



Remote Learning

Thank you for all of your support with remote learning during the past few weeks. It has been good to hear about everything that has been happening at home through our regular phone calls between staff and parents / carers.

At this time of year, we would normally be arranging Pupil Progress Meetings for parents / carers. Although we have been in regular contact with our families, we are aware that there are some parents / carers who have shared parental responsibility and who we would see at Progress Meetings. Therefore, next week, staff will endeavour to contact these parents / carers to give an update on learning and to find out how things are going at home.

School Attendance

As you know, in order to re-open the school, and when there have been changes to the Covid restrictions in the area, the school has had to carry out rigorous risk assessments to ensure that the school is as Covid secure as we can make it. Part of this is restricting the number of children attending school at any one time. Currently, numbers are starting to reach the maximum attendance in some of our 'bubbles,' as determined by these risk assessments.

The government is encouraging all children classed as "vulnerable" to attend. This includes all children with EHCP's or with the support of a social worker. With regards to key worker children, due to very high demand in some areas, our Academy Trust has produced a priority criteria for children eligible to attend school. This may need to be applied when offering school places to key worker children. Please consider whether your child needs to be in school or if they could be kept safely at home before requesting a place so that we can do our best to support all of our families.

School Lunch Menu

Next week, for one week only, there is a different lunch menu, which your child should have received already in hard copy, if they are attending school at the moment, and which is being circulated with this letter via email.

Devon Norse, the company currently providing our school meals, are trying out different menu choices to see what our children like to eat as they haven't been able to offer their full range to us because of lockdown. They will use the feedback from the children next week to help inform the menus for next half term.

Free School Meals

Many families in Devon have seen their financial circumstances change due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. If you didn't previously qualify for free school meals but your income has recently reduced or stopped, you can check your eligibility. The quickest way to do this is through the Devon website where you will get an instant decision:

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/school-information/school-meals>

Alternatively, contact the education helpline on 0345 155 1019.

Safeguarding

Safer Internet Day – Tuesday 9th February

This week we will be marking Safer Internet Day, which has the theme of "Together for a better internet".

Thinking about how to stay safe online is particularly important at the moment with increased amount of screen time and remote communication. The NSPCC has a range of resources that parents / carers may find useful relating to online safety:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

It also includes advice about how to set up parental controls:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/parental-controls/>

Prayer Focus

The Wednesday Word is still being produced electronically rather than in paper form. It can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.paperturn-view.com/uk/wednesday-word/prayer?pid=MTA101634&v=17.8>

and on our school website:

<https://www.st-marysrc.devon.sch.uk/catholic-life/the-wednesday-word/>

This week's chosen word is "prayer" and this Sunday's Gospel reading comes from Mark, Chapter 1, verses 29-39. In it, we hear about Jesus taking time out to recover and refresh himself through prayer.

God wants us to spend time with him through prayer, just as we would spend time with others who love us. We can trust that God always hears our prayers. He is our loving Father and will always do what is best for us and those we pray for.

Our prayer this week is The Lord's Prayer:

Our Father,

who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;

thy kingdom come, thy will be done

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us;

and lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

Amen.

Achievement Assemblies

Well done to the following children for their BLP awards last week:

Burrator – Honey-rose, Esme

Fernworthy – Conrad, Mariska

Avon – Emmeline, Ned

Venford – Ava, Charlie T

Meldon – Fraser, Ted



This week our Achievement Assembly will take place on Monday and will be led by Miss Haworth. The video link will then be made available to everyone through the Class Blogs.

Mental Health Week



Thank you to those who have supported the children's mental health charity Place2Be by giving or pledging a donation. Don't forget to send in your 'Express yourself' photos so that we can share these on the school website. If you want to find out more about the charity and the week, the Place2Be website contains lots of information and features a special message video from the Duchess of Cambridge: <https://www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/news/the-duchess-of-cambridge-sends-message-to-mark-children-s-mental-health-week/>

Early Help

Although these are challenging times for everyone, it might be that you and your family need additional support at the moment. Devon Children and Families Partnership have developed a system called 'Early Help' which may be something that you and your family could benefit from. The following is some key information about the initiative, and further information is available from their website:

<https://www.dcfp.org.uk/early-help/>

or from the leaflet accompanying this letter.

What is Early Help?

Early Help is the extra support your family can get if you need it. It may be that you want to prevent a problem, or change things for your family before the problem becomes more serious.

It is not a specific service or team, it's an approach that brings together people from a range of services and teams who will work together with your whole family to help improve the situation for everyone.

It can offer support to families from pre-birth to adolescents with all sorts of issues from parenting, employment and school attendance to emotional wellbeing or anti-social behaviour.

How does Early Help work?

By identifying and building on your strengths as a family, we can help and support you to find long term solutions to your issues, as well as developing your skills to help you manage any future challenges.