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St Mary's

Church of England Primary School

Newsletter No. 19

Monday 25th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

We hope this finds you all safe and well. We continue to be so impressed with the children's engagement with their remote learning and we thank you all very much for the support you are providing alongside your other commitments.

The big question raised in the media over the last few days is 'when are schools to re-open for all children?'

Whilst it continues to be a hot topic for debate, the government have still not made a decision. In the new year, we were all told that schools will be closed for most pupils until February half term. We have not received any indication that schools will or will not be opening after half term.

The education secretary has indicated that there will be a minimum of 2 weeks' notice ahead of re-opening. Please be assured that once a decision is made by the government, we will be writing to you to confirm arrangements.

Structure and routine:

We know how important structures and routines are for all of us at the moment and each family will have their own routines. Today, your child's teacher has shared an example of a suggested timetable on Google Classroom to demonstrate how the children could organise their time on a school day. These suggested routines include breaks and lunch to avoid extended time on screens. These structures **are only a suggestion** of course as timings and the order of activities would need to be adjusted in accordance with each family's context. **We will email these out in an editable format, so you can make best use of them.** We hope you find this useful.

Annual School Reports:

At this time of year, teachers would usually begin writing progress reports for children in Y1 to Y6 to be published in March. This year, we have decided to publish all school reports (including Reception) at the end of the academic year instead. There will be consultations by zoom before the end of term where teachers will speak to you regarding your child's progress and areas for further development.

Online Access to Learning:

Although you all responded to the survey about access to technology last term, please do notify us if you have had a change in your circumstances since then that may affect your child's ability to go online to access their remote learning. Please also get in touch if you have any difficulties with your home internet connection as we may be able to help.

Diocese of St Albans
London Borough of Barnet



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If online learning becomes problematic on any day, for any reason, please let us know. For example, if you feel that your child is not coping or if there has been a sudden change to routine that has impacted on you or them, please don't hesitate to send an email to the office. This will be forwarded to someone who will contact you as soon as possible.

Collective Worship:

An act of worship is uploaded every day to Google Classroom, all of which is purposefully prepared for the children at St. Mary's. **Please encourage your child to take part** in collective worship as they would at school each day; there are often questions for them to reflect about and comment on throughout the week. We are currently thinking about people that Jesus met also about some of Jesus' most important messages.

All of our online collective worship recordings include important unifying elements that remind the children that although we are apart, we are still one St. Mary's family.



In addition, this Sunday's service from St Mary's Church will be a Christingle service, which will be available on the seasonal services playlist at

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL1ReN5949S8gwAb7QgriBmVoFiL4Y5Sil>

Children's Mental Health Week: Week Commencing 1st February 2021

The theme of this year's Children's Mental Health Week is **Express Yourself**.

The 'Express yourself' focus is about children finding ways to share feelings, thoughts, or ideas, through creativity. This could be through art, music, writing and poetry, dance and drama, photography and film, and doing activities that make them feel good.

Next week, teachers will be sharing activities and ideas for the children to explore. As parents and carers, you play an important role in your child's mental health. Take a look at these [free resources](#) from Place2Be.



Supporting Children with Questions they may have about the pandemic:

We have prepared something that you might find useful should your child ask about friendships, learning and lockdown. The summary is at the end of this newsletter and is simply a suggested way of responding to questions that your child might have.



**Lord Jesus Christ,
This is our school, let your light shine here and in our homes.
Let the rooms be full of joy.
Let love be all around – love for one another; love for people everywhere; and love for you.
Let us remember, that as many hands build a house, so many hearts build a school and that
whether we are together or apart, you are with us.
Amen**

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

**Maria Constantinou and Mel Adams
Headteachers**

Supporting Children with Questions they may have about the pandemic

Why can't we go to school? Why are we in lockdown again?

Reassure as much about the facts that we know. We are keeping safe and trying to minimise the virus. There are scientists and doctors and health professionals working very hard to give out vaccines and medicine, but for the moment we need to help by staying at home to help stop the virus from spreading. It is important to still wash hands and to be aware of their own hygiene to minimise any risks. Reassure that everyone is doing everything to ensure we are as safe as possible.

What if I am missing too much learning?

Reassure children that it is the teacher's job to see where they are at with their learning and they don't need to worry. Everyone is trying their best and there are new ways being developed to help children with their online learning and for teachers to be able to see how children are doing and what they need help with.

Will my friends still be my friends?

Be honest and direct that friendships do change and grow and new friendships can happen as well. Enjoy the feeling of looking forward to seeing friends again and know your friends will be looking forward to this too when we do all get back to school. For now, keep in contact with phone calls, and chats.

When will lockdown end and when can we go back to school and see our friends?

Be honest and say what we know. That we will go back as soon as we can and when the virus is under greater control. As soon as we know we can let you know but at the moment we are all doing our best to stay safe and to be together as much as we can. Be responsive and aware in listening to any concerns or questions. Give factual answers where possible and reassure, encourage and empower children to use their inner skills of resilience, relationships, self-worth, and optimism and encourage them to keep talking to people that care about them.



Resilience: How we develop inner strength and courage and the ability to keep trying and 'bounce back' from difficult situations.



Self-worth: How we feel about ourselves inside, knowing we are important and that we matter.



Relationships: The connections we have with the people around us that help us to feel special and safe.



Hope and Optimism: Helps us to see that things can change and that we can believe in our potential now and in the future.



Self-care: How we look after our mental and physical health, notice our feelings and how we make choices about ways to take care of ourselves.

For additional supporting information please click [here](#) to see the Public Health England guidance for parents and carers on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic