



St. Teresa's Catholic Primary School Newsletter

Friday 22nd January 2021

Little Flowers Growing and Giving Glory to God

Thank you to parents and carers who are, amidst everything that is going on at this time, supporting their children who are working at home. We are receiving the work produced by children and that is thanks in no small part to the hard work from parents/carers that children are accessing and learning the relevant year groups' curriculum. I hope that you experience the joy of witnessing first hand your child taking on a concept or a piece of learning, tackling it, demonstrating resilience and being successful. In many ways it is these small things that are actually the big things in life! We will be celebrating the contributions made by parents/carers and family member supporting remote learning in this afternoon's Congratulations Assembly, available on the home page of the school website.

We are now establishing a pattern of work being uploaded onto the school website and, at the start of the week, teachers providing paper copies of resources which, when they are organised so that siblings work is together, we are messaging parents/carers to let them know that the work is ready.

It is important that the children not only complete the work set but that it is returned either electronically or paper versions which are isolated for at least 72 hours. We are seeing patterns of engagement in school work from most children. Once again, thank you to all supporting their children. However, we are also seeing and challenging the parents/carers of children who are not engaging with their remote learning.

Thank you also to those parents who are using the individual class email addresses to correspond with the class teachers. The teachers get little or no opportunity to respond to these emails in the school day. Please do not be disheartened if you are not readily replied to. Given the numbers of children attending teachers are with the class for nearly all lessons.

Next week, staff in some classes will provide paper copies for the children that require them. There are other classes where the resources provided already include next week's work. We will put these packs together where needed and notify you once they are available - thank you to Mrs Dignan for overseeing the organisation of the packs.

Earlier this week staff were working with Google's G-Suite for Education. Several technical issues came to light, including issues with the trainer's capacity to lead the training but we are looking to overcome these issues. We are aware, given the feedback from parents from their Home Learning arrangement form replies and staff telephone calls to parents, about a number of parents not being in a position technically or with other commitments to 'learn' a different system. We will keep you updated.

This week, on Monday there were fifty children in school. On Tuesday, there were fifty-two children in. On Wednesday, there were forty-two children. Yesterday, there were forty children in and today there are forty children in school.

The drop in numbers of children attending from Wednesday was, in part, due to a positive Covid-19 test result in the Year 3 class bubble. This test result was received and forwarded to the school early on Wednesday morning. My thanks to the family of the person who had the positive Covid-19 test result, for letting the school know so promptly. We were able to send a text message and an email to the parents/carers of those Year 3 children we anticipated being in school to inform them that the Year 3 bubble was closed with immediate effect and that all the children and staff in the Year 3 bubble on Monday 18th January are to isolate at home for ten days.

For those parents/carers of children in the Year 3 class bubble who may attend school as children of critical workers or vulnerable children.

I was informed, through the original contact from NHS Covid-19 Notification of a positive test result, that the isolation period would end on Thursday 28th January. It was planned that the Year 3 class bubble would be able to open on Friday 29th January and we communicated this to the relevant parents on Wednesday. However, on Wednesday evening NHS Test and Trace contacted the person who has tested positive with further information including '...you must stay at home and self-isolate until 29th January (including this date)'.

Therefore, the Year 3 class bubble will not be reopening until Monday 1st February. I apologise to parents/carers for any inconvenience caused but the Test and Trace guidance is clear and unequivocal.

This week, when possible, staff have been contacting parents/carers to clarify if the home school learning provision is working and ensuring children are safe and well. A number of parents and carers have shared their own challenges including illness, in a number of cases Covid-19 related, and other individual difficult circumstances.

Our school's Mental Health and Well-being lead is Mrs Byrne. If any parents/carer or child wanted support or someone to talk to we will make Mrs Byrne available. Mrs Byrne has also been working in support of several staff at this challenging time.

Throughout the day, windows and at times outside doors are open. Given the weather at this time of year those children who are in school may bring a fleece or warm top to wear over their school jumper or cardigan. This warm top would be as well as, not instead of, school uniform. Given the weather forecasts and the time of year, I advise that children who are in school have a change of footwear and a change of socks with them. For all of the children, including the younger children, the footwear should be something that they can put on themselves rather than relying on staff members to put on the footwear (preventing a staff member and a child being too close to each other).

Digital Poverty

We still have a number of Vodafone data SIM cards which allow 30GB usage for up to 90 days from activation at no cost. Please contact school if you require one or more SIM cards.

On the behalf of parents/carers, schools can request temporarily increased data allowances on mobile devices. This is for children who do not have fixed broadband at home or cannot afford additional data for their devices.

For each request we need to know:

- The name of the account holder
- The number of the mobile device
- The mobile network of that device

Please contact the school office if this is of interest to you.

If there are parents/carers who have a route through work or another agency to access donated laptops, or you know of a business that is prepared to fund a laptop or device for one of our children, please email the school at enquiry@stteresa.bham.sch.uk with details.

Family Fund

The Family Fund supports disabled children. Families can apply for grants for laptops or other devices. Information about grants for laptops can be found at <https://www.familyfund.org.uk/computers-and-tablets>

If any support is required completing the forms please contact Miss Shirley at m.shirley@stteresa.bham.sch.uk and she will arrange a time to go through the forms over the phone.

Jack and Ada Beattie Foundation

The Jack and Ada Beattie Foundation is donating £100 to individuals for essential items. Further information can be found at the website <https://tonsofhelp.com/apply>

The Communication and Autism Team

The Communication and Autism Team (CAT) are inviting parents/carers to a group session held via Microsoft Teams: 'Supporting your autistic child/young person during the pandemic'. This session will be an opportunity to discuss some of the issues faced by children and young people at this time, as well as giving an opportunity to ask questions.

The session will take place on Monday 25th January between 10.00 and 11.00 am. To book a place, please contact Dawn.A.Jenkins@birmingham.gov.uk giving your name and contact email. An email invitation will be sent to you so that you can access the session through Microsoft Teams Online.

Catholic Life

The Wednesday Word booklet for this weekend is available on the 'Home' page of the school website. Please do share this weekend's gospel with its theme of 'Community' - a theme that is particularly relevant at this time.

Please keep those affected by coronavirus in your prayers.



Free School Meals vouchers

We had access to the Edenred Free School Meal vouchers ordering site on Wednesday. Voucher codes have been ordered for the four weeks from Monday 18th January for the majority of children entitled to the vouchers. These are to be released within the next four days. For parents/carers who receive the voucher codes the link below may be helpful. Please do contact school if there are any issues accessing the voucher codes or downloading the vouchers.

https://www.edenred.co.uk/Documents/DfE/DfE_FreeSchoolMeals_ParentCarerFAQs.pdf

For a small group of children's parents/carers without access to download the voucher codes, we are already aware of the families preferred supermarket chain and will use the code, when it is forwarded to school, to download and print the vouchers and to forward them on.

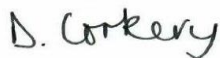
Free school meal vouchers are not being provided for the first two weeks of this half term. This was not evident until a Department for Education statement on Monday of this week and was noted as I logged onto the Edenred ordering website on Wednesday. Although I am not a Manchester United fan, this may yet again need the intervention of Marcus Rashford MBE to address this issue!

Should your family be one that have previously received food parcels through school, or if your family need a food parcel at this time, please come to the school office and we will provide whilst there are food parcels available and if we run out we will source more.

Dates for the Diary

- Monday 25th January from 10.00 a.m. to 11.00 a.m. - CAT Microsoft Teams session.
- Friday 12th February at 3.20 p.m. - End of the first half of the Spring Term.
- Monday 22nd February - INSET Day. Only staff in school.
- Tuesday 23rd February at 8.50 a.m. - Start of the second half of Spring Term for children.
- Thursday 1st April at 3.20 p.m. - End of the Spring Term.
- Monday 19th April - INSET Day. Only staff in school.
- Tuesday 20th April at 8.50 a.m. - Start of the Summer Term for children.

Keep safe,



D. Corkery