

ST MARGARET CLITHEROW ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Monkswood Lane (off Monkswood Way) Stevenage Herts SG2 8QJ

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Wednesday 20th December 2023

Dear Parents / Carers

What a busy but exciting term - Christmas is almost upon us! We were treated with the sounds of children rehearsing for their plays and carol concerts this month – they bring us so much joy. We enjoyed two wonderful plays in school and a stunning carol concert at St. Hilda's Church. I am incredibly proud of our talented children! It was wonderful to see so many of you join with us to celebrate our children's wonderful talents over the last few weeks. Thank you for your support in helping the children to learn their lines and for organising their costumes. A huge thank you to the staff for the extra effort that they go to ensuring our children put on a fantastic performance. Earlier this term, our children lead us reverently in prayer for our Advent Mass with Father Michael.

A message from the Governing Body

We'd like to welcome Mr Steve Davidson to the Governing Body. Steve, who has a daughter in Year 2, was appointed by the Governing Body as our Local Authority Governor. We're grateful to Steve for giving up his time to serve on the governing body and look forward to working with him.

Admissions Committee – We currently have places in our Nursery Class for September 2024, should anyone wish to apply for a place for their child, or know anyone that would like to apply, application forms are available on our website or from the office.

Curriculum Committee – Governors spent a morning in school recently looking at writing across the school. We have invested in a new writing scheme, and it was a very positive morning looking at how it has been implemented in each class. More information is available on the school website.

We would like to thank parents for completing the questionnaire at parent consultation evening in October, we are delighted with such a positive set of responses.

Finance and Personnel – Governors would like to take this opportunity to thank Mrs Jo Nicholls, children in Nursery and Year 1, for continued work with the governing body. Although Jo's term of office ended in August of this year, she has continued to support the finance and personnel committee with her financial skills. Huge thanks to Jo, we'd be lost without her!

We have completed our due diligence for the academy process, and we look forward to sharing more information in the new year.

Health and Safety – Continues to look after the health and safety of all pupils, staff, parents, and visitors to the school site.



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At St Margaret Clitherow School we are committed to Safeguarding Children

I know you will all want to join governors in thanking Miss Puccio and the whole team at St Margaret Clitherow School for the amazing support and dedication they have shown to the children this term. It has been wonderful to see the Nativity Plays, Advent Mass and Carols at St Hilda's – Thank you all for your hard work.

Finally, we wish you and your families a wonderful Christmas break and we look forward to working with you in the new year.

Free School Meals

This term, our Pupil Premium strategy has supported the buying of a new English scheme that is in place across school, with some beautiful new texts being used and supporting our writing; cello nurture lessons, which has encouraged a few children to want to ask about lessons to continue their skills; and supported some children in accessing school trips.

If your situation has changed, or you think you may be eligible for free school meals, please visit

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/at-school/free-school-meals/free-school-meals.aspx>

The application only takes a couple of minutes to complete.

Please do notify the school if you are eligible. Even if your child is in a class (Reception – Year 2) that receives a Government funded free school meal, it is still worth making an application as the school receives additional funding.



Advent Charities – thank you!

Thank you for supporting our Advent Giving Week this half term. The items were greatly received by Feed Up Warm Up and the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Once again this year, the children have been paying to sign their class Christmas Card. This money will be used to purchase CAFOD World Gifts and will support sustainable development projects in places of real need. It was wonderful to support the St. Joseph's Drama Group last month by attending their phenomenal performances of 'Frozen'. A heart-felt thank you to everyone who was involved in any way with the show. In total they were able to donate £3000 to Centre Point which means 200 homeless teenagers can enjoy a Christmas dinner and £340 to Garden House Hospice. Thank you for your support and generous contributions this Advent!

Advent Trips

Our Year 2 class visited St. Peter's Church to take part in Bridgebuilder's Christmas Journey. They met various characters from the Christmas story and a great time was had by all! Year 6 travelled further afield and represented our school in The Catholic Children's Society Advent Service at Westminster Cathedral. A beautiful service that included live actors retelling the Christmas story and real-life animals as well! A special well done to Daria from Year 6 for her confident reading of the bidding prayers to a packed Cathedral. We were all so proud of her! Our Year 5 children brought some Christmas cheer to Garden House Hospice's Community Hub last week, singing Christmas Carols to



people who are lonely, socially isolated and/or may have a life limiting illness. We were delighted to be able to help make a difference this Christmas.

Attendance and Lateness

Our school target for attendance is set by the Local Authority at 96%. Our current whole school attendance figure since September is 96.3%. Attendance figure includes unauthorised absences, absences related to illness, medical appointments, and lateness. We must all work together to ensure children are in school providing they are well enough. It should come as no surprise that there is a strong link between high levels of attendance and high attainment. Some parents have received attendance letters this term if their child's attendance is a cause for concern.

Please be reminded that your child's school day begins at 8:45am. As soon as the children enter the school building, their learning journey begins and every second counts. School begins at 8:45am. We have several children arriving closer to 9:00am.

These children are missing key learning opportunities each day. They lose 1 hour and 15 minutes of learning each week! Children who are regularly late can experience anxiety over coming into school after their peers are already in class. Additionally, developing good time-keeping is an important life skill for the future.

Please note that we have made applications this year to the Local Authority to issue fixed penalty notices to families when unauthorised absences have met the Local Authority's threshold.

Message from your PSFA

What a couple of months it has been! From starting a new PSFA committee, to celebrating Christmas with a disco and market, which the children thoroughly enjoyed. The PSFA committee would like to say a BIG thank you to everyone for their support in what was such a short turnaround in organising events. We are happy to announce a total profit of £1943.25. We very much look forward to what 2024 brings!

A few highlights this half term:

- Book Advent Calendar created by our librarians
- Where's Elfie?
- Supporting The Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal
- EYFS Curriculum session for parents
- Netball and league matches
- 3rd place in Year 5 and 6 football tournament
- Feeling Good Week – including participation in Stevenage Council's promotional video
- Visits from some Stevenage FC football players – Jamie Reid came to say hello!
- Christmas dinner and jumper day
- Children in Need non-uniform day



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- Year 2 Stevenage Museum workshop
- Flu vaccinations for Reception to Year 6 – the nurses said we were the best school they'd visited!
- 2 of our Youth Leadership Team members represented the school at Stevenage Parliament held at the Council Chambers

Please follow us on twitter (@StMClitherow) to gain an insight into school life. Our twitter feed can also be accessed via our school website.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to thank all our families for their support throughout 2023. May I also thank our dedicated staff team and governors for their commitment and enthusiasm. We are certainly blessed with a beautiful community that we can all be so very proud of. I wish you all a very happy and holy season with much fun, celebration, laughter and family times. Merry Christmas!

Puccio

Carmela Puccio
Headteacher

Important dates this term (dates and times subject to change – please check our website)

Christmas Break: Thursday 21st December to Wednesday 3rd January 2024

Thursday 4th January 2024	Return to school: 8:45am
Thursday 11 th January 2024	Year 3 Stevenage Museum visit
Thursday 11 th January 2024	Year 6 parent session – how to talk to your child about pornography: 9:15am in the school hall
Thursday 18 th January 2024	Year 4 Stevenage Museum visit
Thursday 25 th January 2024	Year 5 Stevenage Museum visit
Friday 2 nd February 2024	NSPCC Number Day
Thursday 8 th February 2024	Year 6 Stevenage Museum visit
Wednesday 14th February 2024	Ash Wednesday Mass: 2:00pm in the school hall
Friday 16 th February 2024	Finish for half term (normal time)

Half term break: Monday 19th February to Friday 23rd February

Monday 26 th February 2024	Return to school: 8:45am
Tuesday 5 th March 2024	Year 6 trip to Hazard Alley
Thursday 7 th March 2024	EYFS Stevenage Museum workshop
Thursday 14th March 2024	Lenten Mass & confessions: 9:30am in the school hall
Tuesday 19th March 2024	Year 3&4 Easter Play: 9:30am in the school hall
Wednesday 27 th March 2024	Parent Consultations. School finishes at 1:15pm
Thursday 28 th March 2024	Reception library visit
Thursday 28 th March 2024	Finish for Easter holidays at 1:15pm

Easter Holidays: Friday 29th March to Friday 12th April 2024

Monday 15 th April 2024	INSET day – no school for children
Tuesday 16 th April 2024	Return to school: 8.45am



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