

To the **amazing** children of St Aloysius,



I hope this letter finds you all **safe** and **well**. I hope you have had a relaxing Easter weekend and have enjoyed lots of **quality time**, **fun**, **LAUGHS** and of course, **chocolate** with your nearest and dearest. I have spent lots of time in school over the past couple of weeks and I must say what an absolute pleasure it has been to see the **bright**, smiling faces of not only those children that have been in but also the many families who have dropped by to say a quick '**hello**' whilst out on their daily walks. The sun has been shining, the birds have been tweeting and in the midst of all of this craziness I realised one of the main things I missed about our school family – your **beautiful** singing. I was so impressed with the clapping videos that you sent in to support the NHS workers last week. Your **smiles** were so uplifting and it was so lovely to see so many of your faces again! I showed it to my mam, who is a nurse, and it made her day!

So, I've had an idea  and to make it work I will need help from each and every one of you!

We are going to make a **virtual choir**!

Our choirs at St Aloysius have been outstanding over the years, bringing lots of happiness to audiences across the North East. Let's see if we can bring some more **joy** to our school community through our **wonderful** singing!



We are going to need to practise a song that we are all familiar with first before trying to record an original and we are very lucky to have an extremely talented musician, a dear friend of our school called **Mike McGrother** on board to help us put it all together. Mike has very kindly written a letter to you all (which I have attached) providing instructions on how to record yourself singing and then how to send your recordings in to us. Make sure you have a good read! We are super excited to hear all of your voices again and I know that Mike can't wait to help us create something very special!

Until we see each other again, please remember to look after each other, look after yourselves, be **kind** to those around you, keep **smiling**, keep singing and keep **safe**.

With love

Miss Doughty



*Music gives a soul to the universe,
Wings to the mind,
Flight to the imagination,
And life to everything.*

Plato





Hello everyone!

My name is Mike McGrother and I am going to help you to put the St Aloysius virtual Choir together. I had already planned to come in and do some work with you before the schools had to close down and so I am sorry I haven't had chance to meet you face to face... yet! Mr Conway and I have known each other for a long time and I am really excited to be a part of your amazing school and help you with your learning.

I am a musician who has played all over the world - from New York to Beijing; across Europe and the UK. I play a number of instruments - the electric fiddle, guitar, piano amongst others and when I am not performing on stage I produce shows for theatres and help people to create events and festivals. I also lead choirs... in schools, colleges, football stadiums, hospitals and even prisons! I believe that every voice matters and that a 'choir' should be for everyone!

Our Virtual Choir is an experiment - and we will all learn together. We wanted to find a way to add your voice to that of your friends and then use technology to mix it all together and create something special that you can play and sing-along with at home.

WHAT DO YOU NEED?

Ideally, you will need to be able to use a

1. **MOBILE PHONE** on a table or desk. Find the **VOICE RECORDER APP** on it - any one will do or download a free one if your parents let you.
2. **A TABLET OR a PC OR LAPTOP OR SECOND PHONE** and
3. **HEADPHONES PLUGGED INTO THAT TABLET / PC / LAPTOP / SECOND PHONE**

HOW DOES IT WORK?!

The **MOBILE PHONE** is your microphone - your recording studio and the thing you **SING** into. Place it on a table around 3 feet away from you.

The **TABLET / PC / LAPTOP / OTHER PHONE** is your 'piano player' or conductor - the person you need to follow to sing the right thing at the right time - the thing you **LISTEN** to.

The **HEADPHONES** are how you are able to listen to the music. **BUT THERE IS A SPECIAL TRICK.** You need to keep one headphone on your ear and the other one **OFF** the other ear. This will help you to hear the music... **BUT ALSO** hear your voice! If you have both headphones on it becomes difficult to know if you are singing the right tune! **TRUST ME** - it's what we do in recording studios!

OK... THE EXCITING BIT!

Let's start our recording adventure by picking a song I have heard you sing VERY well... **A MILLION DREAMS**. I forced my 13 year old daughter to sing it as well - so you will have an idea of when to sing each bit!

1. **WARM UP YOUR VOICE.** When we meet I will show you lots of ways to do this but for now, stand up straight, relax your shoulders and yawn, (YES! Yawn) a couple of times. The muscles in your face and neck are the same for singing as they are yawning!
2. **HAVE A SING.** Pop your headphones on to listen to **TRACK #1** on your TABLET / PC / LAPTOP / OTHER PHONE. Sing the whole thing a couple of times - nice and loud! I have popped the words at the end of these instructions. Don't worry about using your phone to record at this stage. Try it with both headphones on - then just one... it takes some getting used to but it is worth practising. You will hear an annoying click - it won't be heard eventually but it helps me keep everyone singing at the right speed!
<https://soundcloud.com/wildcats-of-kilkenny/st-alloysius-track-1/s-YPjRMasBUjd>
3. **NOW** the tricky part - you may want to ask someone to help. With your headphones on Listen to **TRACK #2**. Again you will hear some music with a 'click' and then a count in 1,2,3,4 which leads you into the **CHORUS** of the song. For now - I **ONLY** want you to sing that chorus for now.... We are just practising. More parts of the song will come later...<https://soundcloud.com/wildcats-of-kilkenny/st-alloysius-track-2-14042020-1333/s-9JjQruKvb7Q>

THE WORDS!!!

Every night I lie in bed

The brightest colours fill my head

A million dreams are keeping me awake

I think of what the world could be

A vision of the one I see

A million dreams is all it's gonna take

Try practising with your headphones a few times. I **KNOW** the click is annoying but it helps us **ALL** sing the song at the same speed!

4. RECORDING. When you think you are singing the chorus the very best you can, ask someone to start recording using the PHONE voice recorder app. Listen back to it - you will only hear YOUR voice - which might sound a little bit funny but that's what I need. YOU ONLY NEED TO RECORD THE CHORUS ONCE... I can 'copy and paste' it to use three times in the song!
5. Ask your parent or guardian to send your recorded clip back to THIS school email music@st-alloysius.co.uk, make sure you remember to save your recording in the following way ' **Million Dreams, Joe Smith, Year 6, JD**' and then wait for my next instructions! The school will send me your clips and I will try and turn you all into a Virtual Choir!
6. FINALLY.... If you DON'T have headphones you can still take part. Play #TRACK 2 quietly and record yourself (see point 4 above) and get a little closer to your PHONE. It isn't ideal but I don't want you to miss out.
7. IF YOU OR A PARENT HAS QUESTIONS SEND THEM TO THE SCHOOL AT music@st-alloysius.co.uk and they will send them on to me!

I'm really excited to hear your voices and hopefully this will help us create something special! I hope to meet you all soon.

"In life, finding a voice is speaking and living the truth. Each of you is an original. Each of you has a distinctive voice. When you find it, your story will be told. You will be heard." John Grisham

Mike McGrother



MILLION DREAMS WORDS

I close my eyes and I can see
The world that's waiting up for me
That I call my own
Through the dark, through the door
Through where no one's been before
But it feels like home

They can say, they can say it all sounds crazy
They can say, they can say I've lost my mind
I don't care, I don't care, so call me crazy
We can live in a world that we design

***Every night I lie in bed
The brightest colours fill my head
A million dreams are keeping me awake
I think of what the world could be
A vision of the one I see
A million dreams is all it's gonna take***

(A million dreams for the world we're gonna make)

There's a house we can build
Every room inside is filled
With things from far away
The special things I compile
Each one there to make you smile
On a rainy day

They can say, they can say it all sounds crazy
They can say, they can say we've lost our minds
I don't care, I don't care if they call us crazy
Runaway to a world that we design

***Every night I lie in bed
The brightest colors fill my head
A million dreams are keeping me awake
I think of what the world could be
A vision of the one I see***

A million dreams is all it's gonna take
A million dreams for the world we're gonna make

However big, however small
Let me be part of it all
Share your dreams with me
You may be right, you may be wrong
But say that you'll bring me along
To the world you see
To the world I close my eyes to see
I close my eyes to see

Every night I lie in bed
The brightest colours fill my head
A million dreams are keeping me awake
A million dreams, a million dreams
I think of what the world could be
A vision of the one I see
A million dreams is all it's gonna take
A million dreams for the world we're gonna make
For the world we're gonna make

