



NEWSLETTER



1/3/19

Lent

The season of Lent begins next week. It is a period of six and a half weeks when we are asked to reflect on our lives and prepare ourselves to commemorate the death and glorious resurrection of Jesus at Easter. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday (6th March this year). On that day the whole school will go to Mass. Part of the Mass will be the distribution of Ashes where each member of the congregation will have a sign of the cross made on their forehead with ashes made from burning of the palm leaves from the previous year's Palm Sunday. During Lent Christians are asked to prepare themselves through prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Children are not expected to fast but giving up some less than healthy treats would not be a bad thing at any time of the year. We will be speaking with the children about how they could prepare themselves during Lent by doing extra good deeds, as well as extra prayer opportunities and supporting of charities.

Mardi Gras

The day before Ash Wednesday is Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday) where traditionally families would use up all the food they would not be eating during Lent. This led to the pancake tradition which we follow to this day. At St Joseph's we have traditionally held a pancake day race. As we have more children than ever before, and through trying to avoid unnecessary waste, we have decided to alter the format this year. Instead of each child running individually with their own pan and pancake each class will have a relay type race instead. Pans and pancakes will be provided and 'recycled' for each race. The Friends of St Joseph's will provide extra pancakes to be shared by the children after their race. The races will be interspersed throughout the day, to avoid too much interest from seagulls, so unfortunately parents will not be able to watch the races. If there is enough interest in a parents' race at 3.30 I am sure we will be able to accommodate that.

Internet Safety

There have been worldwide concerns raised this week about the World Wide Web and how children are particularly vulnerable to scary material. We have put information on our website, under the 'Parents' then 'E-safety' tabs, about Momo in particular. It also includes general good home e-safety habits families can adopt to avoid future distress being suffered by children.

World Book Day

Next Thursday is World Book Day where children are encouraged to come into school dressed as a particular book character. The idea behind this is to provoke conversations about books and the magic that can be created through identifying with particular characters who really only exist on the page. Hopefully those conversations will lead to more children, and adults, reading. All of the children will get a book voucher for £1 on the day. Most bookstores have a selection of World Book Day books which cost just £1.

After School Clubs

Attendance at many of the clubs dwindled over the course of last half term so we are opening up the chance to attend clubs to more year groups. If your child expressed an interest in joining a new club they will have been given a new application letter today. If your child does get given a place in a club please do encourage them to stick at it and not give up on a whim.

Attendance

Total absences for each class can be seen below. Unauthorised absences are occasions where the reason given for an absence is not justified. This is typically holidays. We have had 106 school days so far this year.

Type of absence	Foundation	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Class 5	Class 6
Authorised	255	265	285	178	159	217	323
Unauthorised	13	76	64	30	90	26	49
Late	34	95	142	44	35	16	52

Since half term, overall attendance has risen slightly to 95.15%. After my meeting with the Educational Welfare Officer yesterday, a number of parents will be contacted by her to improve their child's attendance.