

St Mary's at Home

Friday 15th May 2020

Extending In-School Provision

Since I wrote to you all earlier in the week, regarding the Government's announcement on Sunday 10th May 2020 about their plans for schools to extend in-school provision for more children over the coming weeks, much has taken place. I have attended a number of meetings with headteachers from all phases of education and from across the local area, Denary and Diocese. The Government have released and amended a large number of guidance documents over the last few days. The unions representing headteachers, teachers and support staff are very actively involved in discussion with the DfE in order to address a number of matters of concern for their members. East Sussex and the Diocese have also sent correspondence regarding extending school provision. A lot of conversations and discussions have taken place and a great deal of thinking has gone on.

At the current time the plans as to how St Mary's School moves forward are in the early stages of development and there is a vast amount to be considered and to be prepared. Therefore I am not yet at a stage where I am able to present a precise plan to you or a clear picture of how the school will operate in the coming weeks and months. What has become apparent over the course of the week is that, as always, the decisions we make must hold the best interests of the children, staff and wider community at the heart of them. Therefore, it will be necessary to take extra care in reviewing Government guidance and applying it fairly to all the children in our school community. It is also very important to me that however we proceed, we must do so in as safe a way as is possible, and so caution and care will be applied at all points in the planning stages and during a phased return of more children to school.

I have sent out a letter today asking for all parents/carers who hold 'key worker' status to declare this as soon as possible so that I have a very clear idea of the numbers of children who have first entitlement to any in-school provision offered. This information will help me to review the capacity the school has for extending provision.

Whilst I have been very busy this week considering how the school can safely and effectively extend in-school provision, I am acutely aware that you, as parents/carers, will also have many concerns, queries and questions. Please rest assured that I will do my best to share the school's plan and the rationale for the plan with you as soon as possible.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to our whole school community.

Have a lovely weekend and enjoy the sunshine.

Liz Hills

(Acting Headteacher)

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DONATION TO THE SCHOOL

Thank you so much to Josh T (Blue Class) who has made a bird feeder for the school's wildlife area. He made a bird feeding stand, with his dad, for his own back garden a couple of weeks ago and then offered to make a bird feeder for the school. It was agreed that this would be a great addition to the school's wildlife area so staff gratefully took Josh up on his offer. He has then worked really hard with his dad to make two more bird feeders, one which he has kindly decided to donate to the school and one for Mrs Lawlor. On behalf of the St Mary's School birds—thank you Josh!



OUR GENEROUS COMMUNITY—CONGRATULATIONS!

Well done to Olivia H (Orange Class) who has been busy raising funds for the NHS this week. Olivia has raised £150 so far with her front garden boot sale selling clothes, shoes, pictures, films, games and other items. Well done Olivia—we are so proud of you for your act of charity.



Unbelievable!!!

The Staff of St Mary's could not believe their eyes on Monday when they saw the incredible collection of gifts and tokens of appreciation, collected by Jenni Andrews, from across the whole school community—cakes, chocolate, candles, rainbows, masks, toiletries, wine, flowers, etc. It really was an impressive sight and quite humbling to receive. Thank you to all those who contributed—the staff are incredibly grateful and touch by your kindness and generosity. Thank you.

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Next week is **Mental Health Awareness Week**; the Mental Health Foundation and Place2Be have chosen kindness as their theme. They will be focusing on the power and potential of kindness. The charities have chosen kindness because it strengthens relationships and deepens the sense of community and is vital for individual and collective mental health. For millennia, cultures across the World have recognised that kindness is something that all human beings need to experience and practise to be fully alive.

Amidst the tragedies and trauma of the coronavirus pandemic, we have witnessed many instances of people's kindness towards each other, for example in Colonel Tom Moore and the weekly Clap for NHS and Carers. And, I believe, that nowhere has this been more evident than in the St Mary's community. There have been countless examples of people showing kindness to each other in a wide variety of ways. It is perhaps even more important that we hang on to this as we enter a new and potentially difficult phase of the coronavirus pandemic, whilst we continue to cope with and recover from our shared experience. The social and psychological impacts are likely to outlast the physical symptoms of Covid-19.

Kindness is defined as doing something for yourself and others which is motivated by a genuine wish to make a positive difference. We know from research that kindness and mental health are deeply connected; it creates a sense of belonging. It helps reduce stress, cure isolation, deepen relationships and boost self-esteem. It can even help improve confidence and optimism. Showing kindness takes courage because we risk looking foolish or being taken advantage of, which can sometimes be why we back down from displaying it to others. Next week, let's all take the opportunity to celebrate acts of kindness and the benefits for both givers and receivers, as well as to explore the sort of society we would like to come about as a result of the pandemic. We have the chance to build communities that value good mental health, for all of us, but especially for those who are most vulnerable.

During Mental Health Awareness Week (18th – 24th May 2020), children can choose from specific activities that will be posted on our Home School page. Activities which will help get them thinking about how kindness can be an inspiration to us all. At the end of the week, we will recognise pupils' acts of kindness with a certificate specifically designed for the week.

Karen Seal (Inclusion Manager)



Mass and Prayers

Are you struggling to find a way to successfully pray and celebrate mass with your families during the lockdown period? Why not take a few moments to read this article (written from a very real perspective) about how to celebrate mass with children at home. It may provide food for thought.

<https://www.osvnews.com/2020/04/01/how-families-can-make-the-most-of-mass-at-home/>

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School leaders, teachers and support staff have been asked to go to great lengths to help this country step up to tackle coronavirus, thank you.

We are supporting **Thank a Teacher Day** on 20th May to make sure everyone working in schools and education settings is recognised for the huge contribution they have made.

Join us as we celebrate everyone making a difference in education, not only now, during these unprecedented times, but every day of the year.

[Find out how to get involved.](#)

The Thank a Teacher campaign is being led by the Teaching Awards Trust, in partnership with the DfE.

Support for Parents: a message from the Department for Education

We understand this is a challenging time for parents, many of whom are now supporting their children's learning at home or may have questions about their children potentially returning to school.

We have developed the following guidance and resources for parents to support them at this time:

[Q&A](#) which answers key questions parents may have

[Guidance for parents on phased reopening of education settings](#)

[Guidance for parents on supporting learning at home for early years and primary age children](#)

List of [online resources](#) to support children's development



Department
for Education

Keeping Fit and Active

Recommended by one of our parents, please check out the 'funetics' Home School Pack for worksheets, activity cards, fun games and information on the history and heroes of sport.

<https://funetics.co.uk/for-parents/funetics-home/>



funetics
run + jump + throw

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IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO JOIN IN THE FUN

St Mary's: your school needs you! Specsavers have teamed up with Active Sussex to create a virtual school sports competition!

We know that school life might be a little bit different at the moment, but you can still compete to be Sussex champions in the Specsavers 'Virtual' Sussex School Games 2020.

Take part alongside your friends and teammates from school, win medals, trophies and prizes, and strive to be the very best that you can in this very special, virtual competition.

Each Monday morning during the Summer Term, a new sport will be launched, made up of four physical or technical sporting personal challenges, which can be done from the living room, garden or school.

Throughout the week you can practice, train and improve, before submitting your best scores in each challenge on <http://www.sussexschoolgames.co.uk/> ahead of the Friday deadline (12pm midday). Your score will be added to your school total, meaning that you can be part of your school team, and compete against all of the other schools in the county.

All your parents have to do to start your competition is sign up at this link and then submitting your scores each week:

[https://activesussex.us19.list-manage.com/subscribe?
u=7e3010e972326c6e37223b895&id=f3b11a2b7c](https://activesussex.us19.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=7e3010e972326c6e37223b895&id=f3b11a2b7c)

There are even individual prizes to give away for creativity, resilience and many more sporting values! You can share your training videos on Facebook or Twitter using the hashtag #SussexSchGames.

So what are you waiting for St Mary's? Get competing!

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HM Government

AT HOME SHOULDN'T MEAN AT RISK OF DOMESTIC ABUSE



If you are controlled or physically, sexually, economically or emotionally abused by a partner, ex-partner or family member, this is domestic abuse. Household isolation rules do not apply.

Police and support services remain available.

If you are in immediate danger, or suspect someone else is, call 999.

If you're worried you, or someone you know, may be experiencing domestic abuse:



The Portal - Domestic or sexual abuse and violence can happen to anyone. You are not alone. We understand, and we believe you. Contact the Portal:

0300 323 9985

If you need to flee your home because of domestic abuse:



For women and children.
Against domestic violence.

The Freephone 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline run by Refuge offers support for women:

0808 2000 247

#YOUARENOTALONE

Find more support at
www.safeineastsussex.org.uk/domestic-abuse-help