

Autumn Second Half Term Newsletter

The second half of the Autumn Term is now underway and the seasons of Advent and Christmas are fast approaching. This newsletter contains lots of information about special events in school through Advent and up to Christmas – please see the attached dates for your diary sheet! As always, we are here to serve you and your children and if you need our help with any issues relating to the school or your child's learning, wellbeing, happiness or safety at school, never hesitate to get in touch as soon as possible.

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 lead is **Mrs Chapman and Miss Oakley, Mrs Cheema and Mrs Buckley** 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. We strictly follow all of the local safeguarding protocols of Dudley Safeguarding People Partnership – you can find these in our policy (on our website) and on the DSPP website: <https://dudleysafeguarding.org.uk/>

Operation Encompass



Our school is also part of Operation Encompass to help ensure that all of our children are looked after following incidents which may happen outside of school.

Operation Encompass is a police and education early information safeguarding partnership enabling schools to offer immediate support to children experiencing domestic abuse.

Operation Encompass ensures that there is a simple telephone call or notification to a school's trained Designated Safeguarding Lead /Officer (**Mrs Chapman**) prior to the start of the next school day after an incident of police attended domestic abuse where there are children related to either of the adult parties involved.

Information is shared with a school's Designated Safeguarding Lead prior to the start of the next school day after officers have attended a domestic abuse incident. This sharing of information enables appropriate support to be given, dependent upon the needs and wishes of the child.

Our Catholic Schools Pupil Profile Values this half term are Learned and Wise

Faith filled: Engaging with scripture and talking to God through prayer to strengthen our faith.

Hopeful: Hopeful of what is to come and how we can make the world a better place with our words and actions.

A God Who Speaks focus scripture this half term:

"The word became a human being and, full of grace and truth, lived among us" John 1:14

This scripture from John's Gospel reminds us that through Jesus' birth in Bethlehem God became human and walked the earth and lived amongst the people.

The Holy season of Advent starts on the First Sunday of Advent: Sunday 27th November

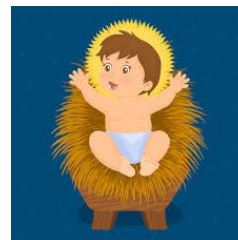


In the Catholic Church we spend the first weeks of Advent preparing not for Christmas – but preparing our lives for the time that Christ comes to the world again. In school, we are asking the children to make promises based on being more like Jesus and involving them in charitable activities. The last weeks of Advent focus on celebrating the first Christmas – and you can be assured the Nativity Gospel will be taught in detail to all of the children during Advent.

Christmas Activities for the children in school

Bambinelli Sunday – Sunday 11th December – celebrated in school Tuesday 6th December

The beautiful Advent Tradition, Bambinelli Sunday, was instituted by Saint Pope John Paul II during his Papacy. The tradition follows that on the Third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday) children and adults bring their Baby Jesus figures from home to be blessed.



Children are encouraged to create their own statue of baby Jesus in his manger with materials from home, e.g. cloth, plasticine, paper, cardboard etc and bring them into school on **Tuesday 6th December** where we will the priest to bless them during Mass. Children can then take them home and find a place for them in their own homes this Christmas.

Friday 9th December: Charity Christmas Jumper Day / Own Clothes / Christmas Clothes Day



All of the children are invited to donate 50p or £1 (or more if you choose) to our Christmas Charity fundraising. Donating is optional and is much appreciated, but not compulsory. The children in each class will choose a charity to donate the money they raise to. Charity is an important part of Advent and this is a fun way to raise funds and help the children to think deeply about the charity they would like to support with the money they raise.

Friday 14th December: Christmas Dinner Day

School dinners at St Joseph's are of an exceptionally high standard since our new kitchen is fully operational!

Christmas Dinner costs £2.40. It must be booked in advance so our chef can order the food in good time. Letters to book will be sent out soon!

Thursday 15th December: DISCOS and Christmas Crafts / Afternoon: Own Clothes Day

Please donate £1 towards the cost of the disco if you can. There will be a Nursery and Reception Disco, a Year 1, 2 and 3 Disco and Year 4, 5 Disco. Morning Nursery children are welcome to come back for the Disco and Mrs Boyle and Miss Simmonds can give you the details!

Father Christmas will be calling at St Joseph's!

Father Christmas will be popping in to the classrooms before the end of term to say hello and drop off a bag of treats for all of the classes!

Pupil Premium – you can help us access precious extra funding – very easily!

Please apply for **free school meals** if you are on a low income and / or receive benefits. As well as receiving a free school meal or sandwich every day (if you choose to take it), you will generate significant funding for our school for many years to come – funding that is all spent on better provision for the children.

Please visit <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/benefits/free-school-meals/> for full details and to apply instantly online.

Free school meals for children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2

If you are eligible for income-based free school meals, please apply so we can access the pupil premium funding. Our new working kitchen, really does offer excellent quality fresh food. There is a choice of hot meals, sandwiches and jacket potatoes together with a salad bar.

Meals are provided FREE for all children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 – please take advantage of your entitlement. There IS such a thing as a free lunch if you're In Reception, Year 1 or Year 2!

Food and drink in school

Cakes and sweets for children's birthdays – food allergies

We have a number of children in school with severe 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 – 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 like this, please make sure they have been chopped into small pieces. All small fruit that is served at school is chopped so that it presents less of a choking hazard.

Nut Free School

Children may have nut allergies without parents yet being aware. In order to maintain as safe an environment as possible, St Chad's is a nut-free 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 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 low-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.

Uniform Reminders

Thank you so much for upholding the high standards of uniform at St Joseph's. Please can you help us to ensure:

- **Long hair** is tied back at all times
- **Hair bows, hair bands and ribbons are small and not excessive in size.** School colours are preferred.
- **No jewellery is allowed** – no earrings, bracelets, necklaces etc. **Nail varnish is not allowed.**
- **Safe, smart and sensible school shoes are worn**, no trainers or fashion shoes.
- **Leggings are not allowed.** In the winter children can wear trousers, or skirts with tights.

Parking Reminders

We are politely requesting that parents park sensibly on Hillcrest Road at the start and end of the day. We have received numerous reports of unsafe parking on pavements etc which has put other parents and children at risk. We understand that with two schools on a narrow road parking is difficult, so please allow plenty of time to park safely before drop off and pick up times to avoid endangering others. Thank you for your support.

Parent conduct

We have received a number of complaints regarding parents swearing when talking on mobile phones when waiting to collect children. Can we please ask parents to be mindful of the language they are using to avoid other adults and children overhearing language which is inappropriate and upsetting. Thank you.

Keep in touch

Your satisfaction with our school and the happiness, safety and academic progress of your child are the reasons we are all here.

If you have any concerns or worries, no matter how small, please let us know so we can do everything we can to make things better and resolve your concerns.

There is always a senior teacher on duty at the school during school hours and there is always someone who can help.

Never hesitate to get in touch.

Thank you, as always, for your support.

Mrs S Chapman
Principal

Dates for the Diary!

Friday 11th November – please donate gifts and toiletries for our Christmas Fair

WB Monday 14th November – Anti-Bullying Week – the theme is Reach Out!

Tuesday 15th November - Year 4 to lead Mass at 9.15am – join us if you can!

Friday 18th November - Year 5's assembly at 9.15am – join us if you can!

Friday 18th November – please donate toys and games for our Christmas Fair

Tuesday 22nd November - Year 3 to lead Mass at 9.15am – join us if you can!

Friday 25th November – please donate chocolate and sweets

Sunday 27th November – Advent begins

Tuesday 29th November - Year 2 to lead Mass at 9.15am – join us if you can!

Friday 2nd December – please donate bottles of pop, wine, beer, squash, bubble bath etc for our Christmas Fair

Tuesday 6th December - Year 1 to lead Mass at 9.15am – join us if you can!

Wednesday 7th December – KS1 Christmas Play performances – 9.30am and 2pm

Thursday 8th December – KS2 Christmas Play Performances – 9.30am and 2 pm

Friday 9th December - please donate tea, coffee, sugar, long life milk etc for our Christmas Fair.

Friday 9th December – Christmas Fair starting at 3.30pm

Monday 12th December – Nursery AM and Reception class Christmas Play performance 10.45am

Monday 12th December – Nursery PM and Reception class Christmas Play performance 2.20pm

Tuesday 13th December - Year 6 to lead Mass at 9.15am – join us if you can!

Wednesday 14th December – Christmas Dinner.

Wednesday 14th December – Carol Service in Church at 5:30pm

Thursday 15th December – Party Day – children to wear own clothes to school

Friday 16th December – School closes for Christmas at 3.15pm