

**9th October 2026**

# **Saint Mary's RC Primary School**

## **Weekly Newsletter**



### **Our week...**

We've had a fantastic week in school mostly by being able to hold our annual Open Day which was attended by a great number of families! It's always a pleasure showing people our school environment and it's always with pride I show off your wonderful children and their work.

Today we have celebrated World Mental Health Day. Pupils all looked very bright in their yellow! Lots of great work in classes took place about how we can support our own mental health and look out for others.

Parents' Evening letters have been sent home this week. Please make sure you make an appointment to see your child's class teacher. If you can't attend on Monday 19<sup>th</sup>, speak to the teacher to arrange another time. It's really important that you understand how your child is progressing.

Please don't forget to pay for your child's ticket to watch Aladdin! We are attending the pantomime as a whole school on 1<sup>st</sup> December. Payments should be made online. If anyone needs support doing so then please speak to the school office.



### **Stay and Pray**

**This week's Stay and Pray  
is WOLF CUBS  
Please enter through the  
main entrance by 8.45am**

### **This week's Bible Scripture:**

**Matthew 22: 1-14  
"Invite to the  
wedding feast as  
many as you find"**



**9th October 2026**

## **Attendance**

Meerkats-95%  
Butterflies- 95%  
Wallabies-95%  
Rhinos-99%  
Wolf Cubs-97%  
Quackers- 94%  
Dolphins-97%  
Chipmunks-93%  
Lobsters- 95%  
Whole School- 96%



## **Stars of the Week- for being respectful by sharing with others**

Meerkats- Mila  
Butterflies- Jane  
Wallabies-Isla  
Rhinos- Riana  
Wolf Cubs-Isabella  
Quackers- Isabella  
Dolphins- Niall  
Chipmunks-Kelsey  
Lobsters- Dylan



## **Team Points**



**Arrowsmith**

**6065**

**6370**



**Campion**



**Barlow**

**6195**

**6065**



**Southworth**

**9th October 2026**



## **Wraparound Care**

We now have full wrap around care led by Progressive Sports.

Times are as follows:

- Breakfast Club 7.30am-8.35am £6 per day including breakfast
- Breakfast Club 8am- 8.35am £4 per day including breakfast
- Afterschool Club 3.15-4.30pm £6.50 per day including a snack
- Afterschool Club 3.15-6pm £9 per day including a snack
- Afterschool Club 4.30-6pm (if pupils have already been in a club e.g. choir and wish to join afterschool club after this) £6.50 per day including a snack

To book, please click the link:

[https://enrolmy.com/progressive-sports-south-lancashire/activity/94-Progressive\\_Breakfast\\_Afterschool\\_club\\_St\\_Marys\\_RC\\_Primary](https://enrolmy.com/progressive-sports-south-lancashire/activity/94-Progressive_Breakfast_Afterschool_club_St_Marys_RC_Primary)

For any questions, please email [Wraparoundsl@progressive-sports.co.uk](mailto:Wraparoundsl@progressive-sports.co.uk) or call 01254403046

Progressive Sports have begun the running of the breakfast and after school club provision in school and this is going really well! . Don't forget to register to use the service using the link so that you can book your child on at any time (more details above). If you are dropping pupils off at breakfast club or collecting from after school club please ring the black doorbell rather than the school doorbell.

## **School Uniform**

At Saint Mary's we take pride in our appearance and know that first impressions count. We strive for all pupils to look smart and tidy when in school.

Our uniform policy can be found here:

Any pupil not wearing correct uniform will be asked to wear spare uniform from school until this can be rectified. Parents and carers will also be informed.



## **Safe Parking**

Please respect that 260 children must enter and exit school safely each day. This partly relies upon everyone parking safely and with due regard for others, including our neighbours. Please do not park across drives or in restricted areas.

Please can we ask that the staff car park is kept clear for staff cars ONLY. Some parents/Carers are pulling into the entrance to the carpark, especially in a morning and this is preventing staff from parking and is causing traffic on Mayfield Avenue.

**9th October 2026**

**PE Days**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Sept- 23<sup>rd</sup> October**



**Meerkats- Tues and Wed**  
**Butterflies- Mon and Thurs**  
**Wallabies- Thur and Fri**  
**Rhinos- Tues and Thurs**  
**Wolf Cubs- Wed and Fri**  
**(swimming)**  
**Chipmunks- Wed and Fri**  
**Dolphins- Tues and Wed**  
**Quackers- Mon and Wed**  
**Lobsters- Thur and Fri**

**Upcoming Dates**

**19<sup>th</sup> October- Parents' Evening**

**23<sup>rd</sup> October- Non uniform day- luxury hamper items (letter to follow)**

**23<sup>rd</sup> October- School closes for half term**

**2<sup>nd</sup> November- School reopens**

**12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Nov- Book Fair in School (letter to follow)**

**27<sup>th</sup> November- Christmas Fair (letter to follow)**

**1<sup>st</sup> December- Whole school trip to watch Aladdin**



**Church News**

**Saturday Mass 6.30pm**

**Sunday Mass 10am**

**Baptisms by appointment**

**If you have a child wishing to make their First Holy Communion please speak to Father O'Brien**



**Have a  
wonderful  
weekend**

# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about AI VIRTUAL FRIENDS

Artificial intelligence has seen significant development over the recent months, with companies releasing new AI-based software or adding an AI element to existing apps (such as Snapchat). One form of AI that has become especially popular has been the 'AI friend' or chatbot. There are now numerous 'virtual friend' apps available, with other successful platforms likely to adopt it soon.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### CONTENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

AI chatbots may not always recognise when content is age inappropriate or harmful and should be filtered out. As a result, there's a possibility that children could be exposed to offensive language or explicit material while conversing with their virtual friend. The companies producing such AI solutions are also unlikely to take responsibility for any content that their algorithms generate.

### REDUCED SOCIAL CONTACT

An excessive reliance on chatbots for social interaction could potentially cause a child to begin reducing the amount of face-to-face communication they have, leading to social isolation. If young people become dependent on chatbots to provide companionship, it could possibly hinder the development of their real-life social skills.

### LACK OF SENSITIVITY

Chatbot software isn't always sophisticated enough to pick up on subtle emotional cues or recognise signs of distress in children, as most humans would. It might therefore fail to respond appropriately. AI misinterpreting what it's being told or replying insensitively to a young user who's already struggling could potentially impact a child's emotional wellbeing or exacerbate any existing emotional issues.

### UNINTENTIONAL BIAS

AI companions are only as reliable as the information they've been programmed with. The algorithms they use, therefore, may unintentionally promote bias, stereotypes or discriminatory behaviour. As many chatbots originate from the USA or UK, for instance, they can display a distinctly western-centric worldview. This could lead to children developing skewed attitudes and behaviours if they interact with the AI consistently.

### COGNITIVE LIMITATIONS

Although many are now undeniably advanced, AI-powered chatbots still have limitations in terms of understanding complex concepts, context and nuance. Depending heavily on chatbots to help with learning or solving problems may stunt the development of a child's own powers of critical thinking, their creativity and their ability to engage in open-ended discussions with other people.

### PRNACY CONCERNS

Chatbots typically collect data about users, including personal information and conversations. This is ostensibly to improve their performance as they gradually learn about our behaviour – but many experts warn that there may be significant risks associated with how this information is stored and used (for instance, the possibility of potential breaches or misuse by third parties).

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### CHAT ABOUT CHATBOTS

If a child is already expressing an interest in AI apps, then a relaxed, natural chat should help you to discover which ones they're aware of and how they're using them (or are planning to). Discuss these options with children and perhaps do your own research to ensure that you think they're suitable. Once you're totally happy, you could sit and explore the range of AI chatbots together.

### CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

If a child is keen to engage with AI chatbots, encourage them to do so in a safe environment: ideally in a shared space, so you can easily keep an eye and ear on their progress. Set up appropriate content filtering measures in advance – and gently remind them that you'll be close by and ready to help with any questions or concerns that may arise.

### FIND A BALANCE

Work alongside children to establish the right balance in terms of how they might use AI-powered chatbots – and when it's appropriate. It's important to make sure that children still get plenty of opportunities to learn to solve problems for themselves, as well as building their interpersonal skills through face-to-face conversations with friends, family members and teachers.

### TAKE CONTROL

As with any form of app or game, when it comes to AI chatbots we'd strongly recommend that you consider employing parental controls (either on the device being used or within the software itself) to manage which apps children can download and interact with. This is particularly important for younger children, who may be more at risk of being upset or frightened by inappropriate content.

### RECOGNISE THE RISKS

It's unlikely that most children will have even considered the potential risks attached to having a virtual companion. So it's probably wise to explain some of the possible hazards and challenges of AI chatbots to them. Emphasise that AI isn't a real person (however much it might sound like one) and may occasionally tell them something inaccurate or skewed by bias.

## Meet Our Expert

A Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP), Gary Henderson is the Director of IT at a large boarding school in the UK, having previously taught in schools and colleges in Britain and the Middle East. With a particular interest in digital citizenship and cyber security, he believes it is essential that we become more aware of the risks around technology, as well as the benefits.



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## HOLIDAY LIST 2026/2027

### AUTUMN TERM 2026

|                         |                                                                  |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Re-open                 | Thursday 3 <sup>rd</sup> September 2026                          |
| Closure after school on | Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2026                             |
| Mid-term closure        | Monday 26 <sup>th</sup> October- Friday 30 <sup>th</sup> October |
| Closure after school on | Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> December 2026                            |

### OPENINGS 72

### SPRING TERM 2027

|                         |                                                                     |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Re-open                 | Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> January 2027                                 |
| Closure after school on | Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> February 2027                               |
| Mid-term closure        | Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> February – Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> February |
| Closure after school    | Thursday 25 <sup>th</sup> March 2027                                |

### OPENINGS 54

### SUMMER TERM 2027

|                         |                                                           |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Re-open                 | Monday 12 <sup>th</sup> April 2027                        |
| May Day closure         | Monday 3 <sup>rd</sup> May 2027                           |
| Closure after school on | Friday 28 <sup>th</sup> May 2027                          |
| Mid-term closure        | Monday 31 <sup>st</sup> May – Friday 4 <sup>th</sup> June |
| Closure after school on | Friday 16 <sup>th</sup> July 2027                         |

### OPENINGS 64

Total openings 190