

# St Mary & St John CE Primary School

Headteacher: Elizabeth Burton



Newsletter 9: 22.05.20

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing in response to some concerns raised following my letter and the FAQ's sent out a couple of days ago regarding the continuation of home learning.

This is our context: we have been instructed to teach in groups of no more than 15. This means we will have 8 classes of children who are in Years 1 and 6 and 2 classes of children who are in the key workers' and vulnerable learners' groups. We normally have 12 classes and this new arrangement gives us 10 classes. We need all our medically fit classroom teachers to teach these classes full time and all our medically fit teaching assistants to support specific needs in classes. Everyone will be teaching all day except for Friday afternoon in the first instance.

I wanted to protect staff well-being during a period of extraordinary difficulty and strain and to manage expectations. This is why I put the home learning question on the FAQ's. We **will** be putting English and maths work on the home learning pages and maybe some other subject ideas. Unfortunately, it's been misinterpreted by some as abandoning the other year groups. We are very aware that our children in Years 2,3,4 and 5 would like to be back at school too and we feel morally bound to give them some direction whilst still at home. Our teachers talk about their classes all the time when they are in on their rota day. They are all missing their children massively and were devastated to have the year interrupted so brutally. Please bear with us as we adapt to yet another phase in this pandemic and rest assured that my main job on return will be to monitor what's going on both in school and with home learning. We will review the arrangements weekly and send you updates.

On a positive note, I am delighted that the home learning has been so well received; thank you for your excellent feedback and appreciation. I've enjoyed watching it develop with the recent addition of some teachers reading stories to their children, the now legendary staff video (big thanks to Becca Edwards for putting this together) and Father Phil's assembly with his funky climb of the church tower's steps (thank you father Phil!).

This may go down well! Children returning to school do not need to wear school uniform unless they choose to as regular washing of clothes is recommended under the cleaning guidelines. This may be harder with a limited amount of school uniform.

I hope you have a restful half term, even though it seems a bit odd to be saying this! The most important thing is to keep safe and well. We've done 9 weeks of this now which is a big achievement. I still yearn for us to be back together though. It will happen in time. Thank you to our families, staff and governors who have reminded me daily that *it was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness.*

Best wishes,  
Liz Burton