

# Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School



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Dear Parents

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> September

You will probably be aware of recent concerns around physical inactivity and childhood obesity. As they go through Primary school, many children put on weight and, across the UK, around 35% of pupils in their final year of Primary are categorised as overweight or obese.

Experts have described this as an epidemic and a crisis that must be tackled before it is too late. The World Health Organisation regards childhood obesity as one of the most serious global public health challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. So far, no approach in the western world has made any difference, with millions of pounds spent on schemes which have had no lasting impact – and the situation continues to worsen.

There is, however, an initiative called The Daily Mile which was started in February 2012 by Elaine Wyllie, who was then headteacher of a large Scottish Primary school in Stirling. She was concerned by the children's obvious lack of fitness and went on to prove The Daily Mile to be both sustainable and effective in combatting inactivity and obesity in her school. The result was that, in November 2015, the Scottish Government wrote to every Scottish primary school to recommend that they implement the scheme too. In addition, in August 2016 the UK government's Childhood Obesity strategy identified and supported The Daily Mile's contribution towards the recommended hour that children should spend taking daily exercise.

The Daily Mile is very simple to start in a school. Without wasting time to change into kit or change their shoes, every child in a school or nursery goes out each day in the fresh air to run, jog or walk for 15 minutes. It is not competitive: most children will average a mile in that time, with some doing more and some doing less. It is not PE, sport or cross-country but a physical activity which is aimed at improving the children's physical, social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing. It can help children to focus and concentrate in the classroom and raise their attainment.

Since 2015, The Daily Mile has been adopted by over 1,600 schools in the UK alone, proving extraordinarily popular with thousands of children, parents and teachers. The initiative is also attracting strong overseas interest, with both Belgium and the Netherlands launching nationally in 2016.

Now that the school site work is completed we are introducing The Daily Mile for all the children at St Mary's to ensure its health and wellbeing benefits are available for everyone. The Daily Mile will take place on school grounds.

As a school we are really excited about this new initiative and we are looking forward to the benefits it will bring to your child/children. To find out more about how it all works please visit: [www.thedailymile.co.uk](http://www.thedailymile.co.uk).

Kind regards

Mr S Lawlor

Emotional Awareness and Health Leader

*With Christ in our hearts we grow in love to help others.*