



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

16th December 2002



Hillcrest Road, Dudley,
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Dear Parents and Carers,

Christmas Newsletter

I hope you and your loved ones are all safe and well. If you have been or even are still poorly or your loved ones have been or are still poorly – we send you our most caring thoughts. To anyone who has suffered the loss of a loved one or a friend we send you our most sincere and heartfelt sympathy. As a school we are all too aware of the many challenges you are all facing – and indeed we face them with you. I want to thank you all for your support of the school this term.

In spite of the many difficulties everyone is facing you have provided remarkable support for our school and been very understanding. Thank you so much for your patience, thank you for being understanding when all of the additional safety measures make life difficult and thank you for being so kind when things might not go to plan from time to time. All of your generosity, kindness and support is very much noticed and appreciated. Thank you very much from everyone at the school.



This newsletter provides you with some updates from school and some important information you might find useful.

At St Joseph's we work, learn and grow together guided by Jesus' teachings

If you have more than one child in our school – we are changing drop off and pick up arrangements to help you – please read this carefully!

Back in the summer when schools were asked to introduce staggered drop offs and pick-ups we didn't really expect to still be needing to have such arrangements in place for the start of 2021. Sadly, this is still going to be the case for the foreseeable future and we want to adapt our arrangements to help parents and also ensure children are not missing out on valuable learning time.

From the start of next term if you have more than one child in school you can drop them all off at the **earliest start time** and you can pick them all up at the **latest finish time**. We have reviewed our staffing arrangements and rotas and this means we can safely look after the small number of children who need to come into school early and stay a little later to wait for their siblings in other classes.





Please note these arrangements can only be provided if you have more than one child in school in order to help you as parents and save children from missing learning by arriving late / leaving early with siblings. If you have one child with us – they are already receiving their full teaching time allocation by starting and finishing with their whole class.

For example, if you have a child in Reception class and a child in Year 5: you can drop both children off at 8.30am (the start time of your Year 5 child) and you can pick them both up at 3.15pm (the finish time of your Reception child).

A reminder of the start and finish times for each class:

Nursery AM: 8.30am start, 11.30am finish

Nursery PM: 12.30pm start, 3.30pm finish

Reception: 9.15am start, 3.15pm finish

Year 1: 9.15am start, 3.15pm finish

Year 2: 8.45am start, 2.45pm finish

Year 3: 8.45am start, 2.45pm finish

Year 4: 9am start, 3pm finish

Year 5: 8.30am start, 2.30pm finish

Year 6: 9.15am start, 3.15pm finish

Children break up on Thursday 17th December at their normal finish time

Thank you for your cooperation with the early break up for Christmas. It was announced at very short notice but this is because the announcement from the government was only made last week in response to the evolving virus situation. The overriding aim of the directors is to protect everyone's health and safety, minimise risk and give everyone in the community the best prospect of a safe and happy Christmas.



Thank you and good bye to Mrs Camilleri



Mrs Camilleri our Nursery teacher will be leaving us at Christmas. We are all sad to be saying goodbye to Mrs Camilleri who has been a popular and well-liked teacher at St Joseph's since September. Mrs Camilleri has been a very kind and caring member of staff and has helped lots of our Nursery children settle into school life at St Joseph's. We would all like to wish her the very best for the future.

Nursery staffing from January

With Mrs Camilleri leaving at Christmas Miss Link will be the person in charge of Nursery from January. Miss Link has worked at St Joseph's for many years in our Nursery and is an expert in providing care and education for some of the youngest children in our school. Miss Oakley our EYFS Leader will be the teacher in charge of Nursery with Miss Link responsible for the running of Nursery along with three other teaching assistants including Miss Perry and Mrs Ajmal.

Important information about what to do if your child tests positive in the holidays

*Letting the school know about positive test results is really important **at the start of the Christmas holidays** as other children and staff may need to self-isolate due to being contacts.*





This is based on being in contact with someone who has tested positive any time up to 48 hours before their symptoms began or in the case of a person without symptoms – being in contact 48 hours before their test was taken. The following guidance has been produced by Dudley Public Health to help you identify when you need to contact the school over the holidays and when the school will contact you:

Positive test results

- Please tell the school about a positive test result for your child where their **symptoms started on or before Saturday 19th December** (regardless of when the test is taken)
- Please tell the school about a positive test result for your child **where the test date was on or before Saturday 19th December and your child didn't have any symptoms.**

When telling the school about positive test results please provide the following information:

- The date symptoms **started** (or if there were no symptoms)
- The date the test was **taken** (not the date you received the result)
- The date your child's self-isolation **ends**

Please contact the school as soon as possible when you receive the positive test result by email to info@st-jos-dud.dudley.sch.uk

*If your child's symptoms start any time **from** Sunday 20th December there is no need to inform the school. If your child is without symptoms but tests positive any time **from** Sunday 20th December there is no need to inform the school. This is because the children's last date in school was Thursday 17th December and Saturday 19th December (midnight on Saturday night) marks the end of the 48-hour period since they were last in school.*

For example:

- Your child develops symptoms on Saturday 19th December, takes a test on Sunday 20th December and receives a positive result on Tuesday 22nd December. **Please tell the school as soon as possible.**
- Your child develops symptoms on Sunday 20th December, takes a test on Monday 21st December and receives a positive result on Wednesday 23rd December. **There is no need to inform the school**
- Your child has no symptoms but takes a test on Saturday 19th December and receives a positive result on Monday 21st December. **Please tell the school as soon as possible.**
- Your child has no symptoms but takes a test on Sunday 20th December and receives a positive result on Monday 21st December. **There is no need to inform the school.**

Contacts of positive cases

- The school will identify any pupils who are contacts of a positive case.
- The school will notify you that your child is a contact and your child must self-isolate (stay at home) for 10 days from the day after exposure. The school will confirm the date isolation ends with you.
- Other household members don't need to self-isolate, unless your child goes on to develop symptoms of COVID-19.





We know that self-isolating can be difficult and may feel especially difficult for children and families during the holidays. However, this is a really important part of helping to stop the spread of COVID-19 and protecting your loved ones. Help is available to those who are self-isolating, may be feeling lonely or isolated, are unable to leave their home, or struggling financially due to the pandemic. You can call 0300 3302 152 from Monday to Friday between 9.30am and 12.30pm.

Returning to school in January



Children from Reception to Year 6 return to school on Wednesday 6th January at their classes time. If your child is going to be absent at the start of term, please let us know. Once term begins, please then continue to tell the school (7 days a week) about any positive test results or self-isolation straight away. If have given consent for your child n Year 2 & 6 to receive a flu vaccine, this will now go ahead on Monday 25th January 2021.

Nursery Returning in January



We have a new intake of Nursery children in January. As we are still unable to complete home visits or the normal stay and play sessions, we have arranged for new Nursery parents to visit the setting and meet the staff on Wednesday 6th, Thursday 7th and Friday 8th January. This means that Nursery will not open for our current Nursery children until **MONDAY 11th JANUARY 2021.**

Schoolcomms

Apart from the inevitable teething problems, our new communication system seems to be working well and we are now able to communicate much more effectively than with the previous system. If you haven't yet downloaded the app, please do so – it's really good!



Keep us up to date with your email address and mobile number

The system only works if we have your correct contact details! If father Christmas brings you a new phone or you change your email address – please remember to let the school know! That way we can ensure you receive all of our emails, alerts and messages!

Free School Meals Eligibility

If you are eligible for free school meals we urge you to apply. We have an onsite kitchen where all our food is freshly prepared and the daily menu always offers a hot main course and options of sandwiches or jacket potatoes too. What's even better is that children pre-order their meals in the morning with their teacher or you can even order them online at home! This means your child will always get the meal of their choice. As well as saving you time and money – if you apply for free school meals and you are eligible – the school will receive precious 'pupil premium funding' for up to six years. I cannot begin to tell you how precious and important this funding is for our school. Your child doesn't even have to take the free school meal if you choose not to – simply by successfully applying you will secure the pupil premium funding for the school. It's really important that as a school we receive the funding we need to help the children with their learning. Please, please apply if you think you might even possibly be eligible.





Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2



ALL children in these classes are able to receive a FREE school meal every day. Our food is good quality, fresh and there are lots of options. This saves you time and money and is a benefit provided for all young children. Please take up this offer and make the most of the benefit you are entitled to.

Everyone in these year groups receives free lunches – but if you meet the eligibility criteria below – please can we ask you ALSO to fill in the form to confirm your eligibility? This is the ONLY way we can access pupil premium funding for your child – which will then be paid to your child's school for the next 6 years. Only a tiny number of parents who are eligible have applied – if everyone eligible was to apply the school would receive precious thousands of pounds of extra funding – meaning we could spend that on improving the provision for the children.

Eligibility Criteria

If you get any of the following support payments your child may be entitled to receive free school meals:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit Run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit (you must have less than £616.67 a month net earned income (after tax - and not including any benefits))

Children who receive a qualifying benefit in their own right are also allowed to receive free school meals.

Children under the compulsory school age who are in full time education may also be entitled to receive free school meals.

Apply online at this address or simply google Dudley Free School Meals Application

<https://www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/benefits/free-school-meals/>

Year 4 First Holy Communion



This Sacramental Mass could not go ahead due to the second lockdown. Please be reassured it will be rearranged. We are now looking towards arranging for sometime after Easter. We are worried that if we organise the Mass for the winter or early Spring it may end up being cancelled again if there are new restrictions announced.





At the moment, everything is pointing towards brighter, more normal times after Easter. We will seek to arrange this important Mass for after Easter. We will be in touch soon after Christmas to provide dates. Thanks for your patience and understanding.

Year 3 First Holy Communion

We will also be in touch with a date for Year 3 First Holy Communion soon after the holidays. This will likely take place in the summer at around the normal time in May, on a Saturday morning as was planned for this year.

Parentview

Last academic year we had a big number of reviews on our Parentview page, with lots of very kind and positive comments which we thank you most sincerely for.

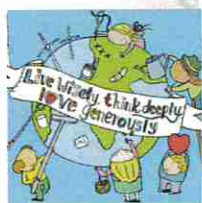
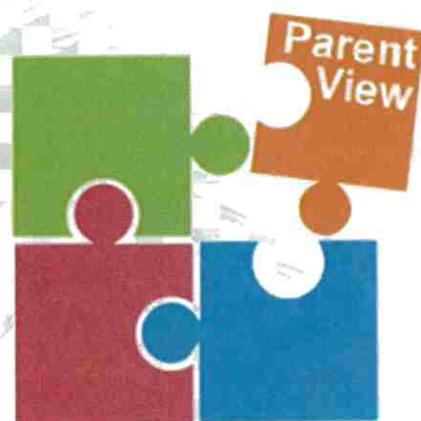
Unfortunately – Parentview archives all of the responses at the end of the academic year and now we are back to zero responses!

Please could I invite you to leave a review on Parentview for the school so that both Ofsted and the school can gather your views. We will also be sending out a Parent Questionnaire in the new year as well, just like last year's which informed so many of the changes we have already introduced.

All I would ever ask is that if there is something you are unhappy about – please come and speak to me first. I take great pride in always trying to resolve issues and responding quickly to parents and carers. Please give us the opportunity to make things better by letting us know.

You can submit your Parentview responses at www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk and our postcode is DY2 7PW.

Thanks very much indeed for your time and support.



Thank you for your generous charitable donations to CAFOD on CAFOD Harvest Fast Day

We collected a total of £315.58 which has been sent to CAFOD's Harvest Fast Day appeal to help provide clean water for handwashing and drinking in some of the neediest communities around the world. Thank you very much.

Thank you for your donations of tins of food for the Good Shepherd Shelter

We collected a lot of food as you can see from the photo on our website blog. This will all be sent to the Good Shepherd Shelter in Wolverhampton and will help provide meals for the homeless and poor this winter. Thank you for your generosity towards the neediest in our own community.





Thank you for helping your children to make their 'bambinelli'

We received an amazing response to this Diocesan and indeed worldwide Advent practice. The tiny models of baby Jesus were so wonderful to see at this time and each class celebrated a special service of blessing over the bambellini. Here is the prayer we used that you and your family might like to use with your own nativity scenes or indeed the bambinelli your child created!

God our Father, You loved us so much you sent us your only Son, Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary, to save us and lead us back to you. We pray that, with your blessing, these images of Jesus might be a sign of your presence and love in our homes. Good Father, give your blessing to all who gather with us this Christmas, our family and friends. Open our hearts, that we might receive Jesus in joy, do always what he asks of us, and see him in those who need our love. We ask this in the name of Jesus, your beloved Son, who came to give peace to the world. You, who live and reign forever and ever.
Amen



A Christmas Message from Archbishop Bernard

His Grace has recorded a short Christmas message for schools to be shared with the children, staff and all their families. The children have seen it in school and we encourage you to enjoy the message as a family, too. It is only a couple of minutes long and was recorded at our beautiful Cathedral, St Chad's, in Birmingham City Centre.

The YouTube link is: <https://youtu.be/IYVkU9cYa38>

Keep in Touch

Your parental satisfaction and the progress, safety and happiness of your child is the top priority for the school. We try hard to do the best we can in all areas but we know that things can and do go wrong. What is important is the way these problems are sorted out. Never, ever hesitate to get in touch for help with any matter however small it may seem. You can speak to staff on the door in the morning or you can call the office. Teachers will always call you back and Mrs Chapman or Mr Hinton can usually speak to you straight away. If for any reason we can't get to you immediately we will always ring you back as soon as we possibly can. Never hesitate to make contact – most things can be resolved and the sooner we know about your concerns – the sooner we can address them.





Wishing you and your loved ones a safe and happy Christmas

Thank you once again for all of your kindness, generosity, patience and support. It's an honour for everyone in the school to serve you. We know how lucky we are to serve such a wonderful, kind and supportive community and we are grateful to you. Have a very happy Christmas and we pray for a brighter, safer and less stressful time for the entire world in 2021.

Take care,
With every kind wish as always,

Mrs S Chapman
Executive Head of School



*May this year 2021 bring with it
all things beautiful and lovely.*

Have a wonderful New Year

