



St Monica's Catholic Primary School

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Thursday 19th December, 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

Christmas at St Monica's truly is "the most wonderful time of the year". We have had a fantastic Christmas here full of great moments, my favourite moment of the past two weeks was a pupil joyfully exclaiming, "Look at my dad clapping for me!" after his Christmas performance - a wonderful smile spread across his face. What a lovely moment.

A sense of togetherness is a key strength in the partnership between home and school, and it was heartening to see every Christmas performance and production filled to the rafters with proud parents and families - and the confidence and joy this brought to our pupils made everything worthwhile.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all families for joining us in these celebrations and to wish you all a Merry Christmas on behalf of everyone here at St Monica's.

I would also like to express my gratitude to all of the staff at St Monica's for going above and beyond in 2024. We are fortunate to have such a talented, hardworking and dedicated staff base who contribute so much to the lives of our children on a daily basis.

On behalf of everybody here at St Monica's, I wish you all a happy and healthy New Year. We return to school on Monday, January 6th.

Y6 Carol Concert - Tuesday

On Tuesday, our Year 6 pupils performed our traditional Christmas Carol Concert. St Monica's Church was filled with parents, families, governors, and

staff - and the performance did not disappoint. We were treated to an outstanding performance. Our Year 6 pupils sang beautifully, filling the church with a heartfelt selection of hymns and songs telling the Christmas story.

It was a wonderful way to mark the final production in our Christmas celebrations. A huge thank you to the Year 6 staff, who worked tirelessly to bring this production to life. You can watch the performance [here](#).



St Monica's: Digital-Free Christmas Challenge

This Christmas, many children will have digital items on their wish lists. I know my own children have asked Santa for digital devices. With this in mind, I encourage all parents and carers to watch Channel 4's documentary [Swiped](#), which casts a startling look at the negative impact digital devices are having on the wellbeing and development of children. The documentary is available on Channel 4's catch-up service, All4.

The documentary's conclusion is clear: excessive screen time is causing irreversible harm to children's brain development. It also shows how social media is significantly affecting children's mental health.

To address this, we want to set a challenge for the St Monica's family this Christmas: reduce digital time and focus on quality family interactions.

St Monica's Digital-Free Christmas Challenge:

- 1 hour of screen time per day for children
- Digital Sunset at 6pm
- Adults to minimize phone use in front of children
- Replace evening screen time with "Book Before Bedtime"
- Swap computer games for board games and fun family activities



As a parent, I understand how difficult it can be to implement these changes, but I am determined, both as a father and a headteacher, to heed the warnings about the damage these devices are causing to our children. Let's work together to protect our children from the overuse of technology.

If you take on our Christmas Challenge and participate in family activities like board games, walks, or trips to the park, we would love for you to share photos with us. These will be celebrated in a 'Healthy Digital Life' assembly when we return to school.

We will finish our Newsletter with messages from our Governors and Father Ged.

A Christmas message from our Chair of Governors, Mr Ryan McLoughlin

On behalf of all the Governors, I would like to express our gratitude to all the staff for their hard work and dedication to the pupils of St Monica's this year. Your efforts truly made this Christmas season one to remember, and we appreciate the extra mile you've gone to for our school community and parish.

From my experience and the interaction I've had with both staff and parents, it's clear our pupils shone brilliantly in the various Christmas performances, showcasing their remarkable talents across the school. It's always a joy to witness the gifts and vibrant spirit within St Monica's.

On behalf of the Governing Board, I wish everyone connected to St Monica's a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

Mr. Ryan McLoughlin

A Christmas Message from Father Ged

As we approach the celebration of Christmas here at St Monica's, I want to take a moment to reflect on the joy and hope that this special season brings. It has been a blessing to journey with you all throughout 2024 and witness the kindness, hard work, and Catholic ethos that make our school so wonderful.

The children's Christmas performances were truly heartwarming, reminding us of the beauty of the Nativity story and the joy of sharing our gifts with others. I am so proud of the way St Monica's pupils performed. Our pupils' attitude during our Advent Mass was outstanding, as was the Christmas Carol Concert performance in Church.

I would like to thank the dedicated staff, who have worked tirelessly to ensure that every child flourishes, and to the parents and carers, whose love and support are such an integral part of St Monica's. Your love and support is what sets our school and parish apart.

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus, may we all be reminded of the light and peace He brings into our world. I pray that each of you will enjoy a joyful and restful Christmas, filled with God's blessings, and that the New Year brings hope, happiness, and continued growth for us all.

We have special Masses on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, and all would be very welcome to come along to celebrate with our parish.



With every blessing,

Father Ged Callacher

Have a wonderful Christmas one and all. Take care of one another and enjoy every moment,

Mr. James Gouldbourne

Headteacher