



St. Mary's Buzzin' Bulletin

Termly Newsletter

16th July 2020



Friendship Compassion Service Forgiveness

Principal Comments

Well, here we are. We have all made it through what has been the most unpredictable few terms of any school and certainly a situation that none of us have ever experienced and hopefully will never experience again! I cannot thank you all enough for the support and encouragement you have shown us either by a few thanks on the playground or some lovely worded emails to my staff team here. It really does keep us going.

Our aim at the start of this pandemic was to maintain a connection with our school community. We knew this would be difficult in lockdown but also highly important. Strangely, I think we are more connected than we ever have been and the whole community feels stronger. I'd like to thank you all and my teaching team for this as their dedication and your engagement has ensured we have succeeded.

Now, each morning as your children arrive, there is a lovely friendly buzz and the school feels alive again. We are all so grateful that you trusted us to keep your children safe and have worked with us around the logistics of arrival and collection without question. This has enabled us to give the children time with their new class teachers and bridge the gap between lockdown and September. This transition week will have been so beneficial to the children and I'm proud that as a school we have achieved this. Happy children running out of school to hug their parents is one of the best sights any head teacher can see. September is just six weeks away and it is full of hope and enthusiasm for an even better and more connected school than we are already.

As we close down this year, we will undoubtedly feel a little sadness. We will have staff and our Year 6 leaving us. Our Year 6 children have been a tremendous year group who have returned to school this term with such a mature and resilient attitude. They are spirited, high achievers, passionate speakers, talented singers and dancers, fantastic footballers, musicians and actors and actresses. They are globally aware, literate and able to present arguments to support a cause. They are caring, compassionate and reflective. They know how to forgive themselves and others and they have developed amazing friendships and flourished as a result. Despite the challenges that lay ahead, they have an incredible amount of potential and I know we will hear of them shining brightly in the near future. We will miss them greatly and they will leave us with amazing memories. The Year 6 children will be celebrating their time here by launching a video that they have made for us all. This will be online from Friday 17th July at 14:00. Please do find the link on our Facebook page to view this!

There are staff changes this year too. It is never easy to say goodbye to staff as we are a wonderful team all willing to go the extra mile for each other and also maintain high standards. This year, we will be saying goodbye to Mr. Cobb, who has achieved a great promotion to the role of Assistant Head Teacher in Medway. I know you will be as sad as we are to see him go but also congratulate him and wish him all the best on the big challenges he has ahead of him. Mr. O'Brien will also be leaving us. He has been here for an amazing 11 years and has developed into a fine teacher, after starting initially as a teaching assistant. He again has found a new role, teaching in a school for profound and complex learning needs. Mr. O'Brien's contributions to sport in our school has been monumental. He has led the football team to several Herald Cup victories and has ensured a vast amount of sporting opportunities for all of our pupils. He will be missed!

Mrs. McHugh will also be leaving us. She has been with the school for an incredible 27 years. Imagine how many young people's lives she has impacted positively on in this time and I wonder how many of the parents of our community she may have taught? This is an incredible service to the community and multiple generations have benefitted from her compassion, service and expertise. It really is an incredible achievement and service to a profession she has adored. We will miss her greatly and hope that she is able to continue to support us in other ways and keep in touch.

In addition to Mrs. McHugh, we will sadly be having to say goodbye to Mrs. Hammond from our EYFS team. She has always brought a smile and a can do attitude to the school for the last 14 years! She has managed many crazy minion parties, stickman adventures and made sure all of our youngest children in the school get a great start. I know she will be greatly missed and we will all wish her the best of luck in a new role. It was lovely to see a small YR party for her last Friday and see her dance to the Wonky Donkey song. We will also be saying goodbye to Miss Carter and Mr. McCaig, who have both successfully completed their qualifying teaching year and are ready for their new roles elsewhere. Miss Ferrier, who has been a Teaching Assistant at St. Mary's for over 7 years will be leaving us to spend more time with her young family. Two of our wonderful teaching assistants Mrs. Regan and Mrs. Medgyesi will also be leaving us. We would like to wish them both all the very best for the future.

There will be a few changes to the teaching team in September, as we will be welcoming Miss Rose to Year 4 and Miss Coughlan to Year 5. The staff team are buzzing for the new year and after a short break, we will be back and flourishing as a school community once more.

I'm sure to see you around the site before the end of term but if not, thank you once again and I wish you a restful time with your children.

My deepest thanks and warmest regards.

Mr. T.M. North, NPQH
Principal

Food Vouchers

Great news! We have finally been able to source the food vouchers to cover the summer holiday period while our school kitchen is closed. These will be sent to families by the email system or posted for those we do not have an email address for. We will be able to send the vouchers to all families who are registered as Free School Meals. Please note that this does not include universal free school meals for children in Key Stage 1. If you are unsure, please telephone the school office. For those families who we have been providing breakfast items for during the pandemic, we will continue with this in addition to the meal vouchers. Thank you again for your continued support and patience with the administration of this overly complex process.

Term Dates

Staff Development Days—Tuesday 1st and Wednesday 2nd September 2020

Term 1 begins on Thursday 3rd September 2020

End of Term 1—Friday 23rd October 2020

Start of Term 2—Monday 2nd November 2020

End of Term 2—Thursday 17th December 2020

Staff Development Day—Friday 18th December 2020

Start of Term 3—Monday 4th January 2021

End of Term 3—Thursday 11th February 2021

Start of Term 4—Monday 22nd February 2021

End of Term 4—Thursday 1st April 2021

Start of Term 5—Monday 12th April 2021

Staff Development Day—Friday 12th February 2021

Bank Holiday—Monday 3rd May 2021

End of Term 5—Friday 28th May 2021

Start of Term 6—Monday 14th June 2021

End of Term 6—Tuesday 20th July 2021

Staff Development Day—Wednesday 21st July 2021

The Nursery will be open on Friday 12th February and closed on Monday 22nd February.

Make Time for Music

Make Time for Music is the Music School that comes into St. Mary's to teach some of our children to play various musical instruments. We have a leaflet in the school office, giving further information on lessons, cost, contact details etc. Please feel free to pop along to the school office to collect a leaflet if your child is interested in learning to play a musical instrument.



School Dinners for Children moving from KS1 (Y2) to KS2 (Y3)

If your child is currently in Year 2 and is moving to Year 3 in September, he/she will no longer be entitled to a universal free school meal. If you have applied for free school meals and you have received confirmation that your child is eligible for free school meals, you will need to bring your letter or email to the school office, so that we may see evidence of this. If your child is not entitled to free school meals, he/she will need to bring in a packed lunch or payment for school meals, which will be £2.28 per day (£11.40 per 5 day week—cheques should be made payable to Caterlink). Envelopes are available from the school office.

Contact Details

The majority of communication with school is now done via email. It is therefore very important that we are using the correct email address to contact you. If you have changed your email address recently, please can we ask you to contact the school office as soon as possible so that we can update our records. You will also need to update your email address on the Sims Parent App.



On line safety awareness

With the summer looming and more free time for children that they may possibly be spending indoors, if the British weather is true to form, it is a good opportunity to speak to your child about keeping safe on line. The following website has activity packs and information for use by parents and children at home. There are 9 packs altogether for different age groups, covering a range of topics on what children should know to keep themselves safe on line. You may already have covered some of the information with your children in their home learning.

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/support-tools/home-activity-worksheets/>

There is also lots of information for parents and carers on how to help their children stay safe online.

Children at this age often think they know how to keep safe and can often tell you how to stay safe but we have found that when presented with an actual situation, they often do not stick by those basic rules. So constant reminders and discussions with your children are really important.

Year 6 Transition Groups

In the Year 6 transition groups, the children continued their learning on 'bouncebackability' or resilience. To start the session, they were given the task of building a tower from spaghetti and marshmallows. This was no easy task as the children found out. They had to use a lot of their resilience skills to complete the task. They learnt that resilience is not just about perseverance but is also about finding different ways to approach tasks. It is about asking for help or imitating others who are succeeding.



Global Education

Despite most schools across the world having been closed due to Covid-19 for the last few months, here at St. Mary's we have been communicating with many of our partners. In Taiwan, students at Rueifong Junior High briefly talked about their weather report and Christmas cards exchange with St Mary's in this presentation video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZgW4vZStwc>

In India, we shared our Year 2 work on Indian Celebrations with Shri Shikshayatan School in Kolkata and DAV, BRS in Ludhiana, with Year 4 asking DAV, BRS in Ludhiana about Hinduism. The pupils at DAV have sent amazing work answers back to our Year 4 from their homes and also sent some Covid Cards.

In Malaysia SK Kimanis, Mandahan and SK Papar Kimanis schools and Hakama Secondary in Jordan responded to the questions that our Year 2 and Year 6 pupils asked the pupils about life as a Moslem in their countries. They created inspirational videos and cards at home, which they sent to us. The school's work linked to SDG's continues with work on Zero Waste, recycling and Y4 worked towards their Fair Trade award. Next term we will continue with our important Global Council Group and will have more Video conferences as schools across the world return to their classrooms, as it is important that we connect and work together with others in our world.

