

12th December 2025

The Mortimer Federation of St. John's and St. Mary's Schools

Newsletter

We would take this opportunity of wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful new year. We look forward to welcoming the children back to school on Monday 5th January.

TERM DATES

Please see below a list of term dates which we trust you will find of use. Event details will be provided nearer the time.

Tuesday 16th December – Orthoptist to visit Foundation Stage children

Tuesday 16th December – Year 5 'Reach for the Stars' Parent Share – 9.15am until 10.15am

Tuesday 16th December – Mortimer St. Mary's Christmas Service – St. Mary's Church – 2.00pm

Thursday 18th December – End of term – Mortimer St. Mary's - 1.30pm, Mortimer St. John's - 2.00pm.

Monday 5th January – Spring Term Begins

Thursday 15th January - School Census Day

Wednesday 21st January – Netball Tournament, Bradfield College

Wednesday 21st January – 'Shakespeare Rewired' - Year 3

Tuesday 27th January to Monday 2nd February - Travelling Book Fair at Mortimer St. Mary's

Friday 6th February – Year 2 trip to the SeaCity Museum

Friday 13th February to Friday 20th February – Half Term

MILK YEAR 1 AND YEAR 2

Milk money for the first half of the spring term (Monday 5th January until Thursday 12th February) is £5.80 or 20pence per day. If you would like your child to have milk, please place the money in a named envelope and ask your child to give it to their class teacher.

Milk for the Foundation Stage children is provided free of charge.

SAFEGUARDING CONTACT DURING SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

We are aware that sometimes parents or carers need to contact the schools during holiday times for urgent safeguarding matters. Therefore, we have set up a dedicated email (please see below) for you to be able to contact a member of the Senior Leadership Team. The account will be monitored on a daily basis in **school holidays only** - Monday to Friday, and should only be used for emergencies or urgent safeguarding matters. Please use the school office email accounts for all communications in term time/weekends as per normal. Thank you.

safeguarding@mortimerschools.org

PROTECT NEURODIVERGENT CHILDREN FROM SCAMS IN GAMES

Neurodivergent children are more likely to become victims of scams in online games. Internetmatters.org have released some new guidelines for parents/carers on how to support their children. From parental controls to discussion ideas to activities to videos, find everything you need to support your child/ren's digital safety and wellbeing here:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/advice/neurodivergent-children/neurodivergent-children-gaming/roblox-parents-guide-neurodivergent-children/video-game-scams/>

RAIL SAFE FRIENDLY PROGRAMME

Please see the attached 'postcard' from the Rail Safe Friendly Programme. The 'postcard' contains vital rail safety messages which may not be widely known among families. By raising awareness, we can all help to children stay safe. Thank you.

SHARENTING - PAUSE BEFORE YOU POST

The term 'sharenting' is a combination of the words 'parenting' and 'sharing' and is used to describe the practice of parents/carers regularly sharing information, photographs and videos about their children on social media and other online platforms. 'Sharenting' can lead to unintended oversharing of personal data, which, in the wrong hands, can have serious consequences.

Watch this 40 second video to find out more about the dangers for Sharenting:

<https://dataprotection.ie/en/children>

PARKING NEAR MORTIMER LANE

We would like to remind all parents and carers that we do need to show consideration for our neighbours particularly during the school pick-up and drop-off times. We do understand that parking is limited, however we all must ensure that the area is safe for all.

- Please avoid parking on the verges and on the corner of Mortimer Lane. This restricts views and blocks resident driveway access.
- Please keep your speed down.
- Please do not use residents' driveways for turning.
- If it would be possible to share lifts, thereby reducing the number of vehicles, we would be very grateful.

Thank you for your co-operation and helping to support a safe drop off and pick up zone for our children, families and the community.

CHRISTMAS FAIR

We would like to say a massive thank you to the PTFA for arranging a wonderful Christmas Fair that took place on Friday 5th December at Mortimer St. John's. We would also like to say a huge thank you to all of the volunteers who offered their time to support with this event. The incredible amount of £2075.00 was raised for our schools, this is amazing. We hope that everyone who attended had lots of fun and left full of Christmas cheer.



A HEARTFELT THANK YOU TO THE PTFA

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to our wonderful PTFA for their incredibly generous donation of just over £1,000 towards new book-banded books for Mortimer St Mary's. This support will make a real difference to our pupils, helping us refresh and expand our reading scheme so that every child has access to high-quality, engaging books that inspire a love of reading.

The PTFA continue to work tirelessly raising funds for our schools. Through their continued hard work, the PTFA have raised an incredible £10,099 this term from various events, such as the Christmas Fair and the Christmas Wreath making evening, which raised an amazing £1669.00. These monies will allow The Mortimer Federation to fund many items to support the children's learning and enrich our school community, including some extra special Christmas treats and Christmas craft activities for our Christmas Party celebrations.



Thank you for your continued commitment to our schools. Your contribution is truly appreciated!

SNOWMEN

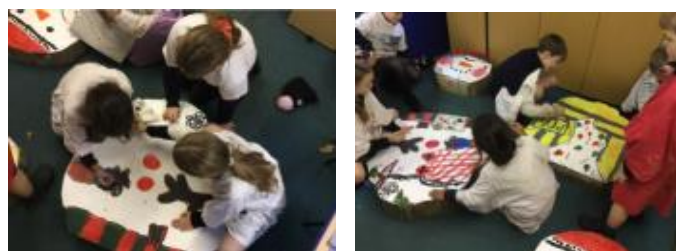
The Mortimer Federation were delighted that we were asked to design snowmen for the Englefield Estate Snowman Trail again this year.

Mortimer St. John's – The children in Craft Club created our designs for the snowmen which will be part of the Englefield Estate Snowman Trail. Craft Club used these designs to bring our wooden snowmen to life, making sure to include lots of details on the designs.



The children used acrylic paints to create the features on the snowmen. The snowmen look fantastic! We are all very proud of the final work and cannot wait to see the snowmen in the woodlands on the trail. See if you can spot the Mortimer St. John's snowmen!

Mortimer St. Mary's – Every child at Mortimer St. Mary's had the opportunity to put forward a snowman design, if they wanted to have the chance of painting the 2 wooden snowmen for the Englefield Estate annual snowman trail. One design from each class was chosen by their Class Teacher, and these children got to work in a small group with Mrs Mallen. They had to collaborate and pick features from their own snowmen, to make 2 final designs which were then painted onto the wooden snowmen. Well done to the children for using their 'creativity' and 'collaboration' learning powers!



The Snowmen will be on show from the 18th December 2025 to 5th January 2026 at various

locations within the Englefield Estate from Mortimer West End towards Burghfield Common. The interactive map will be available on the Englefield Estates website and on the Englefield Estate Facebook page from the 17th December 2025.

<https://www.englefieldestate.co.uk/estate-news/the-snowman-trail-returns-for-fifth-year-in-a-row>

The Class Teachers would love to see photographs of you with The Mortimer Federation snowmen on Seesaw if you do manage to spot them over the Christmas holiday!

ASSEMBLY LIVE FROM ANTARTICA

On Friday 5th December, the children in Year 1 and Year 2 were very lucky to join a virtual assembly, hosted by Picture News, which was broadcast live from Antarctica! We were one of over 5000 schools to join and Robert Swan OBE, the first person in history to walk both the North and South poles, was a guest speaker. The children learnt about what it is like to visit Antarctica and why it is so important to take care of it. We saw all three of our school values in action through Robert Swan and his team. Finally, the children learnt about the 2041 Schools' Campaign and what we can all do to protect the environment and reduce global warming. The Eco Warrior Leaders will help to champion this for the Federation.

"I really liked when Robert Swan answered the questions and I thought learning about how cold Antarctica is was really interesting." – Arthur F

"I really enjoyed watching the video clip of Robert Swan on his journey across Antarctica and learning what it's like there." – Isabelle P

"After watching the assembly, I now want to do the things they suggested to help Antarctica. Some ideas they said were turning off lights when we don't need them and walking more instead of using the car." – Anya W

ASD FAMILY HELP

Please see attached the latest newsletter from ASD Family Help.

FOUNDATION STAGE 'ONCE UPON A MIX-UP' PRODUCTION

On Tuesday 9th December, the children in Foundation Stage performed the story of 'Once Upon a Mix-Up' to their parents/carers. The children worked extremely hard learning a variety of songs and dances working alongside their peers. A big thank you to parents and carers for providing fantastic costumes. Well done Foundation Stage, you are amazing!

YEAR 3/YEAR 4 PRODUCTION OF THE 'IT'S CHRIIISTMAS'

Our Year 3 and Year 4 children certainly made the school feel ready for the festive season by reminding us what the spirit of Christmas is really all about. All of the children worked so hard perfecting their characters, learning their lines, providing costumes and learning songs to bring to life the story of the Nativity through a very exciting pop chart show! Well done Year 3 and Year 4! We loved watching your performances and you really made the school proud.

SHOOTING STARS – MORTIMER ST. JOHN'S

At Mortimer St. John's we have Shooting Stars. These children are from Year 2. They help to deal with any minor disagreements that may occur in the playground at break time and lunchtime. Shooting Stars are trained to deal with a range of situations and keep the adults informed of what has happened. The training includes learning how to read facial expressions, practising active listening skills and learning how to use the language of restorative practice. They wear a bright yellow tabard so that everyone can see them and know who to go to if they have a problem.

Our Shooting Stars are: Liliana, Cora, Elena L-R, Theo, Lizzie, Flora, Romy, Isabelle, Ruby, Imogen, Stanley, Sam, Anya, Harrison, Eliza, Arya, Grace, Violet, Darcey, Miley, Emily S, Mia, Archie Y, Evie and Lucy.

SCHOOL CENSUS DAY – THURSDAY 15TH JANUARY

On Thursday 15th January it is School Census Day. Since the introduction of Universal Infant Free School Meals, Mortimer St. John's School is now liable for the cost of providing school dinners. Although we receive Government funding, this is dependent upon how many children have school dinners on Census Day.

To promote school meals on Census Day the menu will have a 'Dolce Diner' theme and will be as follows:



The more children that have a school dinner at Mortimer St. John's on Thursday 15th January, the better the School is financially. This money can then be used for resources for the school towards the teaching and learning of your children.

DOLCE SPRING TERM MENU

Please see attached the Dolce menu for school meals during the spring term. If you would like your child/ren to have a meal in school please ensure that this is ordered via SchoolGrid in advance. Thank you

FAMILY ADVICE – COMMUNICATION – EDUCATION (FACE)

Please see attached the latest newsletter from FACE. FACE provides practical, accessible and affordable support to parents/carers and professionals who support children and teenagers

CHORISTER FOR A DAY

Please find attached information about Chorister for a Day events, to be held at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, on Sunday 18th and Sunday 25th January 2026. These events are open to both girls and boys in Year 2 and Year 3 who may be interested in finding out more about the opportunity of a choristership at St George's Chapel.



Merry Christmas from all at The Mortimer Federation of St. John's and St. Mary's