



23rd November 2020

Dear Families,

Once again a big thank you for helping to keep our school community safe. We are due another Health and Safety COVID inspection next week; I will let you know the outcome from that.

There is a lot coming up in the next few week- all within the new normal of course!

Filming at St. Mary's

You may have heard that we recently had a film crew in school for the day. We are making a promotional video to share online. Your children were amazing and really showed St. Mary's at its best. As soon as we have a copy of the filming, then we will share it with you. Some children do not have permission to be filmed according to their contact sheet, if you want to change this then please ask at the school office and they will make sure the changes are made.

Mini Police

Once again, year 5 have been selected to take part in the mini police activities. This involves supporting local police teams within the community (where possible). We had many volunteers from year 5, but there is unfortunately only space for ten children, so Mrs McManus randomly picked the names. We know that children are disappointed when they are not selected, but hopefully they will be chosen for another activity soon.

Blended / remote learning

The teachers are working very hard to educate the children in school whilst also providing work and support for isolating pupils at home. As soon as we know that your child is isolating, we will make sure that you know what is expected at home and can offer use of IT if needed. It is vital that your child completes the set work at home to allow them to return smoothly to school and to make sure that they do not fall behind. The teachers are recording the work that is completed and will be in touch if they do not receive evidence of the work. If we cannot gather evidence, then we will refer it on to the Trust's Attendance officer who will complete a home visit to check that everything at home is fine. Please do not send hard copies of work into school; please attach a photo and send it via email or Class Dojo.

Isolating pupils

Unfortunately, we have had to send pupils home to isolate this term, but due to tight risk assessments it hasn't always been a whole class. We follow strict advice from the Department for Education and Public Health England as to who has to isolate. If your child has to isolate then they are not allowed to leave home for the allocated time, which is given to you in a letter. We understand that it is difficult if you need to drop or collect siblings from school, but we will do as much as we can to support this. So far, we have arranged for children to arrive early or late in school or collected early or late to accommodate other family members collecting. If you do need help then please ask and we will find a solution to suit you.

Class trips/ residentials

Last year, the children worked hard to fundraise towards class trips and residential trips and some of you paid directly towards the trips. Don't worry- the money is safely saved until it is safe for us to get out of school. We are hoping that by next summer, we are able to venture out, however, will only do this when it is safe to do so.

Staffing

Mrs Simpson, our KS1 teaching assistant has left St. Mary's family due to a new position in a school closer to her home. Unfortunately, she has been isolating and couldn't say goodbye to the children, but we have arranged a Zoom call on Friday with years 1 and 2 so that she can say goodbye.

Congratulations to Miss Mowbray and her partner as they are expecting a baby in the spring. We will let you know staffing in regards this when we have finalised the details.





School photographs

Due to current restrictions, we have to minimise visitors in school and this includes the photographer. Depending on restrictions, we will be rearranging this for early next year and we will let you know the date when we can.

Christmas

As we approach December, we have an uncertain Christmas ahead of us, yet we are going to provide the children with as much normality as we can. The amazing staff are pulling together to make it a good one. Christmas 2020 is set to be a difficult end to an extraordinary year, with many families in our own community finding themselves in very challenging circumstances. National lockdowns have left many families without their usual income and struggling financially. At St Mary's, we have one aim this Christmas – to make sure no family goes hungry and no child goes without.

If you do need help then please ask us; we know that you are all proud people and asking for help is sometimes hard, but please come and have a quiet word with one of the school staff members, send us a direct message on Class DoJo or phone us if you need some help. We really want to help and we are very confidential.

Cards

Unfortunately, due to COVID restrictions, the children will not be able to bring Christmas cards into school this year. We know this is a tradition that the children look forward to, but we must continue to keep minimum items transferring between home and school. The children will make a class Christmas card in class to share their greetings with each other.

Christmas crafts

Where possible, the children will make Christmas crafts in school. The crafts will be placed in a bag for the children to bring home. We will leave the items for 72 hours before they are sent home, this way you can admire their work straight away.

We are not holding a Christmas fair this year, but the children will each be making a craft that they will be selling to help fund class trips. Last year, we set up class stalls so that parents can buy their child's gift. We are unable to accommodate this; however, we have set up class pages on parent pay. If you would like to purchase your child's craft for £1.50 then please do so on parent pay. The money goes directly towards a class trip for your child.

Christmas parties

As some of you know, we usually allow the children to leave school at lunchtime on their party day to get into their party gear. We will not be doing that this year, as we need to keep the children in tight bubbles and cannot have parents crossing bubbles to collect the children. On the party day, your child should come to school in their party clothes. Make up and jewellery is allowed on this day if needed, but please keep it to a minimum. The parties will mainly be held in the classrooms; however, they will be in the hall in class groups for part of the time to let off some steam. Each child will receive some party food and if Santa is available then he will be flying past and may even drop off a present for the children. To help us fund the parties, please use parent pay to purchase a ticket at £2 each.

Nursery/ reception-	Monday 14 th December 2020
Year 1 and year 2-	Tuesday 15 th December 2020
Year 3 and year 4-	Wednesday 16 th December 2020
Year 5 and year 6-	Thursday 17 th December 2020

Christmas Nativities

Sadly, this year we are unable to have parent/carers into school to watch Nativities or Carol Services. Each class is preparing a performance to share with you virtually. Mr Bourdieu is recording the performances and they will be placed on the school website for you to view.





Christmas dinner/ Jolly jumper day

We previously stated that Christmas dinner and Jolly jumper day was on 10th/11th December, however, that was whilst the children were having alternative hot and cold dinners. As all children are now offered a hot dinner, the day has changed to **Friday 11th December** for all pupils in school, this includes nursery. This will appear on ParentPay as Jolly Jumper Day 2020 and all money raised goes to charity.

Christmas Dinner Day costs £2.20 for those who pay for their child's meal or for those children that would like to have lunch with their class friends and would normally bring a packed lunch. Please pay this on ParentPay the week commencing Monday, 7th December so the office staff know it is for that day.

Christmas Raffles

We will be holding a Christmas Raffle in December, Mrs. Slack has kindly offered to organise this and will arrange for the raffle tickets to come home in a dinner envelope with your child. Raffle tickets will be 50p per strip and will appear on ParentPay as Christmas Raffle 2020.

If you would like to donate something for a raffle prize, please bring it to the school office in a plastic bag.

Christmas gifts

As you know, it is a long-lived tradition that some children buy their teachers gifts at Christmas. This is not expected at all by staff, as the children's smiles and happiness is a daily gift. If you insist on this then please hand the gifts to the school office and they will be left for 72 hours before being delivered to staff.

Liturgies

Class Liturgies will be held in the school hall on Friday, 18th December in their 'bubbles', again we are unable at this time to be able to have parent/carers attend.

SCHOOL WILL CLOSE ON 18TH DECEMBER 2020 FOR THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS AT 1:30PM – there will be no Wrap Around provision on the afternoon of this day.

School returns on Monday 4th January 2021.

Thanking you,

Mrs Tumelty
Acting Head of School



Artsmark
Silver Award
Awarded by Arts
Council England



North East
Better Health
at Work Award
Gold Award



Building
stronger
families

