



# St Mary of the Angels Catholic Primary School

Head teacher: Mrs. C.M. O'Hara B.Ed DPSE



Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents,

Firstly, can I say thanks for the support and level headed approach which we have witnessed , in recent days here at St Mary's, in response to the COVID 19 virus. We have a rapidly changing global picture which we need to respond to at all levels as a community, on a daily basis. That you are recognising the need to be patient and self-aware is really supportive.

There are several important facts which we, as a school, need to communicate to you, moving forward. Please excuse the list of bullet points - we aim to retain a safe, happy working environment, in the short term.

## **Hand washing**

The children, in the most part are responding calmly to all instructions. Please can you continue to encourage a measured response to handwashing. Government advice, supported by scientific and medical evidence, is really clear; soap and water for 20 seconds is recommended in combatting the virus. Please talk to your children about not overusing soap; it causes dryness. Please also remind them that sanitisers on wet hands will really hurt too. They need to be sensible but mature. Hand cream is not allowed in school unless it is prescribed.

Mr Leek and cleaning staff are being very vigilant to ensure that soap is available daily - he reports back to me each evening.

## **Communication**

Please help our office staff by leaving a message about your child's absence that states the following: the name of your child; the reason for their absence; whether you are, as a household, self isolating for 14 days. This will then assist school to report back to Public Health England - via the Local Authority - with numbers of families who are self isolating. We can only give you current advice and ask you how you plan to safeguard your children and families. Please be aware that self isolation will not affect a child's absence record - it is part of our Public Health duty.

## **Clubs**

At the moment we are responding to Government advice in the following ways:

- All unnecessary travel is being cancelled – E.g. Y4 trip, Y4 swimming, Y1 Stations of the Cross and visits to Church.
- All clubs (with the exception of cookery, for hygiene reasons) are still running in school, as our providers are regular staff in school, anyway - it is parental choice to send children or not - please let staff know.
- Brownies, guides and rainbows are also cancelled until further notice.
- All workshops are currently running as posted on our newsletter. However, we are restricting attendees to one person per child. That way we are maintaining small groups of people known to school. Hygiene practices are already in place for parents on site - thank you for your co-operation on this measure.
- Reconciliation will be taking place, as it stands, on Friday, but it will be in school, to maintain good handwashing facilities and to restrict unnecessary travel. It will also be attended by three known members of clergy to limit the time taken. (Separate letter to follow for Y3 parents tomorrow)

## Coronavirus update

School remains open as per the government guidance, however, as with all schools, we have a growing number of families and staff having to self-isolate as a result of the new government guidelines:

***'If one person in any household has a persistent new cough or fever, everyone living there must stay at home for 14 days'***

As an SLT we have decided that should there be a blanket closure by the government then work will be set for the children via White Rose, Twinkl, Classroom Secrets and Timetable Rock Stars – more information will follow in the event of a closure.

In the meantime, please use the link below, which Robin Hood Multi Academy trust, in Birmingham, have kindly agreed to open up during this difficult time. It is really useful for parents - without a teacher to support. I have emailed them to say thank you.

<https://www.robinhoodmat.co.uk/learning-projects>

Simply click on the link or type it into your address bar and choose the appropriate year group and week to find work that your child can complete whilst self-isolating.

### **Communication in the event of an enforced closure of schools**

In the event of schools closing, we know that continuity of learning is really important for children's self esteem and their anxiety levels. It is also important to have some semblance of normality during these times. Teachers will, within 3 days of closure, have clear plans in place which we will forward to you on a regular basis. (Letter to follow when circumstances require). Children will be given an exercise book and a pencil to use, also. I am sure that you will welcome the well thought activities. I am sure, as conscientious parents, you will support their education through these difficult times.

### **Recognising and celebrating the presence of Christ on one another**

Finally, can I ask that parents are mindful of each other as a community - staff, parents, parishioners and pupils - during these uncertain times. Some people react emotionally; others become distant. Some cry; some hold back. All feel stress in differing ways. We are excellent at helping others during Lent and Advent. Now we need to be excellent at helping each other - without judgement or criticism.

As a school, we remain committed to providing a stable learning environment for our children and we would like to thank parents for your continued understanding and support in difficult circumstances.

Regards



**Claire O'Hara**  
Headteacher