



NEWSLETTER

We are growing together on our journey of achievement with Jesus in our hearts, heads and hands.

www.stjosephsbracknell.co.uk

22nd January 2021

Dear Parents,

I am very happy to report to you that we have had no positive case (within the infectious period) at school and hence all class bubbles have remained open. From next week, our staff will each carry out a Lateral Flow Test twice weekly. This will enable us to quickly identify any asymptomatic COVID 19 cases amongst the adults. These tests will give us an added measure to help us to keep all children and adults at school safe.

We are now into our third week of remote learning. It does seem longer than two weeks as we have achieved so much over since the start of term. I do hope that you have all been able to juggle your work commitments with the home learning for the children and are all managing to keep safe and well.

The children in school are experiencing the exact same learning as those children at home. In school, our Teaching Assistants are allocated to each class bubble to oversee the completion of the work set by the class teacher. The class teachers spend most of their time preparing, delivering & recording lessons as well as giving regular feedback to all children.

We thank all the parents for collecting their child's books and hopefully this will make home learning slightly easier. We also sent home reading books, please supplement this through the Oxford Reading Tree online collection of reading books. The teachers do monitor the children's reading by viewing the children's participation on Reading Buddies. We do realise that many children access other reading materials so please just explain this to your class teacher if there is a query.

The teachers have been very pleased with the engagement of the children working at home and have loved seeing the fabulous work that they have produced. The teachers are trialling many different ways of delivering feedback to the children:

- Live daily session
- Live subject lessons
- Chat function
- Assignments on MSTEAMS
- 1-1 MSTEAMS catch ups i.e., reading
- Group MSTEAMS catch ups/lessons (i.e., reading groups in Y1/EYFS)

Last week the school experienced a loss of connectivity with our Wi-Fi. We want to update Wi-Fi and this will be our next fund raising project.

At present we are trialling different class timetables and strategies to reduce demand on the Wi-Fi to improve its efficiency. Please bear with us during this frustrating time – I can assure you our teachers are finding it more upsetting and frustrating than the rest of us. I cannot promise that this issue will be resolved in the near future, but we are doing all in our power to lessen its impact.

Key Worker Children: As I said in last week's newsletter, we have been inundated by requests for places in school during this lockdown – many, many more than in Lockdown 1. Our dual priority here is to keep all staff and children on site as safe as possible and also to ensure that the remote learning remains of a high quality and is effective and viable for all parties. We will therefore, if we are oversubscribed, need to prioritise the waiting list using the criteria specified below:

We will be using the following criteria to prioritise where places should be allocated:

1. Vulnerable Children
2. Children with an Educational Health Care Plan (& SEND)
3. Looked After Children / Previously LAC
4. Children who are eligible for Free School Meals
5. Pupil Premium Children

6. Health & Social Care Critical Key Worker – both parents
7. Health & Social Care Critical Key Worker – one parent
8. Education & Child Care
9. Other Critical Workers
10. Request from parents for school to consider their circumstances.

As always, the message from the Government and the school is that if you are able to keep your child at home day you should do so. This way, we will hopefully be able to provide cover for those parents who really need it and help slow down the rapid spread of the virus at the same time.

Parents 'Catch Up'/Parents' Evening: This term we are going to trial having Catch-Ups with all parents on MSTEAMS/phone during the week of 1st February. The meetings will be held from 8.30am – 3pm and each child will be given a 10 minute slot. More information and booking form will be sent home on Monday via Parent Mail.

Remote Education Questionnaire: To reflect further on our provision, please complete the short questionnaire that was sent out today by Parent Mail. We would like to view our provision from a parental perspective in an effort to see if we could further improve.

Building Fund: Reminder that we will be sending out a request for all parents to contribute to the diocesan building fund (£10.50 per term).

Most parents decide to send their children to a Catholic school because they know that their child will be educated in a Catholic environment.

The quality of our schools has also been recognised by the Government and they have been granted 'voluntary aided' status. What this means is that, although the schools are in the state system, we can retain our traditions and organise the schools on the basis of the teachings of the Church. *In return, however, we are required by law to raise 10% of the cost of developing and maintaining the school buildings.*

Parents are therefore asked to contribute to the upkeep of the St Joseph's through the School Building Fund each year so that the buildings and classrooms look smart and fit for purpose.

School Car Park: A polite reminder that, even during this relatively quiet time for the school in terms of traffic, no parents should drive onto the school site except in an emergency.

School Cleaner Required: St. Joseph's School is seeking to recruit as soon as possible a reliable and hardworking Cleaner to join our small site maintenance team to maintain a high standard of cleanliness in all areas of the school. This job will be physically demanding. Duties will include vacuuming, dusting, mopping and cleaning of washroom areas, fixtures and fittings.

The successful applicant will need to show a good practical attitude and work beside other colleagues in a flexible and cooperative way.

Previous cleaning experience with a good understanding of cleaning chemicals and equipment would be an advantage but is not essential.

The contract is term time only with 5 INSET days but there will be some opportunities for additional hours for deep cleans during the school holidays.

Salary; £9.95 per hour.

Job Type: 15 hours a week: daily hours 4.30pm – 7.30pm

Closing date: Monday 8th February 2021 12 noon.

We reserve the right to close this vacancy once a sufficient number of applications has been received.

Interviews: w/c 8th February 2021

Contact details Liz Cotten, School Business Manager. Applications to be sent to l.cotten@stjosephsbracknell.co.uk

Our school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff to share this commitment. We follow safer recruitment practice and appointments are subject to a satisfactory DBS clearance and references.

Celebration of Achievements: Well done to Akhil who successfully achieved his grade 2 in piano. Well done!



Thank you to all those of you who have taken the time to send us e-mails of support or to acknowledge and praise the hard work of the staff of the school. It is always a pleasure to forward these to the diligent and dedicated staff team here at school.

Finally, I absolutely understand how difficult this time must be for many of you struggling at home with the demands of your jobs and the pressure of coping with the children's home learning. As I said last week, please do try not to stress or worry too much about the children's learning. Whilst it is important that they read daily and do some writing and number practice, the piece below "What If....?" that I came across on social media earlier this week makes some very valid observations that will hopefully help put your minds at rest.

What if?

Rhian Keane

If they cancel the rest of the school year, many people are concerned about students falling behind because of this. Yes, they may fall behind when it comes to classroom education...but fall behind who ?

BUT WHAT IF

*What if instead of falling "behind", this group of kids are **ADVANCED** because of this? Hear me out.*

What if they have more empathy, they enjoy family connection, they can be more creative and entertain themselves, they love to read, and they love to express themselves in writing.

What if they enjoy the simple things, like their own garden and sitting near a window in the quiet?

What if they notice the birds and the dates the different flowers emerge, and the calming renewal of a gentle rain shower?

What if this generation are the ones to learn to cook, organize their space, do their laundry, and keep a well-run home?

What if they learn to ride a bike, play a board game, do simple crafts, learn to bake, climb a tree, play without a screen?

What if they learn to understand the value of money, what's important and to live with less?

What if they learn to plan shopping trips and meals at home?

What if they learn the value of eating together as a family and finding the good to share in the small delights of the everyday?

What if they learn to just be, to be more resilient, to be content?

What if they are the ones to place great value on our teachers and educational professionals, librarians, public servants and the previously invisible essential support workers like truck drivers, grocers, logistics, and health care workers and their supporting staff, just to name a few of the millions taking care of us right now while we are sheltered in place?

What if among these children, a great leader emerges who had the benefit of a slower pace and a simpler life to truly learn what really matters in this life?

*What if they are **AHEAD**?*

As always, please do contact us if you are really struggling in any way, or know of someone else who is, and we will do our very best to help if we possibly can.

Do have a lovely weekend!

Stay home and stay safe!

God Bless

Mrs. J. Dunlop