



18th February 2022

Happy Half-Term

Dear parents and carers,

We approach the end of a busy half-term and look forward to some rest and family time over the next week. Before we do that, here are a few notices that we would like to draw your attention to and events that have been going on so far in 2022 ...

Catholic Life

The Catholic life of our school has been quite busy since our return in January and promises to become more active as we approach the season of Lent and reconnect with our parish community. Our Church has been undergoing refurbishment so class Masses and Stay and Pray sessions are to resume after the break. We all enjoyed retreat days in KS2 in Advent where parents participated and we are planning retreats for KS1 during Lent where we will invite families to join us. Details to follow. Our parish chaplains have continued to be regular visitors into school helping our children on their faith journeys.

We teach our children to be ecologically friendly and to care for God's creation. Pope Francis is constantly encouraging the world to do this and has written a special letter called Laudato Si which talks about giving praise to God's beauty around us. Our children joined other schools from across the trust in singing a special song to celebrate all of the great global work that we do at school. We have also created a special St. Francis award which we will be awarded to children who show that they care for the environment in their daily actions.

Letters have been sent to the parents of Year 4 inviting them to prepare for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion. Preparation will begin next half-term.

We have a "Mini Vinnie" group in school who imitate the work of St. Vincent de Paul in caring for vulnerable people and put concerns into action. They made prayer cards and presented them to parishioners at Mass- they will also make cards for the sick for the pilgrimage to Lourdes later in May.

Curriculum highlights- here's just a few!

Our children have continued to enjoy a wide and interesting curriculum this half-term. A major part of what we offer is teaching the children to be safe and have healthy minds. All children enjoyed special E-safety assemblies on Safer Internet Day and learned some interesting skills and knowledge on how to stay safe online. During Mental Health Week,

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children learned how to grow resilience and feel safe to share their worries and concerns with others to help them grow in confidence and know there are people there to support them.

As part of our Equality work, Class 10 children have spent time exploring ways of tackling girls' sense of vocation in computing. The aim was to increase their interest and engagement in the subject. Research shows that girls' sense of belonging in science, technology, engineering and maths subjects can be lower than boys' and this can be a barrier to participation. Racial Equality and acceptance is important to us as a Catholic school and all of our children fully appreciated the work that we completed on Holocaust Memorial Day in January. This year, we were fortunate to welcome into school such a remarkable lady-Gabriele Keenaghan. She is Jewish and was born in Austria and which meant she was forced to leave Vienna in 1938 to escape the Nazi regime. Gabriele was 10 years old and was part of the Kindertransport that got her safely to England. Her story was an inspiration to our Year 6 children who met her and interviewed her. Children in Early Years enjoyed Chinese New Year celebrations as they learned to appreciate different cultures. It did get a little dangerous on the main corridor as a giant dragon snaked along it!

Reading continues to be at the heart of our curriculum and is the skill that opens up so many other learning opportunities. In Early Years and KS1, children are doing a fantastic job at learning their phonics to give them a solid start to their reading. We are really pleased with the progress here. Likewise at KS2, the Reading Plus programme is helping our older children to become better readers. Thank you for your support in listening to your children read at home and supporting them in their homework. Where parents are working with us, we are seeing huge progress made with those children.

We do like it when our children can talk about what is going on in the world. We take part in a national initiative called "Picture News" where children discuss specific things that are happening in the news. One week they can discuss whether the rules should be the same for everyone like Novak Djokovic playing in Australia to Rose Ayling-Ellis becoming the first deaf contestant to compete in Strictly Come Dancing and the increase in number of people wanting to learn British Sign Language. We have recently been awarded the Picture News Impact award for this important work that we do with our children.

Sporting Moments

We have certainly been busy in the Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust sporting competitions and we have never booked so many buses! Children across KS2 have taken part in many different competitions. We have been successful in being winners of NPCAT

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basketball and cross-country tournaments as well as close runners up in football and netball events. It is always the way in which our children take part and compete that pleases us most! Well done children-we are very proud and we look forward to taking part in more festivals coming up!

Visitors

We have been able to once again welcome a variety of visitors to our school to share their skills and expertise with us. During February, past St.Pat's girl Alison O'Donnell came into school to share her story of her disability and meet guide dog Tess. Again, a truly inspirational role model for our pupils to meet. On the day, we managed to raise £229 for the Guide Dog Association-thank you for your generosity. Also, Lee Fawcett from Tees Valley Wheelchair Sports delivered coaching sessions to our children who thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to take part in them. Urban Kaos Dance continues to deliver street dance to our PE curriculum and we hope to show you some of the work they have been doing next half-term. Class 9 got into the samba beat and received drumming sessions from Tees Valley Music Services- always a noisy day in school when Class 9 pick up the drum sticks! The mayor of Stockton, Councillor Kevin Faulks, came into school to talk about his role. Our children were very keen to find out how the council is planning to look after the environment. Remember that you can keep up to date with all that we on our twitter feed- <https://twitter.com/StPatricksRCHo>

Early Years Environment

You may have noticed that we have been busy further developing our outdoor area in Nursery. Mrs.Kennedy is always keen to have the children learning outdoors as well as inside! We have created an outdoor classroom area which could well fit in with the surroundings of a beach in Bali! Here, the children will develop their curiosity for nature and the outdoors and develop their language skills.

Attendance

The start of 2022 was not the best for some families as they fought off covid illness and endured isolation periods. Our current overall attendance is 94.8% which is good but we are aiming for 97% by the end of the year. Hopefully, seasonal illnesses are behind us and we encourage you all to be in school each and every day. Every day counts!

- 95% attendance means that your child has missed two weeks of school.
- 90% attendance means that your child has missed four weeks of school/half a day every week.

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- 80% attendance means that your child has missed eight weeks of school.
- Attendance of below 90% over five years is equivalent to your child missing half a year of school.
- Attendance below 80% over five years means that your child misses a whole year of school.

Beat the Street

Our Community Ambassadors in school are launching Stockton's Beat the Street Campaign. Beat the Street is a free, fun initiative that will see the Stockton-on-Tees borough transformed into a giant game! See how far you can walk, cycle, run, scoot and roll in just 6 weeks. There are great challenges to enjoy and prizes up for grabs. The game will start on Wednesday 2nd March 2022 and end on Wednesday 13th April 2022. Your child will take details and information home this evening with them.

Parent's Consultations

These will take place on **Tuesday 15th March and Wednesday 16th March**. Where possible, these will be face to face meetings as we want to welcome parents back into school to meet class teachers and have the opportunity to look through books and work. You will be able to book appointments on our Arbor system after half term. Please ensure that you are set up as a user for this as this will be the method of arranging consultations in the future.

Coming-up next half term

Lent- begins on Ash Wednesday 2nd March

World Book Day- We would like **every child to bring in their favourite book** to share with their class. We want children to share their love of reading with each other. KS1 children are welcome to come into school dressed as their favourite character from a book.

Science Week- 14th -18th March

Half-term Fun

The Robert Atkinson Centre on Thorntree Road is hosting activities during the half-term break and activities can be booked on 01642 205233. Sessions take place each day starting at 9:30am – 1pm. Activities will include Active group team games, Drama, Daily Crafts and learning the steel pan drums. Each day will include breakfast consisting of

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toast/cereal/pastries. A hot lunch which will be cooked by staff and children. A good opportunity not to miss out on!

And finally... enjoy the break and family time and see you all on Monday 28th February!
God bless

Mr.Conwell

Mr. Ryan

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