

April 2021

# St. Mary's CofE Primary School

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## Upcoming Events

**May 3**

Bank Holiday

**May 26**

Y5/6 Bikeability

**May 27**

3 Peaks Challenge

The Summer Term is now well underway. It has been great to see everyone back in school after the Easter Holiday and it's also been great to see the sunshine with a bit more regularity. Let's all hope that this continues in the weeks ahead.

Following the lockdown period, we have been really encouraged by the positive attitudes and approach shown by all of the children. Being at home for long periods, as many of them have been, isn't an easy thing and some children can find the transition back into the regular routines of a school week, more difficult than others.

However, we have to say that we are all noticing how much they are all enjoying being back together again in their bubbles. It's been lovely and I wanted to make sure that even if you have the occasional reluctant comment from them at home about going to school, when they are here, they are ALL doing a great job and coping really well. Children have a great deal of resilience as this last year has shown us all.

### Therapy Dogs

More and more schools now have school dogs, and in our Federation, we already have a lovely school dog called Winnie, who goes to St Catherine's. Schools have seen many benefits for their children and in recent research, studies in both Britain and America have shown that having a dog in a school can have many positive effects.

## Before and After School Club

For anyone who needs to continue to use the before and after school clubs, please make sure that you book through ParentPay, **in advance**. For urgent bookings within 7 days, please continue to phone the office and confirm that we have space available before paying on ParentPay and completing a booking form. For more information about booking see the letter from ParentPay dated 29.4.21.

Thank you

We are going to introduce two therapy dogs into the Federation. The two dogs, Lotta and Bea are Portuguese Water Dogs and will be selected and then trained by Bales Buddies. Bales Buddies provide families, schools and other settings that support children with additional needs with Therapy Dogs to enhance their lives.

Bales Buddies website: [Assistance Support Dogs](#) | [Bales Buddies Therapy Dogs](#) | [Devon](#)

Portuguese Water Dogs are highly intelligent and so easily trainable - they also have hair rather than fur and so don't moult and are also thought to be hypoallergenic (less likely to cause allergic reactions).



The puppies are currently only a few weeks old and will be joining the Federation after the half term holiday in the summer term. They are from a well-established breeder in Yorkshire and over the coming weeks, we will be getting puppy updates, which we will share with the children.

Lotta will be based at St Michael's and Bea will be based at Marldon, but both dogs will make regular visits to all of the Federation schools in time.

For the first two years, Bea and Lotta will be trainee therapy dogs and will have weekly training sessions with the trainers from Bales Buddies.

### Sun Safe

The summer is definitely just around the corner which is great to see but can we also remind you of the importance of being sun safe.



Follow the simple guidelines....

Make sure your children are protected against the sun. We have lots of shade available on the playground but additional protection with things like sun hats, is very important as we go through the term.

Please make sure that all hats are clearly labelled.

Please also make sure that you child has their water bottle every day.

### Easter Damage

It is really disappointing to have to tell you about some damage that was done to the school grounds during the Easter holidays. Many schools are completely closed to the public, but at St. Mary's the only part of the grounds that are locked, is the playground area. The field is still open and available to the public in the evenings and during holidays. This is a great space for children to play and that's why it is really disappointing to have vandalism reported. Ultimately this sort of mindless vandalism impacts on our school environment and therefore it impacts on the children at school.

During the holidays there were two incidents recorded on our CCTV. One involved children removing and breaking the painted animals from the front of the school by throwing them around on the slope and the field, and the second incident involved older children climbing over the fence and then climbing on top of and damaging the bike shelter behind school. Thank you to the people who have given additional information. The police have been informed of the incidents and we hope that there will be no more incidents of this nature.

### **3 Peaks Challenge**

**YOUNG MINDS**  
fighting for young people's mental health

Last year, we were planning to do the '3 Peaks Challenge' to help raise money for 'Young Minds' a charity that supports mental health in young people.

As a reminder:

The National Three Peaks Challenge involves climbing the three highest peaks of Scotland, England and Wales, often within 24 hours,

The total walking distance is 23 miles (37km) and the total ascent is 3064 metres (10,052ft) - The total driving distance from Ben Nevis in Scotland, to Scafell Pike in England and then to Snowdon in Wales is 462 miles.

Our aim is to start the challenge on the 27th of May, driving to Fort William in Scotland. The 24hrs starts as soon as we leave the carpark, at the base of Ben Nevis. If all goes to plan, 24 (ish) hours later, we should have completed the challenge ending in the carpark at the base of Snowdon.

All of the money that you donated earlier in the school year is still there on our Just Giving page but if you would still like to donate, please do so by visiting the site at the address below. Our target was to raise £1800 but we have easily exceeded that by having a current total of £3231. We would welcome any further donations to this great cause.

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/usfthreepeaks>



### **Video shoot**

Well done to all of the children for being so good during our filming day last week. We were filming to put together a video to promote the school. We are now hoping to be able to show new parents & carers around more often than we have been able to and being able to show our lovely school has been something that has been clearly restricted in recent months. Having a video that shows what St. Mary's is all about, is a good way to promote our school even when we can't invite people to come and see for themselves. We look forward to being able to share the final video with you very soon.

## A4A after school sports clubs



In line with the Government guidelines, Achieve4All are able to offer their after school clubs for Summer Term (1<sup>st</sup> Half) and **these are now live on the booking system and ready for booking**. Please note clubs will align to the bubbles that are in place during the school day, the details are as follows:

Day	Year Group and Activity	Start date	Cost
Wednesday	KS1 Sports Club – 6 sessions	21 <sup>st</sup> April	£3.25 per session
Thursday	KS2 Football and Sports Club – 6 sessions	22 <sup>nd</sup> April	£3.25 per session

You can book these sessions by going to [www.achieve4all.co.uk](http://www.achieve4all.co.uk), scrolling down and clicking on BOOK NOW and then you can sign in or, if new, register. Although the clubs have already started, if you would still like a space, you can still book a place online.

## Net Zero Heroes



Doing our part for the global environment is very important and something that everyone at St. Mary's is committed to. Before Easter I introduced the idea of becoming a 'Net Zero Hero' to the children in KS2.



The idea is all about how we can all reduce our carbon footprint and help to save the planet. Can we work towards being a Net Zero Hero?

I hope that some of you had an opportunity to look through the booklet of ideas that we sent home so that you can work towards making a difference in the home environment. It's a great project to work on with your children.

## Uniform Policy – A REMINDER

Can I remind you all that when it is your child's PE day, they may still come to school on that day in their PE kits. On the days that aren't PE days all children should be wearing their full school uniform which includes school shoes. The Y6 children now have their leavers jumpers which can be worn for the rest of the year.

I am attaching the uniform policy as a reminder and would appreciate it if you could look through it and remind yourselves of the requirements of the policy. Could we also remind you all again about the importance of labelling the uniform so that we can return lost items quickly.

## Reading



Since the return from lockdown on March 8<sup>th</sup>, we have noticed that there isn't as much home reading being recorded in reading diaries as there was before the lockdown. Although daily reading is happening, it isn't always being recorded for us to see. Daily practice is vital for continued development and we would like to remind you to make sure that every read with your children needs to be recorded in their diary so that we can see how much they are doing at home. Can you also make sure that if your child is doing online reading using myOn (our online library), that this is also noted in their diary. Thank you.

## Term Dates

To see the term dates for the rest of this academic year as well as for the next school year (2021-22), see the school website.

<https://stmarys-brixton.devon.sch.uk/parent-zone/calendar/>

Regards,

*Adrian Clements*

Head of School