



St. Mary of the Angels Catholic Primary School

Following Jesus in all we think, do and say

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Dear Parents and Carers

The start of the spring term was very different to how we all imagined and hoped it would be. Once again we have been asked to stay at home to protect ourselves, others and the NHS which means that the vast majority of our pupils are continuing their learning at home. This continues to be a worrying time for us all, particularly as we know more friends and family who have been directly affected by the virus. We continue to pray for those who are sick and for those who have very sadly lost a family member or friend.

While there may be a physical distance between some of us the resilience, adaptability and commitment of parents/carers and school staff in ensuring the children in our care access a routine at home and have access to quality remote learning is a beacon of hope and light in these difficult times. Going forward, we will refer to 'remote' learning as '*Home Learning*' as the learning platforms we are using (see below) have served to enhance the communication between home and school and enabled teachers to ensure pupils working at home and those attending school are following the same curriculum.

Home Learning

Our priority continues to be that all pupils working at home can access their online learning via Google Classroom (Key Stage 2) or Seesaw (Foundation Stage/Key Stage 1). We know from our phone calls home that parents and pupils are on board and we are delighted with the high levels of engagement, which are testament to the continuing strength of our home school partnership. As to be expected, there have been some teething problems and we hope our response to your queries - re accessing and using Google Classroom/SeeSaw along with the guides on the website have been helpful.

To increase access to online learning, we have been able to loan digital devices provided by the DFE or devices donated to the school to pupils' eligible for free school meals and vulnerable pupils not attending school. Our weekly phone calls home have also identified other families that need support with technology and we are doing our best to provide the support required. We have a small number of devices that we can loan to families who still have limited access to a digital device so if you have not done so already, please email/phone the office and ask that your child's teacher contact you so that we can see what we can do to help.

A reminder that an email was sent home regarding increasing data allowances for mobile devices so please provide the information required by Monday 25th January if this is something of interest to you.

Year Group Expectations

Pupils learning at home will continue to be provided with a weekly home learning timetable which is available to view and download from their Class Page in the Home Learning section of the school website. Whilst we know children thrive on routine and structure, we also appreciate that the demands of family life and work life require some flexibility. Please do contact the school if you need any support or advice with scheduling home learning. Our expectations for each year group are guided by the Department of Education guidelines as follows:

Key Stage 2 pupils (Years 3, 4, 5 & 6)

Our expectation is that all Key Stage 2 pupils take part in the all the live lessons timetabled which can be accessed via Google Classroom and complete the work linked to these lessons.

Teachers will monitor engagement by registering who has logged in and attended the lesson and will contact parents/carers if a pupils does not log on and there has been no contact from the family. Therefore, parents/carers are asked to contact the school as you would if your child was attending school to let us know why they are unable to take part in the live lessons e.g. through illness or family circumstances.

Foundation Stage/Key Stage 1 pupils (Nursery, Reception, Years 1 & 2)

Daily phonics lessons are recorded and uploaded to SeeSaw for Foundation Stage and Year 1 pupils, with a recorded daily Book Talk session available for Year 2. From the week beginning the 1st February, lessons in Key Stage S1 will consist of a combination of live 'check ins' via Google Classroom and pre-recorded sessions on Seesaw. We will review our home learning offer with a view to timetabling live lessons for Year 1 and 2 pupils during the last week of term. We feel that the current offer of recorded lessons supports families who have older siblings who are accessing live lessons and provides flexibility for families, which many of you have said you appreciated during our calls home.

Our Key Stage 1 staff team will provide more details about our live check ins and send home Google Classroom log in details early next week. Once you receive the account details, please ensure that your child can access Google Classroom by logging into their accounts at the earliest possible convenience so that you can contact us if you have any difficulties logging in.

More detailed information regarding the school's Home Learning offer will be available on the school website next week. You will also find a child friendly Code of Conduct for live lessons on our website, which we ask that you discuss with your child.

Resources

Please contact the school if you need any other resources to help with Home Learning as we can put together a pack of exercise books, pencils, paper and other equipment they may need. You can then collect your resource pack from the school office at an agreed time.

Applications for Nursery September 2021

Applications for a Nursery place for September 2021 are open to families with children born between 1st September 2017 and 31st August 2018 and close on Friday 12th February. If you have yet to make an application or know a family who may be interested in applying for a place, please direct them to the Admissions section on the school website or ask them to call the school.

Applications for Reception September 2021

The closing date for applications was January 15th. However, the Local Authority has asked all schools to contact parents and carers to advise that late applications can still be made to your home local authority for pupils born between 1st September 2016 and 31st August 2017.

Weekly phone calls home

These will continue for pupils not currently attending school for one more week whilst we continue to resolve any issues with accessing online learning. However, now that we can more accurately gauge pupil engagement via SeeSaw and Google Classroom, from the week beginning Monday 1st February, teachers will only call home if they have a concern about engagement in home learning or in response to a parental request to call home.

And finally ...

A very special thank you to all parents and carers from the Senior Leadership Team (Mrs Wilson, Mrs Hough and Mrs Waine). The situation at the start of the spring term was very fast moving and we greatly appreciated your patience and understanding whilst we put into place the school's remote/home learning plan. As soon as we hear any news about schools reopening, we will be in touch, although past experience tells us that we will hear the news at the same time as you.

We are absolutely delighted with the efforts of the staff team and parents and carers in getting to grips with the next stage in our home learning journey and we very much enjoy logging in to see how hard the children are working, as well as to read the children and teacher comments. Needless to say, we are very proud of all the children, whether they be learning at home or at school, and we hope and pray that we will all be together very soon. In the meantime, technology will help keep us connected as will our prayers for the well-being and safety of all in our community.

God Bless

Mrs Wilson

Mrs Hough

Headteacher

Acting Deputy Headteacher