



St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Friday 16th October 2026



Dear Parents and Carers,

As we celebrated our four school saints today we reflected on our school value of Faith and the virtues of trust, courage, humility, wisdom and reverence. Our saints inspire us to trust in God, stand up for what is right, learn from others and treat everyone with kindness and respect.

These virtues also help us live out the British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. By listening to one another, making thoughtful choices, respecting differences and ensuring that everyone feels included, we help make St Mary's a place where everyone belongs.

As we begin our two-week half-term break, we wish all our families a happy and restful holiday. We hope you enjoy spending precious time together and making lovely memories with your children. We look forward to welcoming everyone back for the next half term.

Mrs Pratley

Loving God,

Thank You for our four school saints, who show us how to live with faith and courage.

Help us to trust in You, stand up for what is right and listen with humility to others.

Teach us to respect everyone's beliefs, celebrate our differences and make choices that are fair and kind.

May we use our gifts to help others, so that everyone feels valued and included in our St Mary's family.

May we live our mission:
In Christ we live, we learn,
we love.

Amen.



Harvest—Thank you

A huge thank you to our families for your generous donations to our local food bank as part of our Harvest Festival celebrations. Our Mini Vinnies, alongside Fr. Shane, led a lovely blessing for our school,

reminding us of the importance of kindness, gratitude and helping those in need. This was a wonderful example of Catholic Social Teaching in action, particularly the principles of solidarity and the preferential option for the poor, as we put our faith into action by supporting those most in need. Thank you for helping us make a difference in our local community!



all



Year 5 Eco Council Attend Brent Climate Summit

Our Year 5 Eco Council members had the wonderful opportunity to attend the Brent Climate Summit at Brent Civic Centre, joining pupils from other local schools to explore how we can help protect our planet. The children learnt about important environmental issues, including reducing waste, saving energy, protecting nature and making our schools greener.



This exciting experience links beautifully to Catholic Social Teaching, particularly Care for Creation, reminding us that God has entrusted us with the responsibility of looking after our common home.

Inspired by Pope Francis' message in *Laudato Si'*, our young Eco Council members are eager to put their learning into action and help make our school a greener, more sustainable place.



Care for Creation Project—Thank you!

A huge thank you to all our parents and carers for the wonderful support you gave your children with their Care for Creation projects. We were absolutely amazed by the creativity, effort and exceptionally high standard of the projects returned to school! It was lovely to see families working together and putting Catholic Social Teaching into action by reflecting on our responsibility to care for God's creation.



Reception 2027 Open Morning

Come and discover our school, meet our friendly team and see what makes our Reception a wonderful place to learn and grow!

Wednesday 18th November at 9:00am



Safeguarding

If you are ever concerned about a child's safety or general well-being, please arrange a time to speak with **Mrs Pratley**, who serves as our Designated Safeguarding Lead. Should the situation be urgent, do not hesitate to contact the police immediately.

Our school can also offer guidance to families through Brent's Early Help Assessment. If you are facing issues such as difficulties with housing, financial pressures, or health-related challenges, **Mrs Pratley** can point you towards the right services and organisations for further assistance.

You may also find these contacts helpful:

NSPCC: 0808 800 5000

Brent Social Services: 020 8937 4300

Star of the Week

Nursery & Reception	Liam
1 Yew	Lucas
3 Beech	Yzraelle
4 Elm	Mouhamed
5 Willow	Christopher
6 oak	Jericho

Writer of the Week

Nursery & Reception	Maria
1 Yew	Nathan
3 Beech	Rowan
4 Elm	Melissa
5 Willow	Ezekiel
6 oak	Natalia

Attendance:

This week the class with the highest attendance is **5 Willow with 99.6%**

Well done !



Birthdays:

3 Beech

Savannah

4 Elm

Ruth

Rachel

6 Oak

Eliana



Dates

Friday 16th October—Last day of the half term (School finishes at normal time)

Saturday 31st October—Secondary school application deadline.

Monday 2nd November—Children return to school.

Monday 2nd November—House Saints Project Due in

Monday 9th November—Year 6 residential begins

Wednesday 11th November—Remembrance Assembly led by Fr. Phillip

Thursday 12th November—Year 5 Trip to the Travelling Crib at Lambeth Palace

Monday 16th November—Health and Fitness Week

Tuesday 17th November—Year 6 Brent Junior Citizens Workshop

Wednesday 18th November - Open morning for Reception and Nursery 2027 intake (9am)

Thursday 19th November—Individual photograph day

Monday 23rd November—School Football Tournament

Wednesday 2nd December—Blessing of the Advent Wreath—Parents invited

Monday 7th December—Flu vaccinations to take place (Session 2)

Friday 11th December—School Feast Day

Wednesday 16th December—Christmas Jumper Day

Friday 18th December—Last Day of School

* More dates will be added as the term goes on.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about SOCIAL MEDIA & MENTAL HEALTH

An estimated one-third of children have a social media account, so it's important that trusted adults know what content young people are consuming, what they're posting and the interactions they're having. On social media, it can be easy to go down 'rabbit holes' that aren't beneficial to our wellbeing. As platforms grapple with managing such 'legal but harmful' content, lives are being impacted – sometimes to tragic effect. We might be daunted by the scale of the tech giants and their content which so enthralls young people, but we can still help children to be aware of their mental wellness: recognising when something isn't OK... and knowing what to do about content that upsets them.

1. UNDERSTAND THE ALGORITHM

Algorithms rank content by user interest: someone who regularly interacts with sports news, say, will see the latest results at the top of their feed. Likewise, if a user browses content that can cause harm, that's what will be recommended to them in future. Someone who's had a bad day and looks for posts which reflect their mood will find similar content being suggested to them more and more.

2. AVOID THE MAIN FEEDS

Avoiding the default feeds on social media platforms limits the amount of recommended content that's shown. Users can opt to only scroll through the accounts they follow, use restricted modes, or highlight posts that they don't want to see more of. Explore the platform safety settings to see how you can take control of what your child's phone shows them when they open the app.

3. DISCUSS WHAT THEY'VE SEEN

Chatting about what your child's seen online keeps you aware of the content they're interacting with. Don't assume that platforms are screening out inappropriate material, or even that your child would recognise content as being harmful. Discuss who they follow, what posts they like and what comes up in their feeds: if alarm bells ring, it could be time for a more in-depth talk or to seek support.

4. LEARN HOW TO HIDE CONTENT

If your child stumbles across unsuitable content on social media, there's the option to hide that post as well as indicating you'd prefer any similar material not to be suggested in future. On some platforms, you might also be able to block posts that contain specific words, which is an excellent way to start taking control of what your child sees online.

5. SET DAILY LIMITS

Phones and most apps can tell you how much they're being used. Spending too long online can mean a child misses out on other activities that are important to all-round wellbeing. You could set some family rules – for everyone to follow – around device use, such as screen time limits and tech-free spaces: involving your child in creating this agreement makes them more likely to stick to it.

6. MONITOR THEIR ACTIVITY

Keeping a discreet eye on how your child is using social media can help ensure they're not entering potentially dangerous situations. As they grow up, of course, children need space to exercise their independence – but you can still occasionally ask to see what they're looking at. Be transparent about your own social media use and try not to sound judgemental about your child's.

7. TURN OFF PUSH NOTIFICATIONS

Even for adults, it's tempting to check an email or message as soon as the alert sound pings. Push notifications encourage people to open their apps and spend time on their device, so turning them off will help your child to practise mindful use of tech. Most of us have other things that we need to focus on as a priority – and those notifications will still be there later, when we have more time.

8. USE DEVICES TOGETHER

Giving children internet-enabled devices and complete freedom to explore platforms on their own can result in exposure to hugely damaging content. You could consider making a particular area at home a designated space to use phones, tablets and so on – making it much easier to monitor what content your child is viewing and (if necessary) steer them away from any potentially harmful paths.

9. ENCOURAGE OTHER ACTIVITIES

Mental health professionals often highlight the importance of exercise, quality time with loved ones, a balanced diet and restful sleep for our mental wellbeing. Spending hours on social media can cause us to sacrifice other activities that our brains need to feel well – so encouraging your child to put down their phone and enjoy something that doesn't involve a screen can be immensely beneficial.

10. TALK ABOUT PEER PRESSURE

Most platforms default children's accounts to private, so only people they've accepted as friends can see their posts. This reduces the risk of bullying or unkind comments, but – just like offline life – the digital world can still make children feel as if they need to act or look a certain way to fit in. Talk to your child about peer pressure, and listen to any concerns so you can provide the support they need.

Meet Our Expert

Shazia Sarwar-Aziz is executive headteacher at a specialist primary school and, as an emotional therapy coach, works with school leaders to focus on the SEND, mental health and wellbeing agenda. A passionate advocate for vulnerable learners, Shazia is a Fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching and the author of *The Rainbow Within*, a book which supports children with SEMH needs.



[sources: https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-6205695](https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-6205695)
<https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-algorithms/>

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