

St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary School



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Dear Parents,

Thank you for all your hard work this week. I am sure that for many, the news that we will soon all be back at school has made this more challenging, whilst for others, they have been spurred on by the knowledge that the end is in sight. Rest assured that we are working hard to ensure a smooth transition back to school for all of our pupils. We will be assessing the children's progress and putting in place plans to support them at a whole class, small group or individual level as necessary. We look forward to discussing this with you at Parents' Evening during the week commencing 26th April.

As my last letter outlined, we will continue to put in place additional measures aimed at minimising contacts and reducing the chance of transmission. These include class and year group bubbles, a staggered timetable, a one-way system and enhanced cleaning. The government has also provided us with testing kits to allow staff to test biweekly in order to reduce the chance of asymptomatic spread.

I know you are also doing all you can to reduce transmission outside school and I would ask you to continue to follow the government guidance despite the temptation to mix with other families after school and at the weekends. This will be vital to ensuring we do not have positive cases within the school going forward and avoid bubbles having to close. Similarly, please do not send your child to school if they have any symptoms. If your child has symptoms, they must isolate and receive a test as soon as possible. I am sure we are all well aware that any periods of isolation after the 8th March will be disruptive, detrimental and demoralising for all those involved.

As children remain in their bubbles, we will continue to operate a staggered timetable. Drop off and pick up will be as follows:

8.40-8.50 and 3.10-3.20 – Reception, Year 1 and Year 2

8.50-9.00 and 3.20-3.30 – Year 3, 4, 5 and 6

The overlap will allow siblings to be dropped off and picked up at the same time. When picking up and dropping off, please be prompt. We are all aware that the children have missed significant periods of time in school and late arrivals to class miss out on learning and are disruptive for the majority of pupils who always arrive on time. I would also ask you to try and minimise the number of people who come onto our school site and not bring siblings or additional adults if at all possible. Similarly, it would be appreciated if adults could wear masks when they are on the school site and avoid mixing with other adults as much as possible.

When they return to school, children should wear normal winter school uniform, including ties and school shoes, every day except on Monday and Friday, when they should wear their PE Kit. I know that purchasing the correct uniform during lockdown may have been challenging so we understand if this is not always possible. However, our uniform has always been a source of pride for our children and our school so I would ask that you don't allow children to wear their own jumpers, trousers and shoes to school unless there is no realistic alternative. Given the challenging times we have faced, you may need financial support to purchase uniform and if this is the case, please contact the school office and help will be provided in the upmost confidence.

Breakfast club will be running in the mornings from 8am and you can pay for this as usual via SCOpay. Please do this as soon as possible as the children will be kept in bubbles during this time, so we need advance notice to make the necessary arrangements. We will not be running after school clubs for the three and half weeks when the children return but hopefully they will be in place for the summer term.

Although we are still learning remotely, there remains a lot of wonderful learning to celebrate this week. As we have been thinking about our planet and what we can do to look after it and each other, our Eco Week has been a great success and it has been wonderful to see children creating posters, sorting materials, creating bird feeders, reusing materials to make sculptures and much, much more both at home and at school. A big thank you to all the parents, teachers and pupils for their hard work and imagination and particularly to Mrs O'Gorman for organising the week. The second week of Fairtrade Fortnight is next week and I look forward to sharing some of the wonderful work from this event in next week's letter.

Next Thursday 4th March is World Book Day. Traditionally, we celebrate this day with costumes and activities galore. However, we have decided to postpone the full celebrations until the summer term to give the children something to look forward to. In the meantime, Miss Farrell has added a St Mary Magdalen's virtual library to all the Google classrooms, which you can also access on this link https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/12Y-b0ajELNr_qq3ZzLMjkyiV66R1gmhtFDOY9u8Pmko/edit. The library has links to audio versions of popular books, including those which deal with wellbeing. In addition, the final slide on the library includes links for parents which will take you to informative videos about how to support your child with reading and phonics. Thank you to Miss Farrell for all her hard work on this wonderful resource. If you would like to add to your own library we will also be sending a virtual world book day voucher for you to spend along with this letter.

Our responsibility to look after our planet and one another is an integral part of our faith. We hear this message in Pope Francis' Laudato Si and more recently in the Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together, which was recently celebrated on February 4th. We will be reflecting on this during this special season of Lent and as part of this, we will be taking part in CAFOD's "Walk for Water" Lenten Appeal. This a wonderful way for us to look after ourselves, strengthen our community and transform the lives of those who do not have easy access to clean water.

Similarly, we are always looking for ways to contribute to our wider community and we recently received a flyer from a local care home asking for springtime art to decorate their walls. Whilst the closing date for the competition is 3rd March, I know we have fantastic artists in our school so the flyer has been sent with this email in case you would still like to participate or just send an image in to decorate the home.

Finally, I am very grateful to Father Adrian who has recorded a wonderful reflection for us all to listen to. It will be posted in Google classrooms streams this afternoon and is a fantastic reminder that whilst we are currently apart, physically we remain part of one community with much to look forward to and pray for. I am sure you will enjoy his words of wisdom.

I hope you are all able to enjoy some of the signs of spring that have been emerging this weekend.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Hughes
Headteacher