



The Christus Catholic Trust

working in partnership for the benefit of the children and communities we serve

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

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Respect Ourselves, Respect
Others, Respect our School,
Love God

Dear Parents/Carers

As we complete the first week back at school after the Christmas holidays, school is settling well into the new remote way of learning and my thanks go to my staff who are putting in a sterling effort at teaching in a different way.

You will be aware that on the evening of Monday 4 January, the Prime Minister announced a national lockdown in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19. This Government decision is about reducing the number of contacts that we all have with people in other households which will help with driving down transmission of the virus. The new restrictions mean that our school, only remains open for the children of critical key workers and vulnerable young people to attend on site.

All other pupils will receive remote learning until February half term and must remain at home, in line with national guidance.

I understand as a working parent the challenges of balancing work and life at home but appreciate too, that drastically reducing the number of people in school is essential if we are to successfully protect the NHS and reduce the transmission of the virus.

Schools are remaining open to children who have an allocated social worker and children of workers who are critical to the COVID19 response, who are unable to safely stay at home.

We need to ensure that the number of young people accessing the offer of provision in our school is kept to the lowest number possible. Therefore, even if you are a critical worker, if your child(ren) can remain at home rather than attend school, then they should.

Please only use the offer of provision when it is crucial for you to undertake your critical role.

I would ask that you continue to support us in considering this carefully for your circumstances and only use this offer of support if you have no alternatives for childcare for your child(ren).

Clearly the more children who attend, the wider the risk of spreading the virus as children come from different households.

Remote Learning

Remote Learning is up and running and after a few Microsoft glitches is working well.

A big thanks to all those families who have sent in such supportive comments of what we have done to get the systems up and working, albeit with the usual tech problems that always happen when we don't want them too!



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For those families without the laptops or devices to take an active part in Remote Learning, hard copies are being sorted for the children so that they do not miss out. Despite what the Government say on TV when making their various statements on education and as I have already communicated to you in a previous letter, only five laptops have been delivered to St Mary's. We are endeavouring to see if we can get more, something I know that all schools are trying to do.

There seems to be a misconception promulgated by Govt, that there are free laptops available for all which is simply not reality. The few that we have will be loaned to those families most in need as decided by the school.

Should you be experiencing problems with TEAMS buffering, switching off or any other connection problem, this will be due to your Internet connection and not down to the school.

*Did you know that you can access Microsoft Teams by using X- Box and PlayStation? *
Have a look at the guide below for how to do this.

Home packs

The home packs of learning will be the same materials used online by the teachers. Packs will be ready for collection from the school office on Mondays between 9 and 11 am. Please do not come before these times as the Critical worker/vulnerable children will be coming into school and I do not want a glut of people together at the school gates putting you and us at potential risk.

Packs are to be returned for marking the following Monday when you pick up the new pack.

We will be leaving the packs to be marked, for 72 hours before they are touched, to keep us all safe.

Fabulous Fun Fridays

On Fridays starting tomorrow, we will be having a more relaxed curriculum as we know that for the children, teachers and parents, having good mental health is so important. So, we ask the children to have ready some jokes (cracker type), funny stories to share and such like.

The teachers will be ready with their own ideas for bringing some joy to the children. In the afternoon on Fridays, the teachers will be offline planning for the next week and preparing the hard packs of learning for those children who do not have access to TEAMS.

This will be a time for the children to prepare a 'show and tell' maybe or practise a talent they have for sharing the next Friday morning.

Prayer

Quietly in the morning; Quietly, in the morning,
I rise and look at the sky; To watch the darkness scatter
As sunlight open the sky; The day lies clear before me,
All fresh and shining and new; And then I ask God to guide me
In all that I have to do

