



7th May 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I can hardly believe how quickly time is flying by, we only have three weeks left until the Half Term holidays! The teachers are busy packing lots of learning into a short space of time and our children continue to wow and amaze up with their hard work and efforts in all that they do.

We are becoming increasingly aware of behavior issues as a result of pupils being out of school for various periods of time due to COVID-19. I would like to remind all parents that the high standards of behavior and expectations of our pupils has not changed, we want all of our pupils to leave school in Year 6 being strong Catholic model citizens who demonstrate the capacity of compassion and support towards others. All pupils have been reminded of standards and expectations this week.

National Lockdowns

As we all look forward to the gradual releasing of [COVID-19 restrictions](#) can I still please remind you all that there are lots of rules and guidance which we must still follow to keep everyone as safe as possible. None of us want to go back into another lockdown situation.

I have been made aware that parents are starting to have larger group gatherings inside to celebrate children's birthdays. As you can imagine staff and children at school continue to work under strict COVID-19 Risk Assessments aimed at minimising the risk of COVID-19 spreading through our school community. When pupils then come in talking about parties and large gatherings they are attending, in direct contravention of the government guidance, it causes a certain degree of upset and distress. Pupils are also now coming into school and reporting that they are or have been to friends' houses inside for tea and sleep overs, again in breach of the government guidance.

I am fully aware that no-one likes that fact that we are still having to meet one other group outside in the cold and the wet in groups no bigger than 6, but until everyone is vaccinated then we are guided by the rules. It is still the situation that I have staff coming into school daily, from vulnerable families, who have not yet been able to access a vaccine and they become upset to hear when children are being encouraged to flout the guidance. I really would appreciate all your support in this, pupils continue to have to work in restricted bubbles within school and will continue to do so until the government changes its guidance.

Parking on Ashdale Crescent

Once again, this week I have had a resident ring school to complain both about the way in which parents are parking and blocking resident's driveways, but also when approached, some of our parents are swearing and being aggressive towards residents. I have recommended that any resident who is subjected to any abuse of any kind report it immediately to the police as this is not the type of behavior we want to promote in front of our children. I have also contacted the local police to ask them to patrol before and after school to promote safe and considerate parking and behavior towards our resident neighbours.

Parental behavior in the school yard

Once again, it has been brought to my attention this week, that parents are swearing aggressively towards teachers when collecting their Nursery and/or Reception children after school. It is simply unacceptable to be swearing towards staff at any time but most especially in front of the young

children who are all being collected. Please make sure that you are not swearing around children whilst on school premises. I appreciate your support in this matter.

Reading Books

As you know, reading is at the center of everything we do, here at St John Vianney. As such we have a rolling program of purchasing new books to continually enhance our in school provision. Can I ask if you have any old school reading books at home we would really appreciate it if you could send them back to school to put back into our school reading scheme provision?

Additionally, if you have any good quality spare books at home which your children have grown out of we would love to have them here in school. We are in the process of putting together a new library for our children to use in school. All books would be quarantined after they had been donated before being put into the library.

Online reading

As you can imagine it is a mammoth task transferring all of our pupils onto fully integrated online reading resources and I am aware that the parents of the younger children, last week had a really difficult time logging in to Oxford Owl and Letters and Sounds. We have been working with the team from Oxford Owl and hopefully these technical glitches and challenges will sort themselves out as quickly as possible. All the staff really appreciate your patience with it and please know that they are often as frustrated as you are.

KS2 Reading Buddy

There will be a letter following shortly with new access details for our older children to access a new online reading buddy system. This will vastly increase the number and breadth of books pupils will have access to and it also has quizzes and fun activities to back up and support their reading skills. Please be patient as like everything technological there seems to sometimes be glitches; nevertheless, I am sure that as it all beds in it will be a fabulous resource for all of our pupils to use at home.

Parents Meetings

This year, due to COVID-19, we are reporting to parents in a slightly different way. We are still sending out a written report in July 2021, but we are also going to allocate a day per teacher to carry out telephone parent's meetings in June 2021. This will give you the opportunity to discuss anything you wish about your child with their teacher, dates will follow next week. In addition, if you would like to also book a telephone conversation with either of the schools SENDCo's if your child has additional needs then we can arrange that too.

School Photographs

On Wednesday 9th June the school photographer will be coming into school to take individual, sibling groups, class photos and individual staff photos. A consent tab will be uploaded to the school website for you to give permission.

World Number Day

The children all had a fabulous day on Wednesday 5th May, focusing in on a wide range of mathematical concepts and number challenges. All the pupils took part in Times Tables competitions and we are keen that they continue to access Times Table Rock Stars at home. The costumes were fabulous a great day was had by all – your children are all wonderful mathematical superstars.

COVID-19 National Tutoring and Catch-up support

The National Tutoring programme, which school has signed up to support pupils in school has started off well and pupils are engaging positively, which is wonderful to see.

Uniform Policy

Please follow our whole school uniform policy, which is available to read on page 27 of the [school prospectus](#). A point on shoes, I have totally understood that whilst shops have been closed children have worn trainers to school as they have grown out of their school shoes, however now as shops have been open for several weeks all pupils should be wearing black school shoes and not trainers.

I have had to speak to a number of children about suitable hairstyles for school. As you are all aware, no child should have shaved patterns of any sort or extreme hairstyles. Please ensure that where pupils have their hair tied back it is done using bobbles in the school colours, the amazing array of pink, purple and orange bows which are appearing are wonderful but best kept for the weekend. As always I appreciate your support with this.

Behaviour in and out of school

This week, all pupils across school have been reminded by their class teachers about the rules and expectations we have of all of our pupils in school. Despite the fact that pupils have been off due to COVID-19 we still expect all of our pupils to behave in the same kind and considerate way that they did before lockdown. All pupils have been clearly told that if they have not got anything kind to say then not to say it at all. The older pupils have also been reminded that this applies to all their social media interactions out of school too.

We are in the process of booking some updated fun workshops to continue to remind our children about cyberbullying, anti-bullying and the difference between friendship issues and bullying workshops – these will all be provided in an age appropriate way by our external safeguarding provider. In addition to this we would normally provide a parental information workshop, however we cannot currently have all parents into school so the school website continues to be updated about social media and online interactions. It gives parents tips on how they can best support their children. If you need any further help or support, please do not hesitate to ask.

Thrive

In addition to all of this on-going behavioural support we are going to be launching a brand new whole school mental health and well-being initiative to support all pupils – we are applying for and going to implement the outstanding work to become a ‘Thrive’ school. We believe that this will really have a positive impact on all of our pupils and we are confident that our pupils will become fantastic ambassadors for positive mental health and well-being and how to support and care for each other all of the time.

School Bags

Please help us by **NOT** sending your child in with large back packs – we have a very limited amount of space in each classroom to fit all the coats, bags and PE kits. Also due to COVID-19 pupils do not need to carry very much back and forth between school and home so large bags are unnecessary and expensive – I recommend that you buy a £6 small bag from [Tots to Teams based at Kingston Park](#).

Homework

A reminder on homework. As you can imagine the most important thing over the last few weeks has been for teaching staff to settle your children back into school so that they are confident and happy. Staff have spent time working with pupils and assessing their strengths and weaknesses.

The current aim for homework is for pupils to:

- Read every evening (Minimum of 5 times a week) - pupils all have their Oxford Owl logins
- Revising spellings daily
- Year 1 are going to have a weekly worksheet
- Reception may be sent some bespoke work over Seesaw to support them
- Learn times tables using Times Tables Rock Stars – pupils have their logins (Y2 upwards)

If every pupil spent time every night doing all of these things that would be hugely beneficial to their learning, these basic skills are the foundation and building blocks for all learning and we have seen since pupils have returned from the successive lockdowns that a large number of our children need these revisiting daily.

Sun Awareness Programme

As we hopefully move into better and sunnier weather, please [read](#) about how to keep your child sun safe.

RSE Consultation

This will close on Monday 10th May, it has been uploaded onto the school website for your information. Please feel free to have a look at the excellent Ten Ten resources which are supported by the Diocese and the Bishops Conference for Catholic schools to use.

The Big Ask

Rachel de Souza is the Children's Commissioner for England. Her job is to speak up for children in England, stand up for their rights, and make sure that the people in power listen to what children need and want. It's time to give something big back to young people after COVID — and **she needs your help** to do it. This is the largest ever survey of children and young people in England. She will use what you tell her to show the government what you think, and what children need to live happier lives. Please complete the [survey](#) which will only take you **5-10 minutes**.

Wonderful news

I am delighted to let you know that Mrs O'Neil, in Year 3, is expecting a baby. She will hopefully be with us for the remainder of this academic year and I am sure you will join all of us in keeping her and her family in your prayers.

Please always remember that if you need to speak to anyone in school you can ring and book a phone call through the office. We have an open door policy meaning that we will always try to contact you as soon as possible.

As always staff, Governors and I continue to keep you and all of your families in our thoughts and prayers.

Best wishes,

A D Thorpe

Mrs A. D. Thorpe
Head teacher