Dear families of St Mary’s



We sincerely hope that you were able to share Christmas and new year celebrations this year with more success than last. We do wish you a very happy 2022 and are looking forward to working with you and your children this term to continue to progress learning.

Although for many Christmas ends on Christmas day the church tradition is that celebrations continue into January ending with the Baptism of Jesus. The Epiphany (this year Thursday 6th January ) marks the visit of the prophets to see the baby Jesus.



**Still learning to live alongside Covid**

We are pleased to say that as a school we had very low numbers of positive Covid cases during the school holidays and all teachers and pupils are happy to be back on the 1st day of term. We will continue to ask you to closely monitor your child and to test if they have symptoms. Last term we had a small number of Covid cases in each year group so we are still being realistic in expecting the larger numbers that other schools have experienced. We thank you in advance for your continued support. It is greatly appreciated.

Good attendance is a known indicator for school success. We work to make every day count.

If your child is absent due to illness, then please could we remind you to email or phone school as soon as possible with the reason for absence which is so helpful in supporting our attendance monitoring. It is law that we have to contact every family where there is a pupil absent if we do not know the reason for absence so it greatly supports us if you can contact us as soon as you know your child will be absent.

**Planned absence**.

We work with Devon Local Authority attendance systems and have a named education welfare officer in the local authority who monitors attendance with us. Children may have planned absence from school if they are attending a medical appointment, an education visit or if they are attending the wedding or funeral of a close family member. All other absence is unauthorised. However, it is really helpful to us to know the reason for any planned absence and to be able to support this where possible. Please contact school admin to request an absence form and complete and return this to school.

**Changes to the isolation period for school setting.**

Since Wednesday 22 December, the 10 day self-isolation period for people who record a positive PCR test result for COVID-19 has been reduced to 7 days in most circumstances, unless you cannot test for any reason.

Individuals may now take LFD tests on day 6 and day 7 of their self-isolation period. Those who receive two negative test results are no longer required to complete 10 full days of self-isolation. The first test must be taken no earlier than day 6 of the self-isolation period and tests must be taken 24 hours apart. This also applies to children under 5, with LFD testing at parental or guardian discretion. If both these test results are negative, and you do not have a high temperature, you may end your self-isolation after the second negative test result and return to your education setting from day 8.

The guidance for Health and social care workers is different to schools. These settings are also required to take lateral flow tests on day 8, 9 and 10.

Anyone who is unable to take LFD tests will need to complete the full 10 day period of self-isolation.

**PE days**

Robins – Mon & Wed

Woodpeckers – Weds & Thurs

Owls – Thurs (come to school in PE Kit), Swimming Fridays

Kestrels – Thurs & Fri

Eagles – Mon & Thurs

Reminder – after school clubs start next week w/c 10th January 2022.