



Dear Parent/Carer,

And so, we journey towards the end of an action-packed Autumn term. It doesn't seem two minutes since the start of September, and it never ceases to amaze just how much progress our pupils make in these first months of the academic year. It has been a genuine pleasure and privilege to share in the daily lives of all our young people, and I would like to congratulate them all for their individual and collective efforts this term.

The season of Advent is always a particularly uplifting time for us all in school, and it has been made all-the-more special by the wonderful Christmas plays and nativities we have had the privilege of sharing with our friends and family over the past week. Our pupils have loved every minute of rehearsing and performing their productions, and it has been a true joy to see the culmination of their hard work. A huge thank you, on behalf of all the staff, for your kind words and ongoing, unwavering support – as school staff, our working lives are about so much more than personal gain or recognition, but it does mean a lot to be thanked for the hours put in over the year, and your collective and individual generousities are truly humbling.

Throughout Advent, our children have journeyed with hope and excitement in their hearts, waiting expectantly to receive our Lord anew this Christmas. We will continue our final preparations by coming together as a community in joyful song on Tuesday and in worship on Thursday at our carol service and whole school Mass. Hopefully, I will see many of you in St Mary's church on those occasions; they promise to be wonderful celebrations.

If I do not get the chance to say so in person over the coming week, I hope that you all have a restful, safe and joyous Christmas with your nearest and dearest, and that the hope and expectation of our children bears much fruit on the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus.

I look forward to seeing all our pupils back at school in 2025 as we embark on our jubilee year pilgrimage of hope with Christians the world over. May the blessings of Christmas be with you and your loved ones.

Yours in Hopeful Optimism,

Mr J Wheatley
Headteacher

IMPORTANT DATES/TASKS THIS WEEK:

- This will be the last weekly News Bulletin of the Autumn Term.
- REMINDER: Please take a few moments to complete our Autumn Term parent/carer survey [here](#). Thank you.
- Christmas crafts on Monday – please make your way to the main school entrance for 9:15am if you have indicated that you would like to come along to the event. The session will end at around 11:15am.
- Please come along to our Christmas carol service at 2pm on Tuesday and whole school Mass at 9:30am on Thursday (read more below).
- Christmas Dinner – if you would like your child (in KS2) to have a Christmas Dinner on Wednesday, please pay in advance via Arbor. Pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 will receive their Christmas Dinner free of charge as part of the Universal Infant Free School Meals.
- There will be no PE (or swimming) this week – pupils should wear full school uniform on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday.
- Pupils are invited to come into school in their own clothes (Christmas jumpers if they wish) on Wednesday for our Christmas party day. This is free of charge.
- ‘Toy day’ – pupils may bring one toy or game to play with friends on Thursday as an end of term treat. Teachers will discuss with pupils what would be an appropriate toy/game to bring. Please nothing of significant financial or emotional value.
- There are no clubs before/after school this week.
- Please be reminded that the last day of term for all pupils is **Thursday 19th December 2024**.

Key things to note for the 1st Week of Spring Term (wb/6.1.25):

- The first day of term for all pupils is **Tuesday 7th January 2025**.
- There will be no Tennis or Gymnastics this week.
- Happy Feet and our new French club will begin this week.
- Swimming will begin for Year 4.



ADVENT AT ST MARY'S:

As we come towards the end of the second week of Advent, we prepare ourselves for *Gaudete Sunday* – the third Sunday of Advent – the day on which we light the rose-coloured candle reminding us that this is a joyous time of waiting for Jesus' coming on Christmas Day. Over the final days of the Autumn Term, there will be much joy in school, and we look forward to sharing with you some of things that we will be getting up to – so please make sure to keep an eye on our school website and social media.

As we begin to enter the festivities of the season, we continue to ready ourselves to welcome Christ into our lives in a meaningful way this Christmas and look ahead in joyful optimism to that special day.

We pray, *Maranatha*: come Emmanuel, come.

'LOVE CHRISTMAS' DONATIONS:

Thank you to all those who have donated so generously to the Parish of Our Lady and St Philip Neri 'Love Christmas' appeal. Our donations to the Food Bank, 'Angel Tree' appeal and for the Christmas hampers for families in need will go a great way to spread festive joy this season.

CAROL SERVICE:

We would love to see as many friends and family as possible at our Christmas carol service at St Mary's RC Church at 2pm on Tuesday 17th December. The service will finish at around 3pm, and we will dismiss pupils as normal on the school yard. We anticipate that the event will be popular, and unfortunately, we will be unable to reserve seating for those in attendance. Please note that the parish car park will be closed so those in attendance will need to walk to church via Dockendale Lane.

WHOLE SCHOOL MASS:

Please also come along to our whole school Mass at St Mary's RC Church on Thursday 19th December. There will be a reception for friends and family back at school after Mass during which we will have performances from our school choir and our small group violinists from KS2.

All welcome.