



Autumn Second Half Term



Dear Parents and Carers,

Autumn Second Half Term Newsletter

The second half of the Autumn Term is well underway and the seasons of Advent and Christmas is fast approaching. This newsletter contains lots of information about special events in school through Advent and up to Christmas. You will also find lots of important updates about our school which we hope you will find useful. 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 leads are Mrs Chapman and Mr Hinton, and Miss Oakley, Mrs Cheema and Mrs Smith 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://safeguarding.dudley.gov.uk/safeguarding/child/>



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

Learned: Learning everything we can from Jesus' teachings – not just learning the stories, but learning the meanings and morals of what Jesus teaches, and applying them to our daily lives.

Wise: Using everything we learn from Jesus to make the right choices. Understanding that the right choice is often the hardest choice and knowing that Jesus' way is always the right way.

The Holy season of Advent started on the First Sunday of Advent: Sunday 28th 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.





St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

We are sorry that we are not having live audiences in school and we are really grateful for your understanding

With a heavy heart, we have taken the advice to provide recordings of our Nativity / Christmas assemblies and not to welcome live audiences into the school. We held off making this decision whilst we monitored virus rates and liaised with our public health colleagues. Regrettably, the virus rate does not seem to be reducing and indeed is currently high in our local area. The decision to not have audiences in the school has not been taken lightly and is based solely on keeping the children, parents, carers, grandparents, family members, friends and school staff as safe as possible. Welcoming large groups of people into the school over the course of several days inevitably comes with a risk and the last thing we would ever want to do is put anyone at risk of illness at Christmas time.



We can all be much more optimistic about next Christmas and we would certainly like to hope that we can start to welcome parents into school at some point in the Spring or Summer. We are disappointed that things cannot be back to normal for this Christmas but we hope you can understand our intention this year is purely to keep everyone as safe and healthy as possible.

We wrote to you separately with information about the Christmas plays. At the moment we are collecting everyone's consent forms – please let us know if you give permission for your child to be filmed. Details of how to access your child's password-protected assembly on Vimeo will be sent out once the assemblies have been recorded in the week leading up to the Christmas holidays.



Christmas Activities for the children in school

Friday 3rd December: Charity Christmas Jumper Day / Own Clothes / Christmas Clothes Day

Thank you to all of the children who donated 50p or £1 (or more) 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.



Thursday 9th December: Christmas Dinner Day / Christmas Jumper and Movie afternoon

School dinners at St Joseph's are of an exceptionally high standard since our new contractor, Miquill, took over in September. Christmas Dinner costs £2.40. It must be booked in advance so we can order the food in good time.

Friday 10th December: Jumper Day/Own Clothes for the Food Bank

Children can come to school wearing their Own Clothes or Christmas Jumper for a donation for the Food Bank, you could donate packed food, tinned food or toiletries.

Wednesday 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 separate discos for each pair of classes that normally have their lunch and playtime together. There will be a Nursery and Reception Disco, a Year 1 and 2 Disco, Year 3 and 4 and Year 5 and 6.





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Morning Nursery children are welcome to come back for the Disco and Miss Link / Mrs Smith / Miss Simmonds can give you the details!



Thursday 16th December: School fund Christmas Jumper Day / own Clothes / Christmas Clothes Day

All of the children are invited to donate 50p or £1 (or more if you choose) towards our school fund. Donating is optional and is much appreciated but not compulsory. The school fund is used to pay for extras for the children that the school budget does not fund. With almost two years without Christmas fairs, raffles, summer fairs and sponsored events, our school fund is currently low - your kind donations will help us to pay for nice extras for the children that we otherwise cannot afford.



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!

Our new office manager and Operations Manager is Mrs Toddington

Mrs Toddington has re-joined St Joseph's, but in a new role as the Operations Manager across St Joseph's and St Chad's. Mrs Toddington will manage the offices in both schools and will split her full-time week between St Joseph's and St Chad's. Mrs Asrar is here full time as the school administrator but you will certainly be seeing Mrs Toddington in the office and speaking to her on the phone – if you haven't already - and she is very much looking forward to serving you.



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. Please remember that **ALL** children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to a free school lunch every day.

Our new catering company, Miquill, really do offer excellent quality fresh food. There is a choice of hot meals, sandwiches and jacket potatoes together with a salad bar.





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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 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.



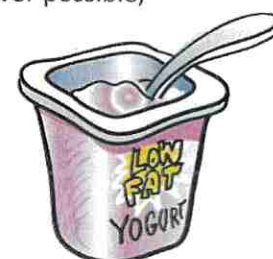
Healthy Playtime Snacks and healthy lunchboxes

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.





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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.



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.



After School Clubs

We know how popular our After-School clubs are with our children, and we are sorry that we have been unable to run these during recent months, due to Covid restrictions. However, we are hoping to have a number of various After School clubs up and running from early next term, and we will be in touch with more details as soon as they are organised.



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.

I will be in touch again before Christmas, until then, every kind wish as always

Mrs S Chapman
Executive Head of School

