



St Mary's C of E Primary School

"Shining Brighter and Brighter"

School Newsletter September 2025

Dear Parents,

A very warm welcome back to all our families – and an especially big welcome to those who are new to St Mary's this term. It's been wonderful to see the school full of energy again and to meet so many smiling faces each morning.

We've had a great start to the year. Routines are being established, a few changes are bedding in, and we're grateful for your patience and support as we do this together. With everyone's help, the start of term has felt positive and purposeful – setting us up for an exciting year ahead.

Here's to a fantastic new school year!

Warm wishes,

Miss Gray
Headteacher



COLLECTIVE WORSHIP & VALUES

This term in Collective Worship we are focusing on our value of Respect. Together we're exploring the big question: "If you were in charge of a school, how would you make sure that everyone felt respected?" Through stories, discussion and prayer we're learning how respect shapes our daily choices. We've also been looking at some of Jesus' parables – including the Parable of the Lost Sheep – which remind us that everyone matters and deserves to be treated with care and dignity.

We're also delighted to have recruited our new Collective Worship Team and Values in Action Group. These pupils will help plan, lead and celebrate our worship life, and spot examples of our values being lived out across the school to share in our Celebration Assembly each week.

Parents are welcome to join us for our Gospel Collective Worship on Monday 13th October at 9:10am.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

We are always delighted to welcome parent volunteers into school. If you would like to help, please speak to the school office – all volunteers are required to have a DBS check before starting. We are especially looking for helpers to support with reading; even an hour in the morning after drop-off would make a real difference.

Please note that, under our policy, regular volunteers cannot work with the children in their own child's class. This is linked to DBS guidance and helps to avoid any unnecessary conflicts. (This only applies to weekly volunteering – parents are still very welcome to join their own child's class on trips or at Forest School.)



WAVE AND GO

Please help us to keep mornings calm and safe for everyone. We kindly ask parents to drop off children and leave promptly at the start of the day. Unless it's urgent, please avoid speaking to class teachers at the door – they need to settle their classes and take the register.

If you need to get a message to your child's teacher, please email the class address, copying in admin@stmarys916.herts.sch.uk if it's important for them to see it before the end of the day.



To keep the site secure, we must close the gates promptly after drop-off. We also encourage parents of older children to take a small step back when waving them in, helping them to grow in confidence and independence.

Thank you for your support in keeping our mornings smooth, safe and welcoming.

ATTENDANCE MATTERS - EVERY DAY COUNTS

Earlier this week we sent out a letter about attendance. When the rules changed last year, we allowed families time to adjust, recognising that some holidays had already been booked before the change.

However, in line with our published attendance guidance, if holidays exceed 10 sessions (5 school days) we will now issue fines to families.

Punctuality is also very important. Arriving on time helps children settle for the day, prevents them from missing valuable learning, and builds strong habits for life. For safety reasons, and to ensure lessons can start promptly, the gates will be closed at 8:50 am each morning.

Thank you for your support in helping every child benefit from full attendance and a calm start to the day.

Collective Worship Team and Values in Action Group

We have been incredibly impressed with the quality and number of applications to join the Collective Worship Team this term. The letters from our pupils were thoughtful, enthusiastic and showed just how much our worship life and school values mean to them. After a very difficult decision, ten children have been selected to form this year's Collective Worship Team, helping to plan and lead our worship across the school.

We are also delighted to launch a brand-new Values in Action Group for the many other children who wanted to be involved. This group will spot pupils around the school who are living our values, record their names and actions in the Values Box and then share them at our Celebration Assembly each week.

Thank you and well done to every child who applied. You have made us very proud and we're excited to see both groups bringing our school values to life this year.

Collective Worship Team: Ezra, Katherine, Caitlin, Alfie, Beth, Larry (Tech), Sienna, Isabelle Q, Evie A, Jasper

Values in Action Group: Freddie, Evie W, Alma, Izzy C, Violet, Raia, Immy, Logan, Frankie, Archie

UNIFORM UPDATES

Thank you for your cooperation with our recent uniform updates, and for your patience as we work to get everything right. We've already seen a dramatic reduction in lost property thanks to your support – well done everyone!

Key Reminders:

- Please check you're up to date with our uniform expectations on the school website.
- All children should come to school dressed appropriately and ready to learn.
- PE Kit: Must follow uniform expectations for PE kit. Children should wear PE kit to school only on their PE days.
- Please make sure all items are clearly named so they can be returned if lost.
- Trainers: As an active school, children may wear black trainers as part of their uniform. We kindly ask that they are as fully black as possible – including soles, laces and any large logos.

A Special Request from Staff:

- EYFS & KS1 – children should bring a bookbag to school.
- KS2 – children may bring a backpack if they wish.
- Please limit keyrings to one per bag.
- Ensure all items are clearly named.

These small steps make a big difference in keeping our cloakrooms safe, tidy and manageable. Thank you for supporting us.

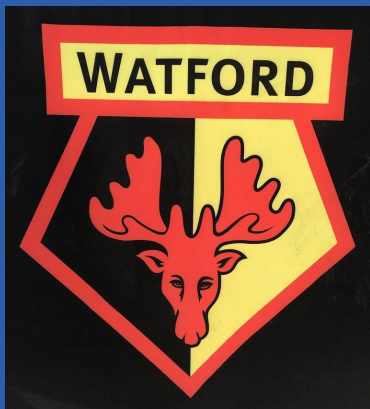


WATFORD PE DEVELOPMENT

As you may know, our wonderful Sports Coach, Miss Gill, has now stepped into the role of class teacher. While she will still be supporting St Mary's clubs and sports development, the teaching of PE will return to class teachers.

Because we are passionate about PE, we're determined to ensure that the high quality of our provision continues. Over the past few years, we've worked with professional coaching providers to develop our curriculum and teaching — and this year we're taking it to the next level.

We're delighted to be working with Watford FC's Community Sports & Education Trust to provide high-quality training for our teachers. Nicola from the Trust has already started working with us, and we're excited about the year ahead.



We especially love that Watford FC promotes the values of fairness, connection, inspiration, and ambition. Every class will have the opportunity to work with Nicola throughout the year!

Remember that your child can wear PE to school on the days of their PE lessons!

ANGELA'S HAIRCUT

This summer, 8-year-old Angela took a big step to help children affected by cancer. She cut her hair and donated it to The Little Princess Trust, which provides free real-hair wigs to children and young people who have lost their hair, while also funding vital childhood cancer research. Angela also raised money to support the charity's incredible work. Any donation, big or small, will continue to make a real difference — thank you for helping Angela give hair and hope to children in need.



SMARTPHONE FREE CHILDHOOD

Smartphone-Free Childhood

We are committed to supporting a smartphone-free childhood for all of our pupils. It is vital that children understand why we promote this, and that families feel equipped to have these conversations at home.

We encourage parents of pupils in Years 5 and 6 to watch a short film produced by the Smartphone Free Childhood charity and, if you feel it's appropriate, share it with your child.

The video explains:

- How smartphones changed the world
- How they are designed to monetise attention
- The hidden “superpowers” you unlock by waiting
- Teenagers sharing why smartphones aren't as great as they seem

You can watch the video here: [This made my kids stop begging for a phone.](#)

We are very pleased that so many parents have already supported our expectations by not sending children to school with smartphones. You may be interested to know that a number of local secondary schools are currently considering imposing a ban on smartphones until at least Year 9, which would make this approach compulsory.

Thank you for your continued support as we work together to help children grow up healthy, safe and ready to thrive.



PORTRAITS

We begin each school year by inviting the children to draw self-portraits for display around the school. Seeing their smiling faces line the corridors – and watching the progress they make during their time with us – never ceases to delight and amaze us!



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