



22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021



Dear Parents,

**Autumn Term is well underway!**

It's great to have everyone back at school and we hope you had a safe and happy summer with your families. To anyone who has lost someone over the holidays or has relatives, friends or loved ones who are poorly – we send our love and sympathy. We pray for our whole community throughout the week and you are very much in our thoughts. We know only too well that even though some normality has returned – there are still many people suffering and we want you to know you are in our prayers.



This newsletter gives you some useful information for the Autumn term and we are also sending out our revised diary dates and term dates. We are very much looking forward to working with you and your children this term and assure you we will do all we can to provide the highest standard of education and care. We thank you in advance for your cooperation, patience and kindness and look forward to the term ahead together.

**Our Catholic Schools Pupil Profile values this half term are ELOQUENT and TRUTHFUL:**

The children are learning to be ELOQUENT in the way they speak about their faith, their love of God, and the way they speak about themselves, others and the world that God created.

They are learning to be TRUTHFUL and honest in all that they do, learning how to remain true to God's teachings even when this is very difficult to do.





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Our focus piece of scripture from 'The God who Speaks' is John 1:1:

***"In the beginning the Word already existed; the word was with God, and the Word was God"***

This underlines the importance of The Bible – 'The Word' and listening to and reading the word – since the word is god himself. By having God's teachings in our lives we are embracing God himself in our lives.

There are numerous times in the week that the children have the opportunity to listen to and understand 'the Word' and you can be assured that this is a central part of school life, both in class and in collective worship.

## Safeguarding

If you are worried about the safety of your child or any child in our school, please speak to one of our safeguarding leaders immediately.

The Designated Safeguarding Leaders are Mr Hinton and Mrs Chapman. The Deputy DSLs are Mrs Cheema, Miss Oakley and Mrs Smith.



## Anti-bullying and Anti-racism Culture



We regularly reinforce our anti bullying policy and teach the children that they do not have to tolerate any form of bullying, harassment, intimidation, violence, threats or name calling. The children know they must tell an adult to get the help they need straight away.

Racist name calling and the use of racist language is not acceptable and is strictly not tolerated in school or within the community. Any form of racist name calling will always be reported to both the parents of the victim and the child using racist language and appropriate consequences will be issued in line with our behaviour policy.

Please support us by ensuring your child understands that we will always tackle bullying, harassment, threats, violence, name calling including racist, sexist or homophobic name calling and any other behaviours that cause any form of fear, worry or unhappiness. It is always right to tell an adult and get help. It's never right to keep quiet.

**SAY NO TO RACISM!**



Please also support us by ensuring your child understands the types of behaviour that are wholly unacceptable in both our school and in the community.

Thanks for working with us to keep all of the children safe and happy.





**The first section of the newsletter is all about the new COVID-19 safety rules and arrangements in school and the next section is the autumn term update.**

The government has updated the Covid safety procedures that schools must follow from September

- We are no longer required to keep children in separate 'bubbles'
- Assemblies and collective worship can go ahead as a whole school
- Children can eat together with other classes at lunchtimes
- Children can play together at break times
- Children can move around school and do not need to be kept separate from other groups
- Children from different classes work together for some activities e.g. phonics sessions
- The government does **not** advise children or staff to wear face coverings in school – **not** in classrooms or communal areas. Face coverings are recommended on public transport.

## WE CAN DO THIS!

We have embraced the freedoms that the new guidance gives us and the key benefit of this has been the opportunity to come together for collective worship in the hall at Mass and assembly. At the same time, we have some measures in place to keep our school as safe and hygienic as possible:

- All of our spaces are kept well ventilated by opening windows and doors
- At playtime and lunchtime, only two classes (the same consistent two classes) play together outside and go into the hall together for lunch
- When we gather together in the hall, we maintain a space (an 'aisle') between different groups of children and everyone faces forward. The hall is kept well ventilated with open windows and doors
- There is ongoing cleaning of touch points, toilets and surfaces throughout the day, as well as at the beginning and end of the day
- At the moment, after taking local advice from Dudley Public Health, we are not inviting parents and carers to assemblies and Masses. We have been advised to hold back on opening this invitation for the next few weeks whilst the impact of schools reopening and the removal of restrictions in schools is assessed. We will work closely with Dudley Public Health and keep the situation under constant review. At the moment it seems sensible to not add additional adults to the groups mixing in school when nobody yet knows the full impact of the lifting of restrictions. Our contacts at Dudley Public health know how important collective worship is to us and





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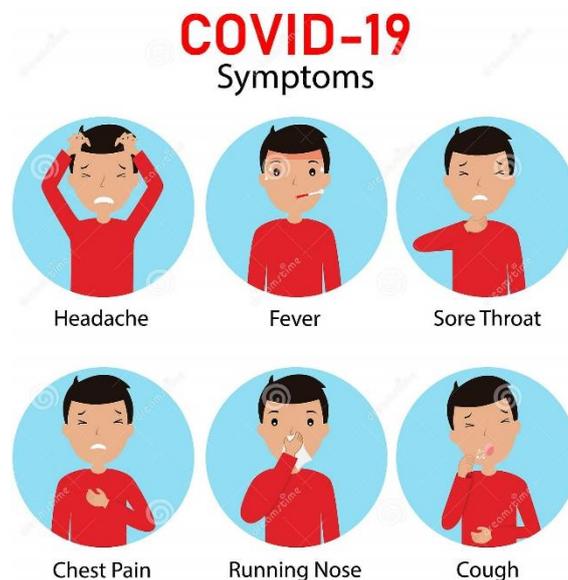
how much we want to include parents and carers – so we will work closely with them with the aim of being able to invite you to join us as soon as we can.

## How we deal with symptomatic staff and children

- If an adult or child shows symptoms of Covid-19 in school they will be isolated immediately and sent home to take a PCR test. They must remain at home until the results of the test are known. Anyone testing positive will need to self-isolate for 10 days.

## Children and adults who have symptoms must not attend school

- Anyone who develops symptoms whilst at home must not come to the school building. Instead you need to book a PCR test and the individual must stay at home until the results of the test are known. Anyone testing positive must self-isolate for 10 days.



## Schools are no longer routinely involved in contact tracing and whole classes are no longer routinely sent home to self-isolate

- If someone tests positive in your child's class, the class is no longer sent home. Instead, NHS Test and Trace (not the school) will identify any close contacts that need to be notified and advised to take a PCR test.
- Local (Dudley) operating procedures mean that if there is a small outbreak in our school – that is 2 or more children / staff who are likely to have mixed closely, testing positive within 10 days of each other – we will notify parents in the affected class/es for their information.
- The same procedures mean that if there is a large outbreak in our school – 5 or more children / staff who are likely to have mixed closely testing positive within 10 days of each other – we will notify parents in the affected class/es and advise them to arrange a PCR test for their child.





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- NHS Test and Trace will notify the parents of children who are deemed to be close contacts.

## Self-isolation rules for contacts of people who test positive

- NHS test and Trace will identify contacts of positive cases and advise them to book a PCR test or self-isolate depending on the group/s they belong to.
- Certain people who are identified as contacts are **exempt from self-isolation unless they test positive**: people who are fully vaccinated, people under the age of 18 years and 6 months, people who can't have the vaccination for medical reasons, people who have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial.
- **All other adult contacts should isolate for 10 days** from the contact with the positive case, with day one being the day after contact.

## We need your help and support to limit transmission of the virus in our school

As a school we welcome the freedoms the new rules bring for the children, the social and emotional benefits of which we are already seeing. However, the new freedoms bring additional risks that didn't exist when we were kept in controlled bubbles.

## There's A LOT you can do to help us and it's VERY EASY!

Please never send your child to school if they have any COVID-19 classic symptoms:

- a new continuous cough (coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours – or if you usually have a cough it may be worse than usual)
- a high temperature – feel hot to touch on your chest or back (temperature of 37.8C or higher if you're able to measure this)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you can't smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal
- **PLEASE BOOK A PCR TEST FOR YOUR CHILD AND KEEP THEM AT HOME UNTIL A NEGATIVE RESULT IS RECEIVED.**
- If your child tests negative on a PCR test but goes on to later develop Covid-19 symptoms – you must keep them at home and book another PCR test.

## Other symptoms of Covid-19

There are a number of other symptoms which may be linked and an indicator of Covid-19, although these symptoms are also common in a number of other illnesses. Dudley Local Authority advice for anyone displaying one or more of these symptoms is to **GET A PCR TEST AS A PRECAUTION**. This testing advice is voluntary and children can continue to come to school whilst awaiting the results.



If your child has any of the symptoms below we would follow the LA advice and advise you to get a PCR test as a precaution. Your child can still attend school if they are fit to do so.





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Symptoms to look out for are: loss of appetite, extreme tiredness, headaches, joint pain or muscle ache, nausea, sore throat, sneezing, diarrhoea or vomiting (children must be clear of symptoms of diarrhoea or vomiting for 48 hours before returning to school) runny nose or congestion.

**WE REALLY APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT TO DO ALL WE CAN TO MINIMISE RISKS OF TRANSMISSION WHILST WORKING TO THE NEW GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE. PLEASE DO ALL YOU CAN TO SUPPORT US TO KEEP YOUR CHILD/REN AND OTHER PEOPLE'S CHILDREN (AND THE STAFF) AS SAFE AS POSSIBLE.**

## Autumn Term Update

Welcome to our new members of staff:

- **Mrs Smith** – our Nursery Teacher and Senior Teacher as Deputy Early Years Leader who leads our Nursery part time.
- **Miss Lyttle** – our new Year 3 teacher
- **Mrs Iqbal** – our new teacher in Reception class.



Let's always be polite, kind and respectful to each other – even when things are difficult – when making contact by phone / email / in person / social media

Every member of staff in school understands the commitment we have to providing the highest levels of respect, care and service to you – our school community. You should rightly expect to be treated with respect, kindness and politeness at all times. If you are not treated with the highest levels of care and respect – you need to let Mrs Chapman know.



Likewise, please treat the whole staff of the school with care and respect. We try hard to run the school with meticulous care and attention but things inevitably can and sometimes will go wrong. When things go wrong you can be assured we will work hard to sort any issues out with the same meticulous attention and care.





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Your concerns will always be listened to and acted upon immediately. Please can we ask everyone to treat us with care and respect when **calling, emailing or visiting** the school. Please also be mindful of what is **posted online, written in emails, posted on social media and in WhatsApp groups**.

When problems arise, we will do our utmost to put things right. You can be assured your concerns will always be acted upon and you will always be treated respectfully. Most problems can be instantly sorted out simply by having a chat with us at the school.

We are committed to providing excellent customer care. We are committed to resolving problems as quickly and effectively as we can. We really appreciate you treating us with respect and care so we can all work together in a supportive, safe and mutually respectful way.

Thank you so much for your kindness and support.

## Playtime snacks

We are a nut free school because we have children in school with nut allergies. Please never send nuts or any products containing nuts to school.



There is no need to send in playtime snacks for children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 or Year 2 – free fruit is provided for them.

In Nursery and Reception, we ask that no snacks are sent in because snack time is part of the routine of the day and the children build up to self service of the drinks and fruit provided. In addition, we have a high number of allergy sufferers in EYFS so we stick to fruit only – which is available in the morning and afternoon.

In Year 1 and Year 2 we would advise you not to send in snacks as free fruit is provided but this is a personal choice.

Children in Years 3 to 6 are allowed to bring in a snack for playtime.

All snacks should be healthy snacks – low fat and low sugar and modest in size. Fruit is strongly recommended however we will allow a small biscuit or small, low fat snack bag. Bars of chocolate are not allowed; big bags of snacks are not allowed and high calorie or high sugar snacks are not allowed.



Please don't send in bars of chocolate or big bags of snacks – only healthy snacks in appropriate sizes for a mid-morning snack.

If children bring big bags or packs of food for playtime they will be asked to take a small amount out for their snack and to take the rest home.





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Please support us by sending only modest, healthy snacks and bear in mind fruit is provided every day for EYFS and Years 1 and 2.

Thank you for supporting us.

## Water bottles and drinks

ALL children from Nursery to Year 6 are encouraged to bring in a bottle of water from home each day. The bottle is taken home at the end of the day to be washed and returned to school the following day. Staff will refill bottles during the day if required, adhering to hygiene procedures.

We encourage your child to be drinking water, but we will allow them to have NO ADDED SUGAR WELL DILUTED SQUASH OR WELL DILUTED JUICE in their bottle as an alternative.

Fizzy drinks, undiluted juice and any forms of energy drinks are strictly not allowed. Thank you for your support.



## Please don't send in cakes or sweets for birthdays



This is a lovely tradition but unfortunately causes big problems in school because of the high number of allergy sufferers we have in each class. This policy was introduced last year and we really thank you for your continued understanding.

## Uniform Reminders

Thank you so much for upholding the high standards of uniform that St Joseph's is so well known and highly regarded for. 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.
- Extreme hair styles are not allowed, no highlights, hair dying, extreme shavings, tramlines or hair engravings / sculpture.





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## Please donate a tin of food or a few tins of food for our Harvest Mass

We'll celebrate Harvest mass on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> September and will be collecting tins of food for the Good Shepherd Shelter in Wolverhampton. The Good Shepherd serve the poor and homeless of the local area and your donations help some of the most needy and vulnerable in our community.

Please send your tins of food in to school on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> September and Monday 27<sup>th</sup> September so that we can put all of the donations on display ready for Mass on Tuesday morning.

Thanks so much for your support.



## CAFOD Harvest Fast Day – Friday 1<sup>st</sup> October – give up your snack and donate some coins to CAFOD!

On this day we invite all of the children to live in solidarity with the world's poor and hungry for just a short time. We ask those children who normally bring in a playtime snack to give it up just for the day (FAST) and instead give the small amount of money saved to CAFOD. All children are invited to bring in a few coins to donate to CAFOD.

CAFOD is the Catholic Church Agency for Overseas Development and supports overseas communities that need help with access to drinking water, safe places to stay, education, food and shelter.



## Small Change to term dates – Christmas Holidays

We will now be breaking up for our Christmas Holidays one day earlier than previously advised. **We will break up for Christmas on THURSDAY 16<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER.**

*change the date*

This change is because an additional bank holiday has been announced for next year in celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022, which takes place during May half term.

As our term started with a training day on 1 September - a day earlier than most schools started - our summer term already ends a day earlier than others. To this end in our school we will be adding the additional Queen's Jubilee holiday to Christmas.

A full list of term dates list is being sent out to you and the website has been updated too.





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## Parking outside school

Please can we remind parents not to wait and / or park on the yellow zig zag lines at the front of school. Parking on the yellow lines is dangerous and could cause a serious accident. Please can parents who are using the services of a taxi ask the driver not to drop off and wait on the lines too. West Midlands Police have provided us with referral forms, which can be collected from the office, to report people who are persistently waiting / dropping off on the yellow lines. Please help us by parking sensible on Hillcrest Road.



## Keep in touch

Your child's happiness, safety, education and wellbeing are the reason we are here. If you have any concerns about your child at school – never, ever delay in getting in touch. The sooner we know about any concerns, the sooner we can sort them out.



- You can usually see your child's class teacher after school. You can also give them a call and they will call you back when they are not teaching.
- Simple messages can be passed to the teaching assistants on duty on the doors each morning.
- **Mrs Chapman** is the head of school and will see you immediately if she is able to or will call you back as quickly as possible.
- **Mr Hinton** is the Executive Headteacher and he will contact you as quickly as possible if Mrs Chapman is not available or not on site. He is predominantly based at St Chad's but regularly works at St Joseph's and has overall responsibility for both schools.
- **Miss Oakley** is the SENCO, EYFS Leader and Senior Teacher – you can contact her if you have any concerns about your child's learning which you feel need to discuss with her. She is also a senior teacher who is able to help with any problems you or your child may have encountered.





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- **Mrs Cheema and Mrs Smith** are senior teachers. Mrs Cheema is based in Year 6 and Mrs Smith is the deputy EYFS Leader based in Nursery. They are both able to help you with any concerns you may have.
- **There is always a senior member of staff available to help you during school opening hours.**



**We are all really looking forward to working with you this term and we are here to help if you need us.**

**Every kind wish as always,**

**Mr S Chapman**

**Executive Head of School**





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## DATES TO REMEMBER

### Autumn Term 2021

- **Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> October** – Children break up for half term
- **Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> October** – Training Day, School closed to pupils
- **Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> October** – Training Day, School closed to pupils
- **Monday 1<sup>st</sup> November** – Children return to school
- **Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> December** – End of Term, Children break up for Christmas



### Spring Term 2022

- **Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> January** – Training Day, School closed to pupils
- **Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> January** – Training Day, School closed to pupils
- **Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> January** – Children return to school
- **Friday 18<sup>th</sup> February** – Children break up for half term
- **Monday 28<sup>th</sup> February** – Children return to school
- **Friday 8<sup>th</sup> April** – End of Term, Children break up for Easter



### Summer Term 2022

- **Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April** – Start of Term, Children return to school
- **Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> May** – May Day Bank Holiday, School closed
- **Friday 27<sup>th</sup> May** – Children break up for half term
- **Monday 6<sup>th</sup> June** – Children return to school
- **Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> July** – Children break up for Summer holidays
- **Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> July** – Teacher Day, School closed to pupils

