



St Mary's Newsletter November 2024



Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to November's newsletter. Please take a few minutes to look over in order to keep up to date with information.

At St Mary's RC Primary School and Polbeth Nursery we aim to create an inclusive learning community where we are Building for Success

We aim to provide high quality education that meets the needs of all learners, based on Gospel values, enabling them to be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and able to make an effective contribution to society, now and in the future.

Our values are focused on:
Trust & Honesty, Respect, Friendship, Safety & Perseverance.



In St Mary's RC Primary School and Polbeth Nursery, our aims are building blocks towards our vision, 'Building for Success':

Our Aims:

Successful Learners

To provide the highest quality learning and teaching experiences which meet the needs of all learners in an inclusive, safe and nurturing environment.

Confident Individuals

To encourage success, promoting confidence, independence and creativity in our learners to build resilience and develop a growth mind-set.

Effective Contributors

To equip every pupil with skills for life by investing in them as individuals by creating a foundation to build skills for learning in Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing.

Responsible Citizens

To build and maintain effective partnerships between the school, the home, the parish, partner agencies and the wider community.

1 - School Vision Values and Aims

Diary Dates



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- *Catholic Education Fortnight: 'Pilgrims of Hope' 17th - 30th November*
 - *Book week Scotland: 18th - 22nd November.*
 - *Bookbug Bag Gifting event for P1-4 parents/carers on Wednesday 20th November at 2.30pm in school.*
 - *Friday 22nd November - Wear Pyjamas Day & bring chocolate donation or item for the School Fayre*
 - *Tuesday 26th November - Parent Council Meeting 7pm in school or online (planning for Fayre)*
 - *Santa Parade - Tues 26th Nov at Polbeth Hub*

- *Friday 29th November 12.30pm onwards, parent volunteers to set up for the School Fayre*
 - *Saturday 30th November 10am - 12noon - School Fayre all welcome!*
 - *Advent Mass - Friday 6th December 9.30am in school hall led by P6R - All Parents/Parishioners Welcome*
 - *Christmas Dinner - Wednesday 11th December - Children can wear a Christmas Jumper*
 - *Nativity - Friday 13th December 9.30am (Primaries 1-3, tickets £2 for Adults, £1 children, Free for pre-schoolers - available from Mon 25th November)*
 - *Christmas Parties - P1-3 Monday 16th December 1.30pm*
 - *P4-7 Tuesday 17th December 1.30pm*
 - *Christmas Carol Service Led by P4-7 - Thursday 19th December 2pm (Parents Welcome)*
 - *Last day of term - Friday 20th December*
 - *New Term - All start back Monday 6th January 2025*
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Book Week Scotland



Please click the following link to find out what we are doing for Book Week Scotland at St Mary's!

[Book Week 2024](#)

Christmas Fayre Saturday 30th November, 10am - 12noon - Call for
Volunteers 🎄



Message from Our Parent Council Chair

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As the festive season approaches, we are thrilled to announce the return of our annual Christmas Fayre! This event is not only a beloved tradition but also our biggest fundraiser of the year, directly supporting our commitment to ensure that no child misses out on valuable educational experiences due to financial constraints. Last year, we faced a challenge with volunteer numbers, which impacted the success of the fayre. This year, we are reaching out to gather a strong team of volunteers to help us create a magical and memorable event for everyone. Whether you can spare two hours on the day (10am- 12noon 30th November), time to set up on Friday 29th at 12.30pm, or help with the tidy-up at the end, your time is a precious gift to our school community. From setting up stalls to running games, every helping hand makes a difference. The home-baking stall is always very popular. Perhaps you'd be able to make a tray bake or a cake(s) and hand into the school? We will also have stalls selling good quality Fancy Goods, Bottle Stalls, Vouchers and Toys donated by the school community. If you have items that could have a second life in someone's home, please donate to the school. Whatever your role, please join us in making this Christmas Fayre the most successful yet and help us guarantee that every student has access to the full spectrum of educational opportunities.

To volunteer, simply complete the following [Volunteer Form](#) with your availability. Let's come together to spread joy and celebrate the spirit of giving this holiday season!

Warm regards,

Christopher Ferguson Ph.D

Donations of the following items are encouraged. These may be handed into the school office or for any large items, please call in advance and we can arrange for the janitor to support.

- *Bottles - anything goes e.g. shampoo, tomato sauce, perfume, beer, wine, spirits.*
- *Chocolate - for the chocolate tombola e.g. selection boxes, family bags, bars of chocolate*

- *Toys - good condition toys e.g. board games, cuddly toys, outdoor, role play etc.*
 - *Home baking*
 - *Any gifts for the Wheel of Fortune that can be added to hampers e.g. vouchers, spirits, Christmas gift sets.*
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Whilst there isn't a set entry fee for the Fayre, those who wish to make a donation will be given a ticket into a prize draw that will be announced towards the end of the event. Good luck!

Health and Wellbeing Support



Please follow the link below for Health and Wellbeing supports available to children, parents/families as part of the St. Margaret's Cluster.

[Cluster Health and Wellbeing Supports](#)

Could you help us to give a West Lothian child a warmer winter?

**Help Fill-A-Bag
Winter Appeal**

Could you help us to give a West Lothian child a warmer winter?

We are collecting:

- 1.Socks
- 2.Tights
- 3.Black Hoodie
- 4.Hats & Gloves
- 5.Cosy Socks



Optional Extra's:
Lip Balm, Moisturising Hand Cream, Hand Warmers, Christmas Treat/Sweet, Roll on Deodorant, Shampoo, Shower Gel, Toothpaste and Toothbrush.

Collecting at your school now!

Better £ ff
West Lothian



St. Mary's have signed up in partnership with the School clothing bank, and The Families and Young Peoples Advice Service. To become a collection point for their 'Fill-a-Bag Winter Warmer Campaign.'

We are

collecting:

1.Socks

2.Tights

3.Black Hoodie

4.Hats & Gloves

5.Cosy Socks

Optional Extra's:

Lip Balm, Moisturising Hand Cream, Hand Warmers,

Christmas Treat/Sweet, Roll on Deodorant,
Shampoo, Shower Gel, Toothpaste and Toothbrush,
Collecting at your school now!

Christmas Jumper Day



Pupils are invited to wear a Christmas Jumper to school on Wednesday 11th December as that is when we will be having our Christmas lunch.

In preparation for this event, the Eco/Laudato Si Committee are holding a Christmas Jumper Pre-Loved Sale during the week of Monday 2nd December. Over the next fortnight, we are looking for donations of previously worn Christmas jumpers/t-shirts/dresses, in any size, which no longer fit and are still in good condition. We will also welcome baby, toddler and adult sizes. Children and families will then have the opportunity to attend the pre-loved sale beginning 2nd December.

During the event, we would ask for a small donation to charity in exchange for buying a Christmas jumper. Christmas jumpers can be sent into school from tomorrow and given to Mrs Morton. Thank you for your continued support.

P1 - P3 Nativity



Tickets for the P1-P3 Nativity 'It's a Party' will be on sale via the school office from Monday 25th November. Tickets cost £2 per adult, £1 per child (with pre-school children free).

Primary 7 School Camp Residential Experience



We have provisionally booked a residential experience for our Primary 7s from 29th April - 2nd May 2025. Please can Primary 7 parents complete the following form to register interest for your child.

[Form for Parents/Carers to complete to indicate intentions for School Camp](#)

Credit Union



Our numeracy committee has been leading 'Talk Money Week' in school. As part of this, they have made links with the Credit Union. A credit Union is different to bank in that it is a non-profit making financial co-operative run by its members, for its members. Our Participatory Budgeting Consultation is now closed and the numeracy committee have decided to use this money to open an account for every child in the school by giving £1 per pupil. The idea is that this will continually be added to, allowing savings to build up and can be used e.g. for school camp payments or even for driving lessons later in life.

Anti-Bullying Week

Last week was anti-bullying week and we had a fantastic assembly led by Primary 5. We are working on a way to share this safely between home/school. We have been revisiting our Positive Relationship Blueprint and have relaunched basic expectations linked to our values. The key messages:

Are we ready to learn?

Are we respectful?

Are we being safe?



ST MARY'S ANTI-BULLYING STRATEGY



WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is the ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. **IT IS WRONG!**



When is it bullying?

Several Times
On Purpose

At St Mary's, we will treat bullying seriously. Our children have the right to feel happy and safe at school.



OUR PRACTICE - WHAT ARE WE DOING TO PREVENT BULLYING?

Explicit teaching through our school values and curriculum offer.
All children have access to the One Trusted Adult Approach.
Daily check ins in all classes.
Tracking and monitoring wellbeing.
Communicating with Parents.
Recording on our Pastoral Notes system.
Support for identified pupil(s).
Engagement with other agencies/partners.



WHY DO SOME PEOPLE BULLY?

They may be victims of bullying themselves.
They may not know the negative impact of their actions/interactions.
They want to dominate to be more popular.
They may have a low self esteem or be jealous of another.



TALK IT THROUGH

Don't bottle up. We want to work together to stop bullying at St Mary's.

BUILDING FOR SUCCESS

St Mary's RC Primary School, Polbeth
Positive Relationships Blueprint

- Values**
1. Trust & Honesty
 2. Respect
 3. Friendship
 4. Safety
 5. Perseverance

- Visible Consistencies**
1. First attention to positive behaviour
 2. PIP and RIP
 3. Daily meet and greet

- Over & Above Recognition**
1. Positive phone call home
 2. Recognition Boards
 3. Assembly 'Shout Outs'

Relentless Routines **#buildingforsuccess**



Ready to learn

Respectful

Safe

- Stopped Boundaries**
1. Reminder of value
 2. Warning
 3. Last chance (using **Microscripts** and mantras)
 4. Time Out
 5. Repair/Restorative conversation

- Microscripts & Mantras**
1. I've noticed! (specify the behaviour)
 2. You know (reminder of school rules)
 3. That means you've chosen (drop the consequences gently)
 4. But remember when (draw from the emotional bank account... previous behaviour)
 5. That's who I need to see right now (faith in improvement)
 6. Thanks for listening

- Restorative Questions (Choose 5)**
1. What happened?
 2. What were you thinking/feeling at the time?
 3. What have you thought since?
 4. How did this make people feel?
 5. Who has been affected?
 6. How have they been affected?
 7. What should we do to put things right?
 8. How can we do things differently in the future?

Pilgrims of Hope (Catholic Education Fortnight Focus).



Message from Pope Francis

The theme for this year's Catholic Education Fortnight is "Pilgrims of Hope", and it will be a year of hope for a world suffering the impacts of war, the ongoing effects of COVID-19 pandemic, and a climate crisis.

"We must fan the flame of hope that has been given us, and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart and far-sighted vision."

Here are some resources that can be used in the home for our families. [Scottish Catholic Education Service](#)

Attendance Matters - Please take a moment to read this powerful poster.

West Lothian Council | **Attendance Matters**
Aim: To improve wellbeing, inclusion & attendance for all children and young people

The Benefits of Attendance at School

Through regularly attending school your child will develop:

- social skills - making friends, co-operating, resolving conflict, confidence
- life skills such as resilience and responsibility
- a sense of belonging
- positive habits for their future

Children who attend regularly are shown to:

- have improved physical and mental health in adulthood
- be less engaged in risk taking behaviours such as drug and alcohol use, and are less likely to be involved in criminal activity
- have greater economic opportunities in adulthood
- be significantly less likely to suffer premature mortality

The Impact of Absence

97% attendance	5 days off a year	Approximately 25 lessons missed
95% attendance	10 days off a year	Approximately 50 lessons missed
90% attendance	20 days off a year	Approximately 100 lessons missed
85% attendance	30 days off a year	Approximately 150 lessons missed
80% attendance	40 days off a year	Approximately 200 lessons missed
70% attendance	58 days off a year	Approximately 290 lessons missed
60% attendance	77 days off a year	Approximately 385 lessons missed
50% attendance	95 days off a year	Approximately 475 lessons missed

2 - If you need support with helping your child to attend school, please contact Shannon, our Family Link Worker. Attendance is so important to prevent gaps in learning.

Winter Ready

West Lothian Council has launched its public information campaign Winter Ready West Lothian 2024/25

The campaign highlights the council's preparations for possible severe weather and encourages local people to prepare now. Severe winter weather can include snow, frost and low temperatures, high winds and flooding.

More information is available at www.westlothian.gov.uk/winter

As with previous years the council has:

- Maintained salt stocks.*
- Set up contracts with local suppliers for severe weather support.*
- Delivered refresher training to staff on all severe weather equipment.*
- Published a Winter Ready supplement in the winter issue of Bulletin, the council newspaper.*

The council is also asking residents and local businesses to help:

- Park sensibly – abandoned vehicles can cause serious issues.*
- Share information with friends and neighbours, and spare a moment for vulnerable neighbours.*
- Stay informed. Follow the council's social media channels for updates at: - Facebook www.facebook.com/westlothiancouncil*
- Whatsapp Channel <https://www.whatsapp.com/channel/0029VaLD7Jo6rsQjINS9Esy1W>*

Parents and carers should also ensure that their child's school has up-to-date contact information for them.

- Groupcall is the way that schools will inform parents and carers about closures, any change to arrangements and information about their child's learning provision in Seesaw (ELC – P3) or Teams (P4-S6). This information will also be shared on the council's website at <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/schoolclosures> and via social media channels.*
 - Parents/carers should make the decision on whether they feel it is safe for their child to travel to school in severe weather, depending on their individual circumstances. Parents/carers should contact the school as soon as possible if their child will not be attending school.*
 - A safe walking route from the school gate into the building will be cleared in snow or icy conditions. This will be from the chip shop entrance or the top path (next to the Vet's). School has a risk assessment in place and if the playground is deemed too icy/slippery, we will have indoor break or use the back playing field depending on the weather.*
 - In the event of school closure, pupils should continue to access learning activities through Seesaw (ELC – P3) and Teams (P4-S6) which are used regularly as part of the current learning provision in school. Parents should contact their child's school if they need help accessing these platforms, or if help is required to access a suitable device.*
 - More information is available at <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/47224/Winter-Ready-for-Schools>*
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Car Park



Thank you for all your support in making our car park area safer by not using as a drop off/pick up zone. We just want to keep everyone as safe as possible and heavy congestion increases the level of risk. We also appreciate you encouraging your children to enter via the pedestrian gates. It is much appreciated!

Partnership Working

Recently, we held a Team Around the School Meeting in order to reach out to other organisations in the community who can work in partnership with the school to improve our provision. This was an excellent and productive session with many positive outcomes for our families. Here are some of the communications they've asked us to pass on to parents.

LET'S TALK
Speech and Language Therapy
Advice Phone Line



Is your child under 4 years old?
Do you have concerns or would like a little more
information about your child's communication?

Call us to chat to a Speech and Language Therapist about your
concerns and get some practical advice on how you can help your
child develop their communication.

Wednesdays 2pm – 4pm

07866 219 181

If you are concerned that your child is choking on food or liquids, please contact our team
Monday-Friday on 01506 524 191 and a Speech and Language Therapist will return your call.

www.lets-talk.scot.nhs.uk

Further Support and Resources

To learn about further ways to support autistic children in your classroom, you can:

- Visit the following websites which detail further strategies and supports for parents and teachers:

www.autismtoolbox.co.uk

www.scottishautism.org

www.autism.org.uk

www.thirdspace.scot

- Visit the Social thinking website

Drop in line for parents and education staff

If parents or education staff require support, please access the **Speech and Language Therapy drop in line** for primary school aged children who are autistic:

- Last Friday of every month 2—3:30pm (term time only)
Tel: 07977064792

Training session

Our department have created a recorded training session focusing on supporting autistic children or children with social communication differences. This can be accessed via the QR code or link, & password below:

- <https://vimeo.com/880591756>
- Password: SupportingAutismWLSLT

Please note: this password will expire at the end of March 2025.



Supporting autistic children in primary school

What you can do to support your autistic learners in the classroom



How autistic learners present in the classroom

- Social communication and interaction differences.
- Repetitive behaviours
- Highly focused interests or passions
- Need for routine and sameness
- Over or under reactivity to sensory input (light, sound, taste, smell and touch).
- Anxiety, meltdowns or overwhelm

Why children may present with emotional dysregulation:

- Differences interpreting both verbal and non verbal language.
- Differences recognizing and understanding others' feelings and intentions.
- Differences expressing their emotions.
- Understanding friendships.
- Interpreting language literally.
- Sensory overload.

Who Can Help?

If a child presents as Autistic, and/or has social communication differences please consider the most appropriate/relevant agency for support:

- GP
- Community Child Health
- CAMHS
- Educational Psychology
- Inclusion Support Service
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Occupational Therapy



How to provide a safe and supportive classroom environment



- Provision of structure, routine and predictability throughout the day .
- Consistent use of visual supports to aid understanding and communication e.g. routines, transitions, choices and social situations.
- Sensory related strategies e.g quiet spaces, fidget boxes visible and available
- Social Stories (Carol Gray) can support preparation for new experiences, and plan for change.
- Comic Strip Conversations (Carol Gray) can help children understand the social world and support conversational skills.
- Zones of Regulation can provide regular emotional check-ins throughout the day and support the fostering of self regulation.
- The Incredible 5 Point Scale can support understanding of social interactions and emotional responses.
- Use of Talking Mats can provide a visual framework for helping children to express their views and feelings

Polbeth Hub

 *Polbeth Hub have Launched Their Christmas Appeal!* 

At Polbeth Community Hub, we're committed to providing free/donation based counselling for those in need—a lifeline for people facing tough times.

This Christmas, we need your support to keep offering this service to West Lothian residents who might otherwise struggle in silence.

Every donation makes a difference.  Help us bring hope, healing, and resilience to those who need it most. Together, we can make sure that no one has to face their challenges alone. Join us in making a real impact this Christmas. 

Our campaign link is below, please share with your networks or others who may be interested in supporting our service.

<https://justgiving.com/campaign/gifttherapypolbeth>

Gymnastics



TRY GYMNASTICS
USE CODE HOI360
BEFORE 31 DEC 2024 FOR YOUR
FREE TRIAL CLASS* *EXCLUDES CAMPS, PARTIES
& PRIVATE LESSONS

PRE-SCHOOL - RECREATIONAL - GYMTOTS
FREESTYLE - AERIAL - HOME SCHOOL
ADULT - PARENT & TODDLER - COMPETITION
HOLIDAY CAMPS - BIRTHDAY PARTIES
ASTRO-GYMNASTICS-CLUB.CLASSFORKIDS.IO

ASTRO
GYMNASTICS WEST LOTHIAN

QR code

The poster features a green background with a collage of circular images showing children and adults performing various gymnastic skills such as tumbling, climbing, and acrobatics. The text is centered and uses a mix of bold and regular fonts. A QR code is located in the bottom right corner.

Astro Gymnastics are holding free taster sessions from now until the end of December and have spaces in most of their classes.

More information can be found at [Astro Gymnastics](#)

Notifications

A reminder that all communication should come via the school's email account: wlstmaryspolps@westlothian.org.uk or via phone on 01506 280170. Please do not use email, Microsoft

Teams or Seesaw to communicate with your child's teacher. Appointments can be made via the school office if you wish to speak to your child's teacher. We appreciate your support with this.

School Uniform

All children are expected to wear school uniform (every day).

A royal blue sweatshirt with the school badge and a white polo shirt with grey trousers/skirt/dress.

A white shirt and school tie with a royal blue jersey or cardigan and grey trousers/skirt/dress. Pupils should not wear jeans, football tops or fashion bottoms e.g. tracksuit trousers with stripes of more than one colour.

*For **PE days, school jumper**, a white T-Shirt or Polo Shirt with grey/royal blue bottoms (tracksuit/leggings/shorts). Ideally, if pupils can dress in the appropriate gym clothing on allocated days so that they can just remove a jumper to ensure that they get maximum learning time.*

Breakfast Club

A reminder that pupils can have breakfast at the start of the school day in the dining hall between 8.15am and 8.45am. Children who attend will be directed to their lines for the start of the school day. Please do not drop your child off before 8.15am.

Playground

A reminder to encourage pupils to walk with their scooters and bikes when inside the school grounds to keep everyone safe, especially at the end of the school day.

Dogs are not allowed in the school grounds, both for the nursery and primary.

Pupil Absence

*If your child is absent from school, please contact the school as early as possible, **before 9.00am** on the first day of absence.*

When a pupil has been recorded as absent, and no prior notification has been given of the absence by the parent/carer, the school shall attempt to contact the parent/carer, using the Group Call system. Parents/carers are responsible for providing and updating emergency contact information for use by the Group Call system. Parents/carers are responsible for responding promptly to contact from the school if contacted via group call.

Many thanks for your continued support. Together, we are #buildingforsuccess

Helen Pritchard

Head Teacher
