

St Mary & St John CE Primary School

Headteacher: Elizabeth Burton



Newsletter: school closure newsletter 5: 1.05.20

Dear Parents and Carers,

Happy May! We've got through April now and it seems there will be some detail at the end of next week on how the lockdown will be eased, but not necessarily when.

This communication is really an update on some help around if you have particular needs. We are aware that some families may now find themselves eligible for Free School Meals as a result of claiming Universal Credit. Please contact us on office.3834@ssmj.oxon.sch.uk for the attention of Ruth Tarry and she will check out if you are eligible. You will need your name and date of birth and your National Insurance number for us to run the check. It is very straightforward. Families with children who can have Free School Meals are entitled to supermarket vouchers of £15.00 a week per child during this period of school closure.

One of the education unions has put together a poster with useful numbers of support services. These helplines will give you details of what's available locally. If you are worried about something you have seen or heard then it is best to call Children's Social Care on 03450507666. This can be an anonymous call. The poster is attached to this newsletter.

We had a virtual governors' meeting on Wednesday evening where we shared information about the school closure, communication and organisation and how we are supporting specific families both inside and outside of school. The governors have been fully involved and very supportive. They are still engaging in governor duties, albeit remotely. I am also in contact with lots of other headteachers and school leaders. Experiences are varied from schools that are fully closed, those with a tiny number in and those, like us, who have around 15 – 20 in most days. Staffing levels vary too. We have three teaching staff working with the children with back up teachers on call daily.

I hope you're managing the home learning and it's been lovely to hear from many of you. We understand, however, that many parents and carers are juggling home learning with trying to work from home. This is a tough ask. Please do not worry if some days are less than smooth and you feel thoroughly harassed! We think some home learning is important, but it will be varied, as will be your children's motivation for certain subjects. It really does not matter if your children do not finish all the home learning every week. Your family's health and well being is the most important thing; chatting together, playing games, both outside and inside, having a walk, relaxing on the sofa and so on is hugely beneficial. This is a time when many families can take a break from the usual frenetic programme of activities which make up normal family life. Life is on pause but it will be temporary. I'm thinking of everyone and my number one hope is for us all to be safe and well for a return to school before long.

Best wishes,

Liz Burton