

St Mary's Catholic Primary School



Newsletter No 1

September 2020

'Serving with Love; Striving for Excellence'

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome back to school!

It has been wonderful to welcome your children back to school. Although we are operating in a different way, it's lovely to see the children so engaged in their learning, enjoying their time at school and we are so pleased that our school family is together again.

I would like to welcome our new families who have joined us at St Mary's, in the Nursery and Reception classes. It has been a pleasure to see the children settling in so well.

I thank you for your support during the lockdown and the subsequent return to school. Your positive messages and kind words brought us great comfort during this particularly challenging time for everybody.

The full reopening of the school has been successful and I would like to also thank you for supporting us with being prompt for our staggered starts/finishes and for using either the Church/Council car parks, as this has significantly reduced the congestion in Greenfield Road, making it much safer for everyone.

Unfortunately, the Local Authority have had to delay the start of the Road Crossing Patrols, whilst they implement new measures. We have made them aware of the potential dangers that this is currently posing and we have since been informed that they will be resuming their duties next week.

We will continue to review our risk assessments, policies and procedures so please be aware that all arrangements are subject to change. Our priority is the safety and wellbeing of the pupils and staff and we will keep you fully updated.

We are hoping to gradually re-introduce more extra-curricular activities to the school day, depending on the local situation and the Government advice.

Please remember that your opinions are always valued and although we cannot meet with you in person, we are still available to talk. If you have any queries or concerns, simply let the office staff know that you would like a telephone appointment and we will arrange this for a mutually convenient time.

I would like to thank all our staff and Governors for all their hard work, who work tirelessly to provide an excellent education for our wonderful pupils and I thank you all for your continued support.

We look forward to a successful and healthy new school year.

Mrs MJ Grabski

Headteacher

The 'New Normal'

Going back to school after the summer holidays can feel like a very busy and often stressful time for many families. It's a time of new beginnings: new classrooms, new teachers, new lessons, new schools, new uniform... the list goes on. But this year, school will feel even more different with a 'new normal' after the extended period of school closures. With new start times and new year group bubbles, there will be a lot of 'new' things to get used to ...

Lord Jesus,

We don't know all that this year holds, but you do.

Help us with our schoolwork and our friendships.

Help us remember that you are with us in the good times and the bad.

Amen



COVID-19

Please follow this guidance if your child has any of the main symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19):

Do not send your child to school if they are displaying signs and symptoms of coronavirus and ensure that they get a test as soon as possible.

You will need to stay at home until you get the result and inform the school of their absence and the outcome of the test, as soon as you know.

Main symptoms

The main symptoms of coronavirus are:

- **a high temperature** – this means they feel hot to touch on their chest or back (you do not need to measure their temperature)
- **a new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- **a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Most people with coronavirus have at least 1 of these symptoms.

What to do if you have symptoms

If you have any of the main symptoms of coronavirus: Get a test to check if you have coronavirus as soon as possible.

Stay at home and do not have visitors until you get their test result – only leave your home to have a test.

Anyone you live with, and anyone in your support bubble, must also stay at home until you get the result.

To arrange test:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/>

If the test is positive, follow the guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection, and engage with the NHS Test and Trace process:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>

We ask that you implement these actions by following the advice set out here, together with wider public health advice and guidance.

ATTENDANCE

Our whole school attendance is currently **96.35%** which is a really positive start to the new school year.

Please remember to call the school on each morning of your child's absence and clearly state the nature of your child's illness.

We would appreciate it if you could be very clear whether your child's absence is related to COVID-19, as this requires different coding on our system.

ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

If your child is going to be absent from school either because of illness or visiting the doctor/dentist/hospital please can you call the school absence line every day of absence, explaining the reason why.

If you need to take your child out of school for a medical appointment, please let the class teacher and office know in advance and provide the school office with a copy of your appointment letter.

Thank you for your co-operation.

PARENTMAIL

ParentMail is a very important way of keeping in touch with parents. We are able to contact you by text or email with updated key information. For this reason it is very important that parents update their mobile telephone numbers and email addresses in order to continue to receive this.

Our school version of ParentMail is ParentMailX and you can access this on your computer. If you have a smart phone there is an App that you can download which will make it easier for you to access.

We would ask that you take a few minutes to check that the information on ParentMail is accurate and up to date so that we can continue to communicate with you in this way.

Thank you for your co-operation.



PARENTS' CONSULTATIONS

There will be an opportunity for you to discuss your child's progress with their teacher and to see how they have settled into their new class.

This will be scheduled for the week beginning

9th November, as a telephone appointment.

Further details regarding appointment times will be sent nearer the time.

WATER BOTTLES

Please make sure your child comes to school every day with a named water bottle. It is extremely important that children have regular access to water throughout the day as it really improves their concentration. We will provide all YR and new pupils with a water bottle.

Water bottles can be bought from the office. Unfortunately the cost of these has increased and the cost is now £1.50 should a replacement be needed.

SCHOOL LEARNING COUNCIL

A new school year means a new School Learning Council so we will be preparing for our elections shortly.

The School Learning Council will regularly represent their class and share their comments and recommendations about their learning. This will be done through discussions with each other via our School Council Logbooks.

The School Learning Council will also be responsible for organising whole school charity events throughout the year.

All of the children will be given the opportunity to put themselves forward to represent their class and will be creating posters and manifestos as part of their campaign.

We will be holding our own School Polling Day in October for the children to vote in a class ballot and elect the two representatives for their class.

Results will be announced to the children shortly afterwards.

CAFOD

This year we will be supporting CAFOD in our Harvest

Celebration. We will be collecting money for the **CAFOD Coronavirus Appeal**, for people in countries who do not have access to basic medicine or water for handwashing and also to help with food supply, when parents become ill.

At this time it is important to help our global family as much as possible and make a difference where we can.

At the beginning of October the children will be bringing home their CAFOD envelopes and asked to donate any spare money they have ... every little bit does make a huge difference.

Thankyou in advance for your constant generosity in helping others less fortunate.



SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPHS

The photographer will be in school on **Wednesday 7th October**. He will be taking individual portraits. Please make sure your child is in the correct school uniform on that day.

MEET THE TEACHER

We value the relationship between home and school and a strengthening of this is provided by a meeting at the beginning of the academic year to meet your child's new class teacher. Unfortunately due to the current situation, we have not been able to schedule these meetings but we hope that the teacher presentations provided you with the key information, as your child settles in to their new class.

SCHOOL NURSE

Although our school nurse, Dawn Smith, is not currently offering her usual drop-in service at school we are able to contact her for advice.

If you would like us to put you in contact with Dawn then please contact the school.

She can offer advice on a wide range of common childhood issues such as sleep, eating, bed-wetting and behaviour problems.

PUPIL WELLBEING

As part of our school curriculum, we are delivering Social, Emotional and Mental Health sessions to each class, throughout the week.

There will be opportunities for your child to discuss any worries, friendship issues/conflicts and these sessions will be tailored to support the needs of each pupil and class.

OASIS LUNCH CLUB

Next week, we will be starting an Oasis Lunch Club for children who have been referred by their class teacher, where they can have some extra time to talk and share within a small supportive group during their lunch time. Their concerns/worries can be discussed during these times with an adult and/or other pupils and will focus on helping the children develop coping mechanisms and resilience.

Further interventions are planned and will be offered throughout the year including sessions which support social communication, self-esteem and confidence.

Should you have any concerns regarding your child's social, emotional or mental health please get in touch with the school.





MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING

As we are unable to host a coffee morning this year, as a staff, we will continue to raise money in support of Macmillan on **Friday 25th September**.

PLACE2BE

At the end of the Spring term, we were very sad to say goodbye to Carol, our Place2Be Project Manager, as she moves on to pastures new. She will be very much missed; we thank her for all her incredible hard work in supporting all our school community and we wish her all the best.

Unfortunately, we are no longer able to continue with the Place2Be project in our school.

We thank them for their dedicated and specialist support that they have provided to all our pupils and parents over the years.

PUPIL AND PARENT SUPPORT

We ask that you please contact our Home School Support Worker, Mrs Dumbrell, or our SENCo and Inclusions Leader, Mrs Deeks, should you have any concerns or need any advice.



SCHOOL UNIFORM

Thank you! The children looked very smart in their school uniforms this week. We expect children to take pride in their uniform so please could you make sure that the children are wearing the correct cardigans and sweatshirts that display the school logo. Please ensure all items of clothing are labelled to avoid any confusion. Summer uniform can be worn until the weather changes.

SCHOOL UNIFORM DONATIONS

Thank you to everyone who has made a donation of school uniform. We now have a huge selection of jumpers and cardigans as well as summer dresses.

If you are in need of any items of uniform then please contact the school and we will do our best to provide you with the items you need. We are very low on school trousers, particularly in sizes 7 and above so we would be grateful for any trousers which your child has outgrown. Unfortunately, we will not be able to accept any other donated uniform as we have so much already and are running out of storage space for it all.

Some local charity shops stock school uniform so if you have any you would like to pass on then please try them or alternatively the Gillingham and Twydall Family Hub on Woodlands Road who may be able to take it or direct you to a place that will.

Thank you.



Collect FREE donations for our school with all your online shopping!

A BIG THANK YOU to our School supporters and our NEW supporters, who have helped to raise school funds through www.easyfundraising.org.uk and I am pleased to inform you that so far we have raised **£595.36!**

Please continue to support the pupils at St Mary's Catholic Primary School, by raising much needed funds to support our curriculum and events for the children, throughout the year.

All you need to do is register with [www. easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) and then visit any of the 3,000 retailers to start shopping. After you have made your purchase, the retailer will make a donation to our school at no extra cost to you. **Thank you!**

Join, shop and raise here:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stmaryscatholicprimaryschool1/>

MEDICAL INFORMATION

Please make sure that you keep us up to date with any changes with your children's medical conditions.

If your child is an asthma sufferer please request a School Asthma Card from the School Office if you haven't already provided us with one.

KEY INFORMATION

Please inform our Home School Support Worker, Mrs Dumbrell, if you require letters and information to be sent to two different addresses.



READING IS MAGIC

Step into a world of creativity with the Reading is Magic Festival this autumn. Six days of free, inclusive and engaging digital events for schools and families. It all begins online on **Sunday 27th September**.

Bath Festivals has created a collaboration of amazing book festivals from the UK and internationally to bring you an amazing schools and family programme, all free and available for everyone, everywhere.

Visit <https://www.readingismagicfestival.com/> to find out more and to access the magic!

SUGAR AND HEALTH

As a Healthy School, we ensure the children are taught that some foods present a possible health risk if they are eaten too often.

Through the Personal, Social and Health Education curriculum and our work with the National Healthy Schools Standard, we teach children the importance of making healthy choices.

As we are all aware, consuming too much sugar can have serious effects on health and these issues may only appear later in life. Children can grow accustomed to a diet high in free sugars, and this habit will then be harder for them to break.

As a school, we are therefore raising awareness where possible, and encourage children to make sensible choices.

We request that snacks consist of fruit or raw vegetables such as carrots for breaktime and the following items should not be included in packed lunches: chocolate and sweets. We ask that the only drinks provided are water, pure fruit juice or drinking yogurt.

Due to the risk of severe allergy, nuts (including peanut butter) must not be brought into school. Foods that are less healthy may be offered from time to time as treats or as part of whole school celebrations such as Christmas parties.

We would request that children do not bring any sweets or cakes in to school to share with their class, firstly to consider the varied dietary and allergy needs of all pupils but also to support us in promoting healthy choices.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation.

EUROPEAN DAY OF LANGUAGES

On Saturday 26th September it is The European Day of Languages.



St Mary's would like to commemorate this event by celebrating the diverse culture within our community on, not just a European, but an international level.

The children are invited, if they wish, to come to school on **Friday 25th September** dressed in an international costume or traditional dress of their choice. However, this does not include clothes in the colours of a particular country or those associated with a sport.

Children who attend a club such as Brownies, Guides, Cubs or Scouts are also welcome to wear their uniforms to school for the day.

Mrs Bucklee, Modern Foreign Languages Lead

INCLUSION

Over the coming weeks I will be reviewing the children's needs once they have settled into their new classes.

Where necessary, you will receive a provision form detailing support that your child may need during the Autumn term.

You will also have the chance to discuss any issues with the class teacher and/or myself at the November parents consultations.

I am also updating School Based Plans for those that have these and I ask parents to return this paperwork, if you have not already done so.

Do feel free to contact me if you have any concerns about your child.

MCH

Medway Children's Healthcare is reopening and those who have had referrals made through school previously should be hearing soon about rescheduled appointments.

There is a backlog due to the service being closed, however we have been assured that this is being cleared as quickly as possible.

There is also now a new referral process with all new referrals going through the School Nursing Service.

I will contact families that this will affect individually to discuss the new process and how to move forward.

Mrs Deeks, Inclusion Leader

BREAKFAST CLUB

Should you wish to book a place at Breakfast Club from 7.45am at a cost of £2.50 a day, please fill in the forms held at the office. Payment needs to be made in advance to secure a place. **Please note that children must be in by 8:00 as they will not be admitted after this time.**

AFTER-SCHOOL CLUB

Places for After-School Club are available for children from our Nursery to Year 6. Sessions run from 3:30 - 5:30pm (Monday- Friday) and cost £6.00 per day, £30 per week. Please contact the School Office to register a booking. Payment needs to be made in advance.

CHILDREN DUE TO START SCHOOL IN SEPTEMBER 2021

If your child's **5th birthday** is between **1st September 2021 and 31st August 2022** they will be due to start school in September 2021. Applications need to be made online via the Medway Council website. You will also need to complete a supplementary form and hand it into school. Further information to follow.

SCHOOL TERM DATES
SEPTEMBER 2020-JULY 2021

Term 1	INSET	Wednesday 2nd September 2020
	Start	Thursday 3 rd September 2020
	Finish	Friday 23 rd October 2020
Autumn Break		Monday 26 th October to Friday 30 th October 2020
Term 2	Start	Monday 2 nd November 2020
	Finish	Friday 18 th December 2020
Christmas Break		Monday 21 st December 2020 to Tuesday 5 th January 2021
	INSET	Monday 4th January 2021
	INSET	Tuesday 5th January 2021
Term 3	Start	Wednesday 6 th January 2021
	Finish	Friday 12 th February 2021
February Break		Monday 15 th February to Friday 19 th February 2021
Term 4	Start	Monday 22 nd February 2021
	Finish	Thursday 1 st April 2021
Good Friday		Friday 2 nd April 2021
Easter Monday		Monday 5 th April 2021
Spring Break		Tuesday 6 th April to Friday 16 th April 2021
Term 5	Start	Monday 19 th April 2021
May Bank Holiday		Monday 3rd May 2021
	Finish	Friday 28 th May 2021
May Bank Holiday		Monday 31st May 2021
May Break		Tuesday 1 st June to Friday 4 th June 2021
	INSET	Monday 7th June 2021
Term 6	Start	Tuesday 8 th June 2021
	Finish	Thursday 22 nd July 2021
Term 1	Start	September 2021

An additional INSET day to be confirmed.

Please remember that holidays at the start of the academic year are not authorised.