

Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School



South Street

Isleworth

Middlesex TW7 7EE

Tel: 020 8560 7166

Fax: 020 8232 8820

office@smi.hounslow.sch.uk

www.smi.hounslow.sch.uk

The Feast of the Epiphany 6th January 2021

RE: Weekly Update for all parents

Dear Parents

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord in some cultures it's the day when gifts are given. Happy Epiphany to you all. It's an important feast for Christians as it tells us more about who Jesus is and who he will be. The arrival of the Wise Men and the gifts they bring tell us that Jesus is God, Jesus is Lord and that Jesus is a sacrifice and that he will die for us. The Bible tells us that Mary pondered these things in her heart. Let's ask for her, much needed, prayers today: Hail Mary...

At the beginning of this week we thought that most children would be at home until Monday 18th January. So much has changed and we now find ourselves in the third national lock down which we know will be in place until at least half term, because of this extended lockdown we are making changes to our arrangements – please keep reading. For most of us this has come as a bolt from the blue and it's not at all how we thought the new year would start. Of course it's so important to follow the Government rules which are that we must all stay at home and not go out at all. We must all work from home if we can.

School is open for vulnerable and children of critical workers and the uptake has been much much stronger than before with about 1/3 of our children in. This is far more than other local schools - all the teachers and teaching assistants are in so that we keep these much larger than anticipated numbers of children safe across breaktimes and lunchtime. We are not able to release teachers (other than for their daily calls) as they are needed in class.

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For children in school

We are doing everything we can to be able to safely stay open so that we can do our part in this national emergency and offer places for children who need to be in school. The impact of the virus has affected us and across the school we now have 7 adults not in school, in a smallish school this is a lot. When staff are not able to come into school it puts pressure on those who are in and means that they are needed in class.

The list of Critical workers supplied by the Government is extensive and at the moment numbers of children in school are too high. The more children we have in school the longer the lockdown will go on for as the virus will keep spreading. Earlier this week the Prime Minister confirmed that schools are vectors for the transmission of the virus so please take this very seriously.

From Monday 11th we are asking that you only send your child into school if you absolutely have no other choice.

If numbers continue to be too high then we will start (as other schools have already done) to look to limit the numbers, to keep everyone safe, by expecting that only children with both parents who are Critical Workers (or children of single parents) come in.

For children at home

We are still awaiting updated guidance on the latest lockdown arrangement for schools and as you know there have been fast moving developments. I'm really proud at how the staff here have worked in response to very late Government announcements. This week we have looked again at our Learning at Home provision after it was announced on Monday that this period of lockdown is going to be for longer than 2 weeks.

We know that some of you would prefer St Mary's teachers to provide live or pre-recorded lessons. In our conversations with other schools we have found that this creates a whole new set of issues. There are safeguarding concerns, technical problems, there's union advice, there's the issue of who gets priority in the use of the wifi band width, there's timetabling concerns in that some want a set timetable whilst for others it's vital there's flexibility, there's the need for parents who must work at home to have wifi access - the list goes on. We have seen other systems (such as live and recorded teaching) in other schools breakdown when staff are unable to work. We have also seen that wifi networks in homes have not been able to cope when too many people connect. From the very beginning we have aimed to build robust ways of doing things and have

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developed systems and procedures for Learning at Home which are able to withstand almost any eventuality - it's vital that our systems can withstand the stress and pressure of staff illness and absence for instance. Children, staff and you as parents can be confident that our approach is consistent and will not fail.

These considerations are key in our identification of the Oak National Academy resources which we re-started using from yesterday. The Oak resources are developed in partnership with Reach in Feltham who we have worked with for 3 years. We know that their way of teaching is the same as our way. Learning is unpacked for the children in such a way that it sticks. This is because the approach is linked to the science of how the brain works and how the forgetting process can be interrupted. We would not be able to produce such high quality home learning resources across a complete range of subjects whilst also staffing the classes in school.

We want our children to have the best opportunities for learning at home and we are confident that together we can improve. We have been listening and have taken your feedback seriously and have made some changes which are outlined further down this update.

We know that it's a real task to juggle work and working from home and we've gathered together some resources for you here:

Hungry Little minds 0-5, for the littlest of us:

<https://hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk>

Phonics play:

<https://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/> username: jan21 password: home

Parents guide:

<https://www.theparentsguideto.co.uk/coronavirus>

Thinking Parent's blog, has lots of great ideas for stuff to do with children, but also tips on home-working and mental health:

https://anitacleare.co.uk/education/?cli_action=1609924942.828

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The Oak National Academy, set up for teachers and what we use as it's really good with learning built on the 'science' of how we learn and how the brain works, there's nothing stopping you going in and setting more of their lessons running for your children:

<https://www.thenational.academy/about-oak>

The Reach Academy, based in Feltham – we work closing with them and teach their history and geography curriculum:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCiai-MqUoEe-IQ2FbApQChw/videos>

BBC Learning at home, Karate cats is a highlight!:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/znbncsw>

Working Dads UK, advice on managing work load for you alongside home schooling:

<https://www.workingdads.co.uk/how-help-kids-succeed-homeschooling-tips-coronavirus/>

Because dads matter, survivor stories:

<https://www.dad.info/article/family-finances-fights-covid-survivor-stories>

Huffpost, how to explain COVID to children:

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/how-to-explain-covid-developments-to-your-kids_uk_5fb658dcc5b695be83003be2

NHS, tips if you are worried:

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-anxiety-tips/>

The Conversation, looking after your own health:

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<https://theconversation.com/to-safeguard-childrens-mental-health-during-covid-19-parents-must-look-after-their-own-143897>

Virtual class calls via Zoom from Monday

Here are the changes which will come in from Monday 11th.

In the morning from:

8:30am to 9:00am for nursery and reception

9:00am to 9:30am for Year 1 and 2 (these children will have to do the Joe Wicks session at another time on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays)

9:30am to 10:00am for Y3 and 4

10:00am to 10:30am for Y5 and 6

an adult from your child's year group will host a zoom meeting to greet the children and go through the learning for the day.

From 1:00pm to 1:30pm for nursery and reception

and from 1:30pm to 2:00pm for Y1 and 2

from 2:00pm to 2:30pm for Y3 and 4

2:30pm to 3:00pm for Y5 and 6

there will be a second zoom meeting to go recap the day and the day's learning. These calls are staggered but we know that some children with siblings may have to split their access to the meetings. And we know that not all of the children will be able to take part in all of these meetings, for other reasons, but please do all you can to encourage them to join as for most children at home these meetings will replace the phone calls. Links to the meetings will be in the Learning at Home folder for the week.

From Monday 11th the daily Maths No Problem lesson will have the pages from the MNP textbook and workbook pages included. We will include science and RE content weekly.

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In order to explain these new arrangements we have set them out in these charts:

Nursery (with reception) zoom call daily from 8:30am to 9:00am and 1:00pm to 1:30pm

Nursery

	Mon	Tue	Weds	Thu	Fri
First do this:	Music Monday	Maths	Phonics	RE	Story
Now do this:					
- Joe Wicks PE (live at 9am)	✓		✓		✓

Reception (with nursery) zoom call daily from 8:30am to 9:00am and 1:00pm to 1:30pm

Reception

	Mon	Tue	Weds	Thu	Fri
First do this:					
- Full maths. lesson	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
- Phonics lesson	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Now do this:					
- White Rose Maths	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
- Oak academy English	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Now do this:					
1 other lesson each day:					
- Joe Wicks PE (live at 9am)	✓		✓		✓
- Understanding the World Oak lesson			✓		
- RE		✓		✓	
- Reading book (online)	✓				
- Handwriting					✓
Then do this:					
Phonics Play					✓

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Y1 and 2 Zoom calls 9:00am to 9:30am and 1:30pm to 2:00pm and for Y3 and 4 9:30am to 10:00am and 2:00pm to 2:30pm and Y5 and 6 10:00am to 10:30am and 2:30pm to 3:00pm

Y1 – 6

	Mon	Tue	Weds	Thu	Fri
First do this:					
- Full MNP lesson	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
- MNP workbook pages	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
- English activity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Now do this:					
- Oak academy Maths	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
- Oak academy English	✓	✓	✓	✓	
- Oak academy Science					✓
Now do this:					
1 other lesson each day:					
- Joe Wicks PE (live at 9am)	✓		✓		✓
- History		✓			
- RE				✓	
Then do this:					
- Maths Kahoot					✓
- English Kahoot					✓
MNP workbook answers for previous week	✓				

Take care everyone and stay safe! Keep checking the Learning at Home resources and looking out for further updates.

F Marsh

Headteacher

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