St Mary & St John CE Primary School

Headteacher: Elizabeth Burton

Newsletter 2: 4.09.20

Dear Parents and Carers,

It's day 2 of the school now fully open. Congratulations to everyone!

The first day worked remarkably well with year group bubbles all sticking together. The children were the inspiration as they trotted back into school enthusiastically, even though many must have been understandably nervous. Parents and carers may have been anxious too so thank you for working with us at the beginning and end of the day as drop off and pick up can be stressful with the new arrangements. A special mention must go to our new year 1 children in Willow and Chestnut classes as they have started at Meadow Lane without the usual transition from Comper. And done brilliantly, sitting calmly together on their large class rugs, ready to learn.
We are teaching the children about social distancing within reason; our expectation increases as the children get older. The tables in years 4, 5 and 6 are all facing forwards and the children will sit next to the same person most of the time once suitable seating arrangements are confirmed. The government guidelines take account of the developmental needs of younger children and the focus in the younger classes is year group bubbles and good hygiene.

We welcome a new teacher, Rhiannon Stickley and two new teaching assistants, Alice Mitchell and Gemma Davies, to our staff team and we wish them well as they settle in. Rhiannon is teaching Aspen Class, Year 3; Alice and Gemma are in Year 1, so they are learning the new school routines, alongside the children!

Our After-School Club, known as Plus Base, will be starting on **Monday 28 September for Year 1 (Chestnut and Willow classes) and Year 2 (Ash and Oak classes) only**. We will be reviewing this regularly, along with government guidelines, and will extend it when we feel it is safe to do so. Breakfast club will not run at all this half term. We hope to start after school activity clubs after the October half term. Families with children in Year 1 and Year 2 will receive an application form next week to enrol for a place at After School Club.

Our school is certainly not running normally, and we will miss certain things like whole school assemblies. Father Phil is coming in on Mondays to do Year group assemblies, so we will keep in regular touch with him. I am planning to do Year group assemblies on Tuesdays. We'll miss welcoming parents and carers to our sharing assemblies and seeing you at our well-established Friday tea stalls. It is, however, a massive step forward to fully open our school and hear a more normal noise level about! Our school is looking very smart with all surplus stuff out of the way and streamlined, friendly classrooms. We have the advantage of experience from staying open during these last few months and know what is realistic and manageable in a large primary school. I will communicate with you regularly to let you know how things are going.

I look forward to working with you over the coming months as we journey on through this extraordinary year together.

Best wishes,
Liz Burton