



## St Mary's Catholic Primary School Newsletter No. 7

Dear parents and carers

Thank you very much for your welcome to us over the last week. It has been great to meet many parents individually. We are working hard to learn each child's name and look forward to building the connections with you too.

Very well done to all the children for coping with the new arrangements at the start and the end of the day and thank you to you all for being so positive.

Just to confirm, the gates will open at 8.45 for our children. Once the Dragonfly member of staff is standing at the gate (approximately 8.55 am) this means that your child should go into their classroom via the front entrance as their classroom door will be closed.

### **Attendance and Punctuality**

#### **Punctuality**

Getting children to school on time can be a challenge especially when there are younger ones to get up and get ready. We are starting lessons at 9am now and have moved our assemblies to just before the morning break, so it is crucial that children are ready to learn by 9am. **Officially our registers close at 9am** and your child will be given a late mark if he / she arrives after that time. If you are facing challenges with getting children in on time on a regular basis, please contact us so we can support you.

#### **Sickness**

Thank you to parents who ring in to report illness as soon as possible on the first morning. Up to date contact details we collated in autumn term but if any changes to contact details are made please update the office. A reminder for any sickness and diarrhoea absence – please do not send your child back until 48 hours after the last 'episode'.

#### **Medical appointments**

Where possible please arrange appointments before or after school so that your child does not miss learning time. Thank you.

#### **Taking time off during the school term**

If you decide to take your children off school during the school term, in line with best practice, it will not be authorised unless there is an exceptional circumstance. As a general guidance, parents attending a funeral and similar significant events which require exceptional changes that affect children attending school are the only situations where we can authorise absence.

#### **Attendance below 95%**

If your child has attendance below 95% that is equivalent to missing nearly two weeks of school time; below 90% is nearly 4 weeks of school time. It is important that we work together to support any situation where attendance is falling to these levels. We will be working with the Education Welfare Officer Team for Devon to support families where there are attendance challenges.

**Next steps : School Council**

It has been a great pleasure working with your children at the start of the term and watching their interactions with the teachers, the teaching assistants and with each other. Mrs Mannix will be taking over the School Council and was pleased to meet with the team this week. Their first task is to undertake a short survey and they will then focus on identifying positive learning behaviours in the classroom and positive social behaviours in the playground. We have already had positive feedback as the children are very confident in saying what they feel!

**Before and After School Activities**

From Monday 15<sup>th</sup> Jan all of the clubs will be running. Please see the separate letter for the wide range of activities on offer and please remember that booking for paid activities is through parent pay. Full details are in the letter which has gone out this week.

**School PTFA**

It was lovely to meet the enthusiastic and very positive Chair of the PTFA, Danielle Martin this week. The menu of activities that we can look forward to continues to grow. PTFA makes an incredible addition to school life so every contribution every parent can make to their work is appreciated by all of us.

PTFA dates for your diary include :

School Uniform Sale Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> January

February Cake Sale Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February after school to be led by Woodpecker Class. The cake sale, which takes place on the first Thursday of each month, is a great way for each class to make their contribution to PTFA funds. In March it is the turn of Robins Class.

School Disco Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> Feb after school.

Kind regards to you all,

Amanda Burt

Elaine Mannix