



ST MARY'S

CATHOLIC INFANT AND JUNIOR ACADEMIES

Infant School Parent Handbook

'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.' Philippians 4:13



Welcome to the St Mary's Family

Dear St Mary's families,

Our ambition is for every child to fulfil their potential and we celebrate everyone's uniqueness and the gifts and talents they have. Every child is precious, and it is a privilege to play a part in their development. The ambitious ethos of our schools encourages our school family to aim high and live up to our school Christian values as we believe, *'We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.'* *Philippians 4:13.*

All our work with children and families, staff, governors, parishioners and the wider community is influenced by our core values which are: Compassion, Respect and Resilience. Our 2-form entry Academies work together to provide an excellent education for all our pupils in every area of the curriculum, within a caring Catholic community.

Our Infant School caters for children aged 3-7 across our Nursery provision and classes of Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 children. Our Junior School caters for children aged 7-11 with two classes in each of the year groups 3, 4, 5 and 6. The children are taught a broad and balanced curriculum by wonderful teachers who set high standards.

We give all our children the opportunity to shine and be proud, having the confidence to have a go at anything and believe that they can succeed. We continue to teach our children to have pride in themselves and work harmoniously with each other. We are proud of our schools and the personal and academic achievements of our children. We hope you can get a sense of our energy, ambition and ethos from our website. If you need any further information our children and staff would love to show you around.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Birchall".

Mrs Samantha Birchall

Executive Head –St Mary's Catholic Academies



Welcome

Dear Parents, Carers and Children,

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to St Mary's Catholic Infant Academy.

We hope that the information in this handbook gives you a glimpse of school life as well as informing you about how the school is organised.

At St Mary's Infants we offer a strong sense of community for our families with a rich and challenging curriculum. It is a place where everyone can develop their skills and talents in a variety of ways in a safe, welcoming and inspiring environment. Our children are so incredibly important to us. The whole staff team know that your child is precious, not just to you...but to us all. Our whole school community is committed to providing your child with a fantastic education and instilling them with a lifelong love for learning.

We are very proud of our academy and we look forward to getting to know you and your child. Our goal is for every child to leave our school happy and successful, with memories that they will cherish and skills that are the foundation of their future learning.

If there is any additional information that you feel you may need, please just ask!

We will be happy to answer your questions.

Best Wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "K. Grange". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Mrs Grange

Head of School (Infants)

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 considering St Mary's Catholic Infant and Junior Academies for your child. 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 Local Academy Council, 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 Local Academy Council 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 Local Academy Council 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 Academy Council twice every term. 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

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

Philippians 4:13



We are very proud of our mission statement, which is at the heart of all that we do. St Mary's Catholic Infant and Junior Academies are secure, friendly and faith-centred communities 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.

Vision

As we aspire to form an ever-stronger relationship with Christ, we walk hand in hand with Him, striving for excellence in all we do. In doing this, our vision is to deliver outstanding Catholic education for children which is rich in content and has high challenge with low risk. Our vision is to also create a secure and welcoming environment based on Gospel Values where everybody feels valued and is treated with dignity and respect.

This vision is built on the firm belief that God continually guides us and gives us what we need.

"Dear children, our hands are a symbol for our hearts and only open, generous hearts can change the world."

Pope Francis

Aims

Here, at St Mary's Catholic Infant and Junior Academies, we will:

- Create a community that treats others the way we want to be treated (Matthew 7:12)
- Put Christ and our children at the heart of all we do
- Provide a warm welcome to all
- Build a happy, safe school filled with love and pride where children are excited to arrive and learn each day
- Create and develop a curriculum which encourages children to say, "I can" rather than, "I can't" (*'Together we can do great things.'* St Teresa)
- Foster a lifelong love of learning to ensure all children are given the opportunity to achieve their God-given potential
- Ensure every child has the opportunity to become a thinker, leader, organiser, communicator, explorer, creator, inventor, performer and artist
- Build a worshipping community that nurtures and supports each child in their journey of faith.

'Dear young people, do not bury your talents, the gifts that God has given you. Do not be afraid to dream of great things.'

Pope Francis

Our Catholic Life

Our Academies are secure, friendly and faith-centred communities. United in our faith in Jesus, our school families will love, nurture and inspire every child to reach their full potential. All our work with children and their families, staff, governors, parishioners and the wider community is influenced by Gospel values.

Religious Education

As a Catholic school, Religious Education and Collective Worship 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. Families are also invited to celebrate Mass with the Church for special Family Masses on a Sunday.

Prayer and Liturgy

We understand worship to be a special act or occasion whose purpose is to show reverence to God. Collective Worship 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 Collective Worship with their classes. This will either take place in our prayer garden, 'Jo Kavanagh's Prayer Garden' or in their classroom.

We celebrate the Gospel and the word of the Lord in Collective Worship as a school family every Monday.

Relationships and Sex 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.

Working together and celebrating success

As a parent, you are your child's first educator and all the experiences your child has acquired before coming into school are valued. We believe in working as a partnership with you to continue building on those experiences. We encourage parents to share home learning and experiences through Seesaw.

The Infant School Day

Arriving at School. The school opens at 8:40am. 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 until the bell sounds and the doors open. Children should not play on the playground or use the equipment. Teaching Assistants are available on the doors to liaise with parents who may wish to share home to school information. They then share this with the child's class teacher.

Reception- Year 2

8:40am	Infant doors open
8:55am	Registration and start of the day
10:45-11:am	Y1 & Y2 morning break
12:00 – 1.00am	Reception –Y2 lunchtime
3:15pm	Infant school day ends

Nursery

****IMPORTANT****

Please be aware that having a Nursery place at St Mary's Nursery does NOT guarantee you a place at St Mary's Catholic Infant Academy.

If you want a place at the Infant School you need to apply for a place in September, please read the Admissions criteria for selection carefully to understand which children will be given priority, if there are not enough places available.

8:40am-11:40am.	Nursery doors open and learning starts at 8.40am
12.20pm-3:20pm	Afternoon Nursery Children
8:40am-3:20pm	30 Hours Nursery Children

If you arrive after the doors close, please take your child to the School Office and sign them 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 3.05pm. Children should be collected from their own classroom doors at 3.15pm. For safeguarding reasons, the children do not travel between classrooms at the end of the school day.

30 Hour Children

If your child is attending Nursery all day then you will have qualified for 30hours funding. Please be aware that you must update your account every 3 months for St Mary's to access your code. Failure to upload your code may result in your child losing their 30 hour Nursery place. A fee of £4.00 per day is required to cover lunchtime supervision as the 30 hour funded entitlement does not cover the entire day. Please make sure your child brings a

packed lunch with them to Nursery. Please be aware that due to allergies we are not allowed nuts at school.

School Fund

Nursery– Year 2

To raise money for School fund we hold a Friday raffle at a cost of 50p. One child per class will win one of our 'Lucky bag' prizes.

School Rules

School rules are kept to an essential minimum and reinforce what we stand for, our values. Adults in school will demonstrate 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.

Attendance Matters

Attendance

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 8.40am. Registers are taken at 9.00am. Registration closes at 9.30am. If a child arrives after the register has been taken, he / she 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 a 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 Touchline: www.touchline-embroidery.net/schoolshops.

Please choose the Infant school on the Touchline website. Alternatively, you can buy sweatshirts, cardigans and other uniform items from Whittakers and JayMax shops in St Helens.

All major supermarkets sell un-logoed school uniform and PE kits at a very reasonable price. Children will be expected to come into school wearing their PE kit.

It is essential that the children's belongings are clearly **named** for identification to avoid them getting lost.

Girls Uniform	Boys Uniform
White polo shirt (Nursery and Reception) White shirt (Y1-Y2) Blue cardigan with or without school logo Grey skirt pinafore or trousers 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 top with school logo or plain white T shirt blue shorts (no logo) pumps/trainers	White polo shirt (Nursery and Reception) White shirt (Y1-Y2) Blue v neck sweatshirt with or without school logo Grey trousers / shorts Grey or black socks Sensible black shoes (no boots or trainers) P.E Kit white top with school logo or plain white T shirt blue shorts (no logo) pumps/trainers

EYFS Uniform



Y1-Y2 Uniform



All children in EYFS and KS1 may wear trainers and blue tracksuits/leggings in P.E. lessons, these can be worn along with PE top.

Labels

Please ensure that your child's name is on **all** items of their clothing. It is often useful to have a recognisable key ring on their book bag and a prominent sticker on their water bottle, as well as their name. This will help them to recognise their belongings and help them to become as independent as possible.

Book Bags

School book bags are available to purchase at the school office. Book bags do make it very easy for letters and pictures to be placed in bags with ease. Character bags and back packs often do not fit letters in and therefore letters can become damaged or misplaced.

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. **Parking on the Church driveway and the staff car park is strictly prohibited.**

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 into school to discuss it. Jewellery is not allowed to be worn in school other than a watch. Smart watches are not allowed. Earrings are NOT to be worn due to health and safety reasons.

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.

School Meals and Healthy Eating

School Lunches

All children at the Infant School are entitled to Universal Free School Meals.

All meals are prepared daily by our School Cook and her team at the Junior site. The menu is available from the School Office if you need a copy. The children make their selections daily during morning registration.

If your child prefers to bring a packed lunch please ensure it is healthy and nutritious. Please note that fizzy drinks, sweets or products containing nuts are not permitted in packed lunches. We are a nut free school due to a number of our children having allergies.

If your child has any food allergies please inform the office and the class teacher as soon as possible.

Free School Meals

Children are entitled to receive Free School Meals if their parents or carers are in receipt of certain benefits i.e. elements of Universal Credit. Please check your eligibility and apply online at <https://www.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/sims>

Registering for free school meals could raise an extra £1,455 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

Children in Nursery or on free school meals are entitled to free milk each day. Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 children have the option of having milk at school, which is subsidised by the local authority. This currently costs £6.00 per year and is paid for through Schoolmoney *(Please note this will change to Arbor once change over is completed, information will be provided)*

Each day for their morning snack, every child, is given a piece of fruit from the 'Free Fruit Scheme' Government initiative.

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. Communication will be through Arbor and the school office.

Schoolmoney (Arbor)

We currently 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 once your child has started School in September. *(Please note this will change to Arbor once change over is completed, information will be provided)*

Arbor communications

To aid effective communications between school and home, our school subscribes to an email and text messaging service through Arbor. We will use this service in a variety of ways e.g. to issue newsletters, reminders and information about clubs. Consent to use parent data to communicate in this way is required under the latest General Data Protection Regulations

School Newsletter (Sway)

A weekly newsletter is produced every Friday containing a round-up of news for the week. The newsletter is emailed out each week through Arbor. Paper copies are available from School Office reception area upon request.

Website

Please visit our website regularly which is updated often. 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.

School Reports

Annual school reports are sent home in the summer term and they will include progress to date together with targets for future progression.

Day to Day Communication

Teaching Assistants are available 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.

Teaching & Learning

Curriculum

Our curriculum provides the children of St Mary's with an introduction to the essential knowledge they need to be educated citizens. It introduces them to the best that has been thought and said, and helps engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.

As with all aspects of school life, our curriculum is underpinned by our new Mission Statement; *'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.'* Philippians 4:13 and also our core school values of Respect, Resilience and Compassion.

Homework

School has a homework policy which outlines the types of homework we set. As well as reading, we focus on spelling, maths and English activities that reinforce learning that has been covered throughout the week. The children also get opportunities to complete home learning projects at different times throughout the year.

EYFS (Nursery & Reception)	Topic Topic activities are set weekly to reinforce the children's learning. Reading Reading books are changed once a week. Children to read to an adult (ideally daily) and be given an opportunity to talk about what they have read. A quality text is sent home once a week to foster a love of reading. Phonics Phonic Flashcards will be sent home throughout the year.
Key Stage 1 (Year 1 & 2)	Reading Reading books are changed once a week. Reading records to be signed by parents 3 times a week and checked by class teacher. Discussions about what has been read is vital for vocab development and comprehension. A quality text is sent home once a week to foster a love of reading and encourage predicting the story Spelling Spelling tests will focus on sounds and words covered in Read, Write, In sessions that week and/ or common exception words. Maths/ English Work will be set on a weekly basis, reinforcing the topic covered in class that week.

Learning outside the Classroom

Physical Activity

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 Dash. Throughout the year they also take part in a number of intra and inter competitions. 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 two or three 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. 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 and during this assembly we share and celebrate the children's successes and achievements both in and outside school as a whole school family. Throughout the year, parents are invited to come and celebrate many special occasions: their child's RE work at class Collective Worship, fundraising events, prize giving award ceremonies and many more.

Pupil Leadership

During the children's time at the Infant school there are many exciting opportunities to participate in pupil leadership: School Council, Buddies, Eco Club and Worship Warriors.

Extra-Curricular Clubs

We run a programme of extra-curricular clubs throughout the academic year. Clubs are run by staff. These run either before school or after school.

Breakfast and After-school Provision

'The Foxes Out of School club' run a breakfast and after-school club on-site at the Infant School. Breakfast club is open from 7:30am and the after school is available until 6pm Monday to Friday. This is available to children from for Nursery through to Year 6. Junior children are collected and walked over to the Infant School

Please contact kathryn@littlefoxeschildcare.co.uk for any enquiries.

School Community

St Mary's Catholic Infant and Juniors Academies 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 questions that haven't been answered in this booklet, you can contact us the following ways. We look forward to hearing from you.



01744 678357



info@smi.allsaintsmat.org and info@smj.allsaintsmat.org



www.federationofstmarys.co.uk