each and every one of us, allowing us to have a joyful, personal relationship with Him. Our daily prayers last week included a series of short meditations which encouraged children to have an 'epiphany' and recognise that Jesus is all around them. The question 'Can you see Him...' was repeated throughout the week in different ways and all classes took part in a beautiful online liturgy on Thursday 6th January.

Covid-19 Risk Assessment

The school's Covid-19 Risk Assessment has been reviewed and updated in response to recent changes in guidance for schools and requirements re isolating and testing. The risk assessment and further guidance for parents and carers can be found on the homepage of the school website.

While the updated DFE guidance indicates that schools can continue with in person assemblies we have made a decision to revert to all assemblies and hymn practices being online until the week ending 21st January after which time we hope to be able to go back to our weekly Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 1/Foundation Stage Gospel Assemblies on Tuesdays and Wednesdays respectively.

Home School Communication

Parents and carers are reminded that they must not come in to the school office unless they are invited to attend a meeting or to drop off or collect a child. All other queries or passing on of information must be done via phone (02077921883) or email as follows:

- General queries or concerns to Ms Chadwick office@stmaryangels.co.uk
- Pupil illness/absence to Mrs Murphy reception@stmaryangels.co.uk
- Queries re payments to Mrs Conway finance@stmaryangels.co.uk

If you are invited to enter the office you must wear a face mask unless you are exempt and only one visitor at a time will be allowed in the office area.

Uniform

St. Mary of the Angels is a uniformed school and the expectations regarding school uniform are made very clear when pupils join the school and on the [school website](#). As a result the overwhelming majority of pupils come to school each day in the correct uniform which is wonderful to see. However, this is not the case for all with footwear and coats in particular not always complying with the school's uniform policy. Parents and carers are therefore reminded that all pupils must wear:

- **Black school shoes** (black trainers/plimsolls on PE days)
- **A navy/dark blue coat**

You are also reminded that there is no requirement for pupils to wear branded items of school uniform i.e. cardigans, jumpers, polo/PE shirts bearing the school's logo sold by our uniform supplier. These items can be generic i.e. bought from a range of retailers selling school uniform as is the case for school trousers, skirts, pinafores etc.

The only items we require parents and carers to purchase from our uniform supplier is the branded book bag which pupils use throughout Foundation Stage/Key Stage 1, the branded back pack which can be used throughout their time in Key Stage 2 and the school tie. We are aware of the issues some parents have faced when ordering branded uniform items from our uniform supplier and we are in the process of reviewing our contract with Stitch Design with a view to securing improved delivery times or moving to a different supplier. Please do contact the school office via email/phone if you have or are experiencing problems so that we can feed back.

Curriculum Newsletters

These are now available for you to view/download on your child's class page on the school website along with the RE newsletter and more detailed information about your child's Learning Means the World theme this term. You will also find information regarding Relationships and Health Education (see below).



Relationships and Health Education

We use the **Life to the Full** programme to deliver Relationships and Health Education (RHE) which is based on the model [Catholic Relationships and Sex Education Curriculum](#) developed by the Catholic Education Service and approved by Westminster diocese. Please visit your child's class page to see what topics they will be covering in RHE this term. More detailed information for each topic along with suggested activities and prayers you can use at home can be found by logging on to our school's Parent Platform. To access the online parent platform please click [here](#) or visit: www.tentenresources.co.uk/parent-portal

Username: **st-mary-angel-w2**

Password: **palace-gardens**

Prior to lessons starting next week, we thought it would be useful to remind you of the outcome of the RHE consultation held with parents/carers, staff and governors in the summer of 2021. This focused on gathering views on four key decisions and the outcomes were as follows:

Key Decision 1: Genitalia

Genitalia is not named in Early Years Foundation Stage, private parts are merely referred to as 'privates'. However, we do introduce names of genitalia to pupils in Lower Key Stage 2 (Years 3 & 4). The case for introducing teaching about genitalia at this age is two-fold. The first is that this is the stage at which we talk to children about the differences between boys and girls. Here, it is important not to uphold negative gender stereotypes and, in fact, the nonphysical differences between boys and girls at this age are small and difficult to define. By linking gender to biological sex, it helps children to understand the difference, equality and complementarity of boys and girls. The second is a safeguarding issue. The argument goes that if young children are better able to confidently articulate about private body parts, they are better equipped to identify experiences of feeling uncomfortable if any form of abuse takes place.

Key Decision 2: Puberty

In Module 2 of Lower Key Stage 2, we provide two sessions on puberty and changing bodies. We have decided to use these sessions with our Year 4 pupils as NHS guidance states that the average age for girls to begin puberty is 11, while for boys the average age is 12. But it's different for everyone. It's completely normal for puberty to begin at any point from the ages of 8 to 14. The process can take up to 4 years.

Key Decision 3: Talking About Sex

The third key area for consideration during the consultation was about whether to include a session in Upper Key Stage 2 which answers the question: 'Where do babies come from?' Following feedback from parents, staff and governors, we have decided not to teach this unit to our Upper Key Stage 2 pupils as it is not part of the statutory curriculum; however, we have opted to give parents/carers access to the resources so that they can lead at home if they so wish. Omitting this session does not impact on the rest of the programme.

Key Decision 4: Talking About Pornography

One of the sessions in Upper Key Stage 2 addresses the risks that children face from seeing pornographic images and videos online. While this is very much a lesson about 'internet safety' and therefore falls under the statutory Health Education curriculum we consider that this falls under the non-statutory Sex Education curriculum and so have decided not to teach this session.

It is also important to note that while Relationships and Health Education is now compulsory in primary schools, Sex Education is not compulsory in primary schools and will not be taught at St. Mary of the Angels. We will, however, continue to teach the compulsory elements of the existing science curriculum. As our RHE programme does not include sex education, parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from RHE lessons. Further information from the Department for Education regarding Relationships and Sex Education including answers to some frequently asked questions can be accessed [here](#) and you can find further information, including the school's RHE Policy and a Life to the Full booklet for parents, by visiting the [Relationships and Health Education](#) section of the school website.

If you have any questions regarding Relationships & Health education please contact your child's class teacher in the first instance or the Relationships and Health Education Co-ordinator, Mrs Wilson, via office@stmaryangels.co.uk

Kind regards

Mrs Wilson
Headteacher

Mrs Hough
Deputy Headteacher (Acting)