11 January 2017 Newsletter no.8

Dear Parents,

Welcome back to school after what I hope has been a lovely Christmas holiday for you all.

Children and staff alike have come back to school and hit the ground running, with lots of exciting things lined up for the next half term. A list of dates for the Spring term will be sent out shortly, detailing any visits, sporting activities or Church events that are due to take place.

Something new to St. Mary's this year is meditation, which we are have just begin to roll out across the classes. We hope your child will enjoy the experience and the time to relax and take stock during these short sessions, which take place straight after lunch and prepare the children for the afternoon session of work. Please see below for more information on this.

**Meditation**

Meditation is the art of selfless attention. It is a practice which allows us to see ourselves, others and God more clearly.

In this technological age, with its constant stream of distraction, children need to strengthen their power of attention – to understand themselves, nurture healthy relationships with others and gain the focus required for learning. Choosing to teach meditation to children at St Mary’s is a gift, without cost, which we give to the children and adults in our school. Once received and embedded, it is a gift that is there for a lifetime, if they choose to use it.

Meditation is accessible to all ages and abilities. During meditation children are not being judged, marked or rated. They are asked to centre themselves, be simply silent and still. Meditating as part of a group nurtures personal practice, keeps us close to the needs of each other and our school community. For many, meditation is also a way of prayer and of becoming closer to God, but even if not used in this way, it can be seen as a life-skill in helping us to develop mindfulness.

**First Holy Communion**

Could any parents wishing their children to make their First Holy Communion please contact Sr. Margaret as soon as possible on 01297- 444825.

**Primary School Admissions**

The deadline for Primary School application for those children due to start school in September 2017 is 15 January. Please do this via Devon County Council and don't forget to include supporting evidence if you have any, i.e. Baptism Certificate.

**Census Day Menu**

On Thursday 18th January we will be holding a special ‘Census Day’ lunch for all Reception and Key Stage 1 children. It is important that all children have lunch on this day as it affects the amount of funding the school receives from the Government. The menu will be fish & chips followed by chocolate cracknel. Pizza will be served on Friday 19th instead.

**School Dinners – KS2**

School dinners must be paid for in advance. If you are more than 1 week in arrears your child will not be able to have school dinners. Please contact the school office or myself, Mr. Melling or Mrs. Middleton if you have any concerns regarding payment for lunches.

**Colder weather**

Now the weather is turning cooler, please could you make sure your child comes to school with a coat.

Best regards

Kate Middleton

Assistant Head teacher