Newsletter 7

Friday 10th January 2020

Happy New Year to all.

I hope that you had a happy Christmastime.

All staff at St Mary’s wish you a year ahead filled with many blessings.

We are all busy creating plans for this term and beyond to continue to improve the offer to all children at St Mary’s.

**Crossing Patrol**

Congratulations to Carline Moulding who has passed her induction so will now be working to keep children and parents safe each day. A huge thank you for stepping up as a local hero.

**Car Park and Safety**

Despite the explanations, requests and concerns shared with you about the front car park parents continue to park in the car park. It is not a car park for St Mary’s parents and whilst I appreciate the inconvenience this causes, at this point I can only say that you must seek alternative parking if you are driving to school at the start and end of the school day.

**If you are one of the ones who continues to park in the carpark, despite our requests, please respect this situation and find an alternative. We will be monitoring the car park before and after school to make sure it remains clear.**

**Applications deadline for primary applications for 2020 entry.**

**Please note, the application deadline for September Applications for children starting primary school in September is Wednesday 15th January.** If you or anyone you know needs to make an application please note the closing date.

If you have any questions or concerns then in the first instance speak to Devon Admissions by following the link : <https://www.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/school-information/apply-for-a-school-place>

If you have any problems or worries then please do speak to Mrs Newcombe our administrator

**Little Princess Trust Thank you and Well Done**

Evelyn was delighted to raise £1,100 for the Little Princess Trust and to be able to donate two lots of 40 cm length hair. Thank you to all who supported Evelyn and very well done.

**Attendance Update EWO**

We are keen to work in partnership with you to achieve the highest possible attendance for your child. Our current attendance for all pupils is 96%.

Research identifies that attendance above 95% contributes significantly to pupil success over time. A half day is one absence so a day is two absence marks. To support best practice we monitor attendance of each pupil at regular points throughout the year and work with the local authority Education Welfare Officer (EWO ) who monitors attendance with us.

You will also be aware that the Government has a strong stance on term time holiday. If at any point in the year a child has 10 sessions unauthorised the Education Welfare Officer ( EWO ) contacts us to initiate penalty notice paperwork which results in a fine for parents. As such, we are bound to follow the process which is set by the Government.

**Friday Assemblies**

Friday assemblies will now be in the morning at **9.00am** rather than in the afternoons.

**Hilary’s soup and sandwich lunch**

Hilary Sharp is running a free soup and sandwich lunch tomorrow from 12-2pm at the school. Everyone is welcome! Please come along if you can it would be lovely to see you there.

**After School Clubs**

All before and after school clubs, **except drama,** will begin from Monday 13th January. Drama will begin from Monday 20th. This is due to Miss Wood attending a training course on Monday 13th January.

If you have not yet booked your child onto a club please do consider this. If you are unsure, or would like to consider a taster, please speak to your child’s teacher who should be able to advise on courses that would benefit your child.

After school clubs are well run by staff who already work closely with our pupils. They are a great way to develop confidence and skills.

**Termly Curriculum Updates**

Teachers will be posting the curriculum overview and relevant information on the school website on the relevant class pages. We will have parent consultations for year 6 before February half term and for all other pupils at the end of term.

Please do continue to support your child with reading, times table and spelling tasks as well as other home tasks set by their class teacher.

**New Ofsted Framework**.

You may know from previous communications that Ofsted changed its inspection framework from Sept 2019. Whilst we at St Mary’s have always worked to deliver a broad curriculum some schools spent many hours, and particularly in Year 5 and 6, drilling children in the subjects that are tested at the end of Year 6. All schools now have to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum.

As a teacher with 30 years experience I have taught through many fashions and Government lead initiatives. I am delighted that the Government is now recognising the importance of developing the whole child.

At St Mary’s we are confident in our offer as a good school and are working hard on a path to be an outstanding school.We recognise that each one of our children is unique and special. We work to give each child the opportunity to flourish as the individuals that they are.

When treated fairly and with care, children quickly appreciate that they cannot be treated the same if they are each to flourish; some need to be offered challenge in order to thrive in one area, whilst others may need a more gentle, supportive pathway. As we continue to develop and build our learning offer we are providing a more personalised journey to the children.

**Change Starts with Us**

Last term we looked at how we could each make small changes which when put together could make a big difference in our school , community and further afield.

This term the focus will be more on individual change, encouraging all of us to think about how we really can be the best that we can be. On Friday afternoon Neil Parish MP is visiting St Mary’s. Mr Parish met Eagle Class when they went to Parliament and is keen to look at a local improvement project with them. He will talk to the whole school about why he became an MP and how he thinks it can help to bring about change.

We are also continuing to look at the Unicef Rights Respect Charter and will be completing activities to achieve the Silver Award.

**What it means to be a Catholic School**

Catholic schools in Devon are commissioned by Bishop Mark for their Catholic distinctiveness. To be a Catholic School we must make it possible to experience God. For me that feels like a huge privilege. The Catholic God is made visible through Jesus, who was a very inclusive, positive, supportive and inspiring role model.

At St Mary’s, with The Trust values and our school values driving us, we are working to make each child feel valued and special, able to develop their gifts and talents and to have opportunities to use them to bring about change for themselves and for others.

So many visitors identify that our school has a certain something. They refer to the sense of calm, our polite and positive children, the children’s desire to report all of the good aspects of their school…..so many tangible elements, all of which are taking place at St Mary’s. For me they are all features of a thriving faith school. A school where all can flourish.

**Consider Joining Us**

We have many volunteers and a PTFA that is very active. If you have any time to give please consider joining us. It is very rewarding and if it is of interest, could be a doorway to future paid work.

**St Mary’s Facebook Page**

A reminder that this was set up for parents and is not a school resource. School information is always sent to you by email and sometimes you will receive paper information via your child’s book bag or in the post. If you know of parents who are not receiving information please encourage them to speak to the office about updating email details.

If you feel there is information that school are not providing at any point then please do let the office know.

**RSPB Bird Watch 25th to 27th February**

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/birdwatch>

**Dates for your diary**

Deadline for Reception intake 2020- Wednesday 15th January

Year 6 and Reception children height and weight checks with the school nursing team Tuesday 28th January at 9.30am.

February half term- Monday 17th February to Friday 21st February

**INSET day**- school closed to children Monday 24th February

Kestrel last swim- Tuesday 25th February

Year 5 Bikeability- Monday 9th March- Thursday 12th March

Woodpeckers first swim session- Tuesday 10th March (letter to follow closer to the time)

Last day of Spring Term- Friday 27th March

INSET day school closed to children Tuesday 14th April

First day of summer term Wednesday 15th April