



Dear parents and carers,

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.

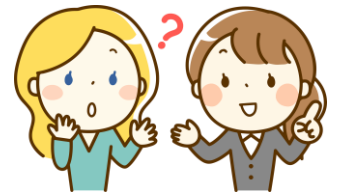
Our Catholic Schools Pupil Profile Values this half term are Intentional and Prophetic

Intentional: Being intentional with our words and actions – making good choices.

Prophetic: Speaking clearly treating others the way Jesus showed us.

Parents in school

We love having parents join us in school for special gathering, Mass, assemblies etc. When we gather as a school family, we recognise that we are in the presence of God and encourage the children to act with reverence and respect. Please can we ask parents not to talk, answer phones etc during our gatherings as this goes against the values that we are teaching our children. Also, it prevents other parents joining in, enjoying, listening and hearing about their own children and practising their faith. We wouldn’t want to ever embarrass parents by publicly by asking them to be quiet as we respect your dignity however, showing reverence and respect during Collective Worship is, as Jesus said, “You shall **love the Lord your God with all your heart**, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength’. Mark 12:30-31. Thank you for your support.



School Improvement and Development

In school we have many pupil groups who work with us to look at ways of improving the school and making it even better! Parents who have been into school recently will have noticed that the whole school has been decorated and the classrooms have had new carpet too!



St Francis’ Forest is a newly developed area of our school too designed to enhance our outdoor learning. St Francis’ Forest is a gated area off the

playground where children can explore nature, sit on stumps to enjoy a story, build dens and use the wooden teepees, collect natural materials for art and science and coming soon we have a fire pit to toast marshmallows and enjoy the fascination of a campfire!



A group of our children decided that they would like to have some gym equipment installed in school to help us all stay fit and healthy. Over the October half-term we were able to use some of our funding to install an outdoor gym – Joe’s Gym! The children are loving the new equipment – pictures can be seen on our Facebook page!

Keeping Healthy

Following on from the children’s idea of having a gym at school they have all been thinking about ways to keep healthy. We have been supporting the children by reminding them about the importance of a good diet as well as exercise. With this in mind, I would like to take this opportunity to remind parents about sending in healthy playtime snacks. A playtime snack is just a small snack to ‘keep children going’ until lunchtime. Ideal snacks would be fruit, vegetables, a small chocolate bar, small packet of crisps etc. Unfortunately, we have seen some children eating very large sharing packs of crisps and large packets of sugary sweets which then makes them too full to eat their lunch. Please support the children in their desire to be fit and healthy by providing suitable playtime snacks. Thank you.

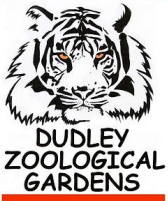


Anti-bullying, Anti-racism and learning about British Values Week

The week beginning Monday 11th November is the week dedicated nationally to anti-bullying and this year’s theme is

– Choose Respect. During the week the children will be completing a range of activities connected to anti-bullying, anti-racism and learning about fundamental British Values.

Dudley Zoo and Castle



As part of our commitment to supporting families and providing children with rich outdoor experiences we have purchased a family pass to Dudley Zoo and Castle. We would like families to make use of the pass during weekends and enjoy spending time together. If you would like to use the pass, please contact the office to 'book it out' for the weekend. The pass can then be collected on a Friday, along with a letter to take to the Zoo and returned to school the following Monday. PLEASE make use of this exciting opportunity.

Food bank

Thank you to everyone who has been able to donate food to the food bank at the front of the school. We now need people to take the food! PLEASE take anything you need to make a meal, part of a meal etc and if you are able please make a donation in the donation box – this money goes to our school fund which we ALWAYS spend on our children!

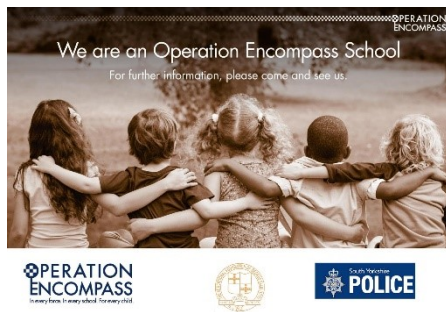


Safeguarding: Keeping Children Safe

Our school is committed to safeguarding and safe practices and you can read our policy on our website. The designated safeguarding lead is Mrs Chapman and Mrs Buckley, Mrs Cheema, Mrs Hickman 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.

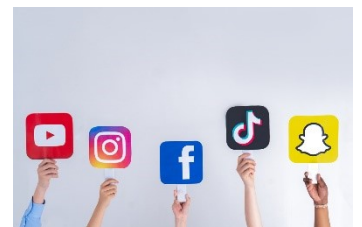
Operation Encompass ensures that there is a simple telephone call or notification to a school's trained Designated Safeguarding Lead /Officer (Mrs Chapman) prior to the start of the next school day after an incident of police

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.

Parents taking photos

We completely understand that parents want to capture special moments for their child in school with a photograph, which, in modern times, are mostly taken with a phone. We would not want to stop this, however we need to remind parents that they should only be taking photos of their own child and if sharing on social media other children's faces and names should not be shared. We share images as a school on our social media channels but always blur the faces of children for safeguarding purposes. Images of other children should not be shared on social media or distributed without consent. Please help us with this as we wouldn't want to be in the position where for



safeguarding purposes we have to ask parents not to take any photos when they are in school. Thank you for understanding.



Attendance

It is very important that when children are well enough, they attend school from 8.45-3.15pm. Here at St Joseph's, we work with the local authority to

monitor attendance levels and address issues. This is why we have a very robust MAC and school attendance policy – which can be viewed on our website. We understand that on occasions children may have to attend medical appointments during the school day which cannot be arranged outside of school, for safeguarding purposes we ask for proof of appointments – please don't be offended if you're asked for proof of appointments we have to follow the policy for ALL parents – it's not that we don't believe YOU – we have to apply the policy equally, consistently and fairly across the school / MAC.



In November we remember

During the month of November we are called to remember the people who have died and gone to heaven before us. This is something we actively share with the children and give them the opportunity to remember family members, friends, people they may only have seen a photograph of. At the front of the school, we are also writing the names of people we would like to remember. If you would like to add the name of a person, please use the strips and pens under the

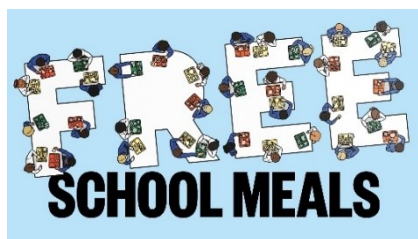
shelter and add to our display.

The Holy season of Advent starts on the First Sunday of Advent: Sunday 1st December

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.



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 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!

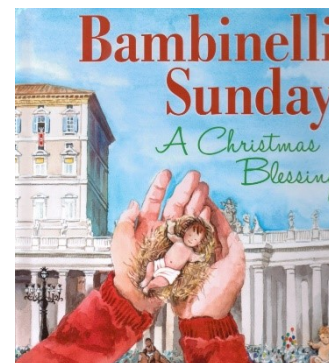
Uniform Reminders

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

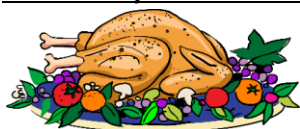
- **Long hair** is tied back at all times
- **Hair bows, hair bands and ribbons are small and not excessive in size.** School colours are preferred.
- **No jewellery is allowed** – no earrings, bracelets, necklaces etc. **Nail varnish is not allowed.**
- **Safe, smart and sensible school shoes are worn**,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

Bambinelli Sunday – Sunday 15th December – celebrated in school Tuesday 10th 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 10th 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.



Wednesday 11th 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 £2.41. 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 12th 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 13th December: Christmas Crafts / Party Day

Children will be taking part in a range of Christmas Activities and enjoying a party with traditional party games. Children are invited to wear their own clothes to school.

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!

Christmas Fair – Friday 13th December

This year we are planning something a little different for our Christmas Fair – including **REAL LIFE REINDEER!** We will



still be having our BIG raffle, face painting, and toy stall but rather than the range of tombolas there will be a variety of hot drink and food stalls including samosas, cakes, hot chocolate etc. We have contacted Father Christmas, and he will be in attendance and bringing his live reindeer which can be seen and enjoyed by everyone! If you are able to donate any toys for the toy stall that would be much appreciated – a good opportunity to have a clear out



before Christmas! **Also, if you work for a business / shop / restaurant etc and could donate items / vouchers as raffle prizes, this too would be much appreciated. Thank you for your support.**

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.

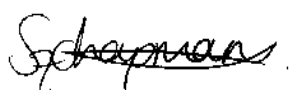
Please visit <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/benefits/free-school-meals/> for full details and to apply instantly online.

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