

St Chad's Catholic Primary School

NEWSPAPER



First Half Spring Term 2021



Dear Parents/Carers,

Thinking of you

Welcome to our First Half Spring Term newspaper. We extend our warmest wishes to you and your family and we particularly want to pass on our most caring thoughts and prayers to anyone who is unwell or worried about someone who is unwell. We also really want to send our sympathy and best wishes to those in our school community who have lost a loved one since we were last in touch. We promise you that the whole school community is always kept in our prayers and we are thinking of you.

School Mission Statement

At St Chad's we are part of God's family:

We learn from Jesus' teachings in the Gospels
We love Jesus and each other with all our hearts
We show kindness to everyone just like Jesus did
'Christ in our heads, our hearts and our hands'



We are really aware of how stressful home learning can be and we are here to support you as much as we can. We know from talking to all of our families at St Chad's that lots of people are experiencing the inevitable stresses of lockdown and home learning in one way or another.

As a dad myself let me tell you I know only too well how stressful and challenging home learning can be – before you even begin to add in the pressure of having to do your own job and run a home as well. Sometimes children are in the perfect mood for online learning and sometimes they are not. The way the world is at the moment means that it's perfectly normal for everyone's emotions to be all over the place! Online learning isn't a replacement for classroom teaching and never can be – so please don't worry if it doesn't work like a classroom in your home!

There are many, many reasons why home learning might not work out as planned – all of which are perfectly normal. Internet problems, upset children, lots of children, babies and toddlers, phone calls to be answered, deliveries arriving, poorly relatives, older relatives to care for, washing and cleaning to do, pressure from work, worries – to name but a few! So, it's no surprise that things won't run perfectly every day. It's really important to remember it's all normal and happens to us all – including teachers and headteachers. Please don't let it worry you or your child!

The Prime Minister has announced that schools won't start to reopen until 8th March and this is subject to the data at the time. It's really important we minimise any stress around home learning during this time. If we're stressed or worried that doesn't help the children to learn – so I really urge you to look after yourself and speak to us if you're worried about anything related to home learning. Most things can usually be easily sorted out.

Please don't place yourselves under any unnecessary stress. We realise you can't do everything. Apart from cases of staff illness, your child's teacher will deliver live lessons online every day in term time. We will always set the work for the children to do and we will provide feedback on everything that is submitted online. The learning is there for you – but we realise you won't always be able to do everything. We know lots of you have got your own jobs to do. Sometimes you won't be able to give online learning your full attention – we understand this.

The really important thing is to let you know we are here to help you – so if you have any problems, feel worried or anxious about your child's work – get in touch. We will do everything we can to help you and have already helped lots of parents with reassurance, advice and support.

I want you to know we understand how extremely difficult this situation is and we are full of support for you. Please go easy on yourself and let us know if we can help in any way.

≡DON'T≡
worry
BE ♥♥♥
happy



Our Catholic values next term are **GRATEFUL** and **GENEROUS**

Grateful

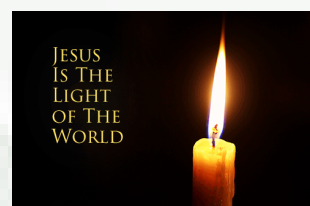
Even in these very difficult times – remembering to count our blessings from God and appreciating the many good things in our lives. The people we love, our homes, our health, our children – these are all blessings from God and it's important we remember to be grateful for the many blessings he gives us every day.

Generous

Sharing what we have with others to make the world a better place. Acting as Christ himself would towards others. This can mean sharing in the sense of being charitable but it also means sharing kindness, being patient, forgiving, smiling, saying hello to someone. We can be generous in so many ways and most of them don't cost us. Being generous with our kindness, patience and forgiveness is really important during these difficult times.

The children have been learning about these values in their assemblies and Religious Education lessons.

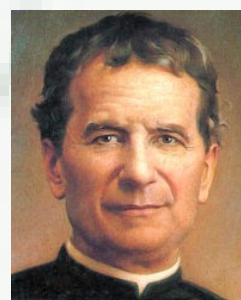
The God Who Speaks: Scripture to focus on this half term



'Here is the light you will reveal to the nations' Luke 2:32 A reminder how the Bible speaks to us and tells us that our Lord Jesus came to us and remains a light in the darkness, a guide and an inspiration – Jesus: The Light of the World.

Our School Values

Truth
Equality
Forgiveness
Respect
Kindness



St John Bosco Feast Day – Sunday 31st January

The feast of the patron Saint of our Catholic Multi Academy Company. St John Bosco is the patron Saint of children and young people. The children will celebrate his feast day in their assembly on Monday 1st February, the first school day after his feast.

THANK YOU



Thank you for being thoughtful and considerate towards the school staff

We are genuinely doing all we possibly can to provide the best quality remote learning that we can. You'll no doubt be aware that lots of schools are not able to provide the amount of live teaching that we are and we are very proud to be able to do this for our children.

Please remember that some things are not in our control – staff illness, bad weather, government decisions, public health rules, rules about self-isolation and closing classes where there are positive cases. All of these things cause additional stress – we know this – but are usually out of our control.

We cannot tell you how much we appreciate your thoughtfulness, kindness and patience. In these very challenging circumstances it's really important we all look after each other, be patient and understanding towards each other and forgive each other when we need to.

We promise to do our best to look after the children and you – our families at St Chad's. We really appreciate the way you show us that similar level of care and respect. Thank you very much.

Thank you for your support this term

We want to say a really heartfelt thank you to all of our families. The closure of schools was very unexpected and it's really, really sad that we are not all together in school. We really hope that the children will be able to come back to school as soon as possible.

Thank you for your patience as we made the sudden switch to online learning. I know that there were teething problems in the first few days and I'm really pleased that these have now been ironed out. We are very proud to be one of the schools that provides face to face live lessons every day, something which isn't as widespread as you might expect. Thank you very much for the very important role you have played in helping to make the online learning a success.

Thank you very much indeed for your feedback when things have gone wrong

Thank you for being honest with us and letting us know quickly where things have gone wrong. It's really important that you let us know about any problems so that we have the chance to put things right as quickly as possible. If you have any issues that have not been resolved it's really important you let Mr Hinton or Mrs Chapman know so that we can sort things out for you.

Thank you very much for your supportive feedback about what is working well

On behalf of all of the staff I really would like to thank you for your support and encouragement. We have been overwhelmed by your kind words of encouragement and the positive feedback you have given us about our online learning provision. It really means a lot and each of us is very proud indeed of the fact our children have live lessons with their own teacher online every day. We've recently introduced the 'assignments' function where the children can submit their work and receive feedback from the teacher which has also been very positively received by many parents. Every email you send in is forwarded to the teacher and your thanks are passed on. Your feedback and kind words has been really, really encouraging and it means such a lot – so thank you very much indeed for taking the time and trouble.



As soon as the children come back to school we will immediately continue the catch-up curriculum

As soon as the children come back to school we will assess their learning carefully and address any gaps that exist. The curriculum will be modified to ensure the key building blocks they need are covered straight away. The children's reading and phonics will be assessed and changes to book bands and phonic groups will be made where necessary. We are well prepared for the return to school and it won't simply be a case of picking up where we left off – a carefully planned catch up programme will start as soon as we return so that gaps in learning are quickly addressed.

Sharing recorded lessons is not possible at the moment

We are not able to provide you with access to recorded lessons at the moment. This is because our lessons take place live with children's faces visible and their voices audible. Even though each Team is only open to the children that belong to the class – we still have no control over what happens to the recording when it is viewed anywhere outside of the school. We are not able to release video and audio of staff and children into a situation where we cannot fully control access. In addition, we do not have permission to do this for lots of our children as well because parents have not consented to photos and videos of their child being placed online.

If for any reason you can't access the live lessons we are providing a number of resources to help your child access the lesson at a later date:

- ◆ A daily email is sent out with an outline of the lessons taking place.
- ◆ The teacher's presentation (PowerPoint) where one is used, is placed in the Files area of Teams.
- ◆ The work for the lesson is indicated on the lesson plan and / or is placed in the Files area (eg worksheets and questions).
- ◆ If you don't have a printer – your child can view the worksheet on screen and write their answers on paper.
- ◆ If you can't access the live lesson but need help – please call us and we will ask your child's teacher to contact you as soon as they can.

Thanks for supporting the teachers when they are teaching

We really appreciate you contacting the school with your questions and not asking the teachers whilst they are in the middle of the lesson. This means the lesson isn't interrupted and the teacher can give you a fuller answer or explanation when they call you back. This makes a huge difference to the lessons because if lots of parents asked lots of questions – the teaching time would be interrupted. You've been great in understanding this and we want you to know it's very much appreciated.





We are keeping in touch as much as we can

You should receive at least one phone call per week for each of your children. This is our way of maintaining personal contact with you during the lockdown and it's our opportunity to provide whatever support we can. Our staff are more than happy (delighted in fact) to talk to the children and have a chat. We call home as part of our duty of care to all our families and it's also really important we can check all 210 of our pupils are safe and well. The teaching assistants make these calls whilst the teachers are teaching online. Our TAs will take messages and pass them on to your child's teacher for you if they can't solve problems over the phone.

Don't hesitate to call us if you need any technical support

If you need any help accessing Microsoft Teams we have staff who can help you. If necessary our staff can talk you through what to do over the phone. Please don't miss out on our online lessons because you're worried about getting online – we can help so please get in touch.



Have you got internet access? Are you struggling with internet usage / bills?



If you are struggling with internet access for any reason – please let us know. We have a limited number of SIM cards that were donated to us by a mobile phone provider. You can use the SIM to provide internet access in a phone – using the device as a hotspot to provide internet for a tablet or laptop. You could even use the phone to access the lessons if you have no other suitable device. Please call us if you would like us to provide you with a Data SIM-card.

If you qualify for income based free school meals and have registered with Dudley LA we may be able to obtain a wireless router for you from the government. Please let us know if you don't have internet access and qualify for income based free school meals. We will then apply for a router on your behalf.

We have received our allocation of laptops from the government and distributed them

We were sent 12 laptops by the government and we have distributed them according to the set criteria. The laptops provided were only for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds (pupil premium / income based free school meals) who do not have access to a device, with priority to children in Years 3 to 6.





If your child's teacher is too unwell to teach – live lessons will be temporarily unavailable

We hope that your child's teacher will be well enough to teach online every day. If your child's teacher is too unwell to teach online we will provide work and resources for your child to use at home. We cannot replace the teacher as all of the other teachers are teaching their own classes. We will let you know if your child's teacher cannot deliver their online lessons and we will let you know when and where the children's work will be available – there may be a slight delay whilst we get all of the work prepared. Please bear with us – we know how important having work to do is and we will keep in contact. You may need to wait a few hours whilst the right work is prepared for your child.

We hope this rarely happens – but it's important you know what will happen if your child's teacher is too unwell to teach online.



Half Term Holiday – 15th to 19th February inclusive

Lessons will finish on Friday 12th February for half term and will restart on Monday 22nd February. The school and office will be closed from 3.30pm on Friday 12th February and will reopen at 8.30am on Monday 22nd February.

St Chad's School Uniform

Last year's parent's questionnaire brought in a mixture of responses about the school's uniform. One of the changes we made for this academic year was to allow girls the option of wearing grey school trousers which was positively received as an alternative for the girls.

We'll be in touch soon with a short survey to ask for your views on anything you think we could change and improve about the uniform. Please be assured – we won't be changing the colours or the option of the kilt – we just want to see if there are things we could do to make it more affordable and easier for parents if we can. Nothing we change (and we may not change anything once we know your views) will incur you any extra expense – that's a promise.



If you are eligible for income based free school meals it's really important you apply

If you think you qualify for free school meals please apply as a matter of urgency. You will receive vouchers during lockdown and will have the option of accessing free school meals at school when we reopen. By successfully applying, you will also gain access to pupil premium funding for the school for the next 6 years – which is extremely valuable to the school and enables us to provide more for the children. Applying is confidential, fast and can be done online. You don't need to produce any documents.

If you get any of the following support payments your child may be entitled to receive free school meals:

Free School Meals

If you receive any of the following support payments your child may be entitled to Free School Meals

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit Run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit

If you currently receive free school meals but have now moved into the area, you will need to complete a new Free School Meals Application form

If you wish to apply for Free School Meals, please go to

www.dudley.gov.uk/resident/your-council/council-tax-and-benefits/benefits/free-school-meals

If you need further information, you can contact the Free School Meals Team by:



Telephone -01384 814988



Email – freeschoolmeals.benefits@dudley.gov.uk



Visiting – Dudley Council Plus, Castle Street, Dudley
between 8.30am and 5pm Monday to Friday, 9am and 12 noon Saturday



Parentview

Last academic year we were overwhelmed by the huge number of positive reviews placed on ParentView around the time of the school's Ofsted inspection. It was very good for us to know that you'd noticed some positive changes in the short time since I started with you.

Unfortunately – Parentview archives all of the responses at the end of the academic year and now we are back to zero responses showing!

Please could I invite you to leave a review on Parentview for the school so that both Ofsted and the school can gather your views. We will also be sending out a Parent Questionnaire soon, just like last year's which was instrumental in so many of the changes we have already introduced.

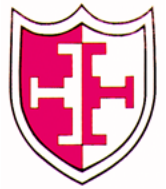
All I would ever ask is that if there is something you are unhappy about – please come and speak to us first. We take great pride in always trying to resolve issues and responding quickly to parents and carers. Please give us the opportunity to make things better by letting us know.

You can submit your Parentview responses at www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk and our postcode is DY3 3UE.

Thanks very much indeed for your time and support.

Twitter and Facebook accounts are now live – another way for us to share useful information and resources





THANK YOU

School Fund

Thank you very much indeed for your extremely generous donations last term which added up to a stunning £823.00. We are extremely grateful for every single penny and all of the money is spent on the children. School fund has helped us to provide online access to reading books, better handwriting resources and much needed modern equipment in all of our classes. The school budget at St Chad's is very, very tight indeed and without your generosity we wouldn't be able to provide all of the new and extra things that we strive to do.

At the same time – we understand how difficult things are at this time for so many of us. For this reason, as I said last term, I will never, ever expect you to contribute to school fund. Donating to school fund is entirely optional and every donation, no matter how small, is much appreciated. If you are able to and feel that you would like to donate to the school – be assured your donation is appreciated and spent on the children. If you are not able to donate or do not wish to – your position is respected entirely and you will never be put under pressure to donate.

Being completely honest I'm sorry that I need to invite voluntary contributions – however the budget at St Chad's is so tight we have no alternative but to do so. Please be assured – there is NO expectation or obligation on ANYONE to donate unless you wish to and are able to. Please also be assured that we really understand so many of you have had the expense of laptops and other home learning resources to pay for – so please don't feel obligated in any way at all.

How to donate - donations can be made using the SchoolGateway app.

Thank you to everyone who has downloaded the Schoolgateway app. If you haven't done so here are the steps to follow;

- Search for "SchoolGateway" in the Apple App Store/Google Play or on your phone go to www.schoolgateway.com/apple (Apple) or www.schoolgateway.com/android (Android)
- Install the app and if you are asked then say yes to "Allow Push Notifications"
- When you launch SchoolGateway for the first time, please select 'New User' and enter the email address and mobile telephone number you have registered with school.
- The system will send a PIN code to your phone; please enter this PIN code and the app will be activated for you.

Please make sure we always have your up to date mobile number and email address

Investing in SchoolGateway/Schoolcomms has transformed the way we can keep in touch with parents and carers and it is working well. However – it only works if we are contacting you on the right number and email address! Please let us know your contact details so we can keep you up to date.



It is very important to us that you and your child/ren are happy

Your child's religious formation, education, safety, welfare and happiness are very important to us – they are the reason why the school is here and we strive to achieve excellence in all these areas. Inevitably, in any school, things will go wrong from time to time no matter how hard we try. Sadly, this can't be avoided but we do our best to minimise any problems from arising.

What's really important is the way in which these problems are sorted out. Please let us know about any worries or concerns that you have – whether that's during the lockdown period or when the school is back open. The sooner we know about your concerns the sooner we can do all we can to resolve them.

We promise to listen carefully to your concerns and explain what we will do to address them. If you are ever dissatisfied by the way your concern has been handled – please speak to Mr Hinton or Mrs Chapman. We will always do our very best to resolve your concern if we can. Please let us know – it's really important.

All the best

You, your children and your wider families are very much in our prayers and at the forefront of our minds every day. We look forward to the time when the school reopens and until then we will keep in weekly contact and we are here for you whenever you need us. Don't hesitate to get in touch.

With every kind wish as always,

Mr M Hinton
Executive Principal