

ST MARGARET CLITHEROW ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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

Headteacher:
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Friday 20th December 2024

Dear Parents / Carers

This term has been both exciting and full of activity! With Christmas just around the corner, the school has been filled with joy and anticipation. The children's excitement, the sound of play rehearsals, and carols echoing through the corridors have created a truly festive atmosphere. Our talented children shone in their play performances and carol concerts, showing incredible courage as they stepped out in front of friends and family. Thank you parents for joining us and to our dedicated staff for their hard work in bringing these moments to life. This term also saw a beautiful Advent Mass, a special time for reflection and celebration.

Next year marks a significant milestone for our school as we celebrate 60 incredible years of SMC. To commemorate this special anniversary, Bishop Paul will join us later in the year to celebrate Mass, and we have a host of exciting activities planned throughout 2025. It's a time to reflect on our rich history, cherish the present, and look forward to the future. Further details will be shared soon, but for now, let's look forward to celebrating this remarkable achievement together as a school community!

Maria Streeter, School Secretary, Update

This term, many of you may have noticed the absence of Mrs. Streeter, a long-standing and valued member of our school community. She has been very unwell but, with remarkable determination and strength, has fought against a rare illness. Thankfully, she is now on the road to recovery. Please keep Mrs. Streeter in your prayers as she continues to regain her health, and we look forward to welcoming her back to school when she is ready. A huge thank you to Mrs Purtow and Mrs McTait, who have worked tirelessly to ensure the school office continues to run smoothly in her absence.

A message from the Governing Body

Although it seems like a long time ago now, we know you will join governors in congratulating Miss Puccio and the whole team on our recent Diocesan Inspection. Thank you parents for your feedback received during the inspection, it reflected the strong community support and collaboration in our school community.

We continue to progress on our journey towards academisation by joining the Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust (DOWAT). In October, the Academy Project Board approved our due diligence reports and they will recommend to the Diocesan Trustees that we



be issued with a conditional consent to convert. Once the consultation process begins, we look forward to sharing further information with you. If you have any questions in the meantime, please email them to admin@clitherow.herts.sch.uk

Finally thank you to Miss Puccio and the whole team for their continued hard work and dedication this term. We wish you and your families a joyful and peaceful Christmas and look forward to working with you in 2025.

Farewell and welcome!

This term, we bid a heartfelt farewell and thank you to Mrs Schofield as she moves onto a new role out of County. She has truly loved working with the children and seeing them grow in the 6 years that she has worked in the school. We've already been working closely with her replacement, Miss Brassington, and look forward to welcoming her officially in January. We also say farewell to Miss McTait this term. This has been a heart-wrenching decision to make as Miss McTait has loved working here, however, she has been offered a full-time position elsewhere.

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 96.2%. 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. Please find current RAG (red, amber and green) rated class attendance below.

Nursery	Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
94.1%	93.6%	94.9%	97.9%	97.7%	97.1%	96.7%	96.6%

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. I have noticed several children arriving around 8:55am and some after 9:00am. They are missing key learning opportunities each day and over the weeks and months, the time soon adds up.

Please also be reminded that our Attendance Policy includes information about fixed penalty notices. This policy can be found on our school website.

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. Thank you also to our families who came to watch the



beautiful Carol Concert at St. Hilda's last week and donated to CAFOD. The Chaplaincy Team will use this money 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 'Shrek'. A heart-felt thank you to everyone who was involved in any way with the show. 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 Darci 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.

Message from your PSFA

What a great start to the school term the PSFA have had! With our first disco of the year the students all danced the night away and it was wonderful to see. Our Christmas Market was a total success. It's lovely to see the children select gifts for their loved ones. They were all so excited. With a busy year coming up we would like to thank all those parents, guardians and friends who help support the PSFA. Your help is always welcomed and appreciated, without which we wouldn't be able to do all our events. The donations for the bake sale in November were truly tasty! Please look out for our updated calendar in the new year. Falling in line with the school's 60th year we will be holding our own celebratory events. We wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Some gentle reminders

Please remember the following guidelines, which aim to keep our school a safe place to be:

- **Only park in designated spaces in the car park – not along the hedge, yellow zig zag lines, in the open space near the entrance or in front of the school gates.**
- All children must be accompanied by an adult through the car park. **Children are encouraged to dismount their bike/scooter when entering the Stevenage FC carpark.**
- The climbing frames must not be used by anyone before or after school.
- Bikes and scooters must be walked through the playground.

A few highlights this half term:

- Supporting The Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal
- Whole school Act of Remembrance
- Christmas dinner and jumper day
- The Comet newspaper article about our wonderful Catholic School Inspectorate outcome
- Luca in Year 6 won the local MP's Christmas Card competition
- Visit from Santa and a gift for every child organised by the PSFA
- Children in Need non-uniform day
- EYFS Busy Fingers session
- Year 5 Mini Police winning team visited the local Police Station.
- Year 3 and 4 football team played their first match this half term
- Pudsey Positivity session for Reception
- Flu vaccinations for Reception to Year 6 – the nurses were so impressed with the behaviour of our children!



- We've started working with a local artist to create designs for the boards above the classroom doors – further details to follow!
- PSFA Christmas Market
- Year 2 took part in Bridgebuilder's Christmas Journey
- 2 of our Youth Leadership Team members represented the school at Stevenage Parliament held at the Council Chambers

Please follow us on X (Twitter) @StMClitherow to gain an insight into school life. Our twitter feed can also be accessed via our school website. We try to share photos and videos of the children every day.

As we celebrate the joy of Christmas, may the light of Christ fill your hearts and homes with peace, hope, and love. This season reminds us of the boundless gift of God's presence among us and the call to share that love with one another. Thank you for being part of our community and for your generosity, prayers, and support throughout the year. Wishing you and your loved ones a blessed Christmas and a New Year filled with grace and joy.

Puccio

Carmela Puccio
Headteacher

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

Christmas Break: Friday 20th December to Friday 3rd January 2025

Monday 6 th January 2025	Return to school: 8:45am
Thursday 9 th January 2025	Show Racism the Red Card workshop for Year 4,5 & 6
Thursday 16 th January 2025	Year 1 Stevenage Museum workshop
Thursday 23 rd January 2025	Drama 4 All workshops for Nursery – Year 2
Monday 27 th January 2025	Supporting reading at home Reception, Year 1 and 2 - AM
Friday 31 st January 2025	EYFS Action Mats
Friday 7 th February 2025	Open morning for parents and NSPCC Number Day
Monday 10 th February 2025	Year 6 Feast Day – non-uniform day
Thursday 13 th February 2025	Year 6 Museum Workshop at Stevenage Museum
Friday 14 th February 2025	Finish for half term (normal time)

Half term break: Monday 17th February to Friday 21st February

Monday 24 th February 2025	Return to school: 8:45am
Monday 3 rd March 2025	Reception height, weight, vision and hearing
Wednesday 5 th March 2025	Ash Wednesday Mass: 2pm in the school hall
Thursday 6 th March 2025	EYFS Stevenage Museum workshop
Tuesday 18 th March 2025	Year 3&4 Easter Play: 9:30am in the school hall
Thursday 20 th March 2025	Lenten Mass & confessions: 9:30am in the school hall
Week beginning 24 th March 2025	Other Faiths Week – Islam
Monday 24 th March 2025	Year 3 Feast Day – non-uniform day
Thursday 27 th March 2025	K'NEX Challenge – Year 5 and 6
Wednesday 2 nd April 2025	Parent Consultations. School finishes at 1:15pm
Friday 4 th April 2025	Finish for Easter holidays at 1:15pm

Easter Holidays: Monday 7th April to Monday 21st April 2025

Tuesday 22 nd April 2025	Return to school: 8.45am
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PLACES WHERE KIDS EAT FREE (OR FOR £1) DURING CHRISTMAS 2024


moneysavingcentral.co.uk/kids-eat-free

MORRISONS

Spend £5 from the hot menu and get one free kids meal all day, every day.

GORDON RAMSEY RESTAURANTS

Kids under 8 eat FREE all day, every day at selected Gordon Ramsay restaurants

SAINSBURYS CAFES

Kids eat for £1 with the purchase of an adult hot main. From 11:30am every day.

ASDA

Kids eat for £1 All Day, Every Day at Asda cafes, with no adult spend required.

WHITBREAD INNS

Two kids under 16 eat for FREE with every adult breakfast purchased

BEEFEATER & BREWERS FAYRE

Two children under 16 can get a free breakfast every day with one paying adult!

TRAVELODGE & PREMIER INN

Buy 1 Adult Breakfast from just £8.99 & up to two kids eat breakfast for free

SIZZLING PUBS

Every Monday to Friday, 3 - 7pm, kids' mains are £1 with every adult meal.

TGI FRIDAYS

Kids Eat Free When 'Stripes Rewards Members' purchase any adult meal (Via App)

PRETO

Kids up to age 10 eat free all day, every day with paying adults at Preto in Half Terms

EMBER INNS

Kids eat for £1 from Monday 21st October to Friday 1st November 2024 (excludes weekends)

COCONUT TREE

One child (under 10) eats free every day Monday 23rd December 2024 to Friday 3rd January 2025.

LAS IGUANAS

Download the app and join 'My Las Iguanas' for free meals for mini Iguanas. Niños get a main, two sides and a dessert with every adult main (or three tapas dishes) purchased.

BELLA ITALIA

Children eat for £1 with any adult main. The offer is valid 4-6pm Sun to Weds. All Day Thursdays

TABLE TABLE

Two children under 16 can get a free breakfast every day with one paying adult!

THE REAL GREEK

Kids under 12 eat FREE every Sunday for every £10 spent by an adult

PAUSA CAFE @ DUNELM

Kids get 1 mini main, 2 snacks & a drink FREE with every £4 spend after 3pm

IKEA

Kids get a meal from 95p daily from 11am

HUNGRY HORSE

Kids eat for £1 on Mondays

FUTURE INNS

Under 5s eat for free with any adult meal.