

Newsletter 6th November 2020

We hope you are staying safe!

We hope you had a good half term holiday with your family and that the start of lockdown has been ok for you. Please follow the government guidelines carefully so you and your family stay healthy and safe. Keep us up to date with any changes, if you are self-isolating or waiting for test results. It's really important we know how everyone is getting on as we need to make daily returns to the local and national government.

Just before half term we had a visit from two of Her Majesty's Health and Safety officers to undertake a lengthy HSE Covid inspection. I am pleased to report that we were found to have 'very good measures in place' at school to keep the children and staff safe.

The next few weeks towards Christmas are going to be different for us all but at school we are trying to continue with business as usual where possible. The children had their annual school photographs this week following strict socially distanced guidelines. Next week parents' evenings start. Have you made your appointment?

Shortly we will be letting you know how we will be celebrating Christmas. There will need to be some changes but we hope to maintain a sense of normality at school, where possible.

Regards,



PE Kit

For the foreseeable future PE kit needs to be worn to school on the day your child has PE. This will be taught by our specialist PE coach Mr Clarke. Due to staying in bubbles, PE will not be taught on other days but the session will be longer.

Due to staff being limited to working in a small number of bubbles only, the children will be on a rota. In the teams with three classes the children will do PE on two weeks of three but for ease and for getting everyone in routine we would still like them to be in PE on the same day every week unless we tell you otherwise. Occasionally we might need to move the PE day due to staff training or other events but we will tell you in advance.

PE kit at this time of the year is a school logo PE t-shirt, plain white, black or navy shorts (or a tracksuit or leggings in school colours) and plimsolls or trainers. **Football shirt or branded t-shirts are not okay.** If you are waiting for a PE t-shirt to be delivered, please find a plain colour t-shirt. If the children need an extra layer they can wear their school sweatshirt or cardigan too.

Monday Finch, Puffin and Coot KS1
Tuesday Kites and Dove Reception
Wednesday Nightingale, Cuckoo, Peregrine UKS2
Thursday Sparrow, Blackbird and Kingfisher LKS2

General Communication

Every week we come across a telephone or email contact that does not work. In fact, we spend considerable time in the school office trying to get hold of some families. Please can you ensure you let us know when numbers or email addresses change. Let's not wait until we need you in an emergency to find your contact details do not work!

Covid Communication

We have to report daily to the government regarding Covid cases. That includes those self-isolating due to other family members in the same household displaying symptoms, those waiting for a test or its outcome in addition to a confirmed or positive case.

We are extremely grateful to those of you who have provided evidence of test results so your child may return to school. Please keep communicating with our school office on this matter so we have accurate information. It is so important to keep everyone in our school community safe.

As our school office cannot have visitors, including parents, at the moment please try to communicate with our admin team either by phone, 0118-901 5545 or email admin@st-maryallsaints.reading.sch.uk we have also created an Office Correspondence box for you to post any paperwork. It is situated outside the main entrance door, together with a red box for any remaining book returns.

NHS Test and Trace COVID-19 app

Please use the NHS COVID-19 Test and Trace app to help control the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). It will do this by alerting people who may have been exposed to infection so that they can take action. The app is available to download for anyone aged 16 and over. This means that some parents and staff should be using this app now and will be eligible to use the app and benefit from its features. We have two different QR codes for the school building. One is situated inside the foyer of the school for any parents needing to come into the building for booked meetings that cannot take place over the phone. In addition, we have a different one for The Nest (aka the former Children's Centre building) for those of you accessing the two year old nursery. Please make use of them.

If you are just accessing the school grounds and are outside in the open air it is not necessary to access the QR code.

Department for Education coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline

The Department for Education coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline is available to answer questions about coronavirus (COVID-19) relating to education and children's social care. Staff, parents and young people can contact this helpline by calling: Phone: 0800 046 8687 Opening hours: Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm

11+

Children in Y5 have received a letter this week from myself inviting them apply to join a regular 11+ practice session for grammar school entry in September 2022. If you and your child are interested please email me as per the letter, so I can consider them.

Cycling or coming to school by scooter

If your child comes to school by bicycle or scooter please bear the following facts and guidance in mind:

- Helmets should be worn. If you choose not to insist upon this then it is entirely at your own risk. Helmets should be taken into school with their coats.
- All scooters and cycles should be stored in the school bicycle shed in an appropriate place
- If children arrive before their allocated staggered start they need to wait quietly and still holding their cycle or scooter in a standing position on the edge of the path/fence, not blocking it.
- As children approach the school curtilage/perimeter fencing they need to dismount and walk with their scooter or cycle.
- All users must be reminded that part of their responsibility as a rider is to be aware of and look out for other users of the path or road, that is other pedestrians and riders. If your child cannot do this yet then I suggest they leave their cycle or scooter at home at the moment until they are ready to do so.
- No cycling or scooting is permitted inside the school grounds.
- Older children cycling to school alone should be reminded please that this is a privilege, which you as a parent trust them to undertake sensibly. If they cannot undertake this role sensibly then I will ask you to accompany your child to school every day. The school is not responsible for unsafe or inappropriate behaviour outside the school gate and any ongoing concerns will be reported to the police. As most of our Year 5 and 6 children undertook Bikeability (old Cycling Proficiency) Level 1 and 2 training last year then quite frankly they should know better!

Staggered starts

Thank you for your continued support regarding staggered starts. Please can I remind all families who are waiting alongside the fence for their allocated time slot not to block the path. We have reception families and members of the local community who need to walk down the path too at this time.

Every day I have to remind parents and their children to line up along the edge of the path or fence. This is particularly important now the paths are wet and muddy. Whilst I cannot enforce mask wearing it should now be strongly encouraged, waiting at least a metre away from the next family.

Can I remind families again that no one should be arriving before their allocated staggered time? Some families are still arriving more than ten minutes ahead of schedule. This is not useful for many reasons, not least as many children cannot cope with the waiting and you are increasing your risk of infection. If you do have to wait for your entry time please stay with your child if under Year 3 and keep them in close contact. By this I mean you should remain waiting whilst holding their hand and supervising them at all times. Please be reminded that antisocial behaviours such as smoking and swearing loudly in the line outside the gates is not okay and several parents have been deeply offended by this! Be aware of your own actions and consider others in doing so.

Parking



Are these your cars? If so, you are parking illegally and irresponsibly near our school entrance. As a result, you are jeopardising the safety of not just your own children, but those of others too. This is not okay and as a school we cannot support your actions.

You may have seen the traffic wardens and car CCTV van patrolling the school vicinity and wider Coley area recently. Parking on double yellow lines and the school yellow zig zag markings is illegal. Likewise blocking the path along the opposite side of the road is illegal. I cannot support any family who chooses to jeopardise the safety of our children by stopping and parking on or next to these markings. Likewise doing U turns outside the school gates area is not okay. It won't be long before we have a serious or possible fatal accident near school, possibly because of irresponsible actions by a parent or carer. As you know the no 11 bus comes right past the school and this adds an extra risk. I often chat with parents who stop or park their cars on the double yellow lines or yellow zig zags to remind them of their actions, but sadly many families continue to violate these laws. Even dropping children off on the yellow lines is illegal and unsafe. I appreciate parents often telling me that they are 'in a rush' or 'have nowhere else to park' but really this is not good enough and would be no excuse if you cause a serious accident. What I witness every day is pretty unreal and if I am honest pretty scary. I have seen parents continuing conversations with their children who are crossing or in the middle of the road. I witness parents doing u turns in front of the bus and others cars. And I regularly witness parents allowing their children to leave moving cars or get out of cars and run across the road. Serious it is totally irresponsible but as principal I cannot take responsibility for your actions on the public road. I have warned, supported you to make alternative decisions and advised, often taking my own safety into risk, but can do little more. Please let us all step up and work as a school, community to keep our children and families safe at all times.

Very few families come from far enough away from the school to warrant the use of a car. If you do, that is your own choosing. In the event you do need to use a car to come to school, please park a few roads away a few minutes before your arrival time and walk the final part of the journey to school. It's safer for us all and healthier for your child!

Free School Meals

If you think your children could be eligible for Free School Meals, regardless of whether your child is also entitled to Universal Free School Meals (under 7s), please ask for a form to complete. If you call us we can usually complete it on the phone and get it assessed within a few days. It is worth being signed up as many families realised when the FSM vouchers appeared during lockdown.

Free School Meals

All children in reception, Year 1 and Year 2 can have a free school lunch. This a national entitlement regardless of income or personal circumstances. Use it, it is your right! Meals must still be chosen and booked using the Parent Pay online ordering system a week in advance, but you do not need to pay anything. If you are unsure of how to go about this, please just give the office a call; and they will advise you.

Children whose families earn below the threshold of an annual income of no more than £16,190 or are in receipt of a number of benefits including universal credit maybe entitles to Free School Melas (FSM). I know many families have already signed up for this and have been informed about their entitlement. However, we appreciate that family's circumstances change and may have done so with the latest Lockdown being announced. If this is the case please let us know so we can help you register for FSM. Its very quick and easy and could benefit your family. For example, in the previous lockdown when schools were closed FSM families received Food Vouchers each week. I know this was a huge benefit to families. We are often given opportunities to support families in different ways such as via food hampers or toy or clothes donations so its worth keeping us in the loop. If we don't know your personal circumstances have changed, we cannot help you.

Birthdays

No sweets should come into school for your children to eat during the day unless your child wants to bring some sweets into school on their birthday to share with the whole class. It is preferred that sweets do not have gelatine such as Haribo although the major supermarkets in Reading do stock gelatine free Haribo. Chocolates are fine generally but please remember we have a **no nut policy**. Any sweets to share should be wrapped and in the main they are distributed before home time so parents can make the final decision. I am sorry but due to Covid safety regulations we cannot distribute or cut a cake in the classroom but individually wrapped shop bought cakes would be fine. The children do enjoy celebrating each another's birthdays, as do the staff enjoy sharing their birthday with their own classes! Each Friday we share and celebrate birthdays from the previous week in our whole school celebration assembly when we sing to the children and staff concerned and each child (and adult!) receives a birthday sticker from me. This is now done by virtual means on the big screen in each classroom.

Outdoor learning with Ufton Adventure

Years 3 and 4 children enjoy outdoor learning every week, usually on Mondays and Tuesdays, led by Ufton Adventure staff. As the weather has now got much colder and wetter, it would be wise to send your child to school with wellies or a change of shoes on their allocated day. We are massively lucky to have great outdoor space and our own woodland area, so let's ensure they are equipped to use it. There is no such thing as bad weather, more like bad clothing! An extra layer and hats, gloves and scarf may also be worn. I am totally committed to outdoor learning for Year 3 and 4 as it is often something that the younger child participates in but peters out as the children move from EYFS into KS1. Outdoor learning is practical and encourages children to develop soft skills such as determination, resilience, confidence and team work, amongst others. And outdoor learning is often great fun and full of memory making. These can be hard to teach from the classroom alone.

Penmanship awards

Children in KS2 have all had chance to apply for their penmanship awards. Children know the results of their applications and have received certification of these awards today in celebration assembly. Just a work of explanation for new families:

- All awards are marked by me as principal to ensure consistency and fairness
- Teachers and children receive individual feedback so they know how they can progress and work towards achieving the next level
- Children can make a new application for their penmanship award once per half term. There will be a further opportunity to try again before Christmas.
- All applications must be complete during school time so that everyone receives a fair chance and is able to produce the same quality of work in a class room setting. Practicing at home is however very useful.

- All applications are undertaken on normal lined paper (not the funny multi lined handing paper). Applications must be written in an appropriate/ close distance to the margin and poems written properly in stanzas following school presentation expectations. Years 1 and 2 can use the wider line spacing (12mm) for their application as this is what they usually use in class for English. Older children will, in the main, be expected to use 8mm lined paper which is their usual spacing I English books.
- There are 5 levels 1. To write using printed script, using finger spaces with letters correctly positioned on a line 2 To write a long poem out accurately using joined/ cursive writing of correct orientation and positioning using pencil. Tis award means a child can now use a school pen. 3 Children can write consistently using a school pen and correctly use complex punctuation in the right places in their poem. 4 Children write with no errors, consistent presentation and neatness and all letters are uniformly shaped and positioned. Punctuation and spelling is 100% accurate.
- School pens and fountain pens will be supplied by us. However, we do recommend that when children achieve Penmanship 4 and are permitted to use a fountain pen they discuss this with their families and buy a slightly better quality fountain pen than we can supply, so they can use it at home too. I will advise after they have achieved no 4. We will also support hem to start using ink cartridges and so on! Its quite a big learning curve but one these particular children are ready for.

Ask you child in KS2 about their application. Which one did they attempt? Were they successful? If so, have you seen their certificate?

Year 1 and 2 children will be able to make their application for Penmanship 1 and 2, if appropriate, shortly.

Well done to Kyla, Jemma and Kerry-Anan who have all passed the converted Penmanship 4 award which means they are entitles to use a fountain pen.

Flu immunisations

The school nursing service will be coming into school to administer flu immunisations on 20th November. I strongly urge you to support this initiative as I have done so with my staff team. This year flu immunisations are even more important than normal and I have already been to have one too this year for the first time! You should have all received this information a few weeks ago but if for any reason you haven't please get in touch with the office. (Just for info the children do not have the immunization via an injection..... they have the benefit of having their dose via a nasal spray, so no needles!) I know some children who have chronic health or medical conditions have already had theirs via the hospital or the surgery. If this is the case, just let us know via the school office please.

Learning this term

As we have been unable to have families into school for curriculum talks, we have uploaded our Curriculum Maps for each team to our website. They can be viewed here:

<https://stmaryandallsaints.co.uk/learning-and-education/curriculum/curriculum-overview>

The curriculum maps include information about what topics your child is learning this year and how you can help them at home.

Remembrance

On 11th November we will be having a short commemoration of remembrance and a minutes silence as we would normally. It will be held in classroom using Teams so we are brought together virtually in our classrooms. If your child wants to wear a poppy that is fine but we are not able to sell poppies at school this year as poppies cannot be moved from bubble to bubble at this time.

Christmas- a heads up!

As I mentioned earlier, we will continue to celebrate Christmas as we would normally albeit in a few Covid safe ways. They include:

- A Christmas picnic lunch for all children in classroom bubbles
- A Christmas party in their classroom
- Father Christmas will visit the classroom entrances in EYFS and KS1 to deliver goodies but there will be no direct contact with him!
- A daily Living Advent Calendar during December led by different classes and shared virtually between classrooms
- A nativity led by KS1 children (with a difference). We will give you and your child the option of wearing a costume. Photos, but not video will be taken of your child and some voice recordings will be made of the music and narration so you can enjoy from a distance.
- A KS1, socially distanced, Christingle service
- An outdoor EYFS Christmas concert, which parents will be able to witness from a distance as they collect their children on the playground
- All children will be involved in seasonal Christmas activities such as making cards and calendars

We will be issuing further guidance regarding **Christmas cards**. We are very conscious that Christmas cards may be even more popular this year, which in principle is fine. But bear with us on this one. Please **DO NOT** start bringing them in until we say you can. All Christmas cards will be scrutiny to quarantine rules before we can give out. It is highly likely we will ask for cards to only be brought into class in the final week of term, i.e. on Friday 11th or Monday 14th December and given out a few days later. Children will be asked to open them at home. I am sorry but there will not be a central school post box for cards this year.

We will issue a full Christmas dates list with specific information nearer the time. This will be after 2nd December when the full post lockdown situation is known.

Nursery places for January 2021

Please note that if your child is three before Christmas, they will be able to join our new nursery class in January 2021. Please telephone the office to get an application form so we can begin the admission process. Our youngest class of three-year olds will be in afternoon nursery form January until July 2021 at which point they will move into the morning session form September 2021 as they make their approach towards reception class in September 2022.

30 hrs funding in nursery

Did you know that if you work for more than hours week, your nursery child can attend school for 30 hours week for free? Please chat to the office staff for advice and on information of how to obtain your 30 hours funding code. We have number of children doing 30 hours in nursery currently.

Nursery end of term closing and opening in January 2021

At the end of term our nursery class will finish on **Wednesday 16th December**. This is to allow staff to begin home visits and induction for the new nursery class.

In January 2021 the existing morning nursery children will return with the rest of the school on Tuesday 5th January 2021. New afternoon children will return after induction has been completed on a rolling start. This will be confirmed with families during home visits.