



Tuesday 28th November 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

Christmas Festivities



This weekend, we celebrated the Feast of Christ the King: this Feast marks the end of Liturgical Year A as we move into Year B. We are approaching the First Sunday of Advent, where our liturgical colour changes to purple and we spend a significant portion of Advent preparing for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

To help our pupils in their Advent reflections, St. Joseph's Parish has kindly purchased 'My Advent Way' booklets for all pupils in both schools. There are small tasks for pupils to complete, as well as short readings and puzzles to enjoy in either home or in school and we thank St. Joseph's for their gift to our pupils.

During Advent, we will once again send home Travelling Cribs with a short Nativity story inside of the bag. We ask you to return the Travelling Crib's purple bag the following day to ensure that all pupils in the class receive an opportunity to join in a prayer session, in the family home.

We are also eagerly awaiting the coming of our Christmas Nativities. Our small but wonderful Reception cohort are enthusiastically preparing their songs and dances (so please don't worry about lack of seating!) while our Key Stage 1 pupils are practising using their loud voices to help spread the wonderful Christmas message! The Key Stage 2 Carol Service is going to once again be a terrific spectacular of songs, dance and prayer.

We recognise that some families have asked what they can do to help to support school as we seek to further strengthen the opportunities we offer to all of our pupils. As per last year, we have suggested a voluntary contribution on Arbor for tickets for each performance which will go towards helping to subsidise some of our new costumes, purchasing new whole-class reading books, arts and crafts materials, as well as supporting gifts and prizes for our Christmas parties and Christmas day lunch decorations.



We very much appreciate the difficulties for families who have multiple children in the schools and this is why we do not provide physical tickets (as this is a voluntary contribution). We will not be checking tickets on the door. We would never deny any member of our school community the opportunity to watch their child perform and we can't wait to welcome you all into school, or church very soon!

Look out for new seating coming to the infant yard - as well as Little Explorer backpacks, containing materials for activities and colouring during playtimes, at both schools! 😊

Confirmation of arrangements:

- Our Reception class performances will take place in the hall, at 10am and 2pm on Tuesday 12th December. Given the size of our hall, we ask that you have a maximum of 3 tickets per family, per Reception class performance (6 tickets altogether). Children will finish at their usual time of 3:15pm.

- Similar to last year, our Key Stage 1 performances will take place in church to accommodate the numbers of parents and carers for the two cohorts. We ask that children are collected at their usual time of 3:15pm on this day to ensure that we can safely take children back to school.
- Our Key Stage 2 Carol Service commences on Tuesday 20th December, at 5pm. We respectfully request that you arrive no earlier than 4:30pm and no later than 4:50pm. To keep everyone safe on the evening, we ask you to handover the children to staff members, who will be standing at the side-altar - awaiting their arrival. Once children have been handed over, you will be able to find a seat in the main body of the church.

When all of the KS2 children have arrived, we will then place them in position on the sanctuary. At the end of the performance, and to ensure everyone's safety, children will be dismissed class by class so that staff are confident that children are handed over to their parents/carers, at the end of the service. We ask that parents/carers keep hold of pupils' coats at this time.

Christmas Lunches:

Our Christmas lunch is due to take place on Wednesday 13th December – we will hold our Christmas jumper and non-uniform day on this day. Please note that there is no obligation to wear a Christmas jumper if pupils do not wish to, or if they would prefer to wear alternative clothing, then that is also acceptable. We will open Arbor for a £1 voluntary contribution for Saint Vincent de Paul – however, please remember that this is a donation and there is no obligation to pay, whatsoever. We will also have Christmas crackers, small games and decorations to help our pupils get into the Christmas spirit!

The Pantomime:

We are really excited to build on our relationship with the Little Theatre in Bensham – we have a perfect venue where we have the sole use of the theatre. We have purposely chosen this for its safety and are excited for our first infant and junior school outing! The transportation to and from the venue is being heavily subsidised by school. The purpose of the visit is to support our pupils to access a Christmas pantomime – experiencing the excitement, thrill and sense of adventure with the safety of staff who are familiar to them. We have several pupils who haven't been to the theatre before and this is one way to create wonderful memories together.

Christmas Parties:

We will be holding Christmas parties on Wednesday 20th December before the pantomime. Please note that pupils do not require anything apart from themselves – they will receive a small snack/drink and play party games in the halls. Pupils can come into school in their party-wear, on this day.

Toddlers:

Our Toddler group's last session will take place on Wednesday 13th December, where we hope they will receive a visit from a special visitor and a small gift!

Visits to Care Homes:

Our Key Stage 1 pupils will be attending Lindisfarne Care Home on Monday 19th December to serenade the residents with Christmas cheer.

As always, we recognise that several families may be struggling financially. As indicated on our newsletters, our door is open and we have onward referral pathways to help to support you at this time, should you be under pressure or finding things tough. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you feel overwhelmed at this time – we are here to help!

Tuesday 12th December – EY Christmas Performance - 10am and 2pm (In St. Joseph's Catholic Infant School)

Wednesday 13th December – Christmas Dinner and festive jumper day £1 optional voluntary donation for Saint Vincent de Paul

Thursday 14th December – KS1 Christmas Performance – 10am and 2pm in St. Joseph's Church

Monday 18th December – Key Stage 1 Performance to Lindisfarne Care Home

Tuesday 19th December – KS2 Christmas Carol Service – 5pm in St. Joseph's Church

Wednesday 20th December – Whole-school to see pantomime at Little Theatre, Gateshead (afternoon) and Christmas party day – own clothes.