

The Federation of St Mary's Catholic Schools



Junior School Parents' Handbook

2023 - 2024

'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.'

Philippians 4:13



Dear Parents, Carers and Children,

Welcome to St Mary's Catholic Junior School. It is our hope that this handbook will provide you with much of the information that you will need to ensure you make a smooth and settled transition from the Infant School.

If there is any information that you feel you may need that is not in this booklet, please don't hesitate to contact our Junior School Office and we will be happy to answer your questions.

We are looking forward to warmly welcoming you into our Junior School family and very much looking forward to being the next stage in your child's learning journey.

Best Wishes

N. Follin

Mrs Nicola Follin

Head of Junior School

Letter from the Chair of Governors

Dear Parents and Carers,

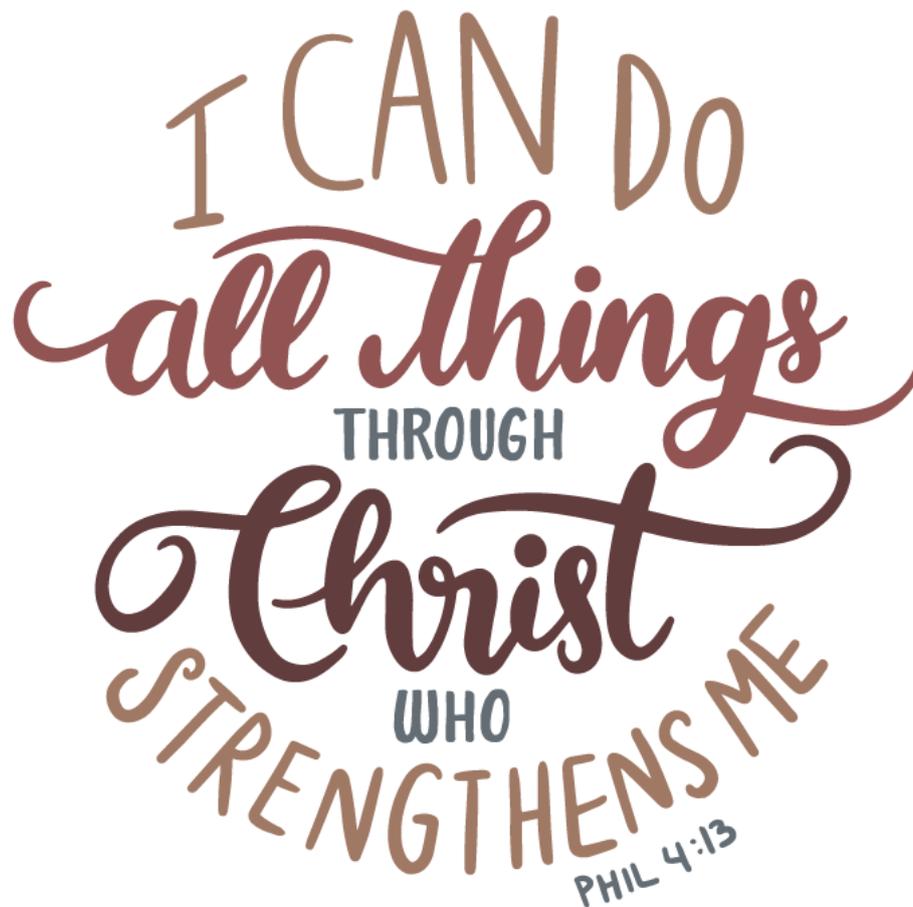
On behalf of the Governing Board, I would like to welcome you to St Mary's. Thank you for continuing your child's educational journey at the Federation of St Mary's Catholic Schools. I feel very privileged to be part of St Mary's. I have three children who have all attended/still attend the school and I am passionate and committed to improving our school and giving our children the very best. As a parent I know how pivotal the partnership between home and school can be and I'd urge you to take an active role within the St Mary's community. The joint efforts of the teachers, governors and parents will ensure our school is a success and our children excel. As a Governing Board we are extremely proud of our children and our warm and caring school. All our Governors bring with them a range of different skills. We believe this diverse range of experience enhances the leadership and management of the school. The role of the Governing Board is to ensure the schools statutory obligations are met. We review and monitor objectives throughout the year, help the school plan for the future, and make sure the vision for the school is challenging. It is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership team to run the school on a day to day basis. It is the role of the Governing Board to support, challenge and strengthen this leadership, and to hold the school accountable for the outcomes of all children. Key decisions are taken by the whole Governing Board which meets once every term. There are various sub-committee meetings where matters such as staffing, curriculum and finance are considered. These meet on a more regular basis to ensure full accountability at all times. A full list of all Governors and their appointments is provided on the school website. Please do familiarise yourself with these and if you wish to contact anyone directly you can do so via the school office. I look forward to seeing you all at our next school event. Welcome to St Mary's and thank you once again for choosing our school.

Kindest regards

Vanessa Wells

Chair of Governors

Our Mission Statement



The Federation of St Mary's Catholic Schools is a secure, friendly and faith-centred community where we seek to realise the full potential of all our family through the living love of Christ. All our work with children and their families, staff, governors, parishioners and the wider community is influenced by our core values which are:

Compassion

Respect

Resilience

These values are underpinned by Oscar Romero's vision:

'Aspire not to have more, but to be more.'

To be more compassionate.

To be more respectful.

To be more resilient.

We promote these values by our words and deeds, and Catholic doctrine and practice therefore permeates every aspect of our school's activity.

Our Catholic Life

Religious Education

As a Catholic school, Religious Education and Prayer and liturgy are an integral part of the everyday life of the school. We use the Come and See programme, recommended by the Liverpool Archdiocese.

Mass

Throughout the school year we celebrate a number of Masses together as the family of St Mary's.

Prayer and liturgy

We understand worship to be a special act or occasion whose purpose is to show reverence to God. Prayer and liturgy may involve all members of the school or a class coming together and participating in an act of worship. All children take part in daily prayer and liturgy in their classes. We celebrate the Gospel and the word of the Lord in prayer and liturgy as a school on Mondays. We hope that parents will be invited into school to celebrate with the class once a year at the end of a topic.

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)

Our School's mission embraces the spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development of children and young people, and through an agreed approach to Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) using the Archdiocesan recommended resource 'Journey In Love' 2020 we believe that we can promote the development of the whole child, so that children can grow in virtue, wisdom and stature, understanding both the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing spiritually, as well as moral aspects of relationships within a context of a Christian vision for the purpose of life. The other aspects of the Statutory curriculum intent will be met by TEN:TEN; Life to the full.

School Levy

Parents are asked for a voluntary contribution to pay this for the eldest child that they have in the school. A request for contributions is made in September and can be paid through School Money. Your support in paying the levy is greatly appreciated. If the levy is not paid through voluntary contributions, it has to come out of our school budget which has an impact on resources available to all our children.

Our School Rules

Our school rules are kept to an essential minimum and reinforce what we stand for; our values. Adults in school will be role models of these rules and ensure all children in school follow them. Our rules have been developed with our children. They are all designed to promote good learning, develop courtesy, good manners and mutual respect.

Be safe, be responsible, be respectful

	In class	Outside of class
Be safe	If you need help or are worried, tell someone. Be in the right place at the right time (punctual).	Share problems with an adult. Be aware of others in the playground.
Be responsible	Take care of the school and each other.	Take care of our school and our equipment. Take turns and share.
Be respectful	Respect one another. Use your manners and kind words. Listen when others are talking.	Be kind and show respect for each other. Always have good manners.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

The Federation of St Mary's Catholic Schools is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare, both physical and emotional, of every pupil both inside and outside of the school premises. We implement a whole-school preventative approach to managing safeguarding concerns, ensuring that the wellbeing of pupils is at the forefront of all action taken. We follow a clear and consistent framework for delivering this promise, in line with safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance.

It will be achieved by:

- Creating a culture of safer recruitment by adopting procedures that help deter, reject or identify people who might pose a risk to children.
- Teaching pupils how to keep safe and recognise behaviour that is unacceptable.
- Identifying and making provision for any pupil who has been subject to abuse.
- Ensuring that members of the governing board, the Executive Headteacher and staff members understand their responsibilities under safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance, are alert to the signs of child abuse and know to refer concerns to the DSL.
- Ensuring that the Executive Headteacher and any new staff members and volunteers are only appointed when all the appropriate checks have been satisfactorily completed.



At St Mary's, safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

You can speak to **any adults** about **anything** that is worrying you.

There are some adults who have the **special job** of keeping you safe: they are called Designated Safeguarding Leads.

Meet our Safeguarding Team

- Gill Cunney
Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Mrs Rollin
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Mrs Whitfield
Safeguarding Team
- Miss McCormack
Safeguarding Team
- Mrs Turk
Safeguarding Governor

The Junior School Day

Arriving at school: The school opens at 8:50am. The bell will sound and the children come into school through their designated entrances and go straight to class.

Please note, **children remain the responsibility of parents or carers until the bell sounds and the door opens.** Children should not play on the playground or use the equipment. Staff are available on the door to liaise with parents who may wish to share home to school information.

8:45am	Junior doors open
9:05am	Registration and start of the day
10:45 – 11.00	Y3 & Y4 morning break
10:30 – 10.45	Y5 & Y6 morning break
12:30 – 1:30pm	Y3 lunchtime
3:30pm	Junior school day ends

If you arrive after the doors close, please take your child to the school office and to sign in using the Inventory system. This is essential so we know your child has arrived safely at school. At the end of the school day, the school gates open to parents at 3.25pm. Children should be collected from their own classroom doors at 3.30pm. For safeguarding reasons, the children do not travel between classrooms at the end of the school day. Teachers will release the children to parents or a responsible adult. If you are running late, please call the school office so we can inform your child's class teacher. Equally, if another adult is collecting your child, please inform the school office or your class teacher. Children who have not been collected are taken to the reception area

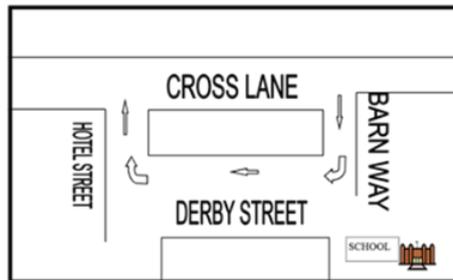
where they will be looked after by a member of staff. Parents will be called and asked for expected arrival time.

Children Walking Home Alone

Children in Year 5 and 6 may walk home alone from school, however parental permission is required. Please complete the walk home letter available from the office.

Parking

There is no allocated parking around school and as a result the roads around school can get very congested. Please be aware that blocking the roads outside school can be very dangerous. Parking over driveways and on pavements upsets our neighbours and other parents. In Barn Way, a voluntary one-way system is in place to help with the flow of traffic.

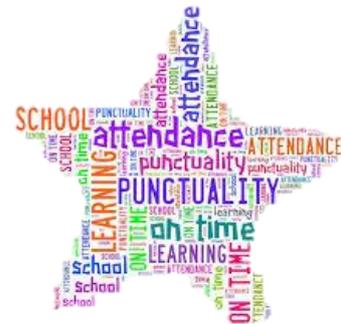


Attendance Matters

We believe in promoting good attendance to develop positive attitudes towards school and learning. Research has proven there is a strong link between attendance and attainment.

Benefits of good attendance and punctuality are:

- Builds confidence
- Promotes concentration
- Improved social skills and friendship groups
- Structured routines
- Academic achievement



We will endeavour to support pupils and families to resolve issues that prevent regular school attendance. School doors open 8.50am. Registers are taken at 9.05am. Registration closes at 9.30am. If a child arrives after the register has been taken, they must report to the school office and will be marked in as 'Late'. Arrival after 9.30am is recorded as an unauthorised late mark. It is important your child arrives at school on time. Being a 'few' minutes late can cause an impact on your child's learning and well-being. If a child arrives at school 15 minutes late each day they lose almost 2 weeks of education a year!

Absence

When a child is absent, parents need to contact the school before 9.15am informing the school of the reason for absence.

As part of our safeguarding procedures, the school will contact the parent or carer if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence. This may include a home visit by our Education Welfare Officer.

Medical Appointments

- a) A child coming into school late from a medical appointment is recorded as 'M' in the register which is classed as an authorised absence from school.
- b) Where possible medical appointments should be arranged outside school hours. Pupils should attend school before and after appointments.
- c) If possible medical appointment card/ letters by the doctors/ dentist/hospital should be shared with school.

Holidays

Parents planning to take children out of school in term time are required to complete a 'Leave of Absence' form, which needs to be submitted in advance to the headteacher. The request is at the headteacher's discretion and will only be granted in genuinely exceptional circumstances. Please note that schools are no longer allowed to authorise requests for holidays.

Uniform & Belongings

Uniform is worn at St Mary's to develop a sense of pride in being part of the St Mary's family. School uniform is available to order online from our suppliers, Touchline. Your child's name will be sewn into the label. www.touchline-embroidery.net/st-marys-nlw-juniors. Please choose the Junior school on the Touchline website. Alternatively, you can buy sweatshirts, cardigans and other uniform items from Whittakers and JayMax shops in St Helens.

Uniform	
White shirt School tie Royal blue cardigan or sweatshirt with or without school logo Grey skirt / trousers / shorts Blue & white gingham or candy stripe dress (summer) White or grey socks or grey tights Sensible black shoes (no boots or trainers)	
P.E Kit	
White & royal blue top with school logo or plain white T shirt. Plain royal blue shorts. No logos. Plain navy-blue tracksuit bottoms or navy-blue leggings. No logos. Plain navy-blue hoodie or jacket. No logos. Pumps or trainers	

P.E. bags, school book bags and water bottles are available to pick up at the school office but should be ordered and paid for using School Money.

Avoiding Lost Property

It is essential that the children's belongings are clearly named for identification.

Hairstyles & Jewellery

All long hair must be tied back (from shoulder length).

We do not allow any "extreme hairstyles" including tramlines, mohicans or partly shaved styles or hair that is dyed. If your child's hairstyle is unacceptable for school you will be invited in to school to discuss it.

Jewellery is not allowed to be worn in school (other than a watch). **NO** earrings are to be worn due to health and safety reasons. Smart watches are not allowed.

Personal Belongings

All personal belongings, such as coats, should be named to make it easier to return them to their owner. Only book bags are permitted in school. We ask that children do not bring backpacks due to storage space.

Stationery

All stationery is provided at school therefore there is no need to buy anything or for the children to bring in their own filled pencil cases.

Mobile Phones

Children in Year 5 and Year 6 may make their own way to/from school and therefore may need to be able to communicate with parents. In this circumstance, we will allow the children to bring a mobile phone to school.

The phone must be switched off as the children enter the school grounds.

Phones must be handed into the school office in the morning and collected at the end of the school day.

Phones must only be switched back on as children leave the grounds.

School Meals and Healthy Eating

School Lunches

All meals are prepared daily by our school cook and the team.

The menu changes with the season and is available for viewing on the school website or from the school office. The children make their selections daily during morning registration.

We encourage all children to enjoy school lunches but if your child prefers to bring a packed lunch, please ensure it is healthy and nutritious. Please note that fizzy drinks and sweets are not permitted in packed lunches.

Summer Menu 2023

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3
<p style="font-size: small; color: #e67e22;">w/c 05/06/23 • 26/06/23 • 11/07/23 18/07/23 • 08/10/23 • 30/10/23 • 20/11/23</p> <p>Monday Spaghetti Bolognese Mac 'n' Cheese (v) Carrots & Peas Choice of Sandwich Raspberry Ice-cream</p> <p>Tuesday Chicken Curry Quorn Curry (v) Rice, Naan & Seasonal Vegetables Filled Jacket Potato Mango Yoghurt</p> <p>Wednesday Beef Dinner Choice of Filled Wrap (v) Yorkshire Pudding, Roast Potato, Carrot & Swede, Gravy Tuna Pasta Salad Homemade Flapjack</p> <p>Thursday Sausage Roll Sausage Roll (v) Mash, Broccoli & Cauliflower & Gravy Filled Jacket Potato Fruit Salad</p> <p>Friday Fish Shapes/Fish Fingers Chicken Goujons/Dippers Chips & Peas Choice of Sandwich (v) Homemade Cookie</p>	<p style="font-size: small; color: #e67e22;">w/c 12/06/23 • 03/07/23 • 04/08/23 25/09/23 • 16/10/23 • 06/11/23</p> <p>Monday Ham & Sweetcorn Homemade Pizza Cheese & Tomato Pasta Bake (v) Broccoli & Carrots Choice of Sandwich Fruit & Ice-cream</p> <p>Tuesday Pasta & Meatballs Hot Dog & Spaghetti Hoops (v) Sweetcorn Filled Jacket Potato Apple Slices & Raisins</p> <p>Wednesday Chicken Dinner Quorn Dinner (v) Mash, Cauliflower, Carrots & Gravy Choice of Filled Wrap Chocolate Cookie</p> <p>Thursday Sliced Ham Sausage Roll (v) Potato Wedges & Baked Beans Filled Jacket Potato Fruit Cake</p> <p>Friday Fish Fingers Battered Nuggets (v) Chips, Peas & Sweetcorn Choice of Sandwich Banana & Custard</p>	<p style="font-size: small; color: #e67e22;">w/c 19/06/23 • 10/07/23 • 11/08/23 02/10/23 • 23/10/23 • 13/11/23</p> <p>Monday Beef Hotpot Tomato & Mozzarella Panini (v) New Potatoes & Broccoli Choice of Sandwich Doughnuts</p> <p>Tuesday Roasted Chicken & Potato Wedges Spaghetti Bolognese (v) Sweetcorn Filled Jacket Potato Sponge Cake & Custard</p> <p>Wednesday Sausage Dinner Sausage Dinner (v) Mash, Seasonal Vegetables & Carrots Choice of Filled Wrap Banana & Raisins</p> <p>Thursday Chicken/Salmon Stir Fry Vegetable Fingers (v) Noodles & Stir Fry Vegetables Filled Jacket Potato Shortbread</p> <p>Friday Battered Fish Rainbow Pizza (v) Chips & Beans Choice of Sandwich Fruit & Jelly</p>
		
		

In addition to the above, Bread, Yoghurt and Fruit will be available daily alongside a variety of salad bar items.



We are a nut free school due to a number of our children having severe allergies. Packed lunches must not contain nut products.

Every Friday, the cook prepares 'Friday Favourites'. If your child is on packed lunch and would like a "Friday Favourite," please let the office know. The cost is currently £2.50.

If your child has any food allergies, please speak to Mrs Follin.

Children at the Infant school can receive a universal free school meal from the government. At the Junior school, the daily cost of the school lunch is currently £2.50 per day. Payments are taken online via School Money. Unfortunately, no cheques can be accepted for school meal payments. Parents can set up an online account called "School Money" to pay for school meals.

Children wishing to switch from school meals to packed lunch and vice versa need to give 1 weeks notice in writing before the change. Please speak to the School Office if there are any problems.

Free School Meals

Children are entitled to receive Free School Meals if their parents or carers are in receipt of certain benefits ie elements of Universal Credit. Please check your eligibility and apply online at www.sthelens.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals.

Registering for free school meals could raise an extra £1,300 for school, to fund valuable support such as extra tuition, additional teaching staff or after school activities. This additional money is available from central government for every child whose parent is receiving a certain benefit.

Snacks & Water



We encourage children to eat healthy snacks at morning break. They are welcome to bring in a piece of fruit or a snack of vegetables from home. Snacks such as crisps, chocolate and cereal bars are not permitted at this time.

Children are encouraged to bring a water bottle to school. We ask that these are sports-cap type to prevent spills and leakages.



Communications

At St Mary's, we value and appreciate your support. We understand that communication with parents is an essential part of a good home-school partnership. It is important that we have up-to-date contact information for all children and parents. Please inform the school office of any changes to your address, email, landline or mobile telephone numbers. Please also inform us of any changes to your child's medical history or dietary requirements.

School Newsletter

A weekly newsletter is produced every Friday containing a round-up of news for the week. The newsletter is emailed out each week and published on the school website. Paper copies are available from school office on request.

Website

Our website has lots of key information on it. There is a calendar with the key school dates as well as important news and useful information including our school policies.

Parent Consultation Meetings

Parent consultation meetings are held in the Autumn and at the end of Spring term. Meetings are an important opportunity to discuss your child's progress and share information. We hope that these return to face-to-face meetings this year.

School Reports

Annual reports are sent home in the Summer term. They will include progress to date together with targets for future progression.

Day to Day Communication

Staff are available on the door each morning to take messages for the class teacher. If you have any concerns or worries, please do not hesitate to speak to the class teacher at the end of the school day or contact the school office to make an appointment.



eduspot Teachers to Parents

To aid effective communications between school and home, our school subscribes to an email and text messaging service. We will use this service in a variety of ways eg to issue newsletters, reminders and information about clubs.



Twitter

We use Twitter so our parents can share in many aspects of our school life. At the moment, all class teachers have their own individual Twitter accounts.



School Money

We use an online money system called SchoolMoney for parents to make online payments for school meals, trips, clubs and the school shop. Login details and passwords will be sent out to parents.

Teaching & Learning

Curriculum

As with all aspects of school life, our curriculum is underpinned by our Mission Statement; 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.' and it also reflects our core school values of **Respect, Resilience and Compassion**. All elements of our curriculum can be found on our website.

Homework

St Mary's has a homework policy which outlines the types of homework we set. As well as reading, we focus on spelling, times tables and the children also get opportunities to complete home learning projects at different times throughout the year.

Lower Key Stage 2 (Year 3 & 4)	Reading. Children are to read 3 times a week at home and parents/carers are asked to sign their diary at least once a week. Discussion about what they are reading and some prediction activities are encouraged. The children cannot read enough! Weekly Book Bingo home activities also support your child's reading. Spelling Shed Activities will be set on a weekly basis. Times Table Rockstars Activities will be set on a weekly basis.
Upper Key Stage 2 (Year 5 & 6)	Reading. Children are to read 3 times a week at home and parents/carers are asked to sign their diary at least once a week. Weekly Book Bingo home activities also support your child's reading. Spelling Shed Activities will be set on a weekly basis. Times Table Rockstars to enhance rapid recall of multiplication tables facts. CGP Homework Books are used in Y5 and Y6 in both Maths and English. SATS past papers are also used from Spring Term in Year 6

Accelerated Reader

Our reading scheme is a programme called 'Accelerated Reader'. This is a computer program that helps staff manage and monitor children's independent reading practice. Your child picks a book at their own level and reads it at their own pace. When finished, your child takes a short quiz on the computer. (Passing the quiz is an indication that your child understood what was read.)

Accelerated Reader gives children and staff feedback based on the quiz results, which the teacher then uses to help your child set goals and direct ongoing reading practice.

Children using Accelerated Reader choose their own books to read, rather than having one assigned to them. This makes reading a much more enjoyable experience as they can choose books that are interesting to them. Most of the books in our library are labelled with a number so that all children can select a book that is suitable for them.

Learning Outside the Classroom

Our beautiful Junior site woodland provides the ideal opportunity for outdoor learning throughout the seasons and in all weathers.

Activities are diverse and numerous, but it should be remembered that we are trying to create independent learners who are inspired to try out their own ideas and explore their own interests. Activities may include, shelter building, fire lighting, tool use, studying wildlife, team games, cooking on an open fire, rope & string work, woodland & traditional crafts, developing stories & drama and PE.

Physical Activity

We place a high emphasis on sport and physical activity at the Junior School and the many benefits this provides our children. This has been recognised by our Gold School Games Award and our Daily Mile Ambassador status.

Children participate in a minimum of 2 hours P.E. curriculum per week. This usually includes an indoor and outdoor session. In addition to this, children participate in the Daily Mile. Throughout the year, they also take part in intra and house competitions such as our famous annual Quidditch house cup tournament. We have strong community links with local sports clubs which allows us to have access to facilities and taster sessions.

Educational Trips & Visits

As part of our commitment to learning outside the classroom, each class will usually take part in one or two trips during the academic year. These trips may be in the local area, a zoo, a museum or theatre. All will be linked to the curriculum. Residential visits take place, usually in Year 3 and in Year 6. If a cost is involved, you will be asked for a voluntary donation in line with School's Charging and Remission policy.

Special Assemblies

Celebration assembly is held each week. During assembly we share and celebrate the children's successes and achievements both in and outside school as a whole school family.

Parents and carers are given opportunities to celebrate our faith at our Monday morning 'Prayer and liturgy' worships. Your child will invite you to this special event.

Pupil Leadership

During the children's time at the Junior school there are many exciting opportunities to participate in pupil leadership. This includes our School Council, our Live Simply club, PE & Sport Ambassadors, and our Junior Safeguarding team.

Extra-Curricular Clubs

We run a programme of extra-curricular clubs throughout the academic year. Clubs are run by staff and outside providers.

Wraparound Care

Please see our separate wraparound care information.

School Community

The Federation of St Mary's PTFA

The PTFA has a very active committee that organises social and fundraising events. All parents are automatically members and are eligible to serve on the committee. An annual general meeting is held every year in October to report on their work and to seek new members for the committee. We are very appreciative of all our volunteers and the fantastic work they do.

Over the years, the PTFA has provided many extras for the children, including outdoor play equipment, new projectors, smartboards for the classrooms, iPads and many books and resources that benefit all the children.

We hope all parents will be interested in lending their support to fundraising events and activities.



CONTACT DETAILS

If you have any further questions that haven't been answered in this booklet, you can contact us the following ways. We look forward to hearing from you.



01744 678603



stmaryrcnj@sthelens.org.uk



www.federationofstmarys.co.uk