



19th January 2024

Dear Families,

Welcome back after the Christmas break – I hope you had a lovely holiday and I wish you all the very best for 2024.

School Attendance

As you may have seen in the media, school attendance is an issue that has come into great focus recently. Following the pandemic, national school attendance has fallen significantly and the number of persistent absentees (children whose attendance is below 90%) has doubled. Although 90% sounds like quite a high figure, it equates to, on average, half a day off every week. Can I please ask that when children are well enough to do so that they come into school, even if it is for the last day or two of the week, and that wherever possible, holidays and appointments are made outside of school time. If you are unsure whether you should send your child to school or not, please see the guidance from the NHS [HERE](#). If you would like support or advice around your child's attendance, every school in Newcastle has been allocated an Attendance Officer who will be able to provide it. Thank you for your continued support with this.

Nativity Costume Donations

I know that thinking about Christmas is the last thing on people's minds right now, but we would like to ask families if they have any Nativity costumes that they would like to donate to school. In future, rather than asking parents to provide children with costumes at what we recognise is a very busy time of the year, we have decided to supply them ourselves. So, any donations of costumes that you may have in the house from this, or previous years, would be very gratefully accepted.

Water Bottles/Pencil Cases

Many children have brought some very expensive pencil cases and water bottles into school following the Christmas holidays. Bringing these items into school unfortunately brings with it the risk of damage or loss, so to avoid upset, it may be wise to keep them in the safety of your home.

PTA Fundraising

You may have seen the posters around school already, but if you haven't, I would like to inform you that thanks to our wonderful PTA and to your amazing support and generosity, we have raised over £3500 since September! This money has gone towards developing a sensory room, redesigning our IT suite into a much more practical working area, and buying a mobile laptop charging unit so that children from Reception to Year 6 can access the technology in their classrooms. We are looking at what we can use future fundraising for and are in the process of exploring the possibility of developing an area in our grounds into a Forest School which is a space where children can learn personal, social and technical skills outdoors - I will keep you updated with any progress made. I have attached a copy of the PTA poster alongside this email.

PTO



Class Blogs & X (formerly Twitter)

A reminder that information and photographs of what your children have been doing in school can be found in the 'Class Blogs' page on our school website within the 'Pupils' tab. Photographs of our Headteacher and Monthly Achiever Award winners can also be found within the same section under 'Photo Gallery' at www.stoswaldsnewcastle.co.uk

Dates for diaries:

Please find below some key dates for the Spring Term.

January

Monday 29th January – Year 3 & Year 4 Team Games session led by the Newcastle Sports Service

Tuesday 30th January – Year 4 Skipping workshop in school

February

Friday 2nd February – Year 4 Liturgy for parents in school 9am

Tuesday 6th February – Year 6 visit to the Centre for Life linked to their Science topic 'Light'

Friday 9th February – Year 2 Liturgy for parents in school 9am

Tuesday 13th February – Year 1 walk around the local area linked to their Geography topic

Tuesday 13th February – Year 2 'What's in your pants is private' session led by the school nurse

Tuesday 13th February – Year 5 'My Body is Changing' session led by the school nurse

Tuesday 13th February – Year 5 visit to St Mary's High School to watch their drama production of 'Grease'

Thursday 15th February – Bishop Stephen visiting school

Friday 16th February – Break up for the half term holidays

Monday 26th February – School re-opens for the second half of the Spring term

Tuesday 27th February – Year 1 & Year 2 begin their 'Story Maker' sessions led by the Newcastle Music service

Thursday 29th February – 'Safety around the Metro' assembly led by Nexus

March

Friday 1st March – Year 5 Liturgy for parents in school 9am

Monday 4th March – Year 3 visit to the Discovery Museum linked to their Science topic 'Light'

PTO



Friday 8th March – Year 1 Liturgy for parents in school 9am

Friday 15th March – Year 3 Liturgy for parents in school 9am

Monday 18th March – Year 6 visit to the ‘Safety Works’ interactive safety centre

Monday 18th March – Parents’ Consultation Evening in school 3:10pm – 6:00pm (Reception - Year 6)

Tuesday 19th March – Year 1 visit to the Castle Keep **TBC**

Wednesday 20th March – Parents’ Consultation Evening in school 3:10pm – 6:00pm (Reception - Year 6)

Thursday 21st March – Year 4 Dance Festival (details to follow)

Friday 22nd March – Year 6 Liturgy for parents in school 9am

Monday 25th March – Easter Egg Competition in school

Tuesday 26th March – Year 4 Stations of the Cross with other Catholic schools at St Mary’s Cathedral **TBC**

Wednesday 27th March – Year 4 & Year 5 Easter Production at Sacred Heart Church 7pm **TBC**

Thursday 28th March – Reception Easter Story for parents in school 9am

Thursday 28th March – Break up for the Easter holidays

April

Monday 15th April – School re-opens for the start of the Summer term

Other Important Dates:

Monday 13th - Thursday 16th May – Year 6 SATs week (please do not book holidays during this week)

Friday 24th May - Staff Training Day (School Closed to children)

Wednesday 5th - Friday 7th June – Year 4 residential to Hawkhirst

Saturday 15th June – Year 4 First Holy Communion Celebration at Sacred Heart Church

Monday 17th - Wednesday 19th June – Year 5 residential to Keswick

Wednesday 19th – Friday 21st June – Year 6 residential to Borrowdale

With my very best wishes,



P Marley

