



Christmas Events

Next week sees the start of our Christmas events led by each of our classes and you should have tickets for next week's events by the end of today (Meldon, Venford, Avon). As we have already taken the decision to limit numbers, and events are only involving one class on any one day, we will be going ahead with these with parents / carers attending. Obviously, if government guidance changes, we will need to act accordingly. Please could all adults attending the events wear face coverings as they enter the school and also throughout the event. All events this week are being held in the school hall.

The following week is the Abbey Carol Service, led by Fernworthy and Burrator, and held in the Abbey Church. Tickets for this event will be sent out next week. This year we do not have permission for all of our children to be photographed or filmed in the events so I will announce what is permitted at the start of each event so that parents/ carers are aware. Photographs will be put onto the website of the events (in line with the permissions we have for children) if you have family members who are unable to attend.

Art Exhibition

Thank you to everyone who visited our art exhibition this week, and also to those of you who left a donation. We were delighted with the comments left in the visitors' book which I have shared with the children today in our Achievement Assembly.

If you click on the link below, there are some photographs and a video of the exhibition if you were not able to visit the exhibition in person.

<https://www.st-marysrc.devon.sch.uk/gallery/curriculum-enrichment/art-exhibition/>

Choristers

Congratulations to our Choristers who were presented with a special badge last week in our Achievement Assembly. Each Chorister is now wearing a treble clef pin badge on their school uniform in recognition of their hard work and commitment to the chorister programme at the Abbey. Mr Searles has sent through a photograph of our choristers who are currently rehearsing for the Christmas concert in the Abbey, which takes place next Saturday. Please click on the link below to take a look:

<https://www.facebook.com/MusicatBuckfastAbbey/photos/a.186221254905321/1761539520706812/>

Safeguarding

Last December, NSPCC Childline service saw an increase in counselling sessions about loneliness. From April 2020 to March 2021, there were 6,039 counselling sessions about loneliness, marking an all-time high for a single year. This is an increase of nearly half (49%) over the past four years. They noted that there was a particular increase in younger children affected by loneliness. In 2020/21, there was a 47% increase in counselling sessions with children aged 11 and under when compared to the year before.

Young people who contacted Childline about loneliness also talked about being unhappy, feeling unloved and generally low. Some described it as a dark experience that was overwhelming. As well as loneliness, the top reasons children turn to the service for support with their mental health include:

- anxiety
- stress
- low mood
- depression.

Further information about supporting children with this and other issues can be found on the NSPCC website:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/>

They are also fundraising with a number of initiatives including letters from Santa: <https://letterfromsanta.nspcc.org.uk/letter-from-santa>

Prayer Focus

Each week, we include a short reflection on the Gospel reading for the week. The school also subscribes to a weekly booklet called The Wednesday Word that can be accessed on our website or via the following link:

<https://www.paperturn-view.com/uk/wednesday-word/preparation?pid=MTA101634&v=46.10>

This week's Gospel comes from St Luke (Chapter 3, verses 1-6). It tells the story of John the Baptist who called people to prepare themselves for the arrival of Jesus. John told people that they needed to change their lives. In the same way, the lead up to Christmas, known as Advent, gives us the opportunity to prepare ourselves for Christmas by thinking of ways in which we could become a better person. The special word chosen for this week therefore is PREPARATION.

Our prayer this week is:

Dear Lord Jesus

Please help us to prepare our hearts to receive and to share more of your love as Christmas approaches.

Amen



Christmas Jumper Day

Just a reminder that, this year, St Mary's will celebrate Christmas Jumper Day on Friday 17th December, to mark the end of term. Please note that this is not the same day as the nationally advertised day.

Burrator St Nick's Day

This Monday (6th December), Burrator Class are going to Buckfast Abbey for a special St Nicholas Day.

Each year the Abbey's Education Department host a special event to mark St Nicholas Day and invite lots of local schools to attend. The day involves the children participating in lots of activities to make small gifts, some of which they keep and some of which they give away. There is also a service in the Abbey church.

This year, due to COVID, the event has been cancelled for other schools but, very kindly, the Education Department is still going to hold workshops for our children. I am sure the children will have a fantastic day and also take time to think of others and share what they have made.

Illness

Some children have been off this week with tummy bugs. Just for clarity, the guidance in "The Spotty Book" is as follows:-

"Diarrhoea and vomiting can have many different causes but the cause should be assumed to be an infection until known otherwise. An infection in the gut causing diarrhoea and vomiting (gastroenteritis) can be easily passed to others. Anyone with gastroenteritis should be regarded as very infectious and must be kept away from school until the diarrhea and vomiting has stopped and they have been passing normal stools for at least 48 hours."

Attendance Figures

These are the attendance figures for the past week:

26th November – 2nd December 2021

Meldon	86.82%
Venford	98.95%
Avon	93.75%
Fernworthy	89.62%
Burrator	92.96%
Whole school	
This week	92.09%
Year to date	95.21%



Congratulations!

Well done to the following children:

	BLP	WOW
Meldon	Reuben A	Emily
Venford	Braxton	Archie V
Avon	Isla	Rainn
Fernworthy	Ned	Rebecca
Burrator	Fliss	Madeleine