



St. Augustine's
Catholic Primary School

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Autumn 1 Newsletter 2020

Dear Parent/Guardians,

May I start by congratulating your children as they have returned to school after a substantial break with a tremendous attitude to their work. I have heard nothing other than positive praise from staff about your children, so thank you for being so supportive and reiterating the importance of education.

Home learning

As we approach the end of our first half term back to school, you should now be fully equipped and able to access IXL and Google Classrooms. I thank you again for your support with this. We have received many positive emails/feedback about how much your children are enjoying the IXL home learning that is set on a weekly basis. I appreciate, and I take on board, that there have been quite a few changes to how we are executing home learning (homework) this year, but as previously communicated, this is because we want to provide an outstanding package of support and interactive teaching if/when we are forced to go into a class bubble lockdown. The rationale behind providing home learning like this now, is to prepare us all for what is looking like an inevitable scenario as we progress into the winter months, with consideration to the local context. Please continue to provide your ultimate support, as I do truly believe that our children will not be the product of a 'lost generation' to the Coronavirus. It just simply means a significant change in how we implement our education to our children.

I had a wonderful time in Year 6 recently, as Mrs Gray invited me in to see how hard the Year 6 children had been working on their topic work, in relation to their class book 'Pig-Heart Boy' by Malorie Blackman. I was most impressed to see a pig-heart dissection, homemade blood, diagrams of the heart, bottles used to demonstrate the heart as a pump, graphs to show a resting heart rate and a heart rate after exercise- truly magnificent!

Mr Trevett also invited me into Year 5 after school, to see the hard work that our Year 5 have been doing for their topic homework - simply marvellous! Year 5 have made 3D models of animals and the range of material that they have used is brilliant. They have created wonderful ants, butterflies, ladybirds, snakes, spiders, lizards, guinea pigs, tigers and a dinosaur in a pumpkin! There is a lovely table outside Year 1, which displays the Year 1's topic work; there are models of Rapunzel's tower, collections of signs of autumn, min-gardens and photographs of children's scavenger hunts.

Well done to all children across the school for their hard work and effort on topic work. Our displays around the school are looking tremendous; hopefully you will be able to view this via our social media platforms after half term.

You will have also, more recently, received your child's login for Reading Planet. This will not be implemented fully until after half term, but as previously explained, this is something that we have bought into to support your child with their reading and will come into full fruition if/when we go into some sort of lockdown. Reading Planet will provide stage appropriate e-books for your child to read virtually. Again, we would like to offer this service to you prior to a lockdown, so that you are aware of it and its content prior to a lockdown scenario, hence the gradual introduction after half term. You will find attached a Parent Guide detailing how to access your child's online reading book

Parent Consultation Meetings

We would like to hold parent consultation meetings via Google Classrooms this year. It is important for us to engage with you virtually and re-enact our 'normal' format, albeit virtually. Staff really appreciate this one to one time with you to discuss your child's progress and areas of development and it is very difficult to deliver this without at least some sort of virtual contact. We would like to hold these for **Key-Stage One classes (YR-2) on Tuesday 17th November from 1pm-6pm** and for **Key-Stage Two (Y3-6) on Wednesday 18th November 1pm -6pm**. Please may I remind you that it is a statutory requirement that we engage with you three times a year to discuss your child's progress. Failure to attend/engage is a safeguarding concern. Office staff will send out a ParentMail, as normal, shortly after half term. Please engage, as you would ordinarily do so.

Anti-Bullying Week

Anti-bullying week is Monday 16th November -20th November and the theme is 'United Against Bullying' and will start with 'Odd Socks Day' to mark the first day of Anti-Bullying Week. Therefore, we would like to invite the whole school to wear odd socks on Monday 16th November. Mrs Bladon, as Inclusion Manager and Anti-Bullying Champion, is taking the lead on this, so there will be more information to come nearer the time. As you are already aware, here at St. Augustine's we take bullying very seriously and support the message from the 'Anti-Bullying Alliance':

'This year, more than ever, we have witnessed the positive power that society can have when we come together to tackle a common challenge. Anti-Bullying Week is no different. Bullying has a long lasting effect on those who experience and witness it. However, by channelling our collective power, through shared efforts and shared ambitions, we can reduce bullying together. From parents and carers, to teachers and politicians, to children and young people, we all have a part to play in coming together to make a difference. We're all a piece in the puzzle, and together, we're united against bullying.'

Christmas Productions

We would very much like to present to you what we ordinarily would do in terms of Christmas Productions, but in the comfort of your homes (virtually). I have been liaising closely with the extraordinaire - Mrs Ayles, and we believe, (all being well), that this will be possible if we can avoid class bubble lockdowns. We would like to be able to present to you a Christmas Nativity from our Reception children and staff, a Key-stage 1 production but class by class (meaning Year 1 and Year 2 separately, not crossing bubbles) so a production told across two classes, and finally a Key-Stage 2 (KS2) Christmas production (Y3-6). Again, the KS2 production will be a production told from class to class to class! We are ambitious at St. Augustine's, but have extraordinary staff- so please bear with us, as more information will follow. It is important for us to celebrate this religious part of the year despite the Coronavirus, all things being well.

RE

It gives me great pleasure to announce that Mr Brown (aka Deacon Mark) will be able to support the school in Deacon Geoffrey's absence. As you are already aware, Deacon Geoffrey would ordinarily regularly attend school, but due to the Coronavirus restrictions is unable to do so, therefore, despite Deacon Mark not strictly working in this local area as a Deacon, he has kindly offered to support Deacon's Geoffrey's role in his absence due to his long-lasting loyalty and support of the school. We are extremely grateful to Deacon Mark for this offer of support. I am sure that your children will communicate his presence to you.

Winter Uniform

Please may I remind you that after October half term, it is compulsory for our children follow our 'Winter Uniform Policy' which is available to view from our school website under policies and 'School Uniform.'

Halloween

We have received information from Dorset Police which explains the 'Do's and Don'ts' during our half-term break and Halloween. Please see accompanying attachments for further details.

Poppy Appeal

A ParentMail was sent out on 19th October explaining how donations can be made as the Poppy Appeal is unable to run as normal this year. A Poster was also provided for children to colour in.

Staffing

I am delighted to inform you that we will have three new members of staff starting after half term. Two new staff members are teachers - Mr Boucher and Miss Mayes, and the other new staff member is a Teaching Assistant - Mrs Phelan. Mr Boucher will join our Year 2 team alongside Mrs Baskerville and Mrs Wilkins, and Miss Mayes will join our Year 1 team alongside Mrs Batten, Mrs Bladon, Mrs Harrop and Mrs Gardner. Mrs

Tonkin will continue to support targeted groups of children throughout the school as additional support to aid the catch-up recovery of the curriculum. Mrs Phelan will be joining the Reception team alongside Mrs Evans and Mrs Wootton, but not until November, as she is moving into the area.

Emotional Wellbeing

Thank you to all those parents who have completed the questionnaire that was communicated via ParentMail about emotional wellbeing and how the lockdown has affected you as a family. It is important that you communicate with us via appropriate systems and mechanisms to enable us to best support your child/ren. We will run a report from your ParentMail input/response and will endeavour to support you with the engagement from other agencies.

Year 6 Prefects

Congratulations to Willow, Lily, Maisie, Harrison and Harvey P who were voted to become our Year 6 Prefects. They are leading our virtual 'Thought of the Week' Reflection Assembly on Fridays and will be contributing to the 'Prospective Parents' page on our school website alongside other important Prefect duties throughout the school. It was particularly humbling to hear how happy the other children were for them - well done Year 6.

School Councillors

Well done to the following children who were democratically voted in by their peers to represent their class: Hudson and Olivia, Charlie and Ivy, Elwood and Isabel, Toby and Matilda, Charlie and Mia, and Willow and Harvey G. Miss Taylor cannot wait to work with our School Councillors as they will be working on becoming 'Eco Warriors' and trying to bring about environmental change. This project links beautifully to our Laudato Si - based curriculum.

Gratitude to Staff

I would also like to take this opportunity to publicly thank staff. I have never felt so humbled to observe the extra length that all staff members are going to, in order to support the children at St. Augustine's. All staff are working above and beyond hours paid, we are cleaning classrooms and toilets profusely, we are trying so hard not to physically engage with others who are not in our class bubbles because we really do want to contain an outbreak if/when that eventuality happens. I have taken the time to observe teachers, with parameters in place, and the lessons that have I seen have been nothing other than fabulous. As we are all in this together, it would be lovely if you could share your appreciation to your child's class teacher, as this new world we are currently living in, has not been easy for any of us, and adaptations have been significant for us all. Thank you.

I hope that you and your family enjoy the half term break. As has previously been communicated, we have staff training on Monday 2nd November; we therefore look forward to welcoming the children back at 8.40am on Tuesday 3rd November.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Emma Berry
(Headteacher)