



ST MARY'S CE FIRST ACADEMY

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO: 110 10.02.2022

"SHINE AS A LIGHT IN THE WORLD"

Matthew 5:16



Dear Parents and Guardians,

I hope this newsletter finds you all well and you are looking forward to the weekend ahead. It has been another busy week at St. Mary's culminating in a wonderful Valentine's 'Movie Night' last night. The children really enjoyed their evening and the craft activities on offer, so a huge thank you to all of you for sending your children along and for your continued support towards our fundraising efforts. None of it would be possible without the determination and hard work of the PTA to organise and facilitate such events or the brilliant support from my colleagues in school. A huge thank you from me to everyone involved.

Our after school sports clubs will be starting after half term with KS2 (Years 3 & 4) pupils attending on a Monday and our KS1 (Years 1 & 2) pupils attending on a Tuesday. Clubs will start straight after school and finish at 4.30pm sharp. The cost will be £3 per session and will need to be paid for the term via our ParentPay system. Further details will follow to support payment.

We will be starting with Multi-Sports clubs so that our pupils get to experience a range of different activities, designed to incorporate team building games, as well as individual skill based activities. All games are designed to improve children's confidence within a sporting environment with an emphasis on FUN at all times.

There are twenty places available for KS2 pupils and fifteen places for KS1. This is due to age and ratios as well as the activity being delivered by an external provider. If we are over-subscribed, then names will be drawn 'out of the hat' to ensure fairness. If your child is not successful on this occasion their name will be placed on a waiting list and they will be given priority for the next club after Easter. Miss Bown has kindly agreed to deliver a Multi-Skills club for Reception pupils after school on a Thursday. This will initially be for six weeks and will cost £3 per session. All monies from this club will be reinvested into new resources and continued school improvements. You will receive a letter with further information on Monday.

There are lots of exciting things happening in school at the moment and I would like to once again thank the PTA for their support towards the completion of our new 'Hundred Acre Wood' library. We still have some seating, shelving and finishing touches to acquire but our PTA are providing joint funding for this to happen which will benefit all of our pupils in school.

We will soon be advertising for a new Lunchtime Supervisor to join the St. Mary's team. It would be great to attract someone local to the role so if you know if anyone that may be interested or suitable then please let them know and ask them to get in touch for an informal chat with Mrs Brennan or myself.

We are also very keen to hear from potential volunteers who might be in a position to help us make a difference to our children and their learning. National statistics show that only 55% of children aged 0-5 are read aloud to at home for at least five days a week and only 37% are read aloud to daily. With this in mind 'we need YOU' to support our children and the catch up work that we do. We are a small team so we really do need more adults to listen to our children reading.



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We are also hoping to deliver some external training to support the confidence of our volunteers within this role. It isn't just reading either as volunteers can really support the school in so many other ways.

Please speak to me or Mrs Brennan if this is something that would be of interest to you or possibly another family member.

I hope you all have a pleasant weekend ahead and I look forward to welcoming you back to school on Monday morning.

Best wishes,

Mr R. Dickson
Executive Principal



Reading Volunteers



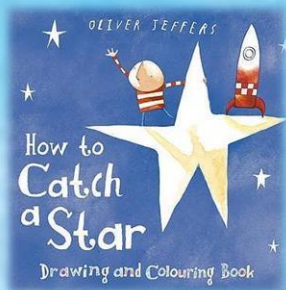
A big thank you to all the parents who have already said they are able to come and volunteer to hear our children at St Mary's read. If you can spare half an hour a week to listen to our pupils read it will really help. Please speak to Mrs Johnson in the school office if you are interested.

STAR OF THE WEEK

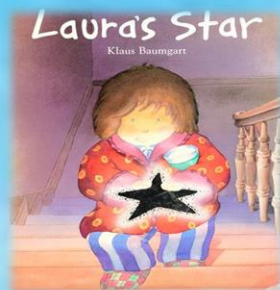
Class	Pupil
Nursery	Archie
Reception	Elliott
Year 1 & 2	George
Year 3	Rosie
Year 4	Izzak

A massive well done to all children for all their hard work this week. We are proud to call you a part of our St Mary's Family.

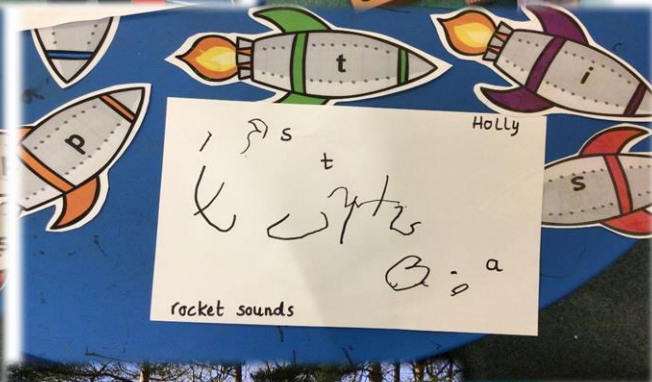
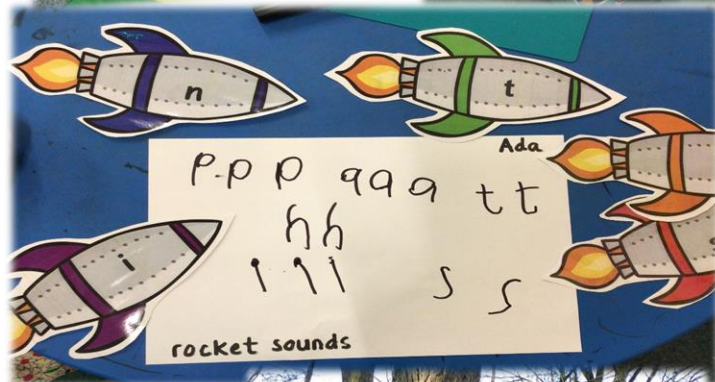




Nursery



Nursery have been looking at the text Laura's Star and How to Catch a Star. The children built a rocket from a variety of construction equipment to take the star back to the sky. They have also been on a hunt for objects that the Owl's mummy might use for her nest. They had a lovely afternoon and the sun even made an appearance. They have been completing some lovely emerging writing - rocket sounds.



Valentine's movie night

Here at St. Mary's CE First Academy

All children, Staff and PTA member's have had a really enjoyable evening, celebrating Valentine's with Pizza, Popcorn a movie whilst completing many crafts. Thank you to all our parent's who have contributed to this event.





National
Online
Safety®
#WakeUpWednesday



Conversation starters for parents and carers: ONLINE CONTENT



Trying to start a conversation about online safety with children can be a daunting task. There are many reasons why children may not want to talk to adults about it. One might be that they don't think you'll understand or that you won't know how to help if they came to you with an online problem. It can also be hard to start a conversation about something that you might have limited knowledge about. However, with screen time increasing during the lockdown, it's important now more than ever, to be talking to children about what they are accessing online.

1 ASK THEIR MOTIVATION

Sometimes it's easy to assume we know why children choose certain games or apps. It can seem obvious, like the child interested in football will be enthusiastic about the new FIFA game. But sometimes it can be more subtle than that. It could be that it's an outlet for their creativity or it might be that they like the look of the main character. Learning their motivation and knowing why they like it can help advising them on how to use it safely and help you discuss the pros and cons.



6 MAKE TIME TO LISTEN

When your child can't wait to tell you about their new game, always try and listen to what they say. We always have a lot on our minds, so it's easy for us to drift off onto other things which may be more important. However, try to stay involved and ask them more details about aspects of the game/app. Children will appreciate your interest and the more questions you ask, the more you can find out. If you act uninterested, then they are less likely to tell you about it again in the future.



2 CULTIVATE A BLAME FREE CULTURE

Children can often blame themselves if they come across something that scares them or makes them feel uncomfortable. There will be times when your child has gone against something that you have forbidden, however, most children do not intend to put themselves at risk. Therefore, it's important that your child is able to come to you with a problem and won't be blamed for it. Try to understand what happened and why and warn them of the dangers once more. Engaging in a 'told you so' dialogue or suggesting they are in trouble for not listening may deter them from reporting any future concerns.



7 ASK THEM TO BE THE TEACHER

Showing an interest in what children are accessing online is a great opportunity for you to learn something new as well. Children on the whole love sharing their experiences so by asking them to teach you how to use an app or play a game is not only a great way to bond, but you will also feel more empowered to talk about it. It is easy to shy away from conversations when the child perhaps knows more about the subject content than you do. This can help to turn this around.



3 SHARE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Starting a conversation by sharing something that you've seen or that has made you feel uncomfortable can be a great opener. Talking about your own feelings can help children realise that it isn't just them - adults can be affected too. You can then go into how you coped with it therefore indirectly giving children advice on how they can also cope in uncomfortable situations. You can also explain that the reason that you've chosen to talk to them about it is because talking helps. Children will hopefully be able to see the parallels in the experiences and mimic your behaviour in future.



8 USE SCHOOL MESSAGING

It might be that your child's school has sent out a message about the Childline number or to remind children to use the CEOP button to report content. Ask the children what they learned about these at school. When would they use the Childline number? When would they need to use the CEOP button? What does it look like? Asking the children why the school thought that the information was so important that they sent out a message about it reinforces what they learnt whilst at school.



4 TALK ABOUT THE NEWS

Asking children what their response is to news stories around online safety can be revealing. For example, there has been a recent survey conducted by the BBFC who are currently campaigning for the application of age ratings and content warnings on video sharing platforms. What do they think about this? Can they think of a time when this would have helped themselves or someone they know? Are they against the idea? If so, why? Could they be accessing something they shouldn't be?



9 ASK ABOUT THE RISKS

Many children may know what online risks are and will happily explain the potential dangers. Listen and try not to be overly shocked if they tell you something that disturbs you. This can then lead nicely into you asking the question about what steps they are taking to look after themselves or what help they could seek if something goes wrong. Sometimes it's just nice to know that your children know the dangers and have taken steps to help reduce the risk for themselves - this is the ultimate goal.



5 ASK FOR ADVICE

It could be that you really do have a friend at work who is debating whether or not to let their child do something online, or it could be that you're bending the truth slightly, but hopefully the outcome would be the same. Don't be afraid to ask others for advice. Not only why they should let the child use it, but also what would they tell the child to be aware of. What are the risks? This will help you understand the risks yourself and what to look out for in future.



10 ASK ABOUT RESPONSIBILITIES

Try asking open ended questions about roles and responsibilities online. Who is in control of the internet? Who is looking after you whilst you are online? Who decides what is appropriate for children to see? This can reveal a lot about a child's perception about who is responsible for their online safety. If they believe that it is up to everyone else to keep them safe, then you know you need to have a conversation about how they can reduce their own risk.



11 ASK ABOUT SCHOOL ADVICE

Sometimes it's hard to know what to warn children about. If there is a new app or game that your child has come across recently, ask them what they think their teacher would say about it. What advice would school give them? What have they been told about trusting people online or about fake news? Finding this out would be a good way to hear what advice they were given at school and help you reiterate the same message. Quick reminders about what to do if something makes them feel uncomfortable or who their trusted adults are can make all the difference.



Meet our expert

Heather Cardwell is a practising Online Safety Lead and senior school leader who is passionate about safeguarding children online and educating them around online risks. She has over 10+ years as a Computing Lead and has successfully developed and implemented a whole school approach to online safety in schools, delivering online safety training to both school staff and parents and helping to roll-out a bespoke online safety policy across her local network of education settings.



St Mary's CE First Academy
Term Dates and Holidays 2022-2023
Dates are subject to change.

Spring Term 2022

Wednesday 16th February - Mental health day.

Half term: Monday 21st February - Friday 25th February

Thursday 3rd March World book day Where's Wally - All children and staff to dress as Where's Wally characters these can be home made or brought.

Friday 18th March - Red Nose Day - come dressed as a Super Hero £1.00 donation for charity.

Term ends: Friday 8th April

Holiday: Monday 11th April - Friday 22nd April

Easter Sunday: Sunday 17th April

Summer Term 2022

Inset Day: Monday 25th April

Term Starts: Tuesday 26th April

May Day: Monday 2nd May

Half term: Monday 30th May - Friday 3rd June

Term ends: Thursday 21st July

Holiday: Friday 22nd July - Friday 2nd September

Autumn Term 2023

Inset Day: Monday 5th September

Term Starts: Tuesday 6th September

Holiday: Monday 24th October - Friday 28th October

Term ends: Friday 16th December

Holiday: Monday 19th December - Monday 2nd January

Inset Days (School Closed to Pupils)

Monday 25th April 2022

Monday 5th September 2022