



St Joseph's Covid Update 8 12/2/21

Dear Parents,

We have reached the end of a half term which has ended up very differently to what we expected when we came back to school on Jan 4th. It has been strange in school but we are aware that there are upsides to being in school for children and adults. The benefits for the children are obvious but as adults we have had the comparative luxury of seeing friends and colleagues each day which we know most adults have not enjoyed this year. We have also had the enjoyment of doing what we all signed up for, which is doing our best to make a difference to the lives of the children in our care. That is not to say we are not looking forward to a week off!

Life at home has been very different for all of you and I just want to say yet again how important it has been that your children have remained engaged with their learning. We do appreciate the efforts our parents have put in to keep those engagement levels so high for the vast majority of children in the school. The most important group who need congratulating are of course the children. I know from discussions with children when we returned in September that they were dreading a second lockdown. With the weather being as it has been, this time seems to be even harder. For the children to keep going with their learning in these circumstances is commendable and they deserve a good pat on the back, and a week away from screens as much as possible. Monday 22nd February is a teacher training day so school will be closed to ALL pupils that day and no home learning will be set.

Staff have been having Covid tests twice weekly for the last couple of weeks and all results have been negative in that time. We all still need to be aware of our responsibilities if symptoms occur.

*"For the **first 6 days** after teaching ends, if a pupil (who has been in school) or staff member tests positive for coronavirus, **having developed symptoms within 48 hours of being in school**, (ie before 3.30pm on Sunday 14th) contact the school either on the school mobile number 07422938855 or email to gjilb@st-josephs.plymouth.sch.uk. The school will need to assist in identifying close contacts and advising self-isolation, as the individual may have been infectious whilst in school."*

*"Where a pupil or staff member tests positive for coronavirus, having developed symptoms **more than 48 hours since being in school**, (later than 3.30pm on Sunday 14th) the school **should not be contacted**. Parents and carers should follow contact tracing instructions provided by NHS Test and Trace."*

You may have seen that we reminded the children in our Liturgy today that Wednesday 17th February is Ash Wednesday which is the start of the church's season of Lent. Rather than giving something up, as many adults do, the children were encouraged to 'give' in some way to make the lives of those they spend time with that little bit better. I am expecting many reports of tidy bedrooms and help with the cooking and cleaning ! The day before Ash Wednesday is Shrove Tuesday, or Pancake Day. When weather and circumstances (and seagulls) have

allowed we have held Pancake Day races in school. I think this is a particularly British tradition that we have tried to uphold so maybe you could incorporate a race into your daily exercise on Tuesday.

Thanks to the determination of our Parent Support Adviser, Susy Putnam, we managed to get an extra twelve food vouchers today to distribute to families who did not automatically get them due to free school meals eligibility. The Free School Meals parcels for the first week back after half term can be collected on Tuesday (23rd) lunchtime. We are not automatically aware of any difficult circumstances that families may be facing during lockdown. Susy is more than happy to help families in whatever way she can. Her email is putnams@st-josephs.plymouth.sch.uk . Please do be aware that this coming week is a week off for her too.

Please enjoy the coming week without the pressure of home learning. By the time we see children in school again the Prime Minister should have made his announcement about school arrangements from the 8th March onwards. Hopefully the data will mean that it will be safe for more children to be in school from then.

BJ Gill