



St John Vianney Catholic Primary School

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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.

READY, RESPECTFUL, SAFE

11th September 2023

Dear Parents/carers,

It seems amazing that the summer holidays are all over and here we are back ready to go for a new academic year. It has been a real delight to see all of our children walk in so smartly in all their new uniform, gleaming shoes and new book bags! Particularly our younger children, have been so brave and have walked around to the 'big' yard each morning, so sensibly! A great first week had by all the children and staff, thank you all so much.

As we start the new academic year, it is a good time to put out a few reminders to ensure that all of our children are given the very best start this term.

New Starters

We welcome all of our nursery and reception children who have been visiting school throughout the last two weeks, they have settled in so quickly, we couldn't be more proud. We welcome the parents of these younger children into our school community and look forward to working with you over the next seven or eight years.

We have also had a number of children who have joined us in various year groups throughout school, they and their families have been so thrilled to join our school, and we are delighted to have you too. So once again, welcome.

Reminder of class teacher in each year group

Year group	Teacher
Rainbows Nursery	Mrs Kingston
Sunshine Nursery	Mrs McLean
Reception	Miss Rice
Reception	Mrs Duffy
Year One	Mrs O'Neil and Ms McAtominey
Year One	Miss Dean
Year Two	Mrs Langford and Ms Campbell
Year Two	Miss Prayle and Mr Robinson



Year Three	Ms Cherry
Year Three	Mrs Bowden
Year Four	Mr Peacock
Year Four	Mr Bonnar
Year Five	Miss Dolphin
Year Five	Miss Young
Year Six	Mr Exley
Year Six	Mrs Meldrum and Mrs Black

Reminder of school rules

All of our pupils from Nursery to Year 6, were reminded last week about our simple school rules. All pupils should be ready, respectful and safe at all times. Pupils are being reminded and rewarded daily for both demonstrating these values, as you will see when they come home with stickers on. They have done something above and beyond to merit it, which is fantastic. The overarching theme this half term is to encourage children to think about being polite and to use their manners meaningfully. We would love you to reinforce this at home too.

Contacting staff at school

As a school we actively encourage an open-door policy, where parents should feel able to come in and talk to staff. The teachers obviously are with their classes all day, teaching, so if you need them to speak to you please pass a message on through the office or email school and Mrs McDine will pass the message on and they will get back to you. As all of our teachers teach all day they may well get back to you after school or even the next day, they cannot respond to requests for a phone call within an hour as all teachers are teaching in class office@stjohnvianneynewcastle.org

Communicating concerns to staff

Staff will contact parents if your child has been hurt at school. Any child who has bumped their head and received first aid will bring home a bumped head letter. If staff have dealt with a small friendship issue, they will not always ring you, often it is enough that staff speak to children in school. Staff are very professional and capable of dealing with friendship issues, in school. I would ask that you do not contact other parents via social media outside of school, to question each other. Please contact school, and speak to the teacher in the first instance.

Parental communication guidance ladder:

1. Speak to the class teacher to raise a concern or speak about something which is worrying you (Email or ring school and the teacher will contact you when they are not teaching).
2. If having spoken to the class teacher you want to escalate it further, then you can speak to the class teacher & phase leader together, by pre-arranged appointment.
3. If you really feel that you need further senior management involvement then you can escalate up a level again and speak with the class teacher, phase leader and senior leader; by pre-arranged appointment
4. Ultimately, you can raise a concern with the head teacher, but the previous 3 steps should have taken place first.

In all of your dealings with staff, I ask that you treat them with respect and courtesy at all times. All the staff are here to help and they work hard to achieve the best for all of your children, they do not need or deserve to be on the receiving end on aggression or shouting. I appreciate all of your help and support with the above.

Attendance

Please be aware that the government is rightly renewing its focus on pupil attendance in school. There is additional guidance on the [Newcastle Authority Website](#) for your information. A reminder that, in the coming academic year, the Local Governing Committee, will refer unauthorised holiday absences to the Local Authority, who may impose a penalty notice.

As you may be aware, amendments to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make it clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances and that Head Teachers should determine the number of days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. The school attendance policy clearly states that should a leave of absence be taken without prior authorisation; a Penalty Notice may be issued by the Local Authority. The Penalty Notice is likely to increase, currently set to £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days and £120 per parent, per child if paid after this date but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice could result in the Local Authority starting legal proceedings against you for the offence of failing to ensure your child's regular attendance at school.

We are required to keep detailed records of pupil attendance and distinguish between authorised and unauthorised attendance. It is vital that parents keep us informed about their child's absence. Please contact the school by 8.40am if your child is anticipated to be late or absent for any reason. If the school is not contacted, we will ring and/or text parents to ensure the child is safe at home.

Repeated absence, will all be monitored closely and the issuing of half termly Red/Amber/Green attendance letters will continue to be issued. Any absences under 90%, will be monitored even more closely and followed up by the attendance officer and/or the Head Teacher and may be reported to the local authority if it falls further, in line with our policy. It is important for our pupils to be on time in the morning.

Persistent lateness results in pupils missing out on vital information at the start of the day and being disorientated. Furthermore, if your child arrives after the register closes at 8:50am, this will be classed as an absence for the whole session, please make sure your child arrives prior to 8:45am, the gate is open from 8:30am. Equally, Persistent Early Collection will also be monitored and recorded.

Universal Free School Meals

Every child in Reception class, Year 1 and 2 is eligible for a free school meal under the universal free school meals scheme. This offer has no bearing on the existing free school meals provision.

School Meals

Nursery children and pupils in Year 3 – Year 6 have to pay for their school meals. Families can pay for school meals using Parent Pay. If you need a log in reminder or any assistance with the online payment system, please contact Mrs McDine or Mrs Whittaker.

Free School Meals

If, because of your family income you believe your child may be eligible, please see Mrs McDine or Mrs Whittaker and they will support you with how to access the free school meals entitlement. (This also includes pupils who are adopted from care, no matter what the parent's income.) Pupils who are entitled to free school meals enable school to access special funding for the whole period in which they are on free school meals and for 6 years afterwards. This is used to help with school trips and educational support, so it really is worth applying for it even when your child is already receiving a free school meal through the universal scheme.

School Meals

If your child is having school meals, you cannot switch on and off to packed lunches, the kitchen needs two weeks' notice to take a child off or add them on to the school meal list. Your help with that is appreciated. For your information there is always a Halal choice included on the menu.

Snacks in school

All Early years and KS1 children (Nursery – Year 2) are given a piece of fruit or vegetable daily as part of their universal school meals entitlement.

If any KS2 (Y3 – Y6) child would like to bring a piece of fruit in to eat at breaktime, they can.

However, please do not send your child into school with crisps, chocolate, fizzy drinks or high sugar snacks as these are bad for their teeth and not part of our Healthy School Policy.

Reminder about earrings

A quick reminder that no pupil is allowed to wear earrings in school. It is a health and safety risk as they run around and play together, earrings can get caught and rip ears. The clear plastic earring spaces are also not allowed for the same reason. If any child comes into school with earrings in, they will be given tape to cover their ears and the child will not be allowed to take part in their allocated PE lesson, they will be given other work to complete. You are welcome to contact Miss Cherry, the Assistant Head Teacher and PE Lead, who will reiterate the same message.

Dogs

With the obvious allowable exception of guide dogs, please can you all remind anyone who is collecting your child that under no circumstances can pet dogs, puppies or old dogs be brought onto the school site. This week two families brought dogs onto the school site and both dogs left dog mess on the path and carpark, for staff to clear up.

Uniform

All pupils have started off the academic year in a really positive way, looking smart and very proud to be part of our St John Vianney community. Please make sure all of your child's uniform is labelled with their name. I would also ask, once again, that no child brings in large or expensive backpacks, we do not have the space to store them. Small book bags, lunch box and a PE kit bag are a much as they need. Parents have been very generous handing in second hand uniform and we have given as much out as possible. I have been informed that the local foodbank in West Denton is accepting St John Vianney school uniform donations, please share your donations with them. Unfortunately, we no longer have the space to store large amounts of second hand uniform.

If you are a family in need of extra uniform please do not hesitate to ask, we would love to give it all away free of charge to any family who needs some. You can contact Mrs Meldrum, Deputy Head, office@stjohnvianneynewcastle.org and she will confidentially put a bag together.

Water bottles

Every child is encouraged to drink water, daily. Please send in cheap water bottles, pupils do not need the £30 designer bottles for school, and school cannot replace them if they get damaged or lost. Children need to take them home nightly to be washed and refilled. Please only fill them with water, as juice is bad for their teeth, sticky and it ruins their books.

Hair styles

Please can I ask that all children, whether girl or boy with longer hair, makes sure that it is tied up and off their face every day. Short haircuts, please make sure that you do not have tram lines and radical hairstyles shaven onto the heads.

Dates for your diary

Last week I uploaded two letters to the school website inviting parents to both curriculum nights and Christmas liturgies. Teachers will start to add in school trips and you will get to know about those as they are planned and linked into their subject based teaching.

Clubs

Over the next week, Mr Bonnar, is going to collating and sorting out a club offer for our pupils, these will include sporting activities such as football, KS1 Choir and a KS2 choir, Dance club and a wide variety of others too. Please be aware that staff offer these classes voluntarily.

Lunchtime 'Yard Bop'

Your children will have been telling you that we have made some real improvements to the yard at lunchtime, following suggestions from the school council and pupil feedback. There are now a number of separate areas for pupils to get involved in:

- There is a supervised ball game eg. Basketball or Netball
- An activity of the week eg. Hoops or bean bags etc
- Yard Bop – music and dance
- A free play zone
- A quiet zone on the wooden tables and benches
- Supervised time on the logs
- When the weather allows time spent on the field.

This has been well received by the children and the staff are working hard to make it a great success.

Collection after school

Please can parents from Year 1 to Year 6 queue on the white spots up on the concrete path beside the grass? Currently, lots of parents are all swarming around teachers to grab their child which is not safe. Teachers are taking a little longer in the first few weeks to dismiss as they need to learn the faces of the adults. Shouting at teachers and grabbing children from behind them creates an unsafe environment. Please can you not all gather around the front of school, but rather stand in orderly lines and children can then be dismissed safely and more quickly.

If you need to speak to a teacher about your child, then please wait until the whole class is dismissed before approaching to pass on a message. If it is a long query, then please email the office and the teacher will contact you at a time when they can talk to you privately.

Facebook

For those who are not yet aware or who have not joined, we have a fantastic school Facebook page where pictures and/or videos are uploaded to share news about what the children have been doing in school each week. It is a way of celebrating work in school and some of the amazing trips they take part in outside of school. It is not a forum for parents to vent their displeasure about school on. Any comment deemed inappropriate or derogatory will be deleted. However, to date most parents have really enjoyed having a little glimpse into what their children are doing in school.

Birthdays

It is wonderful that you all want to celebrate your child's birthday with their friends in school, however due to the number of allergies please do not send in cakes. You are of course welcome to send in the multi-bags of small haribo's.

Golden Book Assembly

As we did last year, we are going to continue with the Golden Book Assembly and the Golden Head teacher's awards. Please continue to send certificates and celebratory awards which we can all join in and celebrate with your child. It is always a pleasure to see all the amazing activities your children take part in outside of school.

SEN Review

This week the school was visited for two days by three specialist Special Education Needs Advisors from BBCET. They were forensic in their analysis of all the things school does to promote inclusion and ensure that every child, regardless of need, is enabled to achieve and reach their full potential. I am delighted to tell you that they went away extremely impressed by the breadth and depth of the school support for all pupils. It was a true validation of all the hard work staff put in to ensuring all your children exceed expectations both academic and social & emotional.

It has been a hugely busy start to the new academic year and with the positive and happy energy which our children are all exuding I can already see we are all in for a fantastic term, and Christmas will be here before we know it!!

Please remember you can contact school at any time, we are here to help.

Kind regards,

A D Thorpe

Mrs A D Thorpe
Head teacher