Dear all St Mary’s families

We are now in week three of lockdown 3 and we sincerely hope that all is well given the many additional challenges facing us all.

All staff and lots of children are in school daily so we are very aware of the difference to lockdown 1. We are working to keep school as safe as possible whilst maintaining daily classes and ensuring that home learning is accessible and purposeful remote provision. We are working to make this work for everyone. From Monday staff will be tested twice a week using lateral flow test kits. Staff will test themselves from home.

The rain has poured and then the sunsets have been magnificent to make up for the dark rainy days. Covid 19 levels rise nationally whilst the numbers of people vaccinated reached 3.5 million and locally and across Devon rates have plateaued and are now falling in some areas. We have to choose what we notice at this time; negative or positive. We are working hard to be a community that notices the good and to support each other to help us all get through this stage. We all hope that this will be the last phase in the Covid 19 journey and we will be able to return to a more normal normal after it.

**Half term Holiday**

We have been told that we will be given 2 weeks notice for every change but we have seen that at times that this is not possible. The Government has needed to react and respond more quickly. For now we are assuming that school will be fully closed for the half term break as there has been no guidance, discussion, suggestion from the Government or across the local authority. We would advise you to work to ensure that children can be at home for the half term break. A reminder that current guidance allows families to form child care bubbles to allow working adults to offer each other informal childcare. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-a-childcare-bubble-with-another-household>

**Local support**

Many people are struggling financially and emotionally. If you find that you are challenged then please know that you are not alone.

If for any reason you feel we are not supporting you please be reassured that this will be a lack of understanding and or cross purposes on our part. We are managing lots of change and sometimes pass notes and messages to each other to complete tasks. If this relates to communicating with a family this could too easily result in some confusion. Trust that we are trying to do our best but may get it wrong and would prefer that you give us the chance to resolve this together rather than assume the worst.

At the weekend I damaged by back by going off on a long march on Saturday. Many Ibubrofen gels and Paractemols later, a night of broken sleep due to an emergency security alert ( which was a false alarm thankfully) as well as a high number of Zoom meetings this week have brought me a lot of additional challenges this week and no doubt has resulted in me additionally bashing my head. I’m not saying this for sympathy, compared to some of the stresses and challenges facing many of our families, these are small issues but even these have rippled together and I can feel the effect. Where you can go gently. We have given the children in school time for mindfulness….we should all do the same.

**Sources of support**

**Pupil Premium.**
If you have found that your financial situation has changed you may be entitled to register for pupil premium. This will provide your child with a free school meal, provide shopping vouchers for holiday times as well as an allowance for school which allows us to look at ways to support your child's progress and development.  Please see our website for full details of how we use this.

To see if you are eligible please see below contact details below:

**Go to devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/school-information/school-meals**

Go to the citizen portal link on the page and apply through that link.

Alternatively, call 0345 155 1019

T**he Impact of Covid -a community response to food shortage .**

HALFF in Axminster (now known as Project Food ) have worked with us on a range of pupil and parent food projects. In response to the on going Covid challenges they have been given a national grant to help meet the needs of those who, for a variety of reasons, would benefit from regular hot meals and fresh fruit for themselves or their families. There are no specific criteria which needs to be met to access this support and their staff are happy to discuss each person’s individual need, but to date, they have been delighted to help:

* Those who have been furloughed, resulting in a temporary drop in income.
* Those who are self-isolating or whose children are self-isolating, and so are not able to get out to the shops.
* Those whose mental or physical health is suffering and would benefit from letting someone else provide a nutritious meal a few times a week.
* Low-income families who are struggling to make ends meet.

If you, your family or somebody you know could benefit from this service, please get directly in touch with the friendly staff at Project Food who will be very happy to advise you on the help they can offer. You can get in touch for an informal chat in any of the following ways below:

Phone number-01297 631782 Email-kerry@project-food.org.uk Facebook page- projectfoodsw WhatsApp- 07487376904



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