



Mrs A D Thorpe
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Through following Jesus, we aim to be a caring, happy school, where everyone is valued and appreciated and can reach their true potential. We hope to act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly with our God.

16th December 2022

Dear Parents/carers,

Scripture of the week

"You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end" (Luke 1:31-33).

Holiday activities for families

Looking for **activities** for children and young people over the holidays? Scan the **QR code** to find out more.

If you or your child is eligible for **Free School Meals** look out for the **Best Winter Ever** logo

Newcastle's Best
WINTER EVER

children & families
NEWCASTLE

Please feel free to use this QR code to access some excellent information about holiday activities.



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Strep A – DfE has issued the following Guidance

Scarlet Fever and Group Strep A Infections

The Secretary of State for Education, Gillian Keegan, is closely monitoring the increased cases of Group A streptococcus (Strep A) and scarlet fever. As a Department for Education, they are working closely with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), who are leading on the response. UKHSA is reporting an increased number of cases of Group A streptococcus (Strep A) compared to normal at this time of year. There is no evidence that a new strain is circulating and the increase is most likely related to high amounts of circulating bacteria and social mixing.

What are scarlet fever and Strep A?

Scarlet fever is caused by bacteria called Group A streptococci (Strep A). The bacteria usually cause a mild infection that can be easily treated with antibiotics.

In very rare occasions, the bacteria can get into the bloodstream and cause an illness called invasive Group A strep (iGAS).

What are the symptoms of Strep A/scarlet fever?

Strep A infections can cause a range of symptoms that parents should be aware of, including:

- Sore throat
- Headache
- Fever
- A fine, pinkish or red body rash with a sandpapery feel
- On darker skin the rash can be more difficult to detect visually but will have a sandpapery feel

If a child becomes unwell with these symptoms, parents are advised to contact their GP practice or contact NHS 111 (which operates a 24/7 service) to seek advice. If a child has scarlet fever, they are advised to stay at home until at least 24 hours after the start of antibiotic treatment to avoid spreading the infection to others.

The Department for Education encourages all parents to trust their own judgement and if their child seems seriously unwell call 999 or go to A&E if:

- a child is having difficulty breathing – you may notice grunting noises or their tummy sucking under their ribs
- there are pauses when a child breathes
- a child's [skin, tongue or lips are blue](#)
- a child is floppy and will not wake up or stay awake.

If your child is diagnosed with Strep A then we ask that school is immediately informed, especially if your child is hospitalised for any period of time.

COVID

It has been brought to my attention that some parents believe other families are knowingly sending their children into school who have tested positive for COVID. Whilst testing is no longer mandatory and isolation is not enforceable, I would ask that if you have tested your

child and they are positive to keep them off school for 3 days. I appreciate your support with this matter, so that we can minimise the spread just before Christmas.

Advent Liturgies

The liturgies have been wonderful so far and from all the fabulous comments parents and grandparents have made as they have left, it has sounded like you have all loved it too. We are so proud of all of our children. The remaining ones are outlined below.

Class	Date	Time
Year Five Miss Dolphin	Monday 19 th December 2022	10:00am
Year Five Miss McMaster	Monday 19 th December 2022	2:00pm
Year Six Mr Allen	Wednesday 21 st December 2022	10:00am
Year Six Mrs Spencer / Mrs Black	Wednesday 21 st December 2022	2:00pm

Christmas Parties

We are inviting pupils to come and have some Christmas fun with their year groups dressed in any sort of party clothes that they are comfortable in.

Please could you send your child in with a small plate of party food so that they can enjoy it after the party games. Pupils will still have either the school dinner or the home packed lunch as normal.

Year Group	Date of Christmas Party – children can wear their own clothes
Nursery - Rainbows	Tuesday 20 th December
Nursery - Sunshine	Thursday 22 nd December
Reception	Wednesday 21 st December
Year One	Monday 19 th December
Year Two	Thursday 22 nd December
Year Three	Wednesday 21 st December
Year Four	Wednesday 21 st December
Year Five	Thursday 22 nd December
Year Six	Thursday 22 nd December

Annual Children's nativity procession

Father Martin is encouraging all families to join with St John Vianney Parish at the Church of the Holy Spirit at 4pm on Friday 23rd December to take part in a community religious celebration in church. Everyone is encouraged to meet at the Church of the Holy Nativity to take part in a joint service and celebration hosted at The Church of the Holy Spirit. It is a chance for both parishes to come together and celebrate Christmas in church together.

In response to EYFS parents asking to visit school more:

- **Christmas Crafts in Nursery**
 - Mrs Kingston has very kindly agreed to invite all parents or grandparents into school for a Festive stay and craft session with their children and enjoy a cup of

juice and a mince pie together on Wednesday 21st December 2022, Rainbows – 8:45am – 10:30am and Sunshine – 12:45pm – 2:30pm

- **Advance notice - Reception parents stay and cook**
 - In January, Mrs Duffy and Miss Rice will host a fun 'Cooking with your child session.' We hope that parent's or grandparent's will be able to come and share a fun morning with their child in school. As soon as the workshop leader confirms the date, we will let you know.

Uniform

I really appreciate your help and support around uniform compliance and we have worked hard to reduce the cost of buying all branded goods. However, a number of the older children have started to wear trainers to school. When asked why, they have said that parents think that the new poverty proofing school uniform policy allows for this. To be clear that whilst it says plain black shoes/trainers that does not mean black and white 'All-stars', white trainers or multi coloured football trainers. If there is an issue around financing black school shoes then please do not hesitate to contact school office and I will approach the church's SVP group to help out financially.

Almost new uniforms

There are still a large number of spare uniforms in school, please let us know if you would like any bagged up and sent home with your child. It would be a shame for them to be sat here if they could be of any use – we would be delighted to give them all away. You can send a confidential email to the office or speak in confidence to Mrs McDine, Mrs Thorpe or Mrs Meldrum at any time.

Car parking

Residents on Ashdale Crescent are again raising concerns about parental behaviour at drop off and collection time. Parents have parked in front of drive ways and are reportedly being abusive to residents. I would urge all of our parents and carers to be understanding and supportive of our local community and consider where they park. Father Martin has again offered the church carpark free to anyone who wants to use it and walk over to school. Residents have been advised that they should contact the police directly reporting any incidents and giving registration numbers.

Water bottles

It has been brought to my attention that pupils, particularly in UKS2, but not exclusively, are trying to persuade parents to buy £30-£40 'Air-up' water bottles. These expensive bottles are not appropriate for school as if they get lost or broken they are too expensive to replace. Please make sure you only send your child into school with an inexpensive named water bottle to use for a drink of water during the school day.

Reception Starters

<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/schools-learning-and-childcare/apply-school-place/applying-reception-places> Please be aware that the closing date for school starter applications is 15th January 2023. It is always best to use the above link and then you will have a secure log of your application process.

Advance warning of school closure

Due to the government announcing that Monday 8th May 2023 will be a bank holiday, school will be closed that day for all staff and pupils.

Christmas holidays

A quick reminder that school finishes at the end of the school day on Thursday 22nd December 2022 and then re-opens after the holidays on Monday 9th January 2023 at 8:45am.

Wellington Boots/Snow boots

Due to the challenging spell of cold weather we are having, if you would like to send in thick socks and boots alongside their school shoes, we would love to take every class out on the field next week. If you do not have boots, please do not go out and buy some, just send a second pair of shoes so that your child can change out of the cold wet ones when they come back inside. They will need to wrap up warmly in coats and gloves, but I am sure that they will all love a good run around in the fresh air and enjoy the cold on their cheeks! Different classes will go out on different days according to what they are doing, so if all children could bring them in every day, that would be amazing. We would like to finish the Christmas term off with a flourish!

We continue to keep all of our families in our thoughts and prayers during this time of Advent.

Best wishes,

A D Thorpe

Mrs A D Thorpe
Headteacher