

January Newsletter

Welcome



I hope that you have all had a peaceful Christmas and New Year and enjoyed the brief flutter of snow. I cannot believe that we are in 2025 and have started the Spring Term already.

Collective worship

Our new value this term is Honesty and we have linked this with the British Values of Mutual Respect and Rule of Law. We have discussed the big question: 'Why is it important to be honest, even when it is hard?' We have looked to the bible for inspiration and have focussed on the story of Ananias and Sapphira from Acts 5:1-11 as well as looking at the following bible quotes:



- Proverbs 12:19 "Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue lasts only a moment."
- Proverbs 12:22 "The Lord detests lying lips, but He delights in men who are truthful."
- Proverbs 19:9 "A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who pours out lies will perish."

We have also continued to look at the protected characteristics and rights of the child in our Wednesday Worships, again answering big questions.

Should you be allowed to build homes anywhere?

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer has stated that building new homes is a 'top priority' and the government has announced changes to planning rules, to make housebuilding in the countryside easier.

British Value: Democracy

Protected Characteristic: Age

Rights of the Child: Everyone has a right to have a safe place to live.



Social media

We hope that you have been enjoying our posts on Instagram. If you haven't yet followed us, we can be found under the name **stmaryscebl**. We will be posting regularly to show you some of the amazing learning that is happening in school.



Number Day

St Mary's is taking part in Number Day again for the NSPCC. It will be held in school on Friday 7th February. Children are encouraged to dress up in clothes with numbers, shapes or wear anything with a maths theme. Please see the separate email sent out with a letter attached.

There is also up a Just Giving page where you are able to donate directly to the NSPCC:

https://www.justgiving.com/page/st-marys-ce-academy-burton-latimer-2?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL

EYFS

Our class teacher Miss Spence in EYFS is pregnant and will go on maternity leave from Easter. Her last day at school will be Friday 4th April. As she prepares to welcome a new addition to her family, we would like to take this opportunity to wish her the best of luck and extend our warmest congratulations on this exciting new chapter in her life.

Safeguarding

As Mental Health week is coming up, we thought it was a good time to shine a light on support that is out there for parents living with mental health worries. If you're struggling, it's OK to reach out for support from friends, families and organisations that are here to help.

Changes in a parent's mental health can sometimes affect children. They may pick up on your anxiety, low mood or stress.

This doesn't mean you should hide or minimise your feelings. You can try to explain what you're experiencing using phrases like, "It's OK to get big feelings, everyone gets big feelings but it's still the grown-up's job to look after the children" or "If grown-ups get big feelings, it's not your fault – we can ask other grown-ups for help with our feelings."



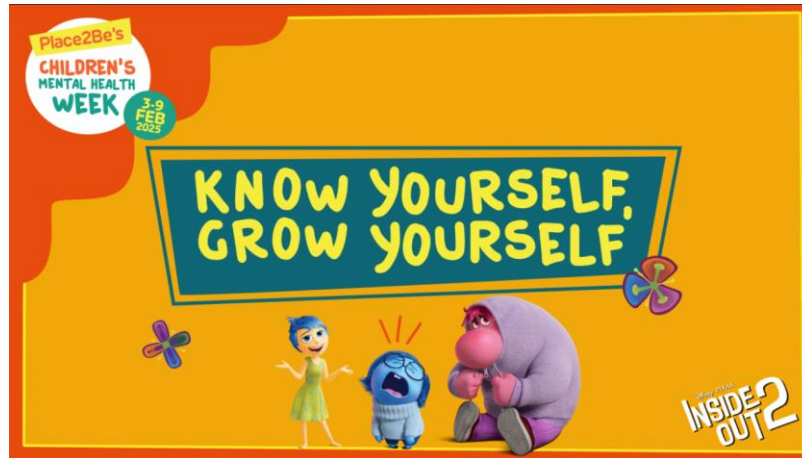
It's important to give children reassurance and support. Looking after your own mental health is vital to their well-being so don't be afraid to try new things together.

If you have coping strategies that work well for you already, keep doing them. That might be using mindfulness techniques, taking five minutes for yourself, or talking to a friend.

Choosing one or a couple of things from the list below to focus on could give your mental health a boost.

- Maintaining good sleep might feel impossible, but [the NHS has tips and advice to help](#).
- Keep in touch with family and friends on the phone or try a video call. If you're struggling to find someone to talk to about what you're going through, [Mind has helplines](#) and you can speak to your GP to see what counselling provision might be available in your area. You can also [call or email our Helpline](#) with any parenting concerns or worries.
- Write down your feelings in a notepad. This can help you reflect, understand, and let go of emotions.
- Join a support group or network online.
- Try to have some time for yourself, whether that's at home or by going for a walk. We have advice if you're [not sure if your child is old enough to stay home alone](#).
- Physical activity is really helpful for some people. You could try walking, going for a jog, swimming or doing an online class. If these don't suit you, you could try a gentler activity like gardening, sitting next to an open window to get some fresh air, or doing a crossword.
- We know eating well isn't easy or accessible to everyone. If you need help with getting essentials you can [contact your local food bank](#).
- Planning things to do by yourself or with your child can help create structure and a routine for the day. Try starting your day with a short list of 4 small, achievable things you'd like to do.
- If there's another adult in your house or older children, ask them to play an active part too.
- If finances are causing additional stress, [Money Saving Expert](#) has lots of information and [Citizens Advice](#) can offer help and support.

Children's Mental Health Week



Children's Mental Health Week 2025 is taking place from 3-9 February 2025. This year we're exploring the theme Know Yourself, Grow Yourself.

During Children's Mental Health Week we want to celebrate children and young people building resilience, embracing self-awareness and forming strong connections with others.

The more we understand about ourselves, the better we're prepared to tackle life's ups and downs. By helping children to get to understand and accept themselves, they start to build self-awareness. This allows them to develop the skills they need to cope with what life throws at them.

This year, Place2Be's Children's Mental Health Week is teaming up with the characters from Inside Out 2 to explore the importance of expressing our emotions. Together, we will discover how getting to know who we are and what makes us tick can help us build resilience, grow and develop.

Sport and PE

PE Kit



As you are aware we are in the process of changing our PE uniform (from September 2025 it will consist of the school logo navy PE T-shirt, school logo navy PE jumper, navy shorts, navy joggers/leggings and plimsolls/ trainers). However please note the old PE uniform is still permitted to be worn this academic year (white PE t-shirt, royal blue shorts or joggers, sky blue PE jumper and plimsolls/trainers).



Earrings must be removed for PE, and long hair tied back, children need to be able to do this themselves or arrive at school prepared. We are not allowed to put tape over the children's ears.

PE is a valued part of our pupil's education; we thank you for your support in ensuring they are suitably prepared for their physical education.

If you are unsure which days your child will be completing their PE lessons, please contact their class teacher.

School Sports Competitions and Festivals

We cannot deny that winning always provides a great feeling and sense of achievement, however more importantly we hope pupils who attend gain a sense of pride, awareness of varying sports and the benefit physical activity provides, increasing their self-esteem and a desire to continue participating in sport.



We promote our school and school games values at these events which include Respect, Determination, Honesty, Passion, Self-Belief and Teamwork, our motto is "win, draw or lose we always show our values."

New Age Kurling

Since our last newsletter we have attended another inter school competition.

6 children were invited to take part in a KS1 Kurling competition.

For all the children this was a brand-new sport they had never previously played.

Fortunately, we were given some practice time before the competition started, which allowed the children to have a practice and get used to the technique of how to push the stones and how much power they would require to land on the target.

The children learnt quickly and improved greatly with each game.

As the competition progressed the children began identifying tactical awareness of placing stones to block and also playing shots to knock the opponents stones off of the target.

Overall, we finished third and narrowly missed out on a place in the final, finishing just one point behind the winning two teams who were tied on points.

I was very impressed with how quickly the children adapted their skills and strategic thinking.

Most importantly the children came away expressing their enjoyment at trying a new sport.

Forthcoming competitions:

We have begun preparations for forthcoming competitions: Boccia Finals, KS1 Gymnastics, KS2 Gymnastics Finals, Tag Rugby Finals and Net and Wall Festival

Sports Clubs

We are committed to providing a variety of sports clubs to children both before and after school; they may change term to term depending on the forthcoming events and weather. Please see the below clubs which are available this term.

Day / Time	Sports Club	Year Groups
Monday AM - 8:00-8:45am	Target Club (Boccia, Archery & New Age Kurling)	All Years
Monday PM - 3:15-4:15pm	Karate	Years 1-6
Tuesday PM - 3:15-4:15pm	Dodgeball	Years 4-6
Wednesday AM - 8:00-8:45am	Basketball	All Years
Thursday AM - 8:00-8:45am	Gymnastics	All Years
Thursday PM - 3:15-4:15pm	Dodgeball	Years 1-3
Friday AM - 8:00-8:45am	Tag Rugby	Years 2-4

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)



Individual Support Plans

Before the end of this term, we will be holding review meetings for your children who have Individual Support Plans (ISPs). These are to review the targets that were set in November. These meetings focus on what is going well and any further support we feel needs to be put in place. Your child's class teacher will be in contact with you in the coming weeks to book these in. As always, we will offer these meetings face-to-face or over the phone and will accommodate discussing siblings during one meeting, if preferred. I will no longer be attending all these review meetings; however, the class teachers will be completing their reviews on our ISP platform, which I will be monitoring. Thank you for your continued support and engagement with these meetings.

These reviews will then inform your child's next ISP which will be sent home the week commencing **Monday 17th March.**

Spotlight

At St. Mary's, we have children with a wealth of different needs. This section of the newsletter will highlight a particular area of need and explore how you can help to support your child at home. Each newsletter, we will explore a different area of need. If you have a specific area you would like us to cover, please send your suggestions into the school office.

Spotlight on...Education, Health and Care Plans

We are having a growing number of parents and families requesting to discuss the process for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) for their child. Below is some information, taken from the [North Northants Local Offer](#). If SEN support isn't enough, then an Education, Health and Care Plan might be the next step. Here's the full process.



Requesting an assessment?

Before a request for an EHC assessment is made, your child would normally have a support plan (ISP) in place. This shows how the school have identified your child's needs, what strategies and interventions are being used to support your child, and what impact these have made. This is called SEN Support (or 'ordinarily available support'). If, in spite of the additional support, your child is still not making expected progress, your child may need a statutory education, health and care (EHC) assessment to work out what extra help they need and, if necessary, to record this extra help in a legally binding education, health and care plan (EHCP).

Who can request an education, health and care (EHC) assessment?

The following people can request that the local authority conduct a statutory assessment (RSA) for a child or young person:

- The child's parent or carer.
- A young person over the age of 16, but under 25, acting on their own behalf.
- A professional acting on behalf of a setting, school or post-16 institution.
- Professionals (this could include foster carers and health and social care professionals) who think an assessment may be required can bring the child or young person to the attention of the local authority who will consider if an assessment is required.

Educational settings must make themselves familiar with the SEND Code of Practice and in particular that they have taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the special educational needs of the child or young person and that the child or young person has not made expected progress.



Spotlight on...Education, Health and Care Plans – The Assessment Process

Stage 1: (Weeks 1 to 6) Decision whether to assess

When a request for an EHCNA is received, the Local Authority must determine if the [Legal test](#) is met and an EHCNA is needed. This must be decided and communicated within 6 weeks of receiving the request. All requests are considered in line with legislation under the Children and Families Act 2014. A specialist panel, called a [Decision Making](#) Group (DMG) made up of relevant professionals, will help the local authority decide whether an EHC needs assessment is required.

There are two possible outcomes of an initial application:

1) Refusal to assess

The child or young person does not meet the criteria for an assessment of special educational needs. A letter will be sent to the applicant giving reasons for this decision and further options for support.

2) Agree to assess

The child or young person does meet the criteria for an assessment of special educational needs. A Case Worker is allocated to be the single point of contact for the family and will explain the assessment process.

Stage 2: (Weeks 6 to 12) The Assessment

The EHC team will identify and contact relevant professionals to give advice in producing the assessment, they include teachers at the child's school, an educational psychologist, specialist teachers who have been involved, medical professional (usually a doctor), social care, external specialists supporting the student, specialist therapists (such as speech and language therapists, occupational therapists or physiotherapists). The EHC team will liaise with these professionals to seek advice regarding the student's difficulties. The EHC team will also seek the views of the parents and carers and the student's own views.

Stage 3: (Weeks 12 to 16) Analysing the information and decision whether to issue an EHCP

When all of the information is gathered, a decision is made by the DMG if an EHCP will be issued, what type of placement could meet the child or young [persons](#) needs and the level of funding required.

There are two possible outcomes:

1) Decision not to issue an EHCP

The Case Worker will contact the family to advise the outcome. A copy of all the documentation used in arriving at its decision not to issue a plan will be sent. You will be notified of the right of appeal and the need to consider formal mediation and/or appeal.

2) Decision to issue an EHCP

If it is necessary to issue an EHC plan, the Case Worker will write a draft EHCP which is sent to the family and education setting to review and decide to:

- Request changes to the draft plan
- Name their preferred education placement
- Request a personal budget

Parents can request a meeting with us to discuss the contents of the draft plan. In some complex cases this meeting could involve other professional bodies who have been involved.

Stage 4: (Weeks 16 to 20) Consultation

Parents return the draft EHC plan, stating their preference for a setting for their child or young person.

If the request is for a place in a:

- Maintained school
- Maintained nursery school
- Academy school
- Independent educational institution approved under section 41 of the Children and Families Act

The local authority must comply with that preference and name the school or college in the EHC plan unless:

- It would be unsuitable for the age, ability, aptitude or SEN of the child or young person.
- The attendance of the child or young person there causes disruption to the efficient education of others or the efficient use of resources.

The local authority must consult the governing body, principal, or proprietor of the school or college concerned and consider their comments very carefully before deciding whether to name it in the child or young person's EHC plan. A copy of the draft plan will be sent to the school or college to inform the consultation. If another local authority maintains the school concerned, they too must be consulted. The nursery, school or college and, where relevant, the other local authority, should respond within 15 days.

Stage 5: (Weeks 16 to 20) Finalise

When a suitable school/education setting has been identified it is named in section I of the EHC plan and a final EHC plan is issued, together with the right to appeal. The education provider will meet with the parents and student to agree short term targets to fulfil the outcomes and provision agreed in the plan.

What if a parent or carer disagrees with the EHC plan?

At this stage, if the parent or carer or young person remains concerned they may:

- Contact the Local Authority to discuss any concerns
- Seek mediation
- Exercise their right to request mediation and to appeal to the First Tier SEN&D Tribunal Service

The completed EHC plan, including the agreed school placement, is reviewed and formally signed off by the professional leads before being issued.



PTFA News

Please like, share, and keep an eye on our [Facebook Page](#)

Email: stmarys.ptfa@yahoo.co.uk



❖ **School disco – 7th February**

- ❖ Early years and KS1: 5:30pm-6:30pm, KS2: 6:45pm-7:45pm
- ❖ Booking on ParentMail by the end of today
- ❖ We always need more volunteers to pour drinks, supervise dancing, give out sweets or are first aid qualified
- ❖ If you can come along & help for either disco please contact the PTFA with your name, child's name & contact details we can contact you on

❖ **Chocolate Bingo – date TBC**

- ❖ 2025 sees the return of the much-loved chocolate bingo
- ❖ Dates and more details to follow shortly

❖ **Tombola donations**

- ❖ Any unwanted gifts (non-food) or wrapping paper donations for future tombola's is very much appreciated
- ❖ Please leave any donations at reception or any gate by 24th January

❖ **Clothing collection**

- ❖ We will have a new clothing collection hopefully in the spring
- ❖ Please keep any donations until further details are announced

Next Meeting – tbc – more info to be sent soon

We love to welcome new people, just come to reception.

We always need volunteers for the events at the school – if you can spare an hour of your time to help run these it is very much appreciated! Without our volunteers we wouldn't have things like Christmas Fairs, chocolate bingo, discos etc. Please contact the PTFA if you can help in any capacity.

Following our recent AGM & re-election of committee members, our current chair has confirmed this will be her last year in the role.

If you value the discos, pantos, Christmas cards, fairs, cinema, chocolate bingo, uniform sales etc. & have ever considered becoming involved, this is the year to get on board and ensure the future of your PTFA.