

Newsletter – September 2020



We're back, and things have been really good in school so far this term. The children have done an amazing job getting to know all of the routines of our new daily life at St. Mary's and they deserve a lot of credit for this, as do the staff who have worked tirelessly to make sure everything is in place. We are reviewing regularly and please be assured that if we can improve any aspect of how we are running things for the benefit of everyone, we will. Our aim is to make things run as smoothly as possible within our guidelines and your continued support and understanding, does mean a lot to us.

Thank you.

Apologies for the long newsletter, but there's so much to include. Please take the time to read it carefully.

Face Coverings

We would now like to recommend that, at the start and end of the day when collecting and dropping off children, adults wear a face covering to help protect themselves and each other.



New children

We have all of our new Reception children in school now and they have settled so well. We're really looking forward to this year and hope that they all continue to have a lovely time in Rosen Class with Miss Lee and Mrs. Berry.



We also have a couple of new children in other classes this year and it is always nice to welcome new faces. One of the lovely things about our school is how well the other children make new people feel welcome so quickly. Joining a new school can be a nervous time, but everything has been really positive.

Communication

With the ongoing pandemic and guidance associated with that, we will be using our email system to make sure news and information gets to you as soon as possible. If you have any changes to your contact details, please make sure that you contact the school office ASAP so that we can update our records. Please also remember to update the details on your ParentPay account and ensure that you don't miss out.

If you need to contact your child's class teacher about anything, please do not hesitate to email or call the school office and then the class teachers will get back to you as soon as possible.

Online Learning

During these difficult times, we are aware that children may be absent from school due to Covid 19 related illness/symptoms. However, we understand that many of our absent pupils will not be poorly or displaying symptoms themselves, but they may have to be at home because of siblings/parents/carers displaying symptoms. The Government guidance has asked us to



ensure that remote learning is in place and we will therefore be providing work to any pupils who are at home self-isolating / waiting for a test.



The work will be reflective of what is going on each day in the classrooms. It will be uploaded onto **Google Classroom** for children to access at home at the end of the day. Please can I ask that you all log into Google classroom to ensure you can access this platform and if you have any problems please let us know.

School Grounds

As I have said before, we are really sorry to have to close the school grounds in the evenings and at weekends. Unfortunately, I am aware that some older children have been climbing into the playground out of school hours which makes it more difficult for us to keep everything safe and clean for everyone.



If you have any older children at home, can you please make sure that they understand the reasons for the locked gates and also ask them to make sure that they share that message around with their friends in the local area.

The school field remains open for anyone to use.

Thank you for your support with this.

Mental Health Awareness Week – Monday 28th September to Friday 2nd October

As you are all aware the school and the Federation take mental health very seriously and during the coming year, we have planned a wide range of activities to support mental health and well-being.

Take 5 Wellbeing Festival

As a federation we have been invited to take part in a virtual wellbeing festival run by Buckfast Abbey this week. The children will be joining in with different well-being activities. I am sure you will hear about what they get up to.

#HelloYellow – Tuesday 29th September



Although this national awareness raising day is later in October, we thought it would be a good to include it in our well-being week by supporting and raising funds for Young Minds. We are holding #HelloYellow day on **Tuesday 29th September**. The children are invited to wear all yellow or something yellow to school and bring a donation for this charity.

Three Peaks Challenge



In support of the Leadership Team who are taking part in the Three Peaks Challenge, and to help with their fund raising for Young Minds, the children and staff



have decided to do some walking challenges of their own.

The altitude gain for all three peaks is 3064 metres. Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 will walk that distance by doing laps of the school perimeter.

The EYFS and KS1 children will do an activity to complete a lap of the playground for every mile walked. The total walking distance is 23 miles so we hope as many as possible will complete the 23 laps.

We are hoping for good weather next Friday but please make sure they bring a coat just in case.

Ultimately, the aim is to raise money. The target is to raise £1800 for Young Minds, a UK leading charity that is committed to improving the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people. We have set up a just giving page and donations can be made using the following link.

www.justgiving.com/fundraising/usfthreepeaks

As I write this, we have already reached 89% of our target total.

Therefore, if you would like to sponsor your child with these in school challenges please see the above link.

Tapestry



You will have received an agreement form for the Tapestry system that we are going to use across the whole school. Please complete and return this form by Friday 2nd October so that we can complete the setting up process.

Parents Online Meetings

Thank you for your contribution if you were able to log in and join the online parent information meetings earlier this week. We understand that not everyone would have been able to attend but if you would like to see what was said, the recordings of these meetings have been uploaded to google classroom. Despite the odd technical issue, we are pleased to have tried this way of meeting and we will hopefully review and improve things for future meetings.

Permission checklists

Can I please ask you to help the office by returning all forms as soon as possible so that any information required can be processed quickly. It takes a lot of time to chase unreturned forms so your help in this would be greatly appreciated.

Cycle helmets



Please make sure that if your child is cycling or scootering to school, that they are wearing their helmet to protect them.

On the same issue, my staff and I have all seen a number of children playing on their bikes and scooters after school without their helmets on. Can we please urge you to encourage all children to wear them to prevent any nasty injuries.

School Photos – Friday 2nd October

On Friday 2nd October the school photographer will be in school taking individual photos and so **all children need to wear their full school uniform** including any children who normally wear their PE kits on a Friday.



Waste workshops

We are always working to improve our understanding of environmental issues and last week, the children in school started looking at the problem of plastic pollution. We will continue to look at the ways we can improve how we reduce, recycle and reuse at St. Mary's.

Part of this work will include some workshops from the Devon Waste Education Team who are visiting the school next week to work with each bubble.

Don't let Devon go to waste

On Tuesday 6th October each KS2 class will have a session looking at litter and recycling.

On Thursday 8th October KS1 and EYFS will both have a session called 'Plastic Pirates' to understand more about plastics in the environment.

Online Assemblies

Despite not having worship and assemblies as we normally would do, altogether in the hall, it has been really good to continue as a whole school through online gatherings. It's all a bit strange, but it's working well so far, apart from the occasional technical glitch. Well done to all of the children for taking part so well.

This half term our Christian Value is

Friendship

Harvest Festival

The Harvest Festival this year will be a bit different to normal. Unfortunately we won't be going to the church and we are also thinking about how else we can share this important time in the church calendar with everyone at home.

Can we suggest that this year, instead of bringing in donations to school for the Harvest, you make a family contribution to a local foodbank. If you are going to a Supermarket, why not make a contribution to their foodbank collection points if they have one in store.



And finally...a couple of quick reminders:

- Children need their coats every day.
- All snacks need to be healthy snacks. Fruit and veg are ideal snacks.
- We are discouraging 'show and tell' items coming into school. Photos uploaded to Google Classroom or Tapestry when that is finalised, are the best ways of sharing special things with the class.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support.

Regards

Adrian Clements
Head of School