



Archdiocese of Birmingham

# ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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[www.stmaryrc.bham.sch.uk](http://www.stmaryrc.bham.sch.uk)

Headteacher: Mrs L. J. Yorke M.Ed.



St. Mary's mission: To love God above all things by: learning together, loving ourselves, loving each other, loving all people, loving life itself and constantly striving for excellence worthy of our God-given gifts.

## February is dedicated to the Holy Family

Our theme for the Spring term is: 'Dignity of Work'

Our virtues for this half term are: - 'Attentive and Discerning'



14th February 2025

Dear parents and carers,

Today we break up for half-term and will return on Monday 24th February at normal time. I have included key dates for Spring 2 within this newsletter and will continue to highlight any changes in subsequent newsletters.

This week has been online safety week and we are teaching your children about how to keep safe when using devices and when they are online. Please reinforce these messages at home.

If you're having a Spring clean over half-term break, we are in need of the following items to replenish our OPAL resources. We would gladly receive these items off you:-

✓ **More dress up, toys, role play, arts and crafts materials or any outdoor toys.**

✗ **At this time we do not need any more pots, pans or kitchen equipment.**

Please may I remind all parents of the home school agreement that you sign when you send your children to St. Mary's. In particular, I would like to highlight attendance. We often receive requests to take children out of school during learning time. I am not allowed to authorise any term-time holiday; and must support you to ensure that your child's attendance remains over 96%.

The second area that I would like to highlight is agreeing not to put into disrepute the reputation of the school or staff on social media. This includes the use of WhatsApp groups. I politely ask for you to make an appointment with the appropriate member of staff to discuss any concerns. This is usually not me in the first instance. Most issues within classes can be solved by talking directly with the class teacher.

And finally, thank you to everybody who voted in the recent election for staff Governor. Mr McInerney was the successful candidate and was welcomed in to the new role, when he attended his first Full Governing Body meeting with us, this week.

I do hope that you have an enjoyable half-term and the children have the opportunity to rest and have fun away from lessons. God bless, Mrs Yorke

### As Parents/Carers, we will:

- Embrace the school's values and mission statement.
- Support the spiritual development of my child by frequent and regular attendance at Mass and through prayer.
- Make sure my child arrives at school regularly, on time and in the correct school uniform.
- Let the school know by 8.30am of any absence.
- Ensure that arrangements are made for my child to be collected promptly at the end of the school day.
- Keep the school informed about any concerns or problems (medical, physical or emotional difficulties) that might affect my child's work or behaviour.
- Support school policies and guidelines for behaviour.
- Support my child in homework and other opportunities for home learning or remote learning.
- Support the school in keeping children safe online through monitoring children's use of and access to the internet and reporting any concerns to the school.
- Attend parents' evenings to discuss my child's progress.
- Complete consent forms to identify if my child can be photographed or videoed at school events, for internal displays, for use on the school website or Twitter.
- Encourage children to respect themselves and others.
- Attend workshops to support my child's learning.
- Only use photos taken at school events for my own personal use and not for sharing on social media.
- Adhere to 96% attendance minimum for my child.
- Take holidays out with of school time.
- Use social media respectfully and never to put in to disrepute the reputation of the school or any staff member.
- Discuss this Home/School agreement with my child.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_



# Catholic Life



Luke 5:4

*This week's Gospel and Prayer*

*"Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch"*

Reflecting on this week's Gospel message we learn:

- Simon Peter saw something special in the power of Jesus, demonstrated through His words and actions.
- Like the disciples, we too can trust Jesus.
- We are all invited to follow Jesus and are welcome in God's family.



## Masses



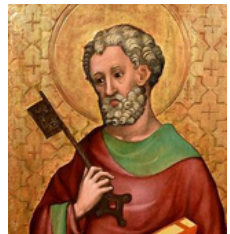
Reception Mass - 12.2.25  
- Our Lady of Lourdes

With their buddies, Reception class led us in a beautiful Mass dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes.



Our next Mass: - Year 6 Mass - St. Peter (Votive)

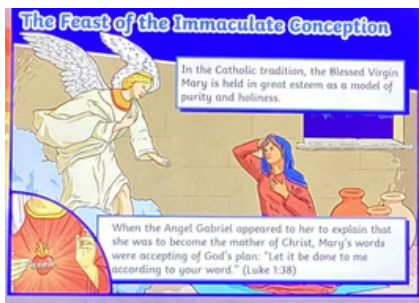
Our next Mass in Church will be on **Wednesday 26th February 2025**, starting promptly at 9:15am. Year 6 will be leading this Mass and Year 5 will also be in attendance. All parents are welcome to attend.



*Examples of our child-led learning about our class Marian devotions this week: -*



5F - Our lady of Good Counsel



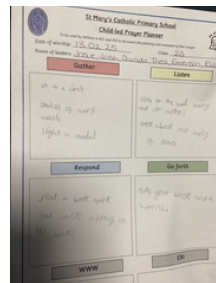
6R - Our lady of the Immaculate Conception



2G - Our lady of peace



6O - Our lady of Lourdes





# Catholic Life



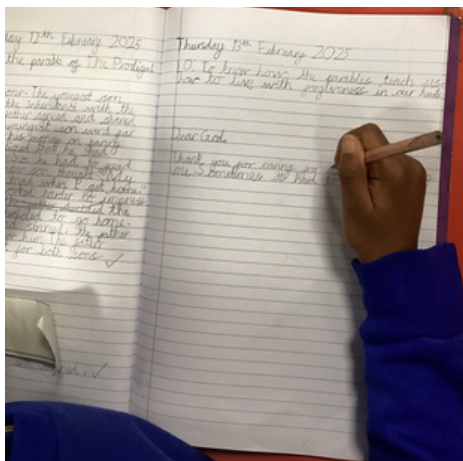
We're taking a moment to reflect on our Catholic life, prayer and RE learning this week:-



Year 3 led their parents in a wonderful year group assembly today all about the Year of the Jubilee! They taught us all about the history of the Jubilee, as well as Pope Francis' key messages.



Congratulations to all the children who received the 'Remarkable RE' award this week! Your dedication and enthusiasm have truly shone through, and we're incredibly proud of your achievements!



Year 2 have been looking at how the parables show forgiveness and wrote their own forgiveness prayers.



Following on from our Sunday Gospel, Year 5 children led a prayer and liturgy reflecting upon Luke 5: 1 - 11 and asked some fantastic 'I wonder' questions. For their Go Forth, they asked the class to write down how they will be 'fishers of men'.



Year 3 learnt all about the sacrament of Reconciliation with Father Hilary. They are preparing for their upcoming Sacrament of Holy Communion in June.



Year 6 lead a prayer assembly for their peers every week.



# NSPCC Number Day -10.2.25

On Monday 10th February we took part in the NSPCC Number Day!

During the day, children took part in exciting maths activities and

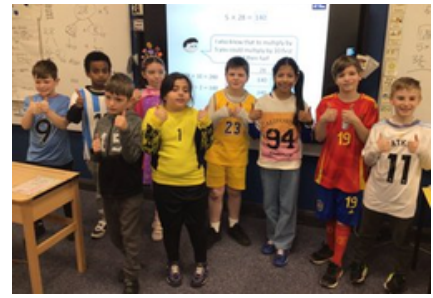
'Dressed up for digits.' Look at these fantastic outfits!

Thank you for your donations for NSPCC

- we made for this charity.

£219

Math<sup>♥</sup>



# Online

# SAFETY

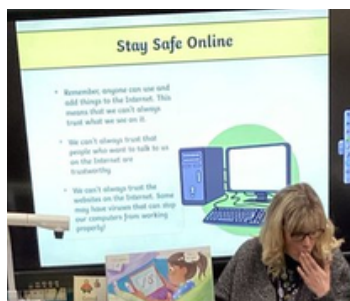
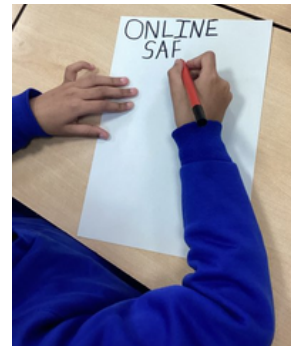
# WEEK

## Safer Internet Day - 11.2.25

Tuesday 11th February is Safer Internet Day. Children in school will learn about online safety and how the Internet can be used safely to make changes for the better.

We would be delighted if you could join us in celebrating the day by continuing the conversation at home. To help you with this, the UK Safer Internet Centre created some free activities and information for parents and carers a couple of years ago, which are available at:

[saferinternet.org.uk/SID-parents](http://saferinternet.org.uk/SID-parents)



At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit [nationalcollege.com](https://nationalcollege.com).

# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

# ROBLOX

Roblox is one of the most popular video games among children. In 2020, the game's developers claimed that more than half of the USA's children had played it. As a 'sandbox' title, the game lets players create their own gaming experiences with Roblox Studio to build custom levels, which can then be shared online.



## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

Roblox encourages players to interact online (including a group chat function), which could expose children to various risks. Scammers often attempt to trick young Roblox fans into exchanging their paid-for items for something which turns out to be of much lesser value – or something they never even receive. The in-game chat has some filters, but it isn't perfect: players can still send unpleasant messages, while predators can reach out to children directly.

### ONLINE DATERS

These are also called 'ODers' and are quite common in Roblox. An ODer is an individual who joins a game with the intention of finding someone to date online – and eventually meet in person. Such online dating is against the Roblox community guidelines, but this doesn't usually deter such people. Some player-built Roblox levels have even been designed with online dating specifically in mind, and this will not always be obvious.

### PUBLIC SERVERS

Roblox has private or VIP servers which allow people to play exclusively with their friends, but this costs money – usually a one-off payment. Most Roblox players will instead be on public servers that anyone can join. Servers can host games which focus on all kinds of aspects, including direct player interaction. Some lobbies, therefore, will put children at greater risk of contact from strangers than others.

### IN-APP PURCHASES

Roblox is free to download and play, but bear in mind that there are some extra costs. These are usually indicated with the symbol for 'Robux' (the in-game currency). Players are encouraged to make purchases in the game using real money. People can also buy extra Robux to spend on cosmetic items in the game, and it's also possible to purchase a private or VIP server.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### SET PARENTAL CONTROLS

Roblox comes with several parental control options, which are explained well on the game's official website. It's essential to enter the correct date of birth for younger players, as that allows Roblox to automatically apply appropriate chat filters. The game also allows parents and carers to set monthly spending restrictions and monitor their child's account.

### DISABLE PRIVATE MESSAGING

Roblox's private messaging function raises the risk of children being contacted by people they may not want to speak with – potentially leading to bullying, harassment, toxicity and scam attempts. Keep in mind that the game allows you to disable messages from anyone who hasn't been added as a friend on your account.

### PRIVATE SERVERS

If a child has friends to play Roblox with, paying for a private or VIP server decreases the risk of contact from strangers. Even then, however, the player who owns the server could invite other people – who might not be child friendly – to join them. Additionally, private servers can be set up in such a way that any player on the host's friends list can join, so it's important to discuss who children are playing with.

### MONITOR SPENDING

If they don't understand they're using real money, it's easy for children to accidentally spend a sizeable amount in the game. Using parental controls to place limits on their spending will help avoid any nasty financial surprises. Ensuring that two-factor authentication is enabled on any payment accounts also makes it harder for children to spend money inadvertently.

### DEALING WITH STRANGERS

At some point in their development, children must learn how to deal with strangers online. Show them how to block and report any users who are upsetting them or asking uncomfortable questions. Talking to them about what's okay to discuss – and what they should never tell a stranger – can help them understand how to communicate more safely with other people online.

## Meet Our Expert

Clare Godwin (a.k.a. Lunawolf) has worked as an editor and journalist in the gaming industry since 2015, providing websites with event coverage, reviews and gaming guides. She is the owner of Lunawolf Gaming and is currently working on various gaming-related projects including game development and writing non-fiction books.



The National College

Sources: <https://www.theverge.com/2020/7/21/21333431/roblox-over-half-of-us-kids-playing-virtual-parties-fortnite>  
<https://corp.roblox.com/parents/>

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### ***Year 4 Harborne Library Visit - 25.2.25***

Year 4 will be visiting Harborne Library next Tuesday.

4M will leave at 8:45am

4J will leave at 10:15am

If you are a parent who would like to attend and support walking to and from the library, please let the Year 1 staff know.

### ***Young Voices - 26.2.25***

Some of our school choir will be singing at the Young Voices concert on Wednesday 26th February. They will be leaving school after they have had their lunch to attend the venue. Children will wear school uniform as normal and will change in to their Young Voices t-shirts after lunch (or bring a plain white t-shirt to change in to if Young Voices t-shirt has not been purchased).

Further details about the concert and pick up arrangements will be sent after half-term.



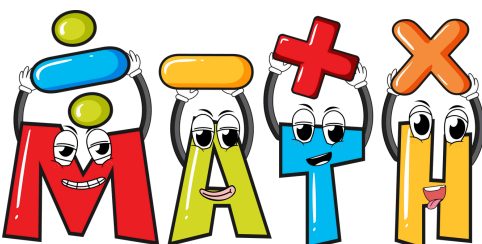
### ***Pet Shower - 28.2.25***

Year 1 have planned a 'Pet Shower' to take part in, in order to support 'Pet Search Rescue West Midlands' – they are asking for children to dress up as their favourite animal or wear any clothes with an animal print on, on this day. They would like donations for the sanctuary i.e. pet food, puppy pads, cat litter, sawdust, blankets... in return for wearing own clothes.



### ***Reception parent workshop for maths - 28.2.25 at 2:30pm***

Reception parents are invited to attend a Maths workshop at 2:30pm on Friday 28th February. During the workshop, you will have the opportunity to find out more about how maths is taught in Reception and how you can help at home.



## Signposting for half-term activities

This section is to sign-post activities that are taking place over half-term, which you may wish to engage with. As a school we are only sign-posting these.

**Ofsted**  
Registered

FEBRUARY HALF-TERM

# PREMIER HOLIDAY CAMPS

Harborne Academy, Harborne Road, B15 3JL  
 Standard Day 9am-4pm - £20  
 Extended Day 8:15am-5pm - £25  
 4 year olds- 8:15am-12:15pm or 1pm-5pm - £12.50

Tax Free payments and Childcare vouchers accepted.

SCAN HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION  
 or visit [premier-education.com/holiday-camps](http://premier-education.com/holiday-camps)

**Premier Education**

FEBRUARY HALF-TERM

**Premier Education**

# FOOTBALL CAMPS

Harborne Academy, Harborne Road, B15 3JL  
 Standard day 9am-4pm - £20  
 Extended day 8:15am-5pm - £25  
 Half day (4 year olds)- 8:15am-12:15 OR 1pm-5pm - £12.50

Tax Free payments and Childcare vouchers accepted.

SCAN HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION  
 or visit [premier-education.com/holiday-camps](http://premier-education.com/holiday-camps)

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 TURNING THE IMPOSSIBLE INTO POSSIBLE

# LEGO CODING SESSION

@ F1 Arcade Birmingham

### Popular - lego coding session

This session is most suitable for children in Year 3 and above. It has always been very popular. Contact details on poster.

**SPECIAL OFFER**  
 Kids Eat Free with every full paying adult

2.5 hours of fun filled activities with a Formula 1 theme.

All attendees will get to create and code fantastic F1 themed builds whilst also getting to race in the state of the art simulators at F1 Arcade

**£20**

Sign up using link

**SESSION INFORMATION**

10:00am - 12:30pm  
 Friday 21st February  
 2 Chamberlain Sq, Birmingham B3 3AX

For further information  
[johnpaul@successeducation.org](mailto:johnpaul@successeducation.org)

**FACE**  
 FAMILY ADVICE COMMUNITARIAN EDUCATION

February 2025  
**Newsletter**

FACE delivers online support via zoom for parents across the UK  
 Talks are 90 minutes long, £24 each - Book Online at [facefamilyadvice.co.uk](http://facefamilyadvice.co.uk)

Tuesday 11th Feb 19:00 - 20:30 £24		<b>Facing Defiance</b> Specific strategy to help parents manage defiant and challenging behaviour, especially aimed at ADHD, ODD and PDA conditions, 5 to 12 years old.
Tuesday 18th Feb 19:00 - 20:30 £24		<b>Cannabis &amp; Ketamine Awareness</b> Get the facts and know the harms about these two drugs so you can hold an informed conversation with your teens.
Tuesday 25th Feb 19:00 - 20:30 £24		<b>Understanding the Teenage Brain</b> A 'must see' for all parents and teachers of teens and pre-teens. Explains why teens think, feel and behave very differently from adults and how we can support them.

[facefamilyadvice.co.uk](http://facefamilyadvice.co.uk)    [info@facefamilyadvice.co.uk](mailto:info@facefamilyadvice.co.uk)

We are an operation encompass school. Therefore school is working alongside the police to ensure support for any child who has been involved in or witness to domestic abuse. Please find more information about this on our website or contact the school office.

## Pastoral Team

If you require any support from school please speak to a member of our pastoral team

If you have a concern that a child is being harmed, is at risk of harm, or you receive a disclosure (intentionally or unintentionally) you must contact one of the following staff members as quickly as possible:



Amy Davis Deputy Headteacher Lead DSL	Louise Yorke Headteacher Deputy DSL	Rachel Jones Senior Teacher DSL	Rachel Richards EYFS Lead DSL	Sharon Tame School Counsellor DSL	Laura Noone AHT DSL	Jade Preedy AHT DSL
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Alternatively, email [DSL@stmaryrc.bham.sch.uk](mailto:DSL@stmaryrc.bham.sch.uk)

## Do not book holidays during term time

*This is a reminder that holidays during term time are unauthorised. If you intend to take your child out of school during term time, we ask that you complete a holiday request form at least 2 weeks prior to the leave date where possible. Parents may be fined by the Local Authority for taking unauthorised leave of absence. Children need to be in school every day so please ensure holidays are only booked during school holiday time.*

*Good attendance, continues to be a school and government priority. Good attendance is 96% and above Remember below 95% is a concern and below 90% is classed as persistent absence. If you have any problems with regards to getting your child to school or you are struggling to improve your child's attendance, please speak to Mrs. Yorke or Mrs. Davis.*

*We will announce the attendance for the previous week in this section of the newsletter each week.*

## Attendance and Punctuality: –

Our attendance for last week was –

**Week 10/02/25-14/02/25**

Class	YRB	YRT	Y1L	Y1F	Y2E	Y2G	Y3L	Y3T	Y4J	Y4M	Y5M	Y5F	Y6R	Y6O
%	97.6	95.6	98.3	93.3	98.3	98.9	95	93.3	98	95	98	98.3	100	98
Lates	3	4	1	3	2	2	1	3	0	2	2	5	2	1
Whole School Attendance so far this year						96.5%			School Target				97%	

**Well done 6R: - Our attendance champions!**



Spring theme -

Spring 11 Virtues

24th February 2025 - 8:45am

25th February 2025 - am

26th February 2025 - 9:15am

26th February 2025 - evening

28th February 2025 - all day

28th February 2025 - 2:30pm

WB 3.3.25

4th March 2025 - am

5th March 2025 - 10:00am

6th March 2025 - all day

WB 10.3.25

11th March 2025 - am

12th March 2025 - all day

12th March 2025 - 9:15am

14th March 2025 - 9:15am

14th March 2025 - 2:30pm

17th March 2025 - all day

18th March 2025 - am

19th March 2025 - 9:15am

20th March 2025 - all day

21st March 2025 - all day

24th March 2025 - 1:30pm

25th March 2025 - am

26th March 2025 - 9:15am

27th March 2025 - all day

28th March 2025 - 9:00am

1st April 2025 - am

1st April 2025 - pm

2nd April 2025 - 9:15am

3rd April 2025 - pm

8th April 2025 - all day

9th April 2025 - 9:30am

10th April 2025 - 9:00am

11th April 2025 - all day

WB 14.4.25

17th April 2025 - 11:00am

17th April 2025

Dignity of Work

Attentive and Discerning

# Dates for next half-term

Children return to school at normal time

Year 4 visit to Harborne library (8:45 4M and 10:15 4J)

Year 6 Mass in Church (and Year 5 classes attend) - parents welcome

Young Voices Concert - will leave school after lunch (separate letter)

Pet Day - animal theme dress up - see separate letter

Reception parent workshop about Maths

Careers Week / Vocations week

Year 3 visit to Harborne library (8:45 3T and 10:15 3L)

Whole school Mass in Church for Ash Wednesday - parents welcome

World book day - wear pyjamas

British Science Week

Year 2 visit to Harborne library (8:45 2G and 10:15 2E)

Reception class trip to Attwell farm

Year 4 Mass in Church (and Year 3 classes attend) - parents welcome

Y2 Year group assembly

X-table check workshop for Year 4 parents

INSET day - school closed for all pupils

Year 1 visit to Harborne library (8:45 1L and 10:15 1F)

Year 2 Mass in Church (and Year 1 classes attend) - parents welcome

One life Pilgrims of Hope Retreat for whole school

Down Syndrome Awareness Day

Year 6 Confirmation Workshop with parents

Year 4 visit to Harborne library (8:45 4J and 10:15 4M)

Year 5 Mass in Church (and Year 6 classes attend) - parents welcome

Mothers' Day Inspire Event in school

Year 6 prayer service for parents

Year 3 visit to Harborne library (8:45 3L and 10:15 3T)

Parent Consultation Evening

Reception Mass in Church (with Year 6 buddies) - parents welcome

Parent Consultation Evening

Year 2 school trip - Coal mining tour

Whole School Mass - parents welcome

Reception prayer service for parents

Year 3 school trip to Birmingham Art Gallery

Holy Week

Year 6 Stations of the Cross in Church for KS2 and parent

Break up for Easter Holidays

# Star of the week

*Congratulations to the following children who have shone in school over the last week:*

Year RB	Billy	For being very sensible whilst taking the offertory in Mass.
Year RT	Micaiah	For doing a beautiful job of taking our offertory gifts in Mass.
Year IF	Emily	For her fantastic prosody in reading and thoughtful contributions in all lessons.
Year IL	Sparkle	For her excellent efforts in her learning and always living out the school virtues
Year 2E	Elliot	For fabulous reading and improving comprehension skills. Well done Elliot!
Year 2G	Aaliyah	For always be a kind, caring and thoughtful member of the class!
Year 3L	Sophia	For always trying her best in everything she does and being a super role model
Year 3T	Rina	For trying incredibly hard in her Exciting Writing this week! Well done.
Year 4J	Savannah	For being a kind and supportive friend
Year 4M	Peonya	For being a good role model for her peers in learning and behaviour
Year 5F	Devaansh	For his beautiful manners and for being a wonderful role-model.
Year 5M	Charlie	For hard work and perseverance in everything he does, resulting in exceptional high quality and beautiful work!
Year 6O	Annabel	For joining in enthusiastically with Fr Hilary's homily at Mass
Year 6R	Thomas	For his mature, conscientious approach to all his work



*Peter, John, Paulos and Tomas Abraham wowed their Headteacher with their example of living out the virtues. These 4 brothers found a resident's phone and returned it to the Parish in the hope that the owner could be found. After Fr. Hilary charged up the phone, he was able to find the owner. The lady was so happy to be reunited with it and wanted these boys to be specially acknowledged for their honesty and kindness. Well done boys - we're very proud of you.*