

St Mary's at Home

Friday 24th April 2020

As we come to the end of the first week of term five I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate some very important messages to you:

- You are all doing an amazing job during this difficult time—you may not feel like you are but all our children are safe and well and for the staff of St Mary's this is the most important thing.*
- You are all doing an amazing job supporting your children's learning in your Home Schools—your children may not be completing all the work set by their teachers but that is absolutely fine. Your children will be learning so many other things right now which will help them to develop and thrive. Loading the dishwasher, hanging out washing, baking a cake, managing their emotions, playing with each other, taking turns, thinking of others, helping one another, tidying up, etc. are all important lessons to learn!*
- You are all struggling in your own ways—it would be very strange if you weren't. It is normal for your children to feel scared, confused, angry, frustrated, lonely, annoyed, etc. and it is normal for these emotions to manifest themselves in lots of ways, including tantrums. It is normal for you to feel this way too and I am sure you may have had some tantrums of your own! Be patient and understanding with each other. Recognise the pressure your own family is under and help and support each other, remembering to forgive one another too when things go wrong.*
- You are best advised not to compare your situation with that of anyone else—so if you are having a tricky day avoid social media sites where other people's posts shout, 'We've got this!' People post about the positives, not the negatives. So remember EVERYONE is coping differently depending on their own unique situation and comparing yourself to others is not helpful at a time like this. You must do what is right for your own family.*
- No children are 'behind' - I have told you all this already but I want to reiterate a very clear message on this. The staff at St Mary's want you to do the very best job you can, under the current circumstances, to keep your family safe and well. The best thing you can do for us is to ensure that when your children return to school they are in the best possible physical and mental health that they can be and that they have continued to develop and learn (in lots of ways which are not all academic). We will address the 'academic learning' once the children come back to us but first we will work hard to ensure that they all feel safe in our school and are ready to learn with us again. Your most important job is to keep your children safe and well.*
- You are not alone—the staff at St Mary's are working hard to support the community they serve. It is a challenging time for us all but please do not hesitate to reach out to us if you need to. We are here for your children and for you.*

Stay safe and well everyone. You all remain in our prayers.

Liz Hills (Acting Headteacher)

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Never Underestimate How Wonderful Children and Young People Are!

As a teacher with over 20 years experience there are still times when I am humbled by the amazing things children and young people do. This week I have been impressed by the acts of kindness, courage and generosity shown by three wonderful pupils of St Mary's School. I have acknowledged these children with Headteacher Awards in this week's Celebration Assembly but I wanted to take this opportunity to share a little bit about the stories that lie behind the special certificates awarded this week. I am sure that you too will be impressed by these children's acts. Liz Hills (Acting Headteacher)

Brilliant Buddy

Leo in Violet Class realised this week that his Red Class buddy may not see him again if the school does not re-open before the end of the school year and he was very upset by this possibility. He discussed the situation with his Mum and came up with the idea of making a video for his buddy and sending it to her. It was a really fantastic and fun way for Leo and his buddy to keep in touch and a great opportunity for Leo to introduce his new puppy. Leo's buddy's Mum contacted me to tell me about the wonderful video Leo had made and the massively positive impact it has had on her daughter. I am so impressed by Leo's concern for his buddy and how they are coping in the lockdown situation, his creative approach to keeping in contact and the consideration and responsibility he has shown towards his buddy. What a great story of a young man's thoughtfulness and care. Thank you Leo.

Emergency Action!!!

This story is about Maisie in Indigo Class who showed incredible courage in a very frightening situation. Maisie's Mum unfortunately slipped whilst coming down the stairs in their home and was knocked unconscious. Maisie acted straight away and went to the pharmacy just below where she lives to get help. She explained the situation to the pharmacist who came back with her to help. Whilst the pharmacist was helping Maisie's Mum, Maisie contacted her Grandmother to come over. I know from speaking to Maisie's Mum that she was very scared at the time but she was able to put her fears to one side in order to act in a safe and sensible way to get help straight away. What an incredibly sensible act of bravery in a very difficult situation. Well done Maisie—you are a star!

Fantastic Fundraising

A really big well done goes out to Olivia in Violet Class who has been making rainbows for people to provide a little ray of joy at this difficult time. Olivia has been offering the rainbows to people passing by her house in return for a donation to support the NHS at the challenging time. So far Olivia's efforts have resulted in her raising over £200. What an incredible achievement and wonderful act of charity in support of such

a worthy cause. Olivia I am so proud of your fundraising efforts and the commitment you have shown in your endeavours. Well done!



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Free School Meals

If your child is entitled to free school meals please do not forget that they are entitled to a picnic lunch each day during the school week. If you have not yet taken up this offer, please note that you can opt in at any time. Please contact Liz Hills directly: head@stmarysrc.e-sussex.sch.uk



If you have opted into the picnic lunches please ensure you send Liz Hills your child/children's orders for the coming week by noon on Sunday. The filling choices are: ham, cheese or tuna.

I am well aware that people's financial situations may change over the coming weeks and months. Please ensure that you consider the option of applying for free school meals for your child/children should your financial situation become more challenging. Please click on the following link for more information about the criteria and application process:

<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/educationandlearning/schools/school-life/meals/free/>

Mass and Prayers

We hope you have had an opportunity to attend mass remotely at some point over the Easter period—there are so many amazing opportunities at the moment to join with others to attend mass all over the world. This weekend why not take a tour of some of the most impressive Catholic Cathedrals and Churches from across the world. This is a short but inspiring and interesting film that will take you to places you might visit one day:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OhnydLHX_u4

AUTISM

For information, advice and resources to support family members with autism during the lockdown period please check out the National Autistic Societies website:

<https://www.autism.org.uk/>

What if I'm worried about my child or another child?

If you're finding it hard at home with your child and are struggling to cope, call [Family Lives](https://www.familylives.org.uk/) for free, confidential advice on **0808 800 2222**.

If you're worried about the safety of another child in our community, contact the St Mary's Safeguarding Team: dsl@stmarysrc.e-sussex.sch.uk OR head@stmarysrc.e-sussex.sch.uk or call the [NSPCC](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/) on **0808 800 5000**. Or call the police on **999** if you think a child is in immediate danger.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

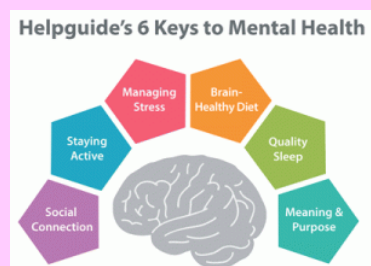
One of the most important issues to consider at the current time is working to ensure your own and your children's physical and mental health is looked after carefully. A number of organisations are working hard to support children, young people and parents/carers to maintain positive mental health and wellbeing. Check out the links below for resources to support children & young people's mental health and wellbeing.

* The DfE has signposted to [resources on supporting and promoting mental wellbeing](#) to help children to learn at home and has worked with the BBC to develop an online educational package, which includes [wellbeing content via BBC Bitesize](#).

* Public Health England has updated resources and provided advice in the context of the pandemic, including the world-leading [Every Mind Matters](#) platform, [Rise Above](#) for young people, which includes RSHE lesson plans for schools, and [guidance on mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic for adults](#) and on [supporting children and young people](#).

* Health Education England's educational mental health platform, [MindEd](#), contains resources for parents and professionals on children and young people's mental health. These have been updated in light of the pandemic.

This information is also [available on Czone](#).



Gratitude Jar



Here is a lovely idea shared with Mrs Hills by one of our parents this week. How about a gratitude jar? The idea is really simple. Find an old jar (decorate it if you want to) and each day get everyone in your family to write down something they are grateful for that day. Put everyone's piece of paper in the jar and when this strange time is over open the jar and share the reasons why you were all grateful. A lovely way to find positives in each and every day and something to help focus the mind back once life returns to 'normal' and we get so swept up in the business of life that we forget about the simple, but important things.

Do you need help and support?

Please do not forget that the school is still operational and there are people who can offer you help and support at this time. If you are experiencing any kind of difficulties and need some help, please contact your child's class teacher/s or Liz Hills (Acting Headteacher):

head@stmarysrc.e-sussex.sch.uk

We will do all we can to support you and your family through this period of national lockdown.

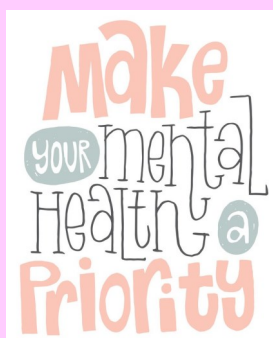
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MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES IN EAST SUSSEX

Please click on the following link to access the East Sussex Mental Health Directory. Here you will find links to many agencies who can offer mental health support.

<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/socialcare/healthadvice/mental-health/directory/services/>



Fancy a Different Workout?

These fun daily sessions come recommended by one of our parents who has been doing them with their children. All the sessions are accessible on YouTube for free and are run by Phil Lear who owns VMA Fitness Centre in town and is trained in children's fitness.

Here is the link to the page: <https://www.youtube.com/user/visiontkd>

Alternatively, have a look at the Facebook group to find out more: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/220830545665814/?ref=share>



CONGRATULATIONS!!!

We are delighted to announce that Mrs Piper, her husband and son welcomed a new addition to their family over the Easter holidays. Mrs Piper's beautiful baby boy can be seen in the photo message sent out to all children at the start of the week. We send the Piper family our love and prayers at this very special time.

On the Move

Despite the lockdown situation, Mrs White and her family have moved house today. It has been a long and difficult process in the current situation and so we would like to extend our best wishes to the White family and wish them every happiness in their new home. Please can children and parents/carers in Indigo Class be mindful that it might take Mrs White a little while to regain internet access and wait until she makes contact with you at some point next week, before contacting her. If you

have any concerns, questions or queries regarding your child or their work, please contact the Year Six teaching team for the time being: Miss Ticehurst (Mon—Thurs) and Miss Russell (Fri). If you need to make urgent contact with the school please contact Liz Hills: head@stmarysrc.e-sussex.sch.uk



NEW BEGINNINGS

NEW MEMORIES

New Home