



St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School
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2nd April 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you are all keeping well, both physically and mentally during these times of uncertainty. In such stressful and rapidly changing times, I wanted to offer some support and encouragement to our parents and carers.

Whilst we still do not know how long schools will be shut, we appreciate that even in the 10 days we have been closed so far, learning and children's leisure time have transformed dramatically. We fully appreciate that learning at home is not the same as in the classroom and we do not want you to be feeling stressed, overwhelmed and under pressure by the work we are sending home for your children. Children need time to read, exercise and pursue their hobbies and activities to maintain their mental health and we do not expect children to work beyond the end of the school day.

Please remember:

1) This is not home-schooling. You did not choose to home school or become your child's teacher. This is an unprecedented emergency situation impacting the whole world. The current situation is at best, distance learning or crisis learning. In reality, it is to stop the spread of Covid -19.

2) It is going to be very difficult for parents and carers to facilitate distance learning with a primary aged child and work from home at the same time. You can certainly have activities where your child learns, but your focus must be your job, and survival.

We realise schooling at home can be very challenging and difficult. Therefore, over the Easter holidays, we will not be setting any formal, home schooling activities. New class time tables and activities will be emailed to you shortly. Please do not start the activities until after Easter, week commencing 20th April.

You may have many worries about home schooling. Hopefully, the following scenarios and responses will answer any concerns you may have

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: You have sent home lots of work. How am I supposed to get through it all?

Your child might not get through everything, please do not worry. You could also carry on with previous work set if you feel your child has not quite grasped the work they have been doing and work may flow from one day into the next or from week to week if it hasn't been completed. Every two weeks, we are adding work to do at home but remember it is not a race or a competition.

Q: A child in my child's class has completed everything and we have barely started. Will my child fall behind?

Again, do not worry. Even if everything were equal in terms of support, time spent, number of

children in the home etc. (which it is not) children learn at different rates. In your child's class there is a wide range of needs and all children work at different paces and require different support.

Q: How can I get three different lots of work done with three different children of different ages?

You can't, stop trying. If they are old enough, try to get them to do little bits independently. The teachers are trying to set tasks that children can tackle on their own. Otherwise try to do something they can all engage with, reading a story together, some free writing, doing a puzzle, baking etc.

Q: Am I doing all that I can to help my child?

You are doing enough. You are loving your children and supporting them through a difficult time. Look after yourselves too. Minimising stress is absolutely vital in a time like this for mental health.

I have seen some wonderful examples of craft projects completed at home and I would like to celebrate children's learning with a gallery.

Please send me photographs of any great learning whether it is art work, a lovely cake, some great writing or a maths problem to news@stjosephs775.herts.sch.uk . I will be updating the website and these can also be added to our Twitter page.

Please follow us on twitter for news about our school. Our twitter address is @stjosephs775

Home Learning

We now have a new section on the website that is being updated to help support you with your child's learning at home.

Please click on the 'pupils' tab at the top of the homepage and select 'Covid-19 Home Learning'.
<http://stjosephs775.herts.sch.uk/pupils/class-areas>

Please do not forget the pupils have access to a range of online learning sites. The teachers will also set activities for the children to complete and the children can also go online and select activities and games to play.

Education City – All year groups from Nursery up to Year 6

The children can complete English, Maths, Science and Computing activities on this site.

www.educationcity.com

Readingeggs

The children can complete reading, comprehension, phonics and spelling tasks on this site.

www.readingeggs.co.uk

My Maths – All year groups from Year 1 to Year 6

The children can complete Maths lessons and homework tasks. There are also booster activities and games that the children can play.

www.mymaths.co.uk

Times Tables Rock Stars – All year groups from Year 1 to Year 6

The children can practise learning their times tables to music.

www.ttrockstars.com





Easter Bonnets

Next week, there will be a Easter Bonnet gallery. All children are welcome to participate. Please send photographs of your children wearing their Easter Bonnets and we will upload them to our twitter account.



St George's Non Uniform Day

On Thursday 23rd April, there will be a non-uniform day (at home) to celebrate St George's Day.

St George was a brave Roman soldier who protested against the Romans' torture of Christians and died for his beliefs. He is also the Patron Saint of England. The children can wear red, white or blue on this day. Please send any photographs of you all celebrating St George's day to news@stjosephs775.herts.sch.uk

Support for Families

Due to the uncertainty surrounding the length of closure and in an effort to support our families, please see a list of support agencies and contact details should you need them in the challenging times ahead.

1. Financial Advice and Support

Organisation	Explanation	Contact Information
Caritas Westminster-Caritas Food Collective	Caritas Food Collective has three key aims: to expand direct food relief across the diocese, to support people to become more food secure through signposting and skills training, and to develop education and advocacy across the diocese so together we can tackle the issues underlying the problem of food poverty.	https://www.caritaswestminster.org.uk/caritas-food-collective-918.php
Catholic Children's Society-Crisis Fund	The Crisis Fund provides immediate financial support for families facing a crisis in their lives. Parish Priests and Head teachers can apply to this fund on behalf of a family and we will respond within 24 hours. This support can make a huge difference to families in desperate situations when they have nowhere else to turn.	https://www.cathchild.org.uk/crisis-fund/
Citizens Advice Bureau	Advice and support for parents on low incomes.	https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/help-if-on-a-low-income/
Early Help Hubs/Social Services	All local authorities have advice and support for families experiencing difficulties.	https://directory.hertfordshire.gov.uk/categories/29
Government Support for Businesses	Support for struggling businesses.	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses
Government Support for the Unemployed	Support for unemployed.	https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit

Government Support for the Self Employed	Support for self employed.	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme
Local Authority– Grants, Benefits and Crisis Funds	Use the web link to find your local authority where you can access services and seek advice on potential grants, benefits and funds.	https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council
The Money Advice Service	Free impartial advice on money issues by the Government.	https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/coronavirus-what-it-means-for-you
National Debt Line	A national helpline and advisory service giving free, impartial and confidential debt advice.	https://www.nationaldebtline.org/EW/factsheets/Pages/coronavirus-advice-and-support/help-and-advice.aspx
St Vincent De Paul (SVP)- Community Support Projects	<p>What the SVP can provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing support for you. • Some easy-to-implement strategies which will be meaningful for those who are facing various forms of poverty at this time. • A source of inspiration, comfort and motivation for your day. • Crucial guidance on matters of policy, legislation and safeguarding to ensure that both you and those you support might be protected. • Prayers for you and your Conference. 	https://www.svp.org.uk/community-support-projects
The Trussel Trust – Food Banks	The website provides useful information on locating your local Foodbank and how you can access emergency help.	https://www.trusselltrust.org/
Turn2us	<p>Turn2us is a national charity providing practical help to people who are struggling financially.</p> <p>Turn2us helps people in financial need gain access to welfare benefits, charitable grants and other financial help – online, by phone and face to face through our partner organisations.</p>	https://www.turn2us.org.uk/

E-Safety & Keeping Children Safe Advice

To help your children use the internet safely, please read the official advice at:
http://stjosephs775.herts.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/smart_parental_leaflet.pdf

Organisation	Explanation	Contact Information
CEOP	Worried about online abuse.	https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/
Internet Matters	E-Safety tips for parents of primary and secondary children.	https://www.internetmatters.org
Parent Info	Parent info provides support and advice to parents.	https://parentinfo.org/articles/all
National Online Safety	Top tips for online learning.	https://nationalonlinesafety.com/guides/10-top-tips-remote-learning-for-children
NSPCC	Support and tips to keep your children safe.	https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/
Thinkuknow	E-Safety tips for parents of primary and secondary children.	https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/

Support for Children and Young People with Additional Needs

Managing the transition to home schooling is a difficult task. Many children may be experiencing a wide range of emotions during this transition, from fear and anxiety to excitement and enthusiasm. Even positive emotions can be unsettling to children.

The following suggestions are designed to make the transition as smooth as possible for everyone.

One of the best ways to make the transition to learning at home is to establish routines as soon as possible.

Ideas:

- Copy the school timetable so your child is familiar with the structure of the learning day.
- Include similar break times and meal-times (if possible and/or appropriate).
- Work with your child (see below) to replicate school. This can be made fun and playful, such as using a bell or timer to signify lesson end or time for a break.
- Work with your child to create a 'school space'. If space is limited, identify a 'school chair' or 'school space' to replicate the physical environment where learning takes place.
- You may need to practice new routines and create a visual timetable.
<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/class-management/daily-routine/visual-timetable>
- Find ways for you and your child to use technology to meet up with others.

This is a useful video about designing a work space for children who are easily distracted:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bsGrd1RCys>

You may also find the websites listed below very helpful.

Organisation	Explanation	Contact Information
The Autism Educator	Social Story.	https://theautismeducator.ie/wpcontent/upload

		s/2020/03/The-CoronaVirus-Free-Printable-Updated-2-TheAutism-Educator-.pdf
Autism Trust	This toolkit from the Autism Education Trust is a summary of common issues surrounding transitions.	https://councilfordisablechildren.org.uk/help-resources/resources/transition-toolkit
Carol Gray	Social Story.	https://carolgraysocialstories.com/wpcontent/uploads/2020/03/Pandemicsand-the-Coronavirus.pdf
DSPL 9	Advice and Support.	http://dsplarea9.org.uk/
Dr Amelia Roberts UCL	Managing Transition to home schooling.	https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ie/departments-and-centres/centres/centre-inclusive-education/homeschooling-children-send/managing-transition-home-schooling
Hertfordshire Local Offer	The Local Offer lets parents and young people know what special educational needs and disabilities services are available in Hertfordshire, and who can access them.	https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/Local-Offer/TheHertfordshire-Local-Offer.aspx
Mencap	Advice and support.	https://www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/health/coronavirus

General Advice Support/Parenting Advice

Organisation	Explanation	Contact Information
Early Help Hubs/Social Services	All local authorities have advice and support for families experiencing difficulties.	https://directory.hertfordshire.gov.uk/categories/29
DSPL 9	Advice and support.	http://dsplarea9.org.uk/
Herts Domestic Abuse Helpline	Confidential free support.	https://hertsdomesticabusehelpline.org/
Family Action	Family Action works to tackle some of the most complex and difficult issues facing families today –	https://www.family-action.org.uk/what-we-

	including financial hardship, mental health problems, social isolation, learning disabilities, domestic abuse, or substance misuse and alcohol problems.	do/grants/
Families First Portal	Families First is available to all Hertfordshire families with children under 18 (25 if they have a learning need or disability).	https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/familiesfirst/familiesfirst.aspx
Family Fund	Family Fund is a charity supporting families with disabled or seriously ill children.	https://www.familyfund.org.uk/
Gingerbread	Charity supporting single parent families.	https://www.gingerbread.org.uk/coronavirus/
Grandparents Plus	Grandparents Plus is the only national charity (England and Wales) dedicated to supporting kinship carers -grandparents and other relatives raising children who are not able to live with their parents.	Call: 0300 123 7015 https://www.grandparentsplus.org.uk

Mental Health and Well Being Support

Isolation can be extremely challenging time for everyone. Below is a list of websites to support you during this stressful period.

Organisation	Explanation	Contact Information
Anxiety UK	Support for people suffering with anxiety.	www.anxietyuk.org.uk
Chat Health	This service is provided by the Hertfordshire Schools Nursing Service for young people aged 11-19. You will get a reply within 24 hours from an NHS School Nurse between 9:00am and 5:00pm, Monday to Friday (except bank holidays).	07480 636 050 – text service
Head Space App	Mindfulness for everyday.	https://www.headspace.com/
MindED	Information for adults supporting children with mental health.	https://www.minded.org.uk
No panic	Supporting anxiety disorders.	https://nopic.org.uk/contact-us/
NHS Mental Health APP	NHS Mental Health Online educational courses and resources which are accessible for service providers and adults/children suffering with mental health.	https://www.nhs.uk/app/library/category/mental-health/
Young Minds	Supporting children and young peoples emotional wellbeing and mental health. Support for children and young people.	Parents helpline: 08088025544 https://youngminds.org.uk/SUPPORT FOR ADULTS

Easter Services & Mass

This Easter will be very different for all of us. Please remember it is a time of hope and time to grow closer to God and renew your relationship with him.

You might be wondering how you are going to participate in our Easter Services and Mass during this lockdown period. You do not need to worry as now you can watch it all online at:

<http://www.churchservices.tv/westminster>

or

<https://catholicparishesofborehamwood.org/other-parishes-with-live-streaming/>

Commencing from Monday 6th April, school will be providing emergency childcare to accommodate vulnerable children and the children of key workers only. All Key Workers have been contacted. Therefore, if you have not received a telephone call regarding this matter, please do not send your children into school.

In line with the latest government guidelines, to further limit the spread of COVID-19, we ask that parents 'keep their children at home, wherever possible' as schools will remain open only for those children 'who absolutely need to attend'.

Please let your children know how much we are all missing them and that we can't wait to see them again in school, filling the classrooms, corridors and playground with fun and laughter.

Thank you for your continued support and have a great Easter.

Stay home and keep safe.

Linda Payne
Headteacher