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St Mary's

Church of England Primary School

NEWSLETTER

Friday 5th June 2020

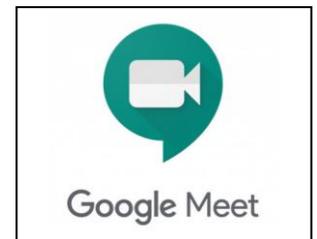
Dear parents and carers,

I trust that you and your families are staying safe and well and that the children enjoyed their half term. It was lovely to see some clips of the children having their own May Day celebrations in their gardens and homes before the break. Who knew there were so many innovative ways to recreate the Maypole at home!

Google Classroom and Introducing Google Meet:

Having set up Google Classroom in April, we increased its use for children in Y1 to Y6 so that all distance learning became available on this online platform. Learning for Reception has largely continued to be email based.

During the week commencing 8th June, all teachers will be initiating online meetings via 'Google Meet' with small groups of children across the week. This time will be for interaction with the children and to give them an opportunity to see their teacher and some of their peers. We will be introducing teaching assistants to join in too once we are up and running with teachers.



The 'Google Meet' may initially include teachers sharing a story, a song, or a short fun activity. Essentially it will be a way for the children to connect with staff and with each other. Groups will meet with their teacher once a week and teachers will mix the groups up each week so that the children get to see more of their classmates.

We would like your support to maximise **safety** and the **use of this time** with the children and ask that you:

- Support your child to access the meeting (using the access instructions on the next page).
- Remain in the vicinity of your child, but not in view please. If they are working in a downstairs room e.g. a sitting room, please encourage them to leave the door open.
- Ensure that your child is wearing a school polo shirt or something similar.
- Remind your child to behave respectfully and in accord with how they would behave at school while they are engaging with the online meeting.
- Encourage your child to participate; even if they don't want to say anything. An online meeting may seem a little strange to some of the children, but hopefully in time they will feel more confident to speak and join in.
- Ensure that your child is positioned in front of a neutral background during the meeting, in a communal area of your home i.e. not in their bedroom.

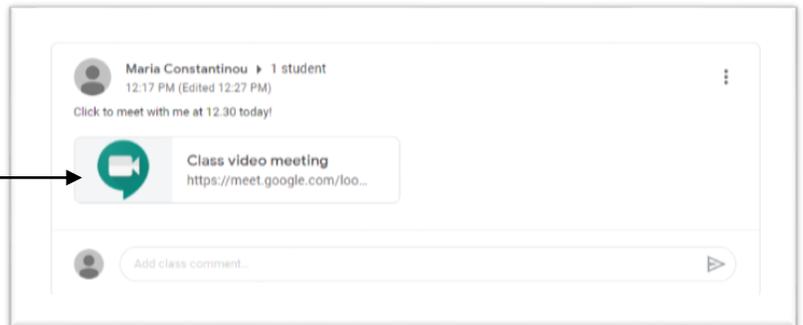
- Please refrain from entering into any discussion with the teacher; this time is for the whole group of children. Do continue to contact your child's teacher via the class email.
- Discourage any excitable siblings from being in view!

Accessing Google Meet:

Your child's teacher will post an announcement about a Google Meet in the Google Classroom stream. This will tell the children when the meeting will be including what time your child will need to join. Please look out for it.

It will look a bit like this and will only be visible to the children in the group that is meeting at that time:

All your child will need to do is click on the link to join the meeting.



Please let your child's teacher know if you have had difficulty accessing Google Meet once it is set up, as we **may** be able to

advise on any technical difficulties... as long as they aren't too complex! Please note that you may need to download Chrome or Edge to access the Meeting if your usual browser is Internet Explorer.

We recognise that the children will be missing one another and their teachers, so we hope that the use of Google Meet will be welcomed by all. We all miss the children very much.

Postponement of Return to School for Reception, Year 1 and Year 6:

The Chair of Governors wrote to parents and carers in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 last weekend regarding the decision to delay the return of those year groups following the Prime Minister's briefing on Thursday 28th May confirming the plan for schools to return from 1st June. We want to ensure that all parents are aware of the decision taken to postpone the return of those classes.

In view of the data presented at the briefing on 28th May, and taking into account our local context, and recent news, the Governing Body looked at the evidence and decided that it was not yet safe to return and decided to change the dates originally sent to those classes. The independent SAGE Group concluded that by delaying school opening for 2 weeks, which is from 15th June, the infection rate would be halved. They also warned that returning on 1st June would lead to an increase in infections and increase the R rate potentially by 0.3.

Other evidence we have taken into account is:

- The R rate remains at 0.7-0.9, where 1 is considered to be very high risk
- The government Covid Alert scale continues to score at 4/5 where 4 is critical
- The Government scientific advisor, Sir Patrick Vallance, described the situation as continuing to be fragile
- Test, track and trace, one of the key tests for reopening schools, is not yet established and there is a suggestion that this now will not be on-line until the end of the month. This is crucial for managing infection and isolating those potentially at risk.
- Barnet infection rates continue to be amongst the highest of the London Boroughs. Click [here to access the data](#) on this comparison.
- Last weekend it was reported that members of the government SAGE advisory committee stated that coronavirus is spreading too quickly to ease lockdown and that relaxing restrictions is too risky.

Despite the delay of re-opening for Reception, Y1 and Y6, school continues to be open for children of key workers and since school closure, all available staff have been deployed to work on a rota to be in school. To

prepare for the return of more children to school, all members of staff are working hard to prepare every classroom and space in school in line with the risk assessment which was recently shared with you. This is in addition to the provision of daily distance learning and associated correspondence.

Suggested return dates for priority year groups: Reception, Year 1 and Year 6

We will continue to communicate any further decisions regarding the confirmed return of the children in the priority year groups. Just a reminder, from the Chair of Governors' letter of Sunday 31st May; although we hope to open on the dates given to you in this letter, the Governing Body will continue to look for improvements in the local and national context referred to in the bullet points above. Confirmation of the dates, or changes to them will be made on the basis of this.

What happens for classes who are not currently being invited to come back into school?

We are very aware of the challenge for families and children who are in classes that are not being invited into school at this time. As yet, we have not been given any further instructions regarding the return of Years 2, 3, 4 and 5. If government guidance changes, we will work with the Governing Body to consider all possibilities and then communicate any decisions with you.

Talking about Covid-19 in a way that children can understand and be reassured:

We have found a lovely free story written by the author of the Gruffalo, Axel Scheffler:

<https://nosycrow.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Coronavirus-A-Book-for-Children.pdf>

We are also creating [well-being page on the school website](#) which we will continue to populate with resources and links to support children and families in this difficult time. Please keep an eye on this for updates.

A Note for Reflection:

Whenever God talks to his children in the Bible, do you know what he usually says first?

Not "Hello, how do you do?"

Instead, he says "Do not be afraid."

God doesn't want his children, even for a moment, to be anxious or afraid.

He wants his children to trust him.

God says to you, "Do not be afraid. I am with you."

Are you worried about something today?

Whatever it is, you can put it in God's hands.



From all of us at St Mary's primary school, stay safe, stay well and our love and prayers be with you.

**Maria Constantinou and Mel Adams
Headteachers**