**St Mary’s Catholic Primary School**

**Living, loving and learning with God**

Dear families of St Mary’s

We have had a very busy few weeks.

We have worked very well as a team to navigate the ups and downs caused by staff absence due to Covid and we have continued to retain a safe and happy, focused learning environment.

Covid Covid Covid :We talked in the KS2 assembly this week a little about Covid. The children are beginning to have had enough of the word. Who can blame them. After having a spike in cases in Eagles at the end of last week and into Monday we took some steps back; Eagle and Kestrel did not have breaks together and signing activities were stopped for Eagles.

Thankfully the children took this in their stride and even more thankfully cases have now dropped off right across the school.

We expect to be able to return to having Eagle and Kestrel having their playtimes together next week and singing continuing as normal.

We continue to be very grateful to all families who continue to support the actions to make all of the above possible.

Our current year 1 and reception Class have never been in a whole school assembly. Many Year 2’s know they have been in whole school assemblies but don’t remember it very well. We look forward to taking steps back to this and to being able to invite parents back into our events.

**Moving on**

Despite the last two years we have been working to continue to move forwards. Bikeability for Year 5. The Year 5 and 6 trip to London to take part in a debate in the houses of Parliament ,residential trips for Year 4 and 6….all signs that something is changing back.

Much smaller signs include the gate and doors being closed at 9.00am with registration closing at the same time. Lessons are starting very promptly at 9.00 am across the school.

This summer we will see the return of the Government assessments for Year 6, Year 4, Year 2, Year 1 and Foundation.

Across school events, cake sales, leadership across the school, performance with parents attending….so much in our futures to look forward to.

**Teaching and Learning**

We are working to develop pupils so that they are so much more than subject skilled. We are working to create change makers; children who will grow into young people and adults who know how to navigate the world, want to be the best they can be and want to sue their skills and knowledge to make a difference for themselves and for others.

This week we have had a day review with an external consultancy. They have looked at how we use values to develop pupils, how we work to support the success of every child and the progress we have made in developing the curriculum in light of changes to the Ofsted framework.

Over the two days the adults undertaking the review were very impressed with our children and their confidence to explain and describe all aspects of school life and learning.

As you know adults can say lots of things but children will always say how it is!

We are looking forward to the end of the term and sharing with you your child’s learning journey so far this year.

We continue to be grateful to all parents who regularly read, support handwriting, spelling and maths learning as well as by being there to talk and be with your child.

If you have any questions or worries about any aspect of your child’s learning please speak to your child’s class teacher.

**Attendance monitoring systems**

In my last communication to you I explained that we monitor all absence every 6 weeks and we have an educational welfare officers who reviews the detail of this with me. At the last review it became an expectation that we report to every parent where attendance is below 95%.

I did mention this to you in our last communication.

Given the current rise in Covid classes nationally in primary school pupils you might think it odd that now is the time when this system is being returned.

This system is an important part of the national safeguarding monitoring system for some of the most vulnerable children in the country and allows local authority to step in and support situations where families themselves may not appreciate that they do need the support.

This first absence letter was sent to all parents where attendance was below 92% as 95% represented a significant majority of school pupils. The letter recognised that Covid and genuine illness were likely causes for absence.

We are also expecting that where a parent elects to go on holiday in term time for a total of 5 days or more then they will be subject to a national fine.

More than ever we hope that you recognise that these are all national strategies to support all children to achieve the highest levels of school attendance as we all know and recognise that attendance matters.

Where we do have concerns about attendance we would always contact a parent personally and seek strategies to support any positive actions to improve school attendance.

If you have any worries or concerns about your child’s attendance please feel able to contact us.

**Pudsey Bear thank you.**

We received a Children in Need thank you for the £145.00 raised by St Mary’s. Thank you for your continued support.

A reminder that after half term we will have World Book Day events including bring in your favourite book and dress up as a book character. These will be on two separate days so that the children can have two ways to celebrate.

Comic relief Home Clothes day will also be on Friday 18th March.

**Wishing you a happy weekend**

**From all at St Mary’s**