30 September 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

This is the 26th week in Ordinary Time

Prayer to Mary, Mother of the Holy Family.
Our Lady, who did ask for the Holy House to be built here in England, lead us to contemplate the hidden life of the Holy family in Nazareth and to listen to the voice of God in the stillness of our hearts. May we find sanctuary in your maternal care and comfort in your prayers. Guide us on this pilgrimage on earth, that, by imitating your joyful welcome of the Divine Will, we too may one day dwell with the Blessed Trinity for ever. Amen.

On Saturday 26 September 2026, we opened our doors to prospective pupils and their families for our annual Whole School Open Day. It was a wonderful occasion, and we were delighted to welcome so many visitors. I had the pleasure of delivering two Headteacher Welcome presentations, both of which were well attended, with standing room only available. Following these, I was able to spend time walking around the school, visiting departments, speaking with prospective families and pupils, and observing interactions taking place between staff, visitors and our own students who had generously given up their Saturday to support the event.

It was a genuinely proud moment for me. I already know how fortunate we are to have such a dedicated and committed staff body, but to see first-hand the enthusiasm, confidence and pride shown by our students was truly inspiring. Hearing the positive feedback from families and witnessing the warm welcome they received reinforced everything that makes St Mary's such a special community.

My sincere thanks go to all our student helpers, to our Head Girl, Alice and Head Boy, Alex, for their contribution to the Headteacher Welcome presentations. Thank you also to our Site Team for ensuring the school looked at its very best and was ready to receive visitors. Finally, thank you to all staff, governors and our feeder primary school headteachers who contributed to a successful day.

Year 7 Mass of Welcome

Our Year 7 Mass of Welcome took place last week at St Mary's Church, Horsforth. The Mass provided a wonderful opportunity for our school and families to come together in prayer and celebration as we continue to support our newest students in settling into life at St Mary's. It was a lovely evening and a fitting way to mark the beginning of the students' journey with us. A big thank you to Mrs Findlay and Mrs Collard for overseeing the arrangements, to Mr Scholey for providing the music, and to our dedicated Year 7 Form Tutors and teaching staff for their ongoing care, encouragement and support. I would also like to extend a special thank you to Fr Sean Elliott for celebrating Mass with our school community.

ST MARY'S MENSTON
A CATHOLIC VOLUNTARY ACADEMY

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Sixth Form Information Evenings
Thank you to our Sixth Form students and their families for attending the Year 12 and Year 13 Information Evenings on Monday 21 September 2026. It was wonderful to see such positive engagement from students and parent/carers. My thanks go to Mrs McLeer, Mrs North, Mrs Bene-Dozpoly and Mr Trickett for their preparation and for the care and consideration given to ensuring the evenings were both informative and supportive.

Sixth Form Open Evening – Wednesday 21 October 2026, 6:00pm-7:30pm
We are very much looking forward to welcoming our Year 11 students, their families and external visitors to our Sixth Form Open Evening on Wednesday 21 October 2026. For more information about our sixth form provision please click here.

St Mary's will be taking part in Hello Yellow on Friday 9 October 2026 to raise awareness and funds for Young Minds, the Uk's leading charity for young people's mental health. Many young people are struggling with their mental health right now and that's why days like Hello Yellow matter. By teaching young people to explore their feelings, how to talk about them and who to reach out to for help, we are giving them the tools they need.

By raising funds for Young Minds, we're making sure that they have access to support when it matters. Students in Years 7-11 will be encouraged to wear **one** item of yellow. They **must dress in normal school uniform** but can substitute one item for something yellow.

You can donate by going on to Parent Pay and making your donation on their for Hello Yellow campaign. Thank you in anticipation of your support for this. Most importantly we want to share the resources which Young Minds offer to support parent/carers and students including:

- Online resources (www.youngminds.org.uk/parent)
- A phoneline service for parents and carers to speak to trained professionals if you're concerned about your children's mental health: 0808 802 5544 (open 9.30am -4pm)
- As well as an online chat and email service (www.youngminds.org.uk/parents-helpline)

Year 13 Biology Field Trip
On Monday, our Year 13 Biology students took their learning outside the classroom, carrying out fieldwork on Ilkley Moor as part of their required practical work. Students investigated the distribution of plant species along a transect from the road up onto Ilkley Moor, exploring how environmental factors such as light, wind and temperature can influence where different species grow. Miss Wellham was incredibly impressed by the enthusiasm, practical skills and commitment shown by our Biologists throughout the fieldwork. Well done Year 13.

Celebrating Our Students
We are always delighted to hear about the achievements, talents and successes of our students, both in and out of school. To help us celebrate these special moments, we have created a dedicated email address: **celebration@stmarysmenston.org** Whether your child has achieved success in sport, music, dance, drama, community work, fundraising, scouting, cadets, competitions, or any other area of their life, we would love to hear about it. By sharing your good news stories, photographs and achievements with us, you will help us recognise and celebrate the many accomplishments of our students. Where appropriate, and subject to space and suitability, some submissions may be featured in our social media communications, website or weekly parent letters.
We are incredibly proud of our students and the many ways they contribute to school and the wider community. Thank you for helping us celebrate their achievements by sharing your news with us.

The Bambisanani Partnership News Items
We are delighted to share some of the latest news stories from the Bambisanani website. We would especially encourage you to read the first article, which showcases this year's visit to South Africa and highlights the incredible contribution made by our students and staff.

Bambisanani Partnership teams learn and make a difference in South Africa — The Bambisanani Partnership

St. Mary's Students Make a Lasting Impact in South Africa — The Bambisanani Partnership

Bambisanani 20th Anniversary Black Tie Dinner
We are delighted to share that tickets are now on sale for the Bambisanani 20th Anniversary Black Tie Dinner, a special evening celebrating two decades of the Bambisanani Partnership and its inspiring work. The event will take place on **Saturday 3 October** at the **Howard Suite, Headingley Stadium**, bringing together students, alumni, supporters and friends of the partnership. **Tickets include a welcome drink, a two-course meal, and live music and entertainment.** Guests are invited to arrive from **6.30pm** for a **7.00pm dinner**, with tables available for groups of ten or individual bookings.
Ticket prices:

- £50 per person (Students)
- £60 per person (General Admission)
- £100 per person (Corporate Sponsorship Package*)

This promises to be a memorable evening celebrating the achievements and impact of the Bambisanani Partnership over the last 20 years. Further information can be found attached to this week's letter.

The Lourdes Roadshow and Quiz Night
Please find attached to this week's letter information about the Lourdes Roadshow and Quiz Night, including dates, venues and how to get involved.

Diocese of Leeds Faith Formation
Please find attached to this week's letter the Diocese of Leeds Faith Formation Newsletter.

The Leeds Diocesan Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Walsingham took place on Saturday, 26 September 2026, marked by a joint coach and walking pilgrimage for the Year of St Francis of Assisi and was led by the RT Rev Marcus Stock, Bishop of Leeds. A coach full, made up of parishioners from our deanery parishes left Ss Peter and Paul primary school early on Saturday morning and made their pilgrim journey to Walsingham. On arriving at the National Catholic Shrine of Our Lady the Angelus was said at 12.00noon followed by Mass in the Basilica and outside in the glorious sunshine. After lunch the pilgrims walked and prayed the Holy Mile into the town of Walsingham and congregated in the Abbey grounds for Benediction, again led by Bishop Marcus. Parishioners reflected that it was a wonderfully uplifting, memorable and holy day.
St Mary's was represented by Noah Kenyon, Year 12, Roberta Campbell, Year 9 and Daniel Harris, Year 9.

Former St Mary's Pupil meets Pope Leo XIV

On Sunday 27th September Pope Leo XIV visited the shrine of Lourdes in France. A former pupil of St Mary's, Paul Lavery, was invited by the Lourdes Sanctuaries to attend the open-air Mass at the Shrine as a VIP guest. The Mass was held on the Prairie on the other side of the River Gave, but in sight of the Grotto, and was attended by approximately 200,000 Pilgrims from all around the world. After the Mass, Paul was invited to a buffet lunch (fortunately he speaks French!) followed by a talk given by Antonia Lofiégo, an Italian woman whose unexplained cure at the Baths in 2009 was declared the Shrine's 72nd official miracle just last year. Afterwards Paul was unexpectedly invited to the Archbishop's Residence, where he was introduced to Pope Leo. They spoke briefly about St Bernadette Relics, that have just begun a twelve-month nationwide tour of the United States, which Paul has helped to facilitate. Afterwards he was presented with a set of special Rosary Beads from the Holy Father bearing the Pope Leo's crest.

Paul attended St Mary's from 1992-99. Whilst he now lives in the south of England with his wife and four children, he remains a proud Yorkshireman with a particular love of Bradford City. He visits Lourdes several times a year, and especially as a Pilgrim with the Diocese of Westminster.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

M. Hattersley.

Miss M Hattersley
Headteacher

STUDENT CELEBRATIONS

Sporting Success!
Congratulations to Year 11 student Luigi Ucci. We are incredibly proud to celebrate Luigi's outstanding achievement at the 2026 England National Championships for Yamada-ha Shito-ryu Shukokai Karate-do, held in Manchester on Sunday 26 September. Competing in the individual category for his age group (13–15), Luigi achieved 1st place, becoming the 2026 England National Champion in his category. This fantastic achievement is a testament to Luigi's hard work, dedication, discipline and perseverance. Congratulations, Luigi, on this fantastic achievement. We are extremely proud of you!

U14 and 15s Netball
Our U14 team got the new season off to a positive start with a closely contested match against Allerton High, narrowly losing 9–7. Well done to our Year 9s for their fantastic effort and determination. Our U15s also enjoyed a friendly match, providing a great opportunity for everyone to get some valuable game time and prepare for another successful season ahead. Miss Marsh was particularly impressed with everyone's enthusiasm, teamwork and commitment in their first games back. A fantastic start to the season!

Gymnastics Success!
Well done to our Year 8 student, Kaycie Henderson, who recently competed in the Nile Wilson Gymnastics Invitational Classic Challenge in Mansfield. Kaycie had an outstanding competition, achieving 1st place on bars, 3rd on beam, 3rd on floor and 2nd overall. This is a fantastic achievement, and we are incredibly proud of her. Kaycie's gymnastics coach praised her dedication and commitment to the sport, particularly her resilience in overcoming a mental block on beam and delivering an outstanding overall performance. Well done, Kaycie! We are extremely proud of your achievements and look forward to seeing you continue to succeed in future competitions.

WELLBEING / SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION

Contact Telephone Number for Parents
The school office will be open during normal school hours: 01943 883000.

If you are outside of school hours or it is a holiday and you have a concern you can ring the local authority social worker team directly.

- Leeds Children's Social Work Services Emergency Duty Team on 0113 535 0600. Further information can be found on the Leeds local authority website.
- Bradford Children's Social Work Services Emergency Duty Team on 01274 431 010. Further information can found on the Bradford local authority website.

NSPCC Helpline
You can contact the NSPCC Helpline by calling 0808 800 5000 or emailing help@NSPCC.org.uk
The NSPCC Helpline is currently available 10am–4pm Monday to Friday, however callers may experience voice distortion due to technical difficulties. You can email help@NSPCC.org.uk at any time for free. You don't have to say who you are. If the NSPCC haven't responded to you and your concerns for the safety of a child increase, please contact the police or local Children's Services directly (as noted above). Please be assured that the NSPCC action all contact received via their Helpline.

NHS ChatHealth (chathealth.nhs.uk)
ChatHealth enables young people to access support and advice regarding various emotional health and wellbeing concerns. To find out more information about ChatHealth and how to access the support please use the above link. ChatHealth also offer a Text Service 07520 619750 (8.30am – 4.30pm Monday to Friday) 11-19 year olds. Mental Health/General Health enquiries.

Young Minds Crisis Messenger - Provides free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK if you are experiencing a mental health crisis. If you need urgent help, texts are free to YM to 85258. All texts are answered by trained volunteers, with support from experienced clinical supervisors.

Wellbeing and Emotional Support
The following resources are available to support students:

- Time for Young People - Time For Young People is a free emotional wellbeing service for young people aged 11 to 18 in Leeds.
- **Kooth:** Young people aged 10-18 are fortunate to have the Kooth service available to them. Kooth is an **online** mental health community where you can access **free, safe and anonymous support**, commissioned by Leeds NHS Clinical Commissioning Group. Further information on Kooth can also be found on our website under the Personal Development section of each Year Group Shell.
- **MindMate:** Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health. Online (https://www.mindmate.org.uk/) and via telephone 0300 555 0324.
- **Teen Connect:** Emotional support over the phone, through text messages, or online to young people in Leeds aged 11-18. They are open from 3.30pm -2am Monday - Friday, and 6pm - 2am on a Saturday and Sunday.
  By phone: 0808 800 1212
  By text: 0771 566 1559
  Online: www.teenconnect.org.uk
  Instagram: @lslcs_teenconnect or visit https://www.instagram.com/lslcs_teenconnect/
  Facebook: @TeenConnectLeeds https://www.facebook.com/TeenConnectLeeds/

Teen Mental Health – A Guide for Parents
https://www.mytutor.co.uk/blog/parents/teen-mental-health-a-guide-for-parents/

Safer Leeds - Domestic violence and abuse (leeds.gov.uk)

Safeguarding Resources/Information
The following resources, highlighted by the Leeds Safeguarding Team, are also available for parents:

- NSPCC Keeping Children Safe Online provides a useful guide to social networks, apps and guide.
- National Online Safety have produced a series of top tips guides to support remote learning for Parents, Children and Teachers
- Thinkuknow is the education programme from NCA-CEOP, a UK organisation which protects children both online and offline for different age groups and parents.
- Childnet has produced a Parent and Carer Toolkit which is a collection of three resources designed to help you talk to your child about their online life, manage boundaries around family internet use and point you in the direction of where to get further help and support.