



NEWSLETTER



19/4/18

Happy Easter

We are still in the Church's season of Easter so don't feel you need to binge on any left over eggs for a few weeks yet. We had some lovely events towards the end of Lent. Once again the Cake Fair organised by the Friends of St Joseph's was a great success and raised £278. Years 5&6 led a beautiful Stations of The Cross service on Maundy Thursday which really made people there reflect on how Jesus's sacrifice should affect how we treat each other today.

International Schools Award

Two children represented St Joseph's at a prize-giving ceremony on April 17th. Precious and Isabella presented the story of our International Development work to the Lord Mayor and a senior official from the British Council. The ceremony was held in the Lord Mayor's House on the Hoe. The house was gifted to the people of Plymouth by Lady Astor and we saw some fascinating historical artefacts in the house from when Winston Churchill and the Queen visited it. After one visit the Queen narrowly missed one of the blitz attacks on Plymouth and in her letter of sympathy she ended by saying 'Oh those cursed Germans'. That was slightly against the tone of the event that we were attending as we were one of six schools in Plymouth being presented with our 'International Schools Award' celebrating the learning about, and links with, other cultures around the world. It was a great experience for the children who were fantastic ambassadors for St Joseph's. Most of the work organising and co-ordinating the embedding of international links has been done by Mrs Norton so she deserves particular praise for this award. She has been supported in this work by our International Development governor Nikola Howells. It was great that she was also able to attend the award ceremony.

Online Issues

Last term we had a number of problems in school where the root cause seems to be children's use of online chatrooms and games. Lack of sleep is a big issue when it comes to health and well-being and has been seen to be a factor when we have tried to investigate reasons for under-performance in school. Some children have reported playing online games in their bedrooms until the early hours. Obviously this has a detrimental effect on their learning in school. We also had a situation recently where children were being upset by comments made in a Snapchat group. In this instance I advised parents to keep a close eye on posts being made, and received, by their children, particularly on sites that they are officially too young to be part of. Similar upset has been caused when children have been playing Xbox type games online. In many of these instances the games they are playing are age rated over 18. The horror involved in some of these games has also been a factor in poor sleep, subsequent performance in school and general feeling of well-being. Please do what you can to protect your child from these dangers.

We have been informed of a particular website that secondary school pupils in Plymouth have been frequenting which has been identified as a site that is used by predators for grooming. The site/app is called bigo and the information came to us through Plymouth City Council from an organisation called Safebook Enforcers (<http://safebook.me.uk>). Primary schools have been advised to share this information as so many young children are making themselves vulnerable by accessing non age-appropriate sites and apps.

Term Dates 2018-19

Please find below the term dates for the next school year. Please plan any holidays around these dates.

Tues Sep 4 th – Thurs Oct 18 th	Mon Jan 7 th – Thurs Feb 14 th	Tues Apr 23 rd – Fri May 24 th
Monday Oct 29 th – Friday Dec 21 st	Mon Feb 25 th – Fri Apr 5 th	Mon June 3 rd - Fri July 19 th

* May 6th is a Bank Holiday (Year 6 SATs wb 13/5/19)

Class Photos

The Tempest photographer will be visiting again on Tuesday 24th to take the class photos. (Clean socks are good on this day !)

St George's Day - Non-Uniform Day

On Monday 23rd April we will be celebrating the Patron Saint of England's feast day. In many countries the Patron Saints Day is a Bank Holiday but that is not the case in England. We do feel that the day should be special in some way. We will have a non-uniform day with a difference giving children a chance to celebrate the fact that England is now a country filled with children whose heritage comes from so many different countries around the world. If children want to wear their own clothes to school on that day it would be good if they reflected England or St George in some way. This could be something bearing St George's Flag or simply being red & white. However if your heritage is from a different country or culture you could choose clothes that represent that country instead. There will be no charge for this day. As circumstances prevented us giving out the traditional ice-creams on St Joseph's Day we will share them on Monday as a Feast Day treat.

Visitors

We have already had some exciting visitors to school in our first week back. Year 6 were visited by elite athlete Doaa Shayea. She has competed in many paralympic style events and brought in her competition wheel chair for children to experience trying to move in. One of the children told me, "She was an inspiration." We also had the School Visiting Team from Warburtons in with years 5 & 6 passing on the history of the bread making business and how bread can contribute to a healthy diet. I have noticed that some parents have started coming into the cloakroom area between classes 1 & 2 when the children are coming in to school. Can you please not go into that area. Schools are constantly reminded of the safeguarding need to control adults coming onto the premises. Parents should only come into the building if it is through the main entrance or if invited in by a member of staff.

School Trips

There will be a number of school trips organised this term and I know many of you will already have had requests for voluntary contributions towards the costs of a trip. We use the Pupil Premium grant to pay some of the costs of the visits. We see these trips as an important part of children's learning and we try to keep costs down to the bare minimum. Parents are asked to pay a voluntary contribution towards the costs of the trips. Sadly on one occasion this year we had to cancel an arranged trip because too few parents paid the voluntary contribution in time. Some parents said they were going to pay but had not done so by the time we had to make the decision. If you would require more time to be able to make your contribution for a trip please let Mrs Way or Ms Taylor know in the office. We will then be able to make more informed decisions about whether trips can go ahead as planned or not.

Questionnaire

Our two new parent governors, Nikki Hirst and Karen Pilkington, have been proactive already in their new roles and are helping to improve the way that we conduct our parent questionnaires. We will be using an online system through Google Forms rather than the traditional paper format. You will hear more from Karen and Nikki in the near future. They do intend allowing parents to access the forms at school if that is the best way for them. Karen is also going to be working with parents to review our Home-School- Child Agreement. She will initially work with parents from the Foundation Stage and Year 1 so those parents can expect an invitation to a meeting in the near future.

Summer Term Important Dates

30th April	New Foundation Parents' Meeting	4th May	Discos (details to follow)	6th May	First Holy Communion
7th May	Bank Holiday	10th May	Ascension Day Mass	14th May	KS2 Sats week
20th May	½ Marathon	25th May	Last Day of ½ term	4th-22nd June	Yr 4 swimming
15th June	Sports Day	22nd June	Summer Fair	20th July	Last Day

Sunscreen

In fine weather we encourage sun-safety in terms of hats to be worn, plenty of water to be drunk and sunscreen to be applied. Please apply sunscreen before your child leaves for school and send in a sunscreen product (named please) that your child can apply to face and arms themselves.