

# *The Priory Catholic Voluntary Academy*



## *Newsletter December 2024*

**Spring (Lent) Term 1:** Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January – Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

**Half-term:** Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February – Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

All pupils return on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

**Spring (Lent) Term 2:** Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> February – Friday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

### **Catholic Life**

**Weekend Mass:** Our Lady and The Beauvale Martyrs Eastwood – Sundays 11am.

**Celebration Assemblies:** Throughout the new year, Celebration Assemblies will take place from 1pm each Friday.

**Christmas Mass Times:** Across Eastwood, Ilkeston and Stapleford

**Christmas Eve:**

Mass 5.00pm Eastwood

Mass 7.00pm Ilkeston (carols will be sung from 6.30pm).

**Christmas Day:**

Mass 9.00am Stapleford

Mass 9.30am Ilkeston

Mass 11.00am Eastwood

**Saint John Houghton 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary:** The Bishop will be at St John Houghton Academy on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> January to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the opening of the school. If you are intending to attend, please arrive by 2pm ready for a 2.15pm start. Light refreshments will be served afterwards, and school will be open until 5pm for time to meet old friends and reminisce. Those who would like to join the celebrations are asked to think about parking congestion at the school and to think about parking well away from the school and Abbot Road.

**Enthusiasm:** having interest, passion, eagerness, keenness, willingness and effort. Our virtue of working enthusiastically continued through the season of Advent.

During Advent, we spent time enriching children's knowledge and understanding of Old Testament stories in the run up to the story of the nativity which was celebrated on the last day of this term in line with our whole school advent calendar. We lit the candles on our advent wreath each day as we explored the symbolism of each candle: **Hope, Peace, Joy and Love.** We lit the Christmas candle today and asked the children to remember to say a prayer or a simple thank you to Jesus before they open their presents from Santa Claus. We ended this term having a lovely Christmas dinner – with PTA members coming in to help – the children are breaking up for Christmas full of joy and enthusiasm. We wish you a most wondrous time as you spend precious time at home with your family.

**Eastwood Food Bank:** Thank you to everyone who has donated tinned and dried food for those people in need. All donations have been delivered to the Food Bank

**School Parents and Teacher Association (PTA):** Over the years, I have written extensively to thank you for supporting this most valuable group of people, who give up their own time, to do so much good for the pupils in our school. After a recent meeting, current members expressed a wish to have more members join. Please do consider joining this most important group. A meeting is being held at midday on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January for any parents who wish to join; please contact the school office – either in person or by email: [office@pri.srscmat.co.uk](mailto:office@pri.srscmat.co.uk) We can then look at establishing Committee Members who can then formulate and organise the Committee Structure. This process will be supported by Mrs Taylor and Miss Fisher who will support the group in undertaking this task as we look forward to many more years of fundraising to the benefit of all our pupils. My thanks at this point go especially to Mrs Nicola Harrison and Mrs Janine Roberts who have worked extremely hard in fundraising and supporting Miss Fisher and the school in this work.

**Free School Meals:** Children who officially qualify for free school meals are eligible for the Pupil Premium. This is not the same as universal free school meals for pupils in reception and year groups 1 and 2. Children who are in receipt of the Pupil Premium (including Armed Forces pupils) are charged 50% of the total costs of trips, after-school and breakfast clubs. If you would like to know more about whether you are eligible, then please contact the school office, or Mrs Helen Smith; they are always on hand to help. Indeed, you can also just follow the link: [www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/education/school-meals/free-school-meals-and-milk](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/education/school-meals/free-school-meals-and-milk)

**Safeguarding our Children:** In accordance with our Safeguarding Policy, from time to time we may need to make a referral to Children & Young People Services at Nottinghamshire County Council. The school's Designated Safeguarding Leads are Mrs Smith (Family Liaison Lead) Mr Harrison (Headteacher) Mrs Grimes (Deputy Headteacher) and Mrs Symonds (SENDCO). You can contact our DSL team at ANY TIME by emailing directly to: [Safeguarding@pri.srscmat.co.uk](mailto:Safeguarding@pri.srscmat.co.uk) Your concerns and correspondence will be treated in the strictest confidence. Our safeguarding policy can be accessed on the school website or by following this link: <https://www.theprioryeastwood.srscmat.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/28/2024/07/Safeguarding-and-Child-Protection-Policy-SRS-PRI-V3-2024-2025.pdf>

**Staffing:** Congratulations and a warm welcome to Mrs Szeniawski and Miss Syson who will be joining us as Teaching Assistants in January. They were recently successful in interviews, and we look forward to working with them as they join the team from 2025! Furthermore, in our kitchen, Mrs Pierrepont is joined by Miss Greco, a new member of staff (through Derbyshire County Council). We wish them all every success during their time here at The Priory Catholic Voluntary Academy.

**SEND Support:** Mrs Symonds would like to inform parents and carers of children who are on the school's special educational needs register that we now have their autumn term SEND plans in place as these will now be reviewed. New targets will be set at the start of the spring term, in January 2025. Also, for your information, we have had an increasing number of parents who have asked about having their children assessed for an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP). Mrs Symonds would like to draw to your attention "The Graduated Approach" which you can find on the school website. Here you can find details of the stages of support that must be put in place, right from initial conversations when concerns are raised, through to universal provision – targeted and specialist support: <https://www.theprioryeastwood.srscmat.co.uk/information/send/> The school along with parents and carers cannot automatically apply for an EHCP, or additional funding, without going through this graduated approach. Mrs Symonds is more than happy to talk to parents about this should you so wish.

**Local Governing Body:** As a school, we are always on the lookout for new foundation governors. If you are baptised Catholic and have some time that you can lend to supporting the pupils and school, please do consider this. It entails attending five to six meetings a year, as well as being a link governor for a curriculum subject – whereby you would meet with a Classteacher who is responsible for that area (e.g. History or PE). If you would like to get involved, or would like further information through meeting with me, then please do contact me via the school office – either in person or by email: [office@pri.srscmat.co.uk](mailto:office@pri.srscmat.co.uk)

**Food for Thought:** "It's true, Christmas can feel like a lot of work. But when you look back on all the Christmases in your life, you'll find you've created family traditions and lasting memories. Those memories, good and bad, are really what help to keep a family together over the long haul." – Caroline Kennedy (American author – member of the Kennedy family).

**Wishing you a Happy and Holy Christmastide**  
Anthony Harrison