

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School



19th March 2021

Hillcrest Road, Dudley,
West Midlands DY2 7PW

Executive Headteacher:
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2nd Half Spring Newsletter

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back to school!

We are all extremely glad to have all of the children back in school. Without exception they have made an excellent start to their new term back in school and we are so happy to have them back.

Welcome back to



Thank you for everything you did to support your children and the school during the closed period

We want to say a huge thank you to all of our parents and carers for the sacrifices you made during the period of school closure. We understand how hard you worked to balance your own commitments with home schooling and we are really grateful. Thank you for supporting the children and thank you for your support and kind words towards the school. We appreciate all of your help and kindness and it means a lot to everyone in the school.

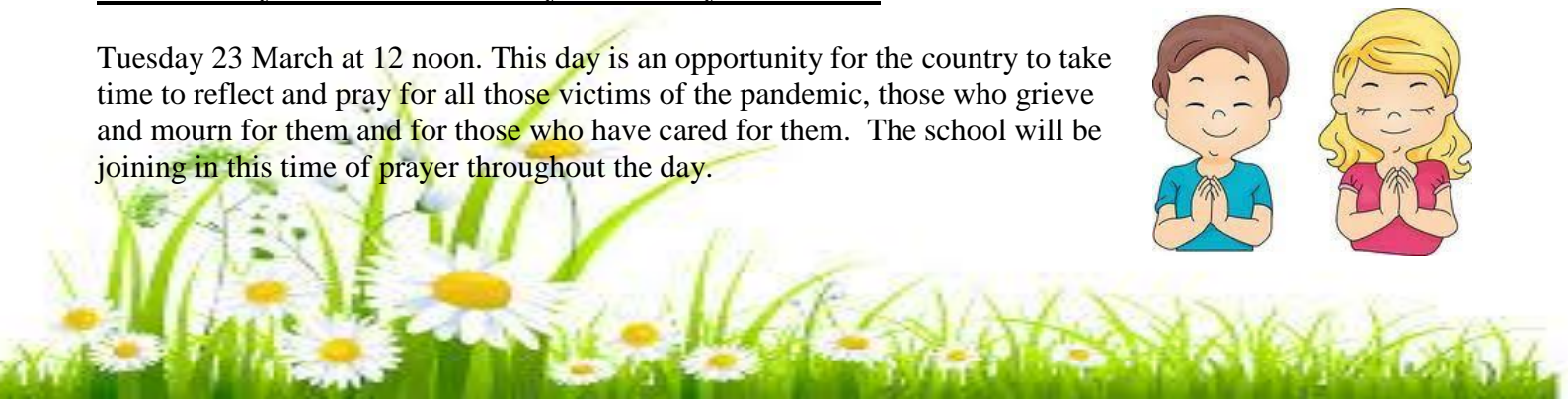


We are thinking of you and praying for all those who are sick or have lost family and friends

I hope you and your loved ones are all safe and well. If you have been or 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. We pray for our entire community every day and we never forget how difficult illness and bereavement is. Many of us of course have been affected too so we genuinely sympathise and we promise you we are always thinking of you.

National Day of Reflection & Prayer: Tuesday 23rd March

Tuesday 23 March at 12 noon. This day is an opportunity for the country to take time to reflect and pray for all those victims of the pandemic, those who grieve and mourn for them and for those who have cared for them. The school will be joining in this time of prayer throughout the day.



Safeguarding



Children

Safeguarding: Keeping Children Safe

Our school is committed to safeguarding and safe practices and you can read our Policy on our website. The Designated Safeguarding leads are Mr Hinton and Mrs Chapman and Mrs Cheema and Miss Oakley are The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads. If you are concerned about your own child or any other child, please speak to one of our safeguarding leads straight away.

Our values this half term are Attentive and Discerning

Attentive: Children are learning to be attentive to their experience of God and to their vocation (calling). They are learning to 'pay attention' to what God asks of them and who he is calling them to be.

Discerning: Making good choices – discerning the right thing to do no matter how hard this is. Considering the effects of the choices we make upon other people. Always trying to discern the right choice, guided by Jesus' teachings.

The God Who Speaks

The focus piece of scripture for this half term is Luke 1: 38 where Our Lady promises to say 'Yes' to God's plan for her. The scripture reminds us all that it is often very difficult to do as God wants us to, but that like Mary, we can all do something beautiful for God and each other by responding to God's call for us to be good and kind:

'I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me as you have said'

We are half way through The Holy Season of Lent

In Lent we are asked to Pray, Fast and give Alms as we journey with Jesus towards Easter. We're doing lots of work in school to help the children to connect with the season of Lent.

LENT
Pray + Fast + Give

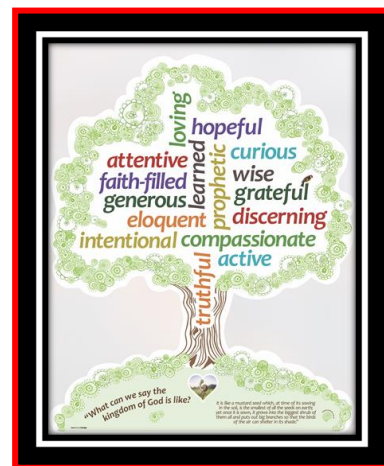
We're praying and reflecting even more

As well as the normal routines of daily collective worship, assemblies and prayers throughout the day, we are having special, extra assemblies throughout Lent to learn about each Station of the Cross. The children also take five minutes out of the day, every day to attend a short virtual retreat led by One Life Music, the liturgical music partner of the Archdiocese. When we reach Holy Week, each class will attend a special Holy Week assembly and reflection in the hall.

Due to restrictions on large gatherings of children, assembly and prayers take place in the classrooms with one class attending assembly in the hall with Mrs Chapman each day. This is on a rolling programme so every class attends an assembly in the hall once in every 5 working days. Every class will also have the opportunity to attend a Holy Week assembly in the hall led by Mrs Chapman.



assembly





There are opportunities to Fast and give Alms this Lent

The children are learning that ‘Giving Alms’ doesn’t have to mean giving money or physical items. Giving Alms can be ‘giving love’ – giving a smile, a hello, giving forgiveness, kindness, friendship, showing care and concern for others. We are helping all of the children to find moments in their lives where they can ‘Give Alms’ in such a way that doesn’t cost anything.

Giving Alms can also mean charitable giving and there are a couple of opportunities to make physical donations if you are able to this Lent. We are very aware of the difficult financial circumstances many people find themselves in at this time so we have deliberately limited what we are inviting you to donate. As always, please only donate if you are able to – you are under no obligation to make donations if you do not wish to or you are not able to.

CAFOD Lent Fast Day – to be celebrated here on Friday 26th March – Fast and Give Alms

We will organise our fast day in school on Friday 26th March. On this day we invite the children to give up (fast) their playtime snack and donate some money to CAFOD instead. This year, CAFOD will use of all of the funds raised to provide clean water in overseas communities where there is no clean water for drinking and washing. As well as being essential for life, access to clean water for handwashing is ultra-important during the pandemic.

If you are happy for your child to participate, please encourage your child to fast (give up) their Friday playtime snack and donate some money to CAFOD instead. By fasting we experience (just for a very short time) a tiny taste of what it must be like for those who are starving and thirsty.

Please donate what you can to CAFOD if you are happy and able to do so.



Give Alms: Donations for The Good Shepherd Shelter in Wolverhampton – we will gratefully receive your donations From Monday 29th to Wednesday 31st March (the donations are being collected by Good Shepherd volunteers on Thursday 1st April)

The children are invited to bring in donations of food and toiletries for the homeless and poor who use The Good Shepherd Shelter in Wolverhampton. You might choose just to donate one item or if you are able to and happy to – please donate as many items as you wish. They will be gratefully received and will make a huge difference to the day to day life of someone who is homeless or financially in great difficulty and struggling to survive.

Good Shepherd gratefully accept donations of the following:

Cereal	Long Life Milk	Fruit Juices
Tea	Coffee	Sugar
Hot Chocolate	Biscuits	Jams
Chocolates	Pasta	Pasta/Curry Sauces





Pot Noodles	Cup a Soup	Crisps
Jelly	Tinned Fruit	Tinned Meat
Shampoo	Shower Gel	Washing Powder
Deodorant		

Again, please only donate if you are happy and able to do so. Please don't feel obligated.

Making a difference near and far

By supporting CAFOD and The Good Shepherd we are helping those in need in overseas countries far away (CAFOD) and those who are in need close by (Good Shepherd Wolverhampton)

Relationships Health and Sex Education consultation

We recently sent you information on our consultation to introduce TenTen – a Catholic relationships, Health and Sex Education Curriculum approved by the Birmingham Diocesan Education Service. Please check you've received this and please respond by Thursday 25th March.

Please wear a face covering!

Please wear a face covering at all times on the school site. Whilst our staggered start times help to limit the numbers of people on the playground and around the school entrance, there is still inevitably a high number of people passing through one place. Please wear a face covering to protect others and limit the spread of the virus. Thanks for your support.



We know it's difficult – but please don't gather in groups and please keep up social distancing.



Please follow government guidance which is for everyone's safety and protection. Please don't gather in groups on the school site, by the school gates or indeed anywhere! Please keep at least 2 metres apart from anyone who is not part of your own household. This will help keep everyone safe and hopefully limit the spread of the virus at the school. We desperately want everyone to be safe and we want to do all we can to keep St Joseph's free of the virus so please follow all of the government guidance carefully!

Attendance and Punctuality

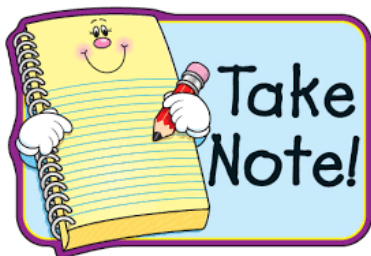
School is fully open and attendance at school is mandatory by law. We have made changes to start and finish arrangements for families with more than one child to make dropping off and picking up easier. Any one of us can be running late from time to time for good reasons – but children must ordinarily arrive at school at the correct start time – and as per school registration rules – they will be marked late if they arrive after the start time. We reserve the right to unauthorise persistent lateness and this will be recorded as unauthorised absence which can ultimately lead to intervention from the





Education Investigation Service and possible penalties. Please support regular attendance and regular good timekeeping. Thank you for your support.

Year Group	Start Time	Finish Time
Reception	9.15am	3.15pm
Year 1	9am	3pm
Year 2	8.45am	2.45pm
Year 3	8.45am	2.45pm
Year 4	9am	3pm
Year 5	8.30am	2.30pm
Year 6	9.15am	3.15pm



The policy on holiday during term time has not altered. There is no automatic entitlement in law to leave in school time to go on holiday. If you intend to take your child out of school, please complete a Leave of Absence form first and hand it into the School Office. Mr Hinton and Mrs Chapman cannot discuss the leave without seeing the written request.

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.

Year 6 Confirmation – Wednesday 14th July at 6.30pm in Church (subject to any government restrictions)

Year 6 Confirmation has been arranged with Bishop Stephen Wright. Bishop Wright will visit the children in school during the afternoon and the Sacramental Mass will take place in Church at 6.30pm. Details of any restrictions on numbers and social





distancing arrangements if applicable will be sent to you much closer the time when we know what restrictions remain in place by that time (if any)



Year 4 First Holy Communion – Saturday 3rd July at 12 noon in Church (subject to any government restrictions)

Year 4 First Holy Communion has been rearranged again! The Mass will take place in Church on Saturday 3rd July at 12 noon. We will have a special Mass in school on Tuesday 6th July followed by the traditional tea party for the children afterwards. More details to follow once we know the level of restrictions (if any) at the time.

Year 3 First Holy Communion

Year 3 will receive the Sacrament of First Holy Communion in the first half of the Autumn Term 2021. We will be in touch after Easter to confirm the date for their First Holy Communion and the date for the children to receive the sacrament of reconciliation (first confession)



Current Year 2 and current Year 5

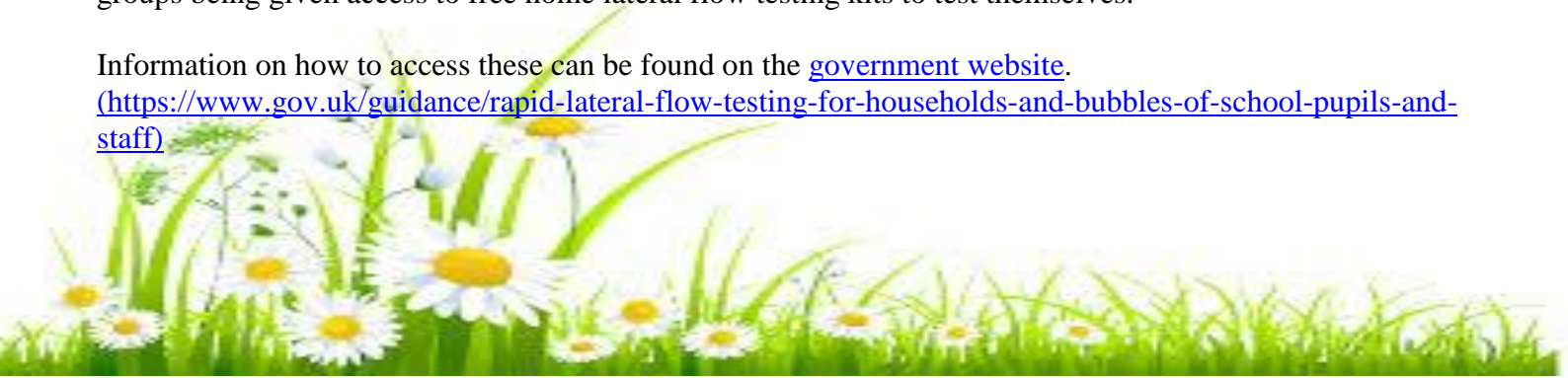
We hope that things will return to some kind of normal in 2022 and so Year 2 children should receive the Sacrament of First Holy Communion on a Saturday in May/June 2022 – date to be advised early next academic year. We also expect the current Year 5 to receive the sacrament of Confirmation on a week night (Monday to Thursday) at 6.30pm in July 2022 – again date to be advised early next academic year. We will keep you fully up to date but these are the arrangements we hope to be able to make all being well.

Did you know, your support bubble and your childcare bubble can ALL access FREE Lateral Flow Tests for adults? This really helps us to limit the spread of the virus at St Joseph's and beyond.

Parents and carers and anyone else living with a school age child or young person are among the priority groups being given access to free home lateral flow testing kits to test themselves.

Information on how to access these can be found on the [government website](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rapid-lateral-flow-testing-for-households-and-bubbles-of-school-pupils-and-staff).

(<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rapid-lateral-flow-testing-for-households-and-bubbles-of-school-pupils-and-staff>)



Rapid Test

All are strongly encouraged to have a lateral flow test at a local testing site prior to starting home testing, to know how a test is undertaken.

Twice weekly testing will help detect hidden asymptomatic cases and help keep pupils and staff safer in school.

Anyone unable to do home testing can go to one of the Dudley lateral flow testing centres. These are at Dudley Leisure Centre, Saltwells Education Centre, with pop-up sessions at Holy Trinity Church Community Centre in Wordsley, Lifecentral Church in Halesowen, St Andrews Church in Sedgley, St James Church in Wollaston and the Salvation Army Church in Lye.



There is also testing at more than 30 pharmacies across the borough. Find out more on where you can [get a lateral flow test and book visit.](https://www.dudley.gov.uk/symptom-free-testing) (<https://www.dudley.gov.uk/symptom-free-testing>)

Cakes and sweets for children's birthdays – food allergies and including

We have a number of children in school with food allergies. When parents and carers generously send in birthday cakes or sweets not all children can accept the gifts because of food allergies. This means that the school is finding alternatives – sometimes involving staff having to go off site to the shops to find suitable replacements. Sadly, this isn't always practical so it is safest that we ask you not to send in cakes or sweets for children's birthdays because of the difficulties we experience in ensuring everyone's food allergies are met. We're really sorry to have to make this restriction but we hope you'll appreciate that ensuring everyone is kept safe has to be our priority.



Choking Hazards – grapes, tomatoes and similar small fruit/veg – please chop into pieces before sending to school.

Small fruits such as grapes and cherry tomatoes present a serious choking hazard if they are swallowed whole. If you are sending your child to school with small fruits/veg like this, please

make sure they have been chopped into small pieces. All small fruit/veg that is served at school is chopped so that it presents less of a choking hazard.



Nut Friendly School



Children may have nut allergies without parents yet being aware. In order to maintain a safe environment as possible St Joseph's is a nut friendly school. Please can we ask that you don't send your child to school with nuts to eat or with any nut-rich products such as Nutella or Peanut Butter. Chocolate spread without nuts is a safer alternative.





Healthy Playtime Snacks and Healthy Lunchboxes

Please can we ask you to only send healthy snacks for playtimes and lunchtimes. For playtime a piece of fruit is ideal, though a biscuit, very small chocolate bar or small bag of low-fat content crisps is also acceptable. Big bags of crisps, high sugar snacks or big chocolate bars are not healthy snacks and are not suitable for playtimes. We don't want to 'ban' any foods in moderation but we do need to ask you to keep a close eye on playtime snacks and help us to make sure all snacks are as healthy as possible.

Similarly, at lunchtimes, please can we ask you to ensure lunchboxes don't contain big bags of crisps, big chocolate bars or any other high fat or high sugar products. A small bag of lower fat crisps, a biscuit or a very small chocolate are acceptable – but please try to keep high fat or high sugar foods to healthy levels.

We want the children to be able to enjoy a balanced diet and we feel that 'banning' any foods is at odds with making healthy choices. We would much rather help the children understand how to enjoy 'everything in moderation' and encourage them to make healthy choices wherever possible, enjoying treats in moderation. Thank you for supporting us.



Turn on the subtitles campaign

subtitles

Recent research has found that turning on the subtitles when the TV is on can have a significant impact in helping children to read. In some cases, it can double the speed at which children learn to read! It's really simple – the combination of hearing spoken words and matching them to written words on screen helps children to read words faster! More information is available here:

<https://turnonthesubtitles.org/>

Useful video about how to stay in control of your child's internet access

We've recently been signposted to this useful YouTube video explaining how to turn off the internet wireless router (wireless hub) at certain points of the day e.g. overnight so that children cannot access the internet when they are unsupervised – for example in the middle of the night. All of the major internet providers have similar videos available on YouTube. This is a general video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMKAekDFGI4>



Important – dangerous website

A family support worker from Dudley has advised us that children are accessing a website where they can interact with strangers. One Dudley parent has reported very dangerous and inappropriate contact between adults and children on this site. The website is called Omegle – Talk to Strangers. The family support worker strongly recommends you block this website and ensure your child is not accessing it. We are passing this information on to help keep the children safe.



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.

With every kind wish as always,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be 'Mrs Chapman'.

Mrs Chapman
Executive Head of School

