

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School



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Dear Parents and Carers,

Thinking of you

Welcome to our Spring First Half Term newspaper. We extend our warmest wishes to you and your family and we particularly want to pass on our most caring thoughts and prayers to anyone who is unwell or worried about someone who is unwell. We also really want to send our sympathy and best wishes to those in our school community who have lost a loved one since we were last in touch. We promise you that the whole school community is always kept in our prayers and we are thinking of you.



We are really aware of how stressful home learning can be and we are here to support you as much as we can. We know from talking to all of our families at St Joseph's that lots of people are experiencing the inevitable stresses of lockdown and home learning in one way or another.

As a mom myself let me tell you I know only too well how stressful and challenging home learning can be – before you even begin to add in the pressure of having to do your own job and run a home as well. Sometimes children are in the perfect mood for online learning and sometimes they are not. The way the world is at the moment means that it's perfectly normal for everyone's emotions to be all over the place! Online learning isn't a replacement for classroom teaching and never can be – so please don't worry if it doesn't work like a classroom in your home!

There are many, many reasons why home learning might not work out as planned – all of which are perfectly normal. Internet problems, upset children, lots of children, babies and toddlers, phone calls to be answered, deliveries arriving, poorly relatives, older relatives to care for, washing and cleaning to do, pressure from work, worries – to name but a few! So, it's no surprise that things won't run perfectly every day. It's really important to remember it's all normal and happens to us all – including teachers and headteachers. Please don't let it worry you or your child.!



The Prime Minister has announced that schools won't start to reopen until 8th March and this is subject to the data at the time. It's really important we minimise any stress around home learning during this time. If we're stressed or worried that doesn't help the children to learn – so I really urge you to look after yourself and speak to us if you're worried about anything related to home learning. Most things can usually be easily sorted out.





Please don't place yourselves under any unnecessary stress. We realise you can't do everything. Apart from cases of staff illness, your child's teacher will deliver live lessons online every day in term time. We will always set the work for the children to do and we will provide feedback on everything that is submitted online. The learning is there for you – but we realise you won't always be able to do everything. We know lots of you have got your own jobs to do. Sometimes you won't be able to give online learning your full attention – we understand this.

The really important thing is to let you know we are here to help you – so if you have any problems, feel worried or anxious about your child's work – get in touch. We will do everything we can to help you and have already helped lots of parents with reassurance, advice and support.

I want you to know we understand how extremely difficult this situation is and we are full of support for you. Please go easy on yourself and let us know if we can help in any way.

Thank you for being thoughtful and considerate towards the school staff

We are genuinely doing all we possibly can to provide the best quality remote learning that we can. You'll no doubt be aware that lots of schools are not able to provide the amount of live teaching that we are and we are very proud to be able to do this for our children.

Please remember that some things are not in our control – staff illness, bad weather, government decisions, public health rules, rules about self-isolation and closing classes where there are positive cases. All of these things cause additional stress – we know this – but are usually out of our control.

We cannot tell you how much we appreciate your thoughtfulness, kindness and patience. In these very challenging circumstances it's really important we all look after each other, be patient and understanding towards each other and forgive each other when we need to.

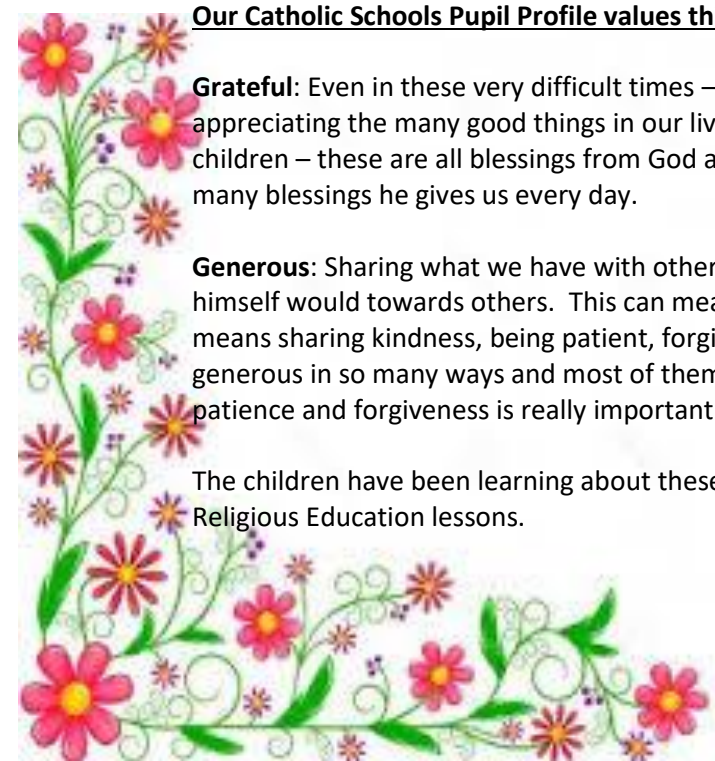
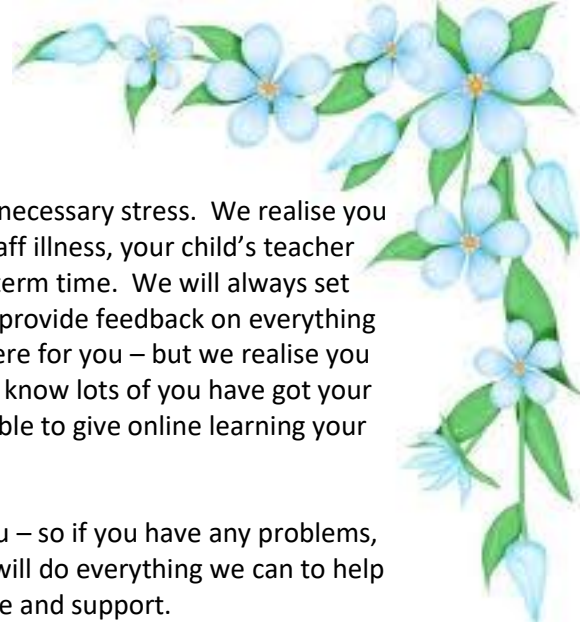
We promise to do our best to look after the children and you – our families at St Joseph's. We really appreciate the way you show us that similar level of care and respect. Thank you very much.

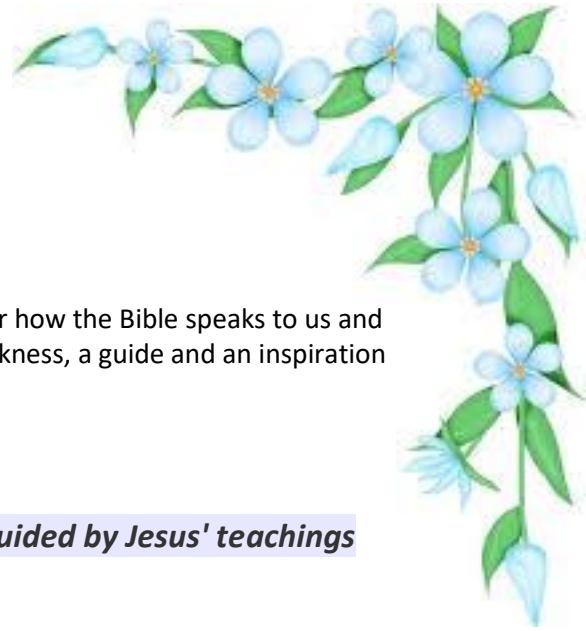
Our Catholic Schools Pupil Profile values this half term: Grateful and Generous

Grateful: Even in these very difficult times – remembering to count our blessings from God and appreciating the many good things in our lives. The people we love, our homes, our health, our children – these are all blessings from God and it's important we remember to be grateful for the many blessings he gives us every day.

Generous: Sharing what we have with others to make the world a better place. Acting as Christ himself would towards others. This can mean sharing in the sense of being charitable but it also means sharing kindness, being patient, forgiving, smiling, saying hello to someone. We can be generous in so many ways and most of them don't cost us. Being generous with our kindness, patience and forgiveness is really important during these difficult times.

The children have been learning about these values in their assemblies and Religious Education lessons.





The God Who Speaks: Scripture to focus on this half term

‘Here is the light you will reveal to the nations’ Luke 2:32 A reminder how the Bible speaks to us and tells us that our Lord Jesus came to us and remains a light in the darkness, a guide and an inspiration – Jesus: The Light of the World.

Our Mission at St Joseph’s

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

Our School Values

- **Respect** - Respect for others, respect for the school building, respect for the values and beliefs of others, respect for ourselves, respect for our Catholic community, respect for other religions, countries and cultures.
- **Forgiveness** - Following Jesus’ teachings by seeking to reconcile our differences, by saying sorry and by forgiving others and giving opportunities to make things better.
- **Truth** - Knowing that telling the truth and being honest is always the right way.
- **Kindness** - Trying our best to show kindness to others in all that we say and do, having kind hands and kind words for everyone – even those we find it hard to get on with sometimes.
- **Equality** - Every human being is equal and valuable and loved by God. Everyone in our school is equal, unique and special and we treat everyone fairly. Everyone is equally special regardless of their gender, religion, ethnicity or cultural background.

St John Bosco Feast Day – Sunday 31st January

The feast of the patron Saint of our Catholic Multi Academy Company. St John Bosco is the patron Saint of children and young people. The children will celebrate his feast day in their assembly on Monday 1st February, the first school day after his feast.



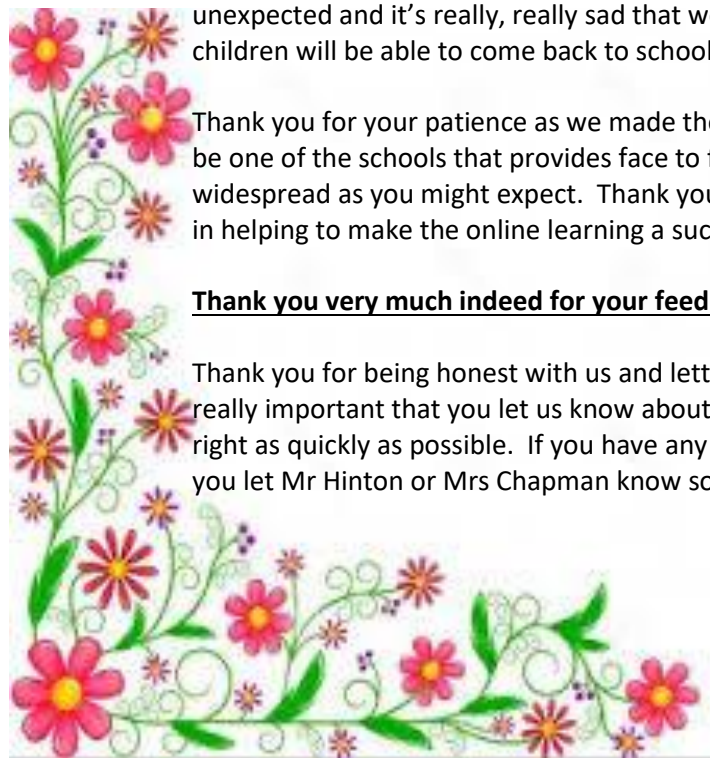
Thank you for your support this term

We want to say a really heartfelt thank you to all of our families. The closure of schools was very unexpected and it’s really, really sad that we are not all together in school. We really hope that the children will be able to come back to school as soon as possible.

Thank you for your patience as we made the sudden switch to online learning. We are very proud to be one of the schools that provides face to face live lessons every day, something which isn’t as widespread as you might expect. Thank you very much for the very important role you have played in helping to make the online learning a success.

Thank you very much indeed for your feedback when things have gone wrong

Thank you for being honest with us and letting us know quickly where things have gone wrong. It’s really important that you let us know about any problems so that we have the chance to put things right as quickly as possible. If you have any issues that have not been resolved it’s really important you let Mr Hinton or Mrs Chapman know so that we can sort things out for you. As always, we



appreciate your respect and understanding if things go wrong and we will always treat you with maximum respect at all times. We promise to always try our best to sort things out for you.



As soon as the children come back to school we will immediately continue the catch-up curriculum



As soon as the children come back to school we'll assess their learning carefully and address any gaps that exist. The curriculum will be modified to ensure the key building blocks they need are covered straight away. The children's reading and phonics will be assessed and changes to book bands and phonic groups will be made where necessary. We are well prepared for the return to school and it won't simply be a case of picking up where we left off – a carefully planned catch up programme will start as soon as we return so that gaps in learning are quickly addressed.

Sharing recorded lessons is not possible at the moment

We are not able to provide you with access to recorded lessons at the moment. This is because our lessons take place live with children's faces visible and their voices audible. Even though each Team is only open to the children that belong to the class – we still have no control over what happens to the recording when it is viewed anywhere outside of the school. We are not able to release video and audio of staff and children into a situation where we cannot fully control access. In addition, we do not have permission to do this for lots of our children as well because parents have not consented to photos and videos of their child being placed online.

If for any reason you can't access the live lessons we are providing a number of resources to help your child access the lesson at a later date:

- A daily email is sent out with an outline of the lessons taking place
- The teacher's presentation (PowerPoint) where one is used is placed in the Files area of Teams
- The work for the lesson is indicated on the lesson plan and / or is placed in the Files area (e.g. worksheets and questions)
- If you don't have a printer – your child can view the worksheet on screen and write their answers on paper
- If you can't access the live lesson but need help – give us a call at the school and we will ask your child's teacher to contact you as soon as they can

Thanks for supporting the teachers when they are teaching

We really appreciate you contacting the school with your questions and not asking the teachers whilst they are in the middle of the lesson. This means the lesson isn't interrupted and the teacher can give you a fuller answer or explanation when they call you back outside of the lesson. This makes a huge difference to the lessons because if lots of parents asked lots of questions – the teaching time would be interrupted. You've been great in understanding this and we want you to know it's much appreciated. Please remember to give the office a call with any problems rather than contacting the class teachers through their direct e-mail.



We are keeping in touch as much as we can

You should receive at least one phone call per week for each of your children. This is our way of maintaining personal contact with you during the lockdown and it's our opportunity to provide whatever support we can. Our staff are more than happy (delighted in fact) to talk to the children and have a chat. We call home as part of our duty of care to all our families and it's also really important we can check all of our pupils are safe and well. The teaching assistants make these calls whilst the teachers are teaching online. Our TAs will take messages and pass them on to your child's teacher for you if they can't solve problems over the phone.



Don't hesitate to call us if you need any technical support

If you need any help accessing Microsoft Teams we have staff who can help you. If necessary our staff can talk you through what to do over the phone. Please don't miss out on our online lessons because you're worried about getting online – we can help so please get in touch.

Have you got internet access? Are you struggling with internet usage / bills?

If you are struggling with internet access for any reason – please let us know. We have a limited number of SIM cards that were donated to us by a mobile phone provider. You can use the SIM to provide internet access in a phone – using the device as a hotspot to provide internet for a tablet or laptop. You could even use the phone to access the lessons if you have no other suitable device. Please call us if you would like us to provide you with a Data SIM-card.



If you qualify for income based free school meals and have registered with Dudley LA we may be able to obtain a wireless router for you from the government. Please let us know if you don't have internet access and qualify for income based free school meals. We will then apply for a router on your behalf.

We have received our allocation of laptops from the government and distributed them

We were sent 11 laptops by the government and we have distributed them according to the set criteria. The laptops provided were only for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds (pupil premium / income based free school meals) who do not have access to a device, with priority to children in Years 3 to 6.

If your child's teacher is too unwell to teach – live lessons will be temporarily unavailable

We hope that your child's teacher will be well enough to teach online every day. If your child's teacher is too unwell to teach online we will provide work and resources for your child to use at home. We cannot replace the teacher as all of the other teachers are teaching their own classes. We will let you know if your child's teacher cannot deliver their online lessons and we will let you know when and where the children's work will be available. Depending on when we find out about your child's teacher's illness – there may be a delay whilst we get all of the work prepared. Please bear with us – we know how important having work to do is and we will keep in contact. You may need to wait a few hours whilst the right work is prepared for your child.



We hope this rarely happens – but it's important you know what will happen if your child's teacher is too unwell to teach online.

Half Term Holidays – lessons finish Friday 12th February and restart Monday 22nd February

Lessons will finish on Friday 12th February for half term and will restart on Monday 22nd February. The school and the office will be closed from 3.30pm on Friday 12th February to 8.30am on Monday 22nd February.



If you are eligible for income based free school meals it's really important you apply

If you qualify for free school meals please apply as a matter of urgency. You will receive vouchers during lockdown and will have the option of accessing free school meals at school when we reopen. By successfully applying, you will also gain access to pupil premium funding for the school for the next 6 years – which is extremely valuable to the school and enables us to provide more for the children. Applying is confidential, fast and easy online. You don't need to produce any documents. 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))



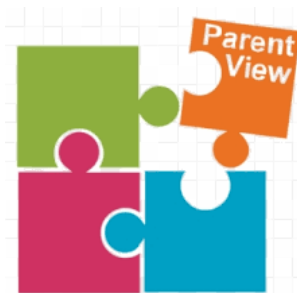
Apply online: search 'Dudley Free School Meals' or go to this address:
<https://customer.dudley.gov.uk/free-school-meals/create/>

ParentView

Thank you to everyone who placed a review of the school on ParentView last academic year. Unfortunately – ParentView archives all of the responses at the end of the academic year and now we are back to zero responses!

Please could we invite you to leave a review on ParentView for the school so that both Ofsted and the school can gather your views.

All we would ever ask is that if there is something you are unhappy about – please come and speak to us first. We 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.

Please make sure we always have your up to date mobile number and email address

Investing in Schoolcomms has transformed the way we can keep in touch with parents and carers and is working well. However – it only works if we are contacting you on the right number and email address! Please let us know your contact details so we can keep you up to date.

Please, please download the School Gateway App

The app can be downloaded from the Apple store or Google Play and is free to download!



It is very important to us that you and your child/ren are happy

Your child's religious formation, education, safety, welfare and happiness are very important to us – they are the reason why the school is here and we strive to achieve excellence in all these areas. Inevitably, in any school, things will go wrong from time to time no matter how hard we try. Sadly, this can't be avoided but we do our best to minimise any problems from arising.

What's really important is the way in which these problems are sorted out. Please let us know about any worries or concerns that you have – whether that's during the lockdown period or when the school is back open. The sooner we know about your concerns the sooner we can do all we can to resolve them.

We promise to listen carefully to your concerns and explain what we will do to address them. If you are ever dissatisfied by the way your concern has been handled – please speak to Mr Hinton or Mrs Chapman. We will always do our very best to resolve your concern if we can. Please let us know – it's really important.



**DON'T WORRY
BEE HAPPY**

All the best

You, your children and your wider families are very much in our prayers and at the forefront of our minds every day. We look forward to the time when the school reopens and until then we will keep in weekly contact and we are here for you whenever you need us. Don't hesitate to get in touch.

With every kind wish as always,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'S Chapman'.

**Mrs S Chapman
Executive Head of School**

