



15th January 2021

Dear Parents and carers,

Teacher phone calls home

Can I thank you all for all the positive comments and support you have given the teachers when they have contacted you at home? We really appreciate how hard you are all working to teach your children using the resources we are providing, please do not make yourself ill with worry. It is important that you, as a family, taking into account your personal circumstances complete as much work as you are able. We will continue to ring parents regularly, to catch up with you. We have taken on board parental feedback and we are going to move to daily provision of work, rather than overwhelm some with a whole week at a time.

We are here to help

Please always remember we are here to help, please do not hesitate to contact school if you need anything, we will always do our best to support you.

St John Vianney SVP Group

Through the church, we have access to a wonderful group of people who have offered their support to any of our families who need it. Please do not suffer in silence – if you need help with food and/or any emotional support please contact us and we will put you in touch with this marvelous group of volunteers.

Domestic Violence

Unfortunately, we saw over the last national Lockdown, the number of families experiencing domestic violence increase. Please know that there are agencies out there to support you at any time <https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/>

Pupils currently in school

The government has confirmed advice that children of Critical Workers or pupils classified as vulnerable should only attend school on the days needed to support their parents work. Therefore, can I ask that wherever possible, please do not send your child into school if you are able to work from home. So for example, if you work on a Mon, Tue and Wed in a hospital, please only send your child into school on those days and keep them at home on Thurs and Fri. I appreciate that this is hard, but the more we can do to minimize the spread the quicker we will get back to normal and have every child back in school.

Computers

We have still not received our government allocation of any laptops yet. We have a number of older laptops which could be loaned out to families – please ring school if you have no access to any electronic devices at home and need help. Also if any family has older spare

laptops which they are not using and would be happy to donate them to school to share out to families who have no devices, we would really appreciate your support.

Huge thank you

One of our parents works at Sainsbury's and has been able to access some grant money to purchase some Amazon Fire Kindles from Argos, these will be loaned out to some of our families who have previously requested IT support. Thank you so much for working with your employer to support school, it is a really generous gift and much appreciated.

Online Learning

This week the amount of parents who have told school they are accessing all the online learning is wonderful to hear. Remember, if your child can do some work every day that is so much better than trying to do the whole weeks' worth on a Saturday. As you can imagine, every parent wants the work slightly differently, please just all try to do your best – it is brilliant how well you are all embracing this new way of working.

The government has now stated that schools need to provide a minimum of 4 hours work per day for each KS2 child and a minimum of 3 hours for a KS1 & EYFS child. Obviously, this is very subjective, as pupils all work at different speeds. Staff are providing age appropriate work coupled with both extension and support activities alongside. I appreciate how hard it is to home school your children and do not want parents making themselves or their children ill with stress, worrying about completing every single bit of work provided. Please use your judgement about what and how much you are asking your child to complete at home.

Obviously with 472 pupils registered in school, it is not practicable to print and hand deliver every child a paper pack to their home address every single week and whilst I know that if you have several children it is hard, we simply ask that you do the best you possibly can, could one child be doing something practical whilst the other one is completing a task and vice versa? I do not have the answers for everyone and sadly, I will not please everyone, but please be assured we are doing everything we can to support you all.

Teams Online Learning Platform

From Monday 18th January, Year 1 – Year 6 pupils will move to daily work packs being uploaded through Teams. For the next two weeks we will, of course, continue to upload the whole weeks work to the school website as well to give you all time to move over to Teams. Every child will have received a Teams login, in their home learning pack, if you cannot find it then please feel free to contact the school office for a second copy of it. There is an instruction booklet which has been made to guide you all onto Teams, it will be in the Home Learning section of the school website.

From Monday 18th January, lessons will be released via Teams on a daily basis at 6am, with that day's resources to your child's personal account. There will be opportunities for pupils, to ask their teachers questions, upload work back into the teacher and get feedback from the teacher. It is easier to view recorded PPT's, view recorded lessons and submit work without ever having to print it out.

We know that Teams is all new for everyone, teachers, parents and children so please be patient with both us and yourselves as we all get used to this new learning platform. We

have chosen this Teams platform to use as it is the Government backed one and all of your older children already use it in their senior schools.

SeeSaw Learning Platform

Nursery and Reception parents are going to be given a new learning platform login for SeeSaw, those children will not need to access anything on Teams and no work will be uploaded onto Teams for them. SeeSaw is in the process of being set up but it will take a few weeks to go live, we will send these login details to you in the coming weeks. This will be particularly good to share phonics sessions and group teaching work in a more accessible way for our younger pupils. In the meantime, all your child's learning will continue to be uploaded via the school website. Staff report that you are doing a wonderful job embracing the teaching of phonics at home – well done.

Learning at home/school

I would like to celebrate pupils learning both at home and at school, so I am going to **'TRY'** to live stream some 'Golden Book Celebration Assemblies', via Teams. I plan to do two separate celebrations, one for EYFS/KS1 pupils and one KS2 pupils each week. Next week, I will text you all a date and time. I would like everyone to share both in school and at home all the great things pupils are doing, but to do this I need to ask for your help:

- Please can let the teachers know in their weekly phone call if your child has done something wonderful
- Please feel free to send an email detailing something great your child has done at home
- Please let teachers know via Teams of anything you are particularly proud of, which your child has done at home
- Please ring the office with a glowing 'proud parent' moment I can share with everyone

I would then like to use these wonderful examples of our pupils shining either at home or at school to share with everyone via our new 'Golden Book Celebration Assembly' online via Teams with the whole school family. Teachers in school will also contribute examples of the pupils currently attending school.

I am not going to lie and say this online gathering will be easy and all work perfectly first time, so I ask for your patience, but I really look forward to celebrating your children's accomplishments, both academic and personal, together.

Packs of resources to support home learning

To support your child's home learning, every class teacher has produced a pack of resources to support your child at home including your child's Teams login. I am sure you will have seen how the weather, ice and snow has conspired against us so that not all of the packs have been delivered. I have really appreciated how many have been collected, thank you very much. We will, weather dependent, try and deliver all the remaining ones out on Monday and Tuesday next week.

FSM

The school office has ordered vouchers for all of our families, and they will be sent out as soon as they arrive. Each FSM pupil will get the government allowance of £15 per child per week. This may well come out in staged for the first two weeks as whilst we were waiting for

a final decision on amounts I felt it important to get something out so the first vouchers will be £12 per child per week, but the back dated top up will come out next week.

Reception Place Application (Sept 2021)

The deadline is TODAY, to apply for a place for your child to start Reception in Sept 2021, is fast approaching. www.newcastle.gov.uk Please pass the word around to all your friends and families as we do not want anyone who would like to apply to miss the deadline.

And finally,

Of course we want all of our children back in school as soon as possible, so to help us do this, please follow all the government rules and minimize all of your contacts with other people at all times.

I continue to keep you and all of your families in my thoughts and prayers during this challenging time, and I look forward to welcoming you all back into school as soon as it is safe and practicable to do so.

Best wishes,

A D Thorpe

Mrs A. D. Thorpe
Head teacher