



School Newsletter

With Christ we live, we love, we learn and we grow

16.05.2020

Dear parents/ carers,

Thank you for your excellent response to the surveys we sent out this week. We now have a really good idea of the numbers of children that are likely to attend school, if we are able to open for more children on June 1st. Thank you for your comments too; they give us a strong sense of your feelings and concerns.

As we move to a new phase in this extraordinary period, there inevitably remains a great deal of uncertainty and anxiety. You will have heard or read about the genuine concerns raised by teaching and medical unions, scientists and also the government's response to those. You will have your own concerns, as do we. But we are progressing towards a time when school will reopen for more children.

At the moment, we are planning for the safe return of Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 children and for our staff. We are also planning for the continued safe attendance of children of critical workers not in those year groups. The health and safety of our children and our staff is our number one consideration.

It will not be possible to plan in any great depth for the return of the children in Y2, 3, 4 and 5 until we receive further guidance; the Government has indicated that it is its ambition that the other children to attend school for a month before the summer holidays. However, I will, of course, keep you informed of the plans in this regard.

When school does open for the first few classes, school life will be necessarily very different. The learning in school will need to be managed in as safe as possible manner given the continued threat of the COVID infection. So school will not be the same as the children are used to – we will do our best though. And because for the most part, teachers will be teaching in school, it is not going to be possible to maintain the same high level of provision of home learning for the children not in school - but again we will do our very best to provide some meaningful level of support.

We will continue to develop our re-opening plans in consultation with staff and governors in the early part of next week. I will be able to share these with you in more detail from the middle of next week. The notes below will give you a brief idea of the principles behind the plans. To minimise the risk of infection and to mitigate the incredible difficulty of maintaining a social distance of 2 metres in our school and nursery:

- children and staff will be grouped in pods/bubbles of no more than 15 children and up to 2 or 3 adults, in their year groups in different rooms.
- These groups will be taught by a teacher (as far as possible) and teaching assistants
- Critical worker/ vulnerable children from Y2, 3, 4 and 5 will be together in groups of no more than 15.
- All these groups of 15 children with their associated adults will be kept separate from each other, minimising contact and mixing in and around school and in the grounds.
- There will be avoidance of contact with anyone with symptoms
- There will be frequent hand cleaning and good respiratory hygiene practices
- There will be regular cleaning of school.
- There will be staggered drop off/ pick up times

These are just some of the principles/ measures included in the planning. I imagine you will have lots of questions and concerns. When the plans are finalised and shared with you, hopefully your questions can be answered.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your hard work at home in supporting learning, your kind comments and your support of the school and our staff. I would also like to thank you for the way you have been supporting one another over the last few weeks and months. Thank you also to our brilliant staff and governors for their exceptional efforts too.

As well as providing detailed information for schools, the DfE has produced information for parents and carers about the plans to reopen.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

Archdiocese of Liverpool Appeal

The Archdiocese has created an opportunity to ask people to help us with the parish finances which are falling rapidly due to the pandemic and to the fact that churches are closed to the public. Members of the clergy and officers of the Church are still working hard for their parishioners, providing invaluable pastoral, spiritual and physical support for individuals and families through these difficult times. They are doing so with dwindling resources. We have been asked to publicise this appeal.

<https://donate.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk/st-mary-chorley>

Online Safety

During this period of school closure and social distancing, children are understandably desperate to communicate with each other, when they cannot see each other either at school or outside of school. Some children are communicating with each other online via games, text or social media. I know you don't need me to tell you about the risks involved but something was brought to my attention in the last week or so where there was some inappropriate messaging going on.

Please could I ask you to remind children how to stay safe online and report anything they see that worries them to you or to their teacher. I would also strongly advise parents to closely monitor any messaging their children are doing on their devices – thank you.

I wrote to you back in February:

It might surprise you to learn (it surprised me!) that the minimum age for Whatsapp is 16 in the UK <https://faq.whatsapp.com/en/iphone/26000151/>. Whatsapp is a great way for us to communicate with each other, many of us, as families, use it and on the whole it's harmless – however, it is not designed to be used by primary school children.

Also, one of our governors has been working on the Panel for Chorley and Partnerships Organisations during the last 8 weeks and it has been reported that there is an increase of domestic violence, child abuse and theft in the North West/ Merseyside areas. She asked if I could give a reminder to parents of potential dangers when leaving their children on the internet or smartphones without supervision. She also asked me to highlight this, 'where there is an opportunity a thief will take advantage. People who are using Zoom etc tend to do so from a laptop in their lounge or another room. Images of expensive paintings or porcelain etc are there to be viewed by whoever. Can we remind people to be careful what they show.'

Chorley Buddies

A message from Paul McBeth of Chorley Buddies:

As you probably know, Chorley Buddies was started on the back of the work done in Chorley regarding Synod2020.

One of the many strands that continually arose was connection with the wider community and social outreach.

Motivated by that and the needs of the community during the Covid-19 Emergency, Chorley Buddies was formed by parishioners from St Gregory's and St Joseph's, Chorley, with many good wishes from other parishioners from other parishes.

Since our first day on Wednesday 25th March, we have grown to provide a service across the whole of Chorley Borough Council.

We are on the Stakeholders Steering Group, working with Chorley BC and other agencies to work out how best to meet the needs of Chorley during the Emergency.

But like all volunteer groups, we need to raise money to continue with the work. We have been awarded £750 from the Community Foundation for Lancashire but need another £1000 to continue our work for the coming year.

There is a massive need for continued support, well beyond the easing of the lockdown.

We have created a crowd funding page on Just Giving. Please consider donating. Any amount is significant. As they say in Scotland 'Many a mickle maks a muckle'!

<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/chorley-buddies>



Chorley Buddies
01257 542367

Want to talk to someone? We're listening
 Want to be a PhoneBuddy? We'll connect you
 Need a ShoppingBuddy? We'll get it for you
 Need meds or Scripts delivered? We'll do it

LINES ARE OPEN FROM 9AM TO 9PM, WITH ANSWERPHONE
 OUTSIDE THOSE HOURS


JustGiving

Help raise £1000 to help fund telephone lines for a befriending & shopping service

We're raising money to help fund telephone lines for a befriending & shopping service. Support this JustGiving Crowdfunding Page.

www.justgiving.com

Star of the Week 16.05.20

	Class	Name	Star of the Week for ...
	YN	Reuben	Always trying his best
	YR	William	for fantastic effort with his home learning for mummy and trying his best all week
	Y1	Mattia	Excellent engagement and enthusiasm. He has been very creative this week!
	Y2	Hettie	Fantastic effort with all her learning this week and beautiful presentation too.
	Y3	Luca	His perseverance in his mathematics work – well done.
	Y4	Melodie	Her VE Day presentation about her Nan's role in the Land Army during WWII.
	Y5	Daisy Joe J	Her enthusiasm towards our work this week and creating a super chapter for <i>Danny, The Champion of the World</i> . A very thoughtful Come and See reflection accompanied by great computing and musical skills.
	Y6	Olivia	Wonderful dream holiday work

Free School Meals – Are you missing out?

Free School Meal Eligibility and Pupil Premium Funding

Because all children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to a free school meal, many parents do not realise that they might be entitled to something called **free school meal eligibility**. And we understand why this might be the case because the system is confusing! At St Mary's, we have noticed a fall in the number of infant children whose parents have claimed eligibility since the introduction of free school meals for all infants –other schools have noticed the same.

This free school meal eligibility can be applied for in Reception, Year 1 and in Year 2 even though children are receiving a school meal anyway. And parents in Y3, 4, 5 and 6 can also apply.

Why bother applying if your child is receiving a free meal anyway?

If you think you might be eligible it is very much worth applying for two reasons:

1. Your child will continue to receive free school meals on leaving the infants in Y3, Y4, Y5 and Y6 and beyond
2. The school receives additional money (pupil premium) for children eligible for free school meals (over £1 300 per pupil).

If you receive any of the benefits below, St Mary's School can access this extra funding, called pupil premium.

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit

How can you find out if you are eligible?

Apply by phone – and you can find out in a matter of minutes!

You can ring the local **Free School Meals and Pupil Premium team on 01772 531809**

It must be the person claiming the benefit that rings.

You will need to provide your:

- Name
- Date of birth
- National insurance number

They will confirm whether you are entitled over the telephone.

Apply by post

Download the application form from <http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/schools/free-school-meals.aspx> and return it to your local area education office.

South Area Education Office

Level 1 Christ Church Precinct
County Hall
Preston
PR1 8RJ

Free milk

If you receive benefits, your child could also get free milk. Contact us to find out what arrangements we make for school milk.

Special Educational Needs and/ or Disabilities (SEND) Resources

Finally, I have also attached the latest SEND newsletter from Lancashire SEND team.

Best wishes,

Patrick Smyth

Headteacher