



## 5<sup>th</sup> February 2021

**Article 2:** The Convention applies to everyone, whatever their race, religion, abilities; whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from.

Dear Parents and Carers,

Once again the weather looks like it will be a real mixed bag, so dig out all of your layers and keep an eye on the forecast which seems to change by the hour at the moment! I think it may be a weekend for lots of baking, puzzles, board games, craft activities and snuggles with a good family movie!

As mentioned in last week's newsletter, next Tuesday is Safer Internet day. We will be thinking about this a lot in school and at home with a day of themed activities and events run by the Safer Internet Council. Look out for further information on Google Classroom on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Has anyone already had a look at Google's 'Be Internet Legends Family Adventure'?

This Sunday is the anniversary of Charles Dickens' birthday. Perhaps those of you in Dickens Class, and anyone else of course, could see what they can find out about this famous English writer.

Thank you to all of you who have sent in the self-portraits which were part of last week's Act of Worship on respecting our differences. If this is something you still haven't got around to, could I please have any remaining ones by Monday.

Next week we continue on the theme of Respect for our Act of Worship. After half term we move on to Perseverance linked to lent as this will have started during half term. For those of you at home the PowerPoint for Monday's Act of Worship and the link to the introductory video can be found by following the link below.

<https://www.st-marys-jun.hants.sch.uk/page/?title=Acts+of+Worship&pid=383&action=saved>

### **Inset Day Reminder – 22<sup>nd</sup> February**

This is our fourth INSET day for this academic year. This means that the school will be closed to all children on that day, and therefore no work will be posted on Google Classrooms for that day, and so **children who are currently attending school will return to school after the half term on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February**. There will also be no homework set over the half term break.

### **Reporting COVID symptoms and Track and Trace reporting over half-term**

**If a child, who has been attending school, develops symptoms up to and including Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> February and subsequently tests positive**, parents are asked to inform the school so that we can assist in identifying close contacts and advising on any self-isolation, as the individual may have been infectious whilst in school.

**We would ask that up to the end of Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> February, you inform the school immediately if your child has developed symptoms and subsequently let us know the result of any tests, whether positive or negative**

As the school will be closed at this point we ask that all communications be made via email to myself and that you **copy in Mrs Lillywhite** to your email as well so that we can ensure that all messages are received. The inbox will be checked each morning between 9.00-10.00am  
[headteacher@st-marys-jun.hants.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@st-marys-jun.hants.sch.uk)  
[g.lillywhite@st-marys-jun.hants.sch.uk](mailto:g.lillywhite@st-marys-jun.hants.sch.uk)

Where a pupil tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), having developed symptoms more than 48 hours since being in school (**ie. The symptoms developed after Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> February**), the school should not be contacted. Parents and carers should follow contact tracing instructions provided by NHS Test and Trace.

### **A Governor's Role during Lockdown**

During lockdown governors may not visit the school and so they cannot make reports for the Governing Body on any matters of the curriculum, safety and well-being, achievement academic or social, of the staff and pupils. There is no opportunity for talking to pupils or staff, and sharing their pride in their work. That does not mean we are ignoring the school. We meet online, via Zoom, and prepare for these meetings by reading the papers sent to us from the Headteacher, via the Clerk to the Governors, just as we prepare for face to face meetings.

Last night I 'attended' one of these meetings: we listened to a report from the Headteacher on how the school is functioning under the current conditions, how many pupils, children of key workers, or identified as vulnerable, are in school; about their physical and mental well-being and on the ways in

which teachers are working to combine the teaching of those present in the classroom with the provision of remote learning for those who are currently learning from home. We were reassured that there were no problems with online access for those at home, the school having sourced sufficient devices to lend where necessary. We saw how the school was responding to the government guideline on provision during lockdown. It was heartening to be told how appreciative and supportive so many parents are of the teachers and support staff and their commitment to keeping in touch with children. The parent governors present supported this. We heard from the chairs of the Learning and Ethos Committee and the Resources Committees and we also approved updated policies, reviewed the current budget situation and were given news about the premises.

Those of us who would normally be planning meetings with subject leaders plan to conduct them by phone or email. In view of the immense amount of teachers' work which has gone into the orderly start, at very short notice, of this term's arrangements, Ms Welch has asked us to do this after half term. What I will miss most by this arrangement is being able to see all the lovely work which Ms Welch has told us the children are doing: for me, that is the highlight of being a governor at St. Mary's.

Jane Whiter

### **COVID Testing for staff**

This week sees the start of self-testing for primary School staff. The idea behind this is to identify anyone who is asymptomatic and may be unknowingly spreading the virus. If a member of staff tests positive, it is likely to result in a bubble going home and we will inform you as soon as possible, along with seeking advice from Public Health England.

### **Primary Road Safety Update**

Road Safety is an essential life skill which needs to be taught and reinforced from a young age. Hampshire County Council's Road Safety Team usually provide various ways of helping schools to share these messages and as this is currently not possible, we need your support to keep Hampshire's young people safe. Attached is the latest parent update with some useful resources to share with your child.

### **NHS Well-being pack**

Attached to this update is a pack developed by the NHS, which as well as containing some good ideas, also signposts to other sources of help and support should you need it.

### **Parent Governor**

We currently have a vacancy for a parent governor which we need to fill as soon as possible. St Mary's CE Junior school has always aimed for a partnership with parents which undoubtedly brings great benefits to the children. One of the most significant ways you

can help in promoting this aim is to volunteer to be a parent governor.

The governing body's main tasks are:

- to ensure that the school has a clear vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- to hold the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils;
- to oversee the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Parent governors are welcomed as valued members of the team and play a vital role in ensuring the governing body is aware of the views of parents and the local community. We feel sure that there are parents prepared to take on this important role and give their time and commitment to helping us to continue to improve the school's performance.

In looking to fill this vacancy the governors of the school have identified the following skills, experience and attributes that they feel would help strengthen the governing body:

Experience of being a board member in another sector or a governor/trustee in another school;

- Links with the community or local business;
- Working or volunteering with young people;
- Ability to analyse data;
- Willingness to commit time and energy to make governance work to the benefit of the school

Training and support will be available to help you develop into the role. This will include in-house mentoring and support as well as access to external governor training.

If you feel you can help in this capacity, please complete the attached application form and return it to the school by 12.00 noon on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> February.

**Please use the attached application form, a paper copy is available from the school office, and NOT the online form on the Hampshire website.**

The guidelines giving full details about how vacancies are filled can be found in the information for prospective governors on the Hampshire County Council website – see link below.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/governors/volunteer>

You will find video, e-learning and written information on the site and all of these will provide you with further details about the role.

### **Half term Holiday Club – Sports Xtra**

This will now be running on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday only. Tuesday is now fully booked but there is still availability on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup>. Places can be booked via the Sports Xtra website:

[www.sports-xtra.com](http://www.sports-xtra.com)

### **Read Easy**

Do you know anyone who struggles with reading – this may be because they are dyslexic or have English as a second language? The Read Easy charity provides 1:1 sessions for adults to support them in improving their reading skills. Follow the link below for more information and contact details:

<https://readeasy.org.uk/>

### **F.O.O.B.S Update**

This week an email was sent out with details of our Mother's Day gift craft kits. Priced at £3.50 and containing a magnet and coaster for your child to decorate, these will make lovely gifts for the special ladies in our lives on Mother's Day.

This half term's activity will be a scavenger hunt! Tickets will go on sale the week before half term and there will a prize draw for those who submit a photo of their findings!

Kind regards,

Caroline Welch  
Headteacher