



St Joseph's Catholic Middle School

The family of St. Joseph's loves, learns and grows together as followers of Jesus

Monthly Newsletter – Friday 15th September 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you and your family have had an enjoyable summer holiday. The new school year has started very positively with pupils' behaviour and attitude to learning being outstanding. Pupils' attendance and punctuality have also been exceptionally good, and our new year 5 pupils are settling in well.

We welcome a few new staff to our school this year with Mrs Montgomery joining us to teach Food Technology and Mr Clay joining us as our new School Business Manager. We wish them well in their new roles.

Just a reminder about homework at St Josephs. We see homework is an integral part of our school routine and we use it to ensure pupils understand that they are responsible for their own learning. Also, research tells us that homework has a positive impact on how pupils learn adding an average additional 5 months of progress particularly for pupils in secondary years. The arrangements for homework at St Joseph's are that homework should be set in line with the agreed frequency, to ensure that pupils get a regular, manageable amount of work. At KS2 when homework is set, the task should aim to take pupils approximately 20-30 minutes to complete and 30-40 minutes at KS3. Tasks set will be in line with the curriculum design and teachers will give pupils a minimum of 2 nights to complete any given task. In half term 1 of Year 5, pupils will be supported to manage the transition to middle school by teachers setting shorter tasks, taking approximately 15 minutes. In KS2 students will be set Maths and English homework weekly. In other subjects' homework will be set approximately once per half term. In KS3 frequency is outlined in the table below.

KS3 Homework Frequency

Subject	Frequency of Homework per Fortnight
Maths & English	4
RE and Science	2
History & Geography	1
MFL	1
IT, Art, Music, DT	1
PE / PSHE	0

In KS3 Maths and English homework will be set at the start and the end of the week, RE and Science will set homework towards the end of the week and in all the other subjects it will be set after the lesson in that subject.

We also have an opportunity for a parent/carer to join our local governing committee (LGC). The role of the parent governor plays a vital role on the LGC. You are on the LGC to bring a parental perspective to the issues discussed as opposed to speaking 'on behalf' of the parent body. If you are interested in the role, please contact the school office on info@sjms.bwcet.com and you will be sent a simple form to fill out. Can you please express your interest in this role by 1st October. If there is more than one person interested in this role, we will have to organise an election. If

you would like further information, please contact the school and we will organise a member of the LGC to get in touch.

We have lots of activities planned for this term including our prospective year 5 parents evening, scheduled for Wednesday 27th September at 6pm, a Macmillan coffee morning, our Y5 Welcome Mass and Pastoral Parents Evening. More details below.

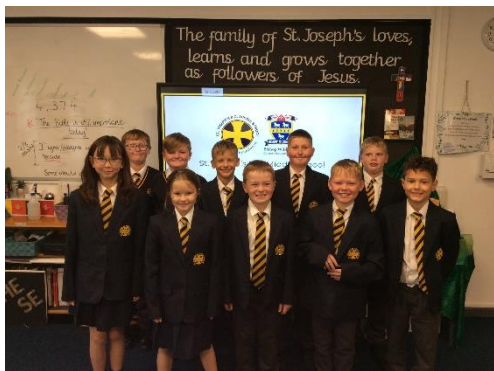
I look forward to seeing you at one or more of these events.

Mr. N. A. Wood
Headteacher

Please see the following Catholic Life News:

Year 5 Welcome Mass:

Fr Paul, who is the new assistant Priest at St Mary's Parish, has been into school this week to visit our Year 5 pupils. It was a lovely opportunity for Fr Paul to meet our newest pupils to join the school and he spent some time planning our Welcome Mass with the children. The Welcome Mass will be held in St Mary's Church on Thursday 21st September at 9:30am. Parents and carers are invited to join our KS2 pupils to celebrate Mass as we begin the academic year.



ARBOR:

Arbor is our new parent portal and it is our primary way of communicating with all parents and carers. If you have not yet logged onto Arbor, please do this as soon as possible so that you do not miss out on any important events or notices.

If you are having trouble accessing Arbor please email parentcontact@sjms.bwcet.com

Open Evening for Prospective Parents, September 2024:

We are holding our annual Open Evening for the parents/carers of children transferring to middle school in September 2024. The evening will start at 6.00pm and it gives prospective children and their parents/carers a chance to meet the staff have a look around our wonderful school.

Application for Middle and High School:

It is now time for children in year 4 (First to Middle), year 6 (Primary to Secondary) and year 9 Middle to High schools to apply for the next phase of school starting in September 2024.

If you have a child who is due to transfer to either middle or high school, please see the link below The Portal will open 12th September 23 and close at midnight on 31st October 23.

https://schadm.northumberland.gov.uk/CitizenPortal_LIVE/en

A huge thank you from the new Mr & Mrs Riches (formerly Miss Mooney) to the St Joseph's school choir for helping to make their day extra special.



Macmillan Coffee Morning:

We will be holding our Macmillan Coffee morning on the Friday 29th September at 9.30am for all parents/carers/grandparents. This is a very worthy cause that we feel is very close to many people hearts and we would love to see as many of you there as possible. To make this fundraising event a success, we need your help! Therefore, we are asking for donations of cakes and biscuits to sell at the coffee morning. Any donations will be gratefully received and can be brought into school on the morning of 29th. Mrs Hudson, our catering manager, will be baking biscuits and pupils can buy a biscuit and juice for £1.00 at breaktime.

Thank you in advance for your support with this event.

Flu Immunisations:

You should have received a form via our new parent portal Arbor, to give consent for your child to receive their nasal flu vaccination. If you have not received this, please email parentcontact@sjms.bwcet.com

Sunshine Panners:

The Sunshine Panners are looking to restart the practice sessions following a summer of gigs. They are holding a taster session on Sunday 17th September.



gigs.

Sports Clubs:

If your child will be taking part in a sports club then they should come to school in their PE kit.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Y5 & Y6 Rounders	Y7 & Y8 Volleyball	Y7 & Y8 Rugby	Y7 & Y8 Football
		Y5 & Y6 Football		

Go on first lunch, then meet by the gate to the field by 12.30. Everyone is welcome!

Upcoming Events at a Glance:

Date	Activity
Thursday 21 st September	Year 5 Mass – St Mary's Church – 9.30am
Wednesday 27 th September	Open Evening – 6.00pm

Friday 29 th September	Macmillan Coffee Morning 9.30am
Tuesday 3 rd October	Pastoral Parents' Evening 4.00 – 6.30pm – Information to follow
Friday 27 th October	Teacher Training Day
Monday 30 th – Friday 3 rd November	Half Term
Monday 6 th November	School Reopens

UNDER-AGE VAPING

Did you know children now start vaping from as young as ten? There has been a lot in the press lately about the dangers surrounding vapes in young people and the potential health conditions they could face in the future. These vapes are purchased illegally and often filled with THC (Cannabis Liquid). Children using vapes are becoming addicted to nicotine and this can influence their behaviour.

Vapes are easy to hide from parents as they do not leave an odour on your clothes... They can be easily hidden, can be vaped in the bedrooms and practically anywhere, being so difficult to detect. For additional information please see below:



- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-62052286> <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/>
- <https://www.theparentsguideto.co.uk/post/vaping-what-uk-parents-need-to-know>
- <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/you-your-body/drugs-alcohol-smoking/smoking/>

STAYING SAFE ONLINE - HOW OLD IS YOUR CHILD ONLINE?

Has your child (or you on their behalf) signed up to access social media/or a game online but have said that they are older than they are so they can have an account? For example, did your 9-year-old join TikTok and put their age as 13, or did you create their account and put your own age? If so, please read some of the implications outlined below that you should think about.

If TikTok thinks your child is 13 when they join but they are in fact 8, then by the time your child reaches 13, the app will think they are 18. This puts your child at risk of viewing content that is not age appropriate and may mean your child will view adverts aimed at adults. In addition, now the app thinks your child is an adult, they will have access to all functionalities (whereas some apps place restrictions on access to under 18s for example to direct messaging).

The following article from OfCOM explains in further detail how to keep your child safe online:

<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/news-centre/2022/risks-of-children-using-false-ages-on-social-media>

The ParentZone website provides more details on age rating for various app and websites:

<https://parentzone.org.uk/article/age-ratings>

STAYING SAFE ONLINE – RESPONDING TO ONLINE CHALLENGES:

Nationally, there are more and more reports of online challenges popping up on social media platforms. While not all pose potential risk, it is important as a parent/carer and guardian to know how to handle an online challenge you may be concerned about.

What are Online Challenges? Online challenges are social media trends where people take part in or mimic games, activities or dares. They typically originate on social media platforms like TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram before spreading to other platforms. Some challenges or online trends are reported by the press first. They tend to use the term 'viral', which can give the impression that the challenge or trend is more popular than it actually is.

Advice for parents. Talking to your child about online challenges can seem daunting, especially if they don't come to you on their own. Having an honest conversation with your child about their online habits is the best way to clear up confusions.

See link below for more detail.

https://ineqe.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/OnlineChallengesAdvice_INEQE_2022-1.pdf

Our Prayer

Dear Lord,

Be with our children as they begin a new school year. Bless our pupils, parents, carers and staff.

Show us how to work together for the good of all. May we share our talents and abilities to the full and grow in knowledge, wisdom and happiness. Give us the grace to become more like Jesus in the ways we think and behave.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

God bless,

N. A. Wood

Mr N Wood

