



The Federation of St Mary's Catholic Schools

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"

Philippians 4:13

12th January 2024

Respect

Compassion

Resilience

A Welcome from Mrs Birchall

Dear Parents,

I am delighted to be able to write to you as the new Executive Headteacher of The Federation of St Mary's Catholic Schools. I feel extremely honoured and privileged to be chosen to help shape the schools through their next journey. Everyone has made me feel very welcome and I have enjoyed my first week at both the infant and junior schools, spending time with the children and beginning to get to know parents.

My vision for our schools is to ensure that the needs of all our children are met in all areas of school life and that each child is given a wealth of experience and opportunities. This in turn, will guarantee they leave our schools feeling extremely confident, responsible and successful members of society.

I believe that school should be happy, caring and spiritual, respectful and hardworking environment, in which all staff utilise their skills to enable the children in their care to recognise their true potential and talents. As a Catholic community, we should endeavour to celebrate the successes of our children in all areas of school and home life. We can do this by showing them that we believe in them, respect them and are proud of them.

I am looking forward to working with the whole community in moving our schools onwards and upwards to becoming the very best. We have committed staff and governors and the most wonderful children, which is a great place to start. By working together, we can ensure that the children enjoy their time at both the infant and junior school, make good progress and leave us with those skills and attitudes to be successful and achieve their full potential.

Please do come and say hello and introduce yourself. I will be outside on the playgrounds either in the morning or after school each day and my door is always open. I look forward to meeting more of you in the coming weeks.

Best wishes

Mrs Samantha Birchall
Executive Headteacher



Happy New Year

A very happy new year to you all and a congratulations on completing the first week back at school. We have begun this week with a history block, focusing on British history.

Nursery and Reception have been learning about King Charles and took a virtual tour around Buckingham Palace! Year 1 have been finding out about King Charles and his job using a variety of sources. Year 2 have been learning about succession and learnt about Elizabeth 1 and Queen Victoria. History seems to be many of the children's favourite subject at the moment!

This half term, our 'Arches' focus is 'Christ at the heart'. As a Catholic school we place **Christ at the centre** of all that we do. We integrate Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church into every aspect of learning, teaching and the totality of school life.

Welcome Mrs Birchall

We have welcomed Mrs Birchall officially into the Federation family this week. She has spent time in both schools, getting to know children, staff and parents.

Online Parent Portal

Thank you to parents who attended our information evening '**How To Talk To Your Child About Pornography**' last night. 'Life to the Full' is a Relationships and Health Education curriculum programme underpinned by a Christian faith understanding that our deepest identity is as a child of God – created, chosen and loved by God. The online parent portal has information suitable for parents to access.



www.tentenresources.co.uk/parent-portal

School login: federation-mary-wa12

School password: glass-blue

Reception Come in and Count

Many thanks to the parents who attended the rescheduled Come in and Count on Wednesday. It was lovely to show how the children are taught number recognition and subitising within their setting.



Award Winners

	Star of the Week	Bee Award
Nursery	Liam	Macy
RJ	Nathan	Kevin
RT	Archie	Olivia
YIM	Mateo	Seb
YIB	Luke	Gabe
Y2M	Joshua	Malwina
Y2G	Luca	Lilyann



School
Values
Award

Theo

Congratulations!

This half term

Dates for both Spring and Summer term have been emailed out this week. This half term's dates are below with the forthcoming week's highlighted.

SEND and pastoral pop-in @ Junior school for the whole Federation	17 th Jan 2pm
Y1 and Y5 Read & Feed	17 th Jan 2.45pm (Y1) and 3.00pm (Y5)
Y4 With You Always session	17 th Jan 3.30-4.30pm
Y4 Read & Feed	24 th Jan 3.00pm
Y4W Class Prayer and liturgy	29 th Jan 9.10am
Y2 Read and Feed	31 st Jan 2.45pm
NSPCC number day Y1P Class Prayer and liturgy	2 nd Feb – further information to follow 2nd Feb 9.05am
Children's mental health week	WB 5 th Feb
Safer internet day	6 th Feb
EYFS Read and Feed	7 th Feb 2.45pm
Infants' Parents Evening	7 th Feb 3.30pm onwards
Juniors' Parents Evening	8 th Feb 3.45pm onwards
Federation Art exhibition. All children will be producing a piece of art work during the week for you to view and buy.	9 th Feb (PM)



This week's prayer and liturgy theme:

Children of God

w/c 8th January

This assembly helps children to move from thinking about Jesus' birth to His Baptism, which marked the start of His public ministry. Children will reflect on their identity as God's children and learn that they too are invited to become a special part of His family.

Mark 1:7-11

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+1%3A7-11&version=NRSVACE>

The Gospel account of Jesus' Baptism tells us that God's voice spoke from heaven, revealing Jesus as His beloved Son. You might want to find a picture or painting of this scene and talk about the images showing God the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit. Or perhaps you could encourage your child to draw their own picture.

This may be a good opportunity to talk about your child/ren's Baptism when they became members of God's family. Perhaps you could share some photographs, light their baptismal candle in prayer time or simply talk about special memories of the day.

TAKEHOME



Are emojis an important part of communication?



In the news this week

10-year-old Teddy Cottle from Oxfordshire has launched a petition calling for Apple to change the glasses emoji, also known as the 'nerd' emoji, as he says it gives the wrong impression of glasses-wearers. Teddy decided to write a letter to Apple requesting the design be changed, asking his classmates and French teacher, Lisa Baillie, to sign it. She suggested instead that it should become a petition and it was launched on petitiononline.co.uk.

Things to talk about at home ...

- What do you know about emojis? Do you ever use them?
- Talk to someone else at home. Do they use emojis?
- If you could design a new emoji, what would it look like?

Please note any interesting thoughts or comments

Share your thoughts and read the opinions of others

www.picture-news.co.uk/discuss



What Parents & Carers Need to Know about — SHARING PHOTOS ONLINE

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

School is often a time chock-full of milestones for your child, and you may well be eager to share their accomplishments with the world. In today's digital age, sharing images of such precious moments on social media is commonplace, and – while that's a lovely thing to do – it does come with some risks attached. Our guide can help parents and carers to consider the potential dangers and make informed choices about safely sharing photos of their children online.

INVASIONS OF PRIVACY

Even with the right settings in place, absolutely nothing online is 100% private. Anyone who can view your photos could take screenshots and potentially share them elsewhere. Privacy settings are still important, though, so it's always wise to ensure your social media accounts have them set up; just bear in mind that you can't completely control what happens to anything once it's gone online.

REVEALING PERSONAL DETAILS

Small details in photos can often reveal personal information. Backgrounds can give clues to where you live, for example, while school logos on uniforms, sports kits, or bags could help someone identify which school your child attends. With interactive maps and reverse image searches commonplace online, information like this could easily be misused by an individual with malicious intentions.

MISUSE OF IMAGES

Once something's been shared online, it's almost impossible to get it deleted. Photos can show up in search engine results and be downloaded, manipulated, and shared without consent. There's the potential for someone's images to be used for advertising purposes (which in many cases, isn't illegal) or even more inappropriate reasons, such as cyber-bullying or serious forms of exploitation.

ONLINE GROOMING

Pictures that convey details about your child's interests, activities, or daily routines could arm an online predator with the kind of information they can deploy to gain a child's trust. They might use this knowledge to pretend to be the same age as the child or to have a shared hobby. Essentially, the more a predator knows about a young person, the easier it is for them to invent some 'common ground'.

PRESSURE TO PLEASE

When their parents or carers share notable moments and accomplishments in a child's life on social media, some children may begin to feel an expectation to always meet certain standards, to achieve things, or to behave in ways that are "worth sharing". Knowing that other people (even friends and family) can see these posts on social media might also add to the pressure they're feeling internally.

IMPACT ON DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

Every photo of a child posted online contributes to their digital footprint. Young people's lives have never been so closely and publicly documented as they are now, and this permanent online presence could affect a child's future opportunities or the choices they make as they grow up – in addition to influencing how they see themselves and, consequently, their emotional wellbeing.

Advice for Parents & Carers

REVIEW SETTINGS REGULARLY

Make sure your social media's secure in terms of who can view your content or see your location (only family and trusted friends, for example). Privacy settings aren't totally foolproof, but they do make it tougher for strangers to access your pics. Reviewing your settings regularly is also a good starting point for conversations with your child about managing their own social accounts when they're older.

CONSIDER OTHER CHILDREN

When taking a group photo, make sure you get parents' or carers' permission to share it on social media. There may be an important safeguarding reason for them not wanting their child's photo posted publicly online, or it might simply not tally with their personal beliefs or cultural background. A quick conversation in advance, just to make sure, is usually hugely appreciated.

Meet Our Expert

Gabriella Russo is a safeguarding consultant with more than 30 years' experience working with children, families, and adults in education, local authority, and mental health settings, both in the UK and internationally. She has developed online safety training for local authorities and foster care agencies across Britain and is the online safety expert for FosterWiki.



CHECK YOUR PHOTOS

Photos of your child shouldn't provide any clues to where they live or go to school: even a house number, street name, or car number plate could be a giveaway. Cover up or blur out school logos, too. If you really want to share a particular pic, you could post a watermarked or low-res version, which can help to discourage misuse as those images are less appealing to download or reproduce.

THINK AHEAD

Try to consider the longer-term implications of what you post. Would you be happy with that photo being online in 10 years' time? Would your child still be OK with the image when they're older? Once your child is mature enough, you could ask for their consent before posting: it respects their privacy, fosters trust and understanding, and helps them to start thinking about their own online life.

