Friday 18th September 2026

Dear Families,

I hope you are all well.

Attendance

We have made a fantastic start to the school year in terms of attendance. Since the children returned to school in September, our whole-school attendance has been 98.4%, which is a brilliant achievement!

As you may be aware, school attendance continues to be a national priority. Across the country, attendance levels have fallen in recent years, and the number of persistent absentees (children whose attendance is below 90%) has increased significantly.

While 90% attendance may sound high, it equates to around half a day of school missed **every week** – or nearly four full weeks over the course of a school year. These absences quickly add up and can have a real impact on a child's learning, progress and friendships.

At St Oswald's, we are aiming for 98% attendance for every child over the course of the school year. Regular attendance gives children the best possible chance to succeed academically, socially and emotionally. Every day really does count.

You can see a 'live' attendance figure for your child whenever you open the Arbor app.

We completely understand that children will occasionally be unwell and, naturally, their wellbeing comes first. However, if your child is well enough to attend school, please encourage them to come in - even if it's just for the last day or two of the week. We also ask that holidays and non-urgent appointments are arranged outside of school time wherever possible.

Why It Matters

A Department for Education report found that missing just 10 days of school in Year 6 reduced the likelihood of reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths by 25%. Regular attendance is one of the most important factors in a child's long-term success.

Support Available

If you need any help or advice around attendance, please get in touch. Every Newcastle school has access to an Attendance Officer who can work with and support families.

You can also find useful information on our school website, including guidance about when children should stay off school and when they can still attend if they are feeling mildly unwell, by following the link **HERE**.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. It has been wonderful to see so many of our children making such a positive start to the new school year.

Curriculum Evenings

A reminder that Curriculum Evenings will be taking place in school in the week commencing 28th September when teachers will give an insight into what your child will be learning and experiencing in their new class (please see Dates for Diaries below for individual class dates and times). If you are unable to make the meetings, the presentations will be available on the school website soon after.

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Reminder: Free School Meals – Please check your eligibility

I would once again strongly encourage any families who believe they may be eligible for Free School Meals to apply via the Newcastle City Council website, or by clicking the link **HERE**.

While all children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 automatically receive free school meals, it is still really important to apply if you think you may be eligible. Doing so provides the school with additional funding, known as Pupil Premium, which is used to support your child's education throughout their time at St Oswald's.

The application process is simple and confidential and can make a real difference to both your child and the wider school community.

Please note: if you have applied previously, you do not need to apply again. Your information is already on record and will be checked, with your eligibility updated accordingly.

Hot Food in Packed Lunches

Can I please remind parents not to send children to school with hot food or drinks in their packed lunches, including soup or other hot food in flasks.

This is for health and safety reasons. Hot food needs to be kept at a safe temperature to reduce the risk of harmful bacteria developing, and school does not have the facilities to monitor the temperature of food brought in from home. There is also a risk of children or staff being scalded if hot food or liquids are accidentally spilled in the dining room. We therefore ask that packed lunches contain cold food only.

For further information around school packed lunches, please see the Packed Lunch Policy in the 'Policies' section on the school website.

Thank you for your understanding and support in helping us to keep everyone safe at lunchtime.

Safeguarding Awareness

As we approach our class Celebrations of the Word for families, we will also be taking the opportunity to further strengthen safeguarding awareness across our school community.

Before the children arrive in the hall, we will play a short online safeguarding video for parents and family members. This will share some useful information and reminders about keeping children safe online and is part of our ongoing work to make sure we are all working together to keep our children safe.

The video is child-friendly, so please don't worry if you have younger children with you.

I hope you find it useful.

Dates for Diaries

Please find below some key dates for the Autumn Term **(recently added dates in red):**

September

Monday 21st September – First Holy Communion meeting for parents at Sacred Heart Parish Hall 7pm

Wednesday 23rd September – Sacred Heart High School Year 6 Open Evening

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Thursday 24th September – St Mary's High School Year 6 Open Evening

Friday 25th September – Year 2 Celebration of the Word for parents in school 9am

Monday 28th September – Reception Reading meeting for parents 4pm – 4:30pm

Monday 28th September – Year 1 Curriculum Evening 4:30pm – 5pm

Monday 28th September – Year 2 Curriculum Evening 5pm – 5:30pm

Wednesday 30th September – Year 3 Curriculum Evening 4:30pm – 5pm

Wednesday 30th September – Year 4 Curriculum Evening 5pm – 5:30pm

October

Thursday 1st October – Year 5 Curriculum Evening 4:30pm – 5pm

Thursday 1st October – Year 6 Curriculum & SATs information Evening 5pm – 5:30pm

Friday 2nd October – Year 6 Celebration of the Word for parents in school 9am

Wednesday 7th October – Year 6 STEMfest trip to Newcastle Eagles Arena

Wednesday 7th October – Reception 2027 Open Evening for prospective parents 6pm

Thursday 8th – Tuesday 13th October – Book Fair 3pm-3:30pm in Dining Hall

Friday 9th October – Book Character Day (Children can dress up as a book character or wear non-uniform)

Friday 9th October – PTA Golden Ticket Draw (details to follow)

Tuesday 20th October – Parents' Evening in school 3:20pm – 6:00pm

Thursday 22nd October – Sponsored Bounce (details to follow)

Thursday 22nd October – Parents' Evening in school 3:20pm – 6:00pm

Friday 23rd October – Reception & Year 5 'Special Friends' Celebration for parents from both classes 9am

Friday 23rd October – Break up for half term

November

Monday 2nd November – School re-opens for children

Wednesday 4th November – Year 2 'Brush Up' workshop delivered by Newcastle Dental School

Friday 6th November – Year 3 Celebration of the Word for parents in school 9am

Wednesday 11th November – 'Supporting Young People with Anxiety' parent workshop (details to follow)

Wednesday 11th November – Year 4 Youth Village Residential Parents' meeting (in-school) 5pm

Thursday 12th November – PTA AGM (details to follow)

Friday 13th November – Children in Need

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Friday 13th November – Year 4 Celebration of the Word for parents in school 9am

w/c Monday 16th November – Anti-bullying Week ('Break the Silence')

Monday 16th November – Odd Socks Day

Monday 16th November – Reception & Year 6 Heights and Weights

Tuesday 17th November – Year 5 Keswick Residential Parents' meeting (online) 5-5:45pm

Tuesday 17th November – Year 6 Borrowdale Residential Parents' meeting (online) 5:45-6:30pm

Friday 27th November - Year 1 Celebration of the Word for parents in school 9am

Friday 27th November – Christmas Fair in school from 3pm (details to follow)

Monday 30th November – Year 5 & Year 6 'Exercise and Mental Health' workshop delivered by the PE service

December

Tuesday 1st December – Annual Nasal Flu Vaccination for all classes in school

Sunday 6th December – Choir singing in Sacred Heart Church hall after 10:30am Mass

Tuesday 8th December – Reception, Year 1 & Year 2 Nativity in school 9am

Wednesday 9th December – Reception, Year 1 & Year 2 Nativity in school 9am

Thursday 10th December – Save the Children Christmas Jumper Day

Thursday 10th December - Year 3 & Year 4 Nativity in school 9am

Friday 11th December - Year 3 & Year 4 Nativity in school 9am

Friday 11th December – Reception, Year 1 & Year 2 Storytime with Santa at the Gosforth Civic Theatre

Monday 14th December – Reception, Year 1 & Year 2 Christmas Party in school

Tuesday 15th December – KS2 Christmas Party in school

Wednesday 16th December – Year 5 & Year 6 Christmas Production at Sacred Heart church 7pm

Thursday 17th December – Advent Reflection for families in school 8:20am

Friday 18th December – Christmas Carols/Songs on the KS2 yard (Reception - Year 6) 2:30pm

Friday 18th December – Break up for Christmas

Other important dates:

Wednesday 10th – Friday 12th March – Year 4 Residential Retreat to the Youth Village, Consett

Monday 10th - Thursday 13th May 2027 – Year 6 SATs week (please do not book holidays during this week)

Friday 28th May 2027 - Staff Training Day (School closed to children)

Monday 21st – Wednesday 23rd June 2027 – Year 5 residential to Keswick

Wednesday 23rd - Friday 25th June 2027 – Year 6 residential to Borrowdale

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With my very best wishes,



Mr P Marley

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