**Newsletter February 25th 2020**

**Welcome back to all of our families.**

We hope that despite the winds and rain you managed a restful and safe half term.



Ash Wednesday



Shrove Tuesday

We return on Pancake Day, or **Shrove Tuesday**. This is the traditional feast day before the start of Lent on Ash Wednesday.

Lent – the 40 days leading up to Easter – was traditionally a time of fasting and on Shrove Tuesday, Anglo-Saxon Christians went to confession and were “shriven” (absolved from their sins).

As Shrove Tuesday developed people had celebrations to rid their homes of excess foods because during lent they tended to live as simply as they can or to fast. You may be aware of the Mardi Gras festivals that take place around the world which are from the same tradition as Shrove Tuesday.

In the Catholic Tradition we will mark **Ash Wednesday** with mass. Children tend to enjoy this service where each of them have a cross marked on their foreheads. The cross is made from ash mixed with oil so that it creates a paste.

During the 40 days of Lent we take the time to reflect on how we can be the best we can be and in modern times tend to take up something that might make ourselves of the world a better place. This has tended to replace the tradition to give up something.

This year as a school we will take part in the CAFOD scheme. What’s your goal? Which fits in with our theme for this term, ‘Change Starts with Me ‘

<https://cafod.org.uk/Education/Primary-teaching-resources/Lent>

**Winter weather**

After so much wind and rain we are all ready for some blue skies. Snowdrops, crocus and daffodils are in bloom which many associate with spring but Spring does not officially start this year until March 20th. Please could you ensure that your child has a coat with them so that where possible we can give the children opportunities to go outside each day.

**Teacher Planned Absence**

We continue to look for ways to develop and strengthen teaching at St Mary’s and to achieve this is does involve teachers sometimes being out of class to work with colleagues and or to access training. We do try to minimise any impact on children by having ways to map in our own staff into classes. This is made possible in most of our classes by having two teachers either as a job share or where the second adult in the class is also a trained teacher.

Where this is not possible we work with the same teaching agency so that wherever possible we can request the same visiting teachers who know our school and our children. These adults are always inducted by myself and will be mapped in with our experienced support staff to give as much continuity as possible. At all times we consider the learning and pastoral needs of pupils in our decisions.

**Home Learning**

**Times Tables**

Please continue to log into TTRockstars and complete school times table challenges.

**PE kits**

Please could all parents and carers ensure their child’s P.E kits are brought into school each Monday so that they can remain in school all week.

**Dates for your diary in this Lenten season**

**PTFA Cake sales after school dates**

Friday 28th February-St David’s House

Thursday 19th March-St Patrick’s House

Friday 24th April-St George’s House

Friday 3rd July-St Andrew’s House

**Tuesday 25th February**-Kestrel Class last swimming session

**Tuesday 3rd March**-Woodpeckers first swimming session (letter closer to the time with details)

**Monday 9th March**-Wednesday 11th March-Year 5 Bikeability

**Friday 13th March** during the school day-Choir to attend Devon Performing Arts Festival in Exeter (letter with details closer to the time)

**Monday 16th March**-Easter Garden competition

**Friday 20th March**- Easter Bingo. Non school uniform day in return for a chocolate donation for the hamper prizes

**Friday 22nd May**-PTFA sponsored event (details to follow closer to the time)

**Friday 27th March**-Last day of Spring Term. Celebration Assembly will be at 3.00pm today rather than 9.00am

**Wednesday 15th April**- Children return to school. Start of Summer Term.

**Friday 19th June**-Party in the field after school. Non school uniform day in return for a bottle for the tombola.

**Friday 10th July**-Summer Fayre after school

