

*We love and grow in Christ, we live and learn in partnership, we build and share together*

# St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School

Blakehall  
Skelmersdale  
WN8 9AZ



Tel: 01695 558560  
e-mail: [head@sfoa.lancs.sch.uk](mailto:head@sfoa.lancs.sch.uk)  
Website: <http://www.sfoa.lancs.sch.uk>

Headteacher: Mrs A E Naylor  
Deputy Headteacher: Mrs S Lamph

6<sup>th</sup> December 2024,

Dear Parents/Carers,

We've reached one of the busiest and most exciting times of the school year – December! Our Nursery and 2 year olds posted their letters to Santa earlier this week and classes have been busy with their preparations for school plays. The Christmas Tree and decorations are also up too. With all of this in mind, please see important upcoming dates in school:

**PTA Christmas Bingo – Monday 9th December (Doors open 6pm)**  
**EYFS play – Wednesday 11th December at 10am in the hall**  
**Christmas Dinner – Wednesday 11th December**  
**KS1 play – Wednesday 11th December at 2pm in the hall**  
**Christmas Jumper/Own Clothes Day – Thursday 12th December**  
**PTA Breakfast with Santa – Monday 16th December (8am start KS1 and EYFS)**  
**2 Year Olds Singalong - Monday 16th December**  
**PTA Breakfast with Santa – Tuesday 17th December (8am start KS2)**  
**Y5 Panto at OLQP High School – Tuesday 17th December**  
**KS2 Carol Service – Wednesday 18th December at 9.15am in the hall**  
**PTA Film Night - Wednesday 18th December (pick up 5.15pm)**  
**Friday 20th December – school finishes at 1.30pm for the Christmas break**

## An Advent Prayer

This Sunday is the second Sunday of Advent. Advent is a time when we reflect on the coming of Christ into the world at his birth. We prepare our hearts and minds for the hope, love, peace and joy this special time brings.

Christ our Hope,  
Illuminate our hearts with your grace,  
Widen our vision so that we recognise our connection with all the people of the world.  
Help us to give to others in ways that meet their needs,  
We await your coming with gratitude.  
Amen



### **Extra-Curricular Activities**

Extra-curricular activities for next week are as follows:

Monday – Ukulele Club 3.15pm – 4pm – Mr Horridge

Tuesday – Year 3 & 4 Dance 3.15pm – 4.15pm – West Lancs School Sports

Tuesday LUNCHTIME - Football –Mr McGregor

Thursday – Year 1 & 2 Athletics 3.15pm – 4.15pm – West Lancs School Sports

### **Lost Property**

As a school, we cannot accept responsibility for the loss of, or damage to, any items brought to school. We ask that pupils do not bring valuable or unnecessary items to school, and that all items such as uniform, coats, bags, PE kit etc are labelled clearly with your child's name. Thank you.

### **Appointments and Absences**

If your child needs to attend a scheduled medical appointment during school hours, please present the school office with the details so that we can authorise the absence. We can only authorise an absence if we are given a valid reason for the absence – otherwise it will be recorded as unauthorised. Thank you.

### **Pets on the premises**

We recognise that pets are well loved members of lots of our families and are an important part of life. We do, however, politely request that they are not brought on to the school premises unless they are, for example, registered service dogs. Many thanks for your co-operation in this matter.

### **School Communication**

There are several ways that you can contact us if you need to. As always, you can use Class Dojo – the children have all been moved on to their current teacher so you can message directly. You can also telephone or speak to us directly, but please be aware that we may be in class teaching or in meetings at certain times of the school day.

We are a very approachable staff and recognise that positive relationships between home and school will always work to the benefit of our children. Like you, we want the very best for them and working together well will ensure that we achieve this.

### **Social Media**

If your child has a phone please check their use of it on a regular basis if you don't already. We need to work together in ensuring their safe and appropriate use.

The age restrictions for social media platforms are as follows:

X, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr, Reddit, Snapchat – children should be at least 13

Whatsapp – children should be at least 16

Please check your child's access to social media and how they are using it. Social media can be used, as we all know, to cause hurt towards others and we do not want this to affect children's enjoyment of school or their learning.

You may find some useful information [here](#).

### Attendance and Punctuality

As you are aware from information previously sent out, for the 2024/25 Academic Year, the Department for Education (DfE) has made changes to the attendance codes and guidance schools must refer to.

These policies are set by the Department for Education and school is asked to enforce these along with all other schools nationally.

The changes to be aware of are:

- The code for authorised holidays has been removed entirely and can no longer be used on registers
- Penalty notices issued for offences that take place after 19 August 2024 will be charged at a new rate of £160 per parent per child. This can be paid at £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days with no option for a discounted rate.
- The threshold at which a penalty notice **must** be considered is set at 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school week period. This may include absences because of arriving late after the register closes. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or school years.
- A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3rd offence another course of action will need to be considered (such as prosecution or one of the other attendance legal interventions).

To put this into context, if a parent/carer takes a pupil out of school without authorised leave of absence in term time for 5 days or more from September 2024, then a family with two parents would receive a penalty of £320 per child. This is halved if paid within 21 days for the first instance.

**Registers will close at 9am.** Regarding late marks, **if a child arrives to school after 9am we are required by the Department for Education to give a U code** ('late after registers close'). If this were to be recorded 10 times within a 10-week period, the guidance would be a statutory fine of £160 per parent (halved if paid within 21 days for the first instance).

**We appreciate that these guidelines are significantly more severe than those in the past. As always, we will do everything reasonably possible to work with families to ensure strong attendance and give our children the best possible life chances moving forward.**

Reception – 85.3%

Y1 – 89.4%

Y2 – 89.4%

Y3 – 98%

Y4 – 90%

Y5 – 92%

Y6 – 93.6%

Well done to Year 3 for the best attendance this week!

The class with the best punctuality this week is: Year 2

**Places in Reception for September 2025**

Lancashire County Council's school admissions for children starting primary school or moving to secondary school in September 2024 opened on Friday 1 September 2023.

Parents can apply online at [www.lancashire.gov.uk/schools](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/schools) - it's quick and easy!

The national closing dates for applications are:

- 15 January 2025 for primary applicants.

**The Household Support Fund**

The Household Support Fund is now available... Please spread the word and click the link below for further details:

[Household Support Fund - West Lancashire Borough Council \(westlancs.gov.uk\)](http://westlancs.gov.uk)

**Directory of Support Services**

The Financial Inclusion Team at West Lancs Borough Council have generated a directory of resources that's easily accessible for anyone and everyone.

Please click the link below to have a look as it's a great resource to have to hand.

[Directory of Support Services - West Lancashire Borough Council \(westlancs.gov.uk\)](http://westlancs.gov.uk)

Best wishes,

Ann Naylor (Headteacher)