



17th December 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Christmas wishes

I can hardly believe that we have reached the end of the term, it has come around so quickly. The children have had a fabulous week with Christmas parties, Christmas card making, learning about and writing out the nativity story and celebrating everything they have learned this week. They have been fabulous and we are so proud of every one of them.

COVID

As you will no doubt of heard on the news there is a large amount of national concern coming from the new Omicron variant of COVID-19. I really hope that you all manage to stay safe over the festive season and spend quality and important time with family and friends as safely as possible. It is our fervent hope that we are all able to open up fully in January 2022 and that everyone can return to school safely.

Nevertheless, I am asking that wherever possible, on Monday 3rd January 2022, you give your child a LFD (Lateral Flow Test) test prior to their return to school on Tuesday 4th January 2022. Obviously, some parents will not want to do this and some children will be too young or find it too difficult. I understand this and am simply asking that if possible you test your child. Unfortunately, we are not allowed to hand out testing kits so we suggest that you collect a test kit from your local pharmacy or order online. Staff will continue to do the twice weekly testing over the holidays, which they have been doing since Sept 2021. I hope this will go some way towards minimising the spread of COVID on our return. I do ask that if you do not want to do this please do not confront staff, I have been clear this is a request for help, it is not a mandate.

Mask wearing – we appreciate all your support in wearing masks whilst on school grounds awaiting to collect children. I will write to update you in January 2022 when the risk assessment has been updated in line with the new government guidance. I am hopeful that the new guidance will be issued before the children return, as soon as I know I will write to let you know via the school website.

Facebook

Just to reiterate, if parents do not want their child or their child is unable to be photographed or filmed for Facebook due to personal safeguarding reasons this is absolutely fine. There are a number of children who cannot have their photograph

uploaded onto the Facebook or school website, that does not mean they are in any way excluded from the activity, they are simply, for that photograph not in front of the camera, staff are very sensible and sensitive of all of our children. We actively respect and support every family's personal decision and no-one is being pressured into giving permission, that's why we have been so scrupulous with ensuring we have written permission for every child. Facebook is being used as an additional tool to communicate with parents on top of all the pre-existing ways we previously celebrated your children through the school website.

Online safety

All pupils are continually taught about the multitude of ways to stay safe online and when the worst happens and they are communicated with by someone untoward what to do about and it and who to alert. We reiterate these messages all the time as social media and online usage is going to be with them throughout their lives. It is part of the National Curriculum and we go above and beyond what legally has to be taught because we want all of our children, in an age appropriate way, to know and understand how to access help when using online forums. Here are a number of websites which offer extra and supportive information for parents.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers>

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/>

<https://nationalonlinesafety.com/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-safety-online-a-practical-guide-for-parents-and-carers/child-safety-online-a-practical-guide-for-parents-and-carers-whose-children-are-using-social-media>

Outdoor learning

Our reception children have had a wonderful time outside in the forest school area, working with their buddies and they are becoming more resilient, creative and beginning to truly work together as a team. Well Done Reception!

PTFA

A huge thank you for all the fundraising efforts which have gone on behind the scenes and to all the parents who bought doughnuts online! The PTFA have also managed to source and wrap a present from Father Christmas for every child in school. Each child came home with their own gift on Wednesday. You may have also seen the short video posted from Father Christmas to all of our children this week!

Message from Claire Colleran, Education Outreach Officer at Mission Together

As we draw nearer to the birth of Christ, and as a reminder of the work of Mission Together around the world, here's a link to a Christmas Greeting from some pupils of St Francis Xavier School, Fundong, a relatively peaceful part of Cameroon. Over 2021 Missio England & Wales (inc. Mission Together) has supported this community in their efforts to build four new classrooms to accommodate children fleeing conflict-ridden areas of the country. The pupils were recorded in one of these recently completed

rooms. The carol, led by Madam Rosita, St Francis' Principal, has notably apt lyrics <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-JDZ5ddpSI&t=6s> Wishing you and yours a blessed, happy, and healthy Christmas.

Christmas Parties, fun and excitement

All of our children have had a wonderful time this week. Games and music along with lots of fun was had by all. The new headphones for the silent disco were a real treat! Thank you to all the staff for organising each of the events for all of our children.

One-way pedestrian exit

Please could you all remind all the adults collecting your child/ren after school that we are operating a clearly marked one-way pedestrian exit through the car park. Adults line up next to the forest school area whilst waiting to collect their child/ren and then walk out through the car park. It is unhelpful of adults to push back through the two lines of collecting adults waiting, so please walk through the car park on exit. Thank you for your support on this matter.

Christmas Mass

We had a beautiful Christmas Mass with Father Martin on Wednesday morning and all of the children said prayers for everyone less fortunate than themselves. It was a great way to pause, reflect and be thankful for all the positivity we have in our lives.

Finally, governors, staff and I would like to take the opportunity to wish you all a very happy and holy Christmas. Please stay safe and enjoy spending time with your families this Christmas. We, as always, continue to keep you and all of your families in our prayers and look forward to seeing all the children back fully refreshed on Tuesday 4th January 2022.

Best wishes,

A D Thorpe

Mrs A. D. Thorpe
Head teacher