



Mrs A D Thorpe  
Head Teacher

# 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**

26<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Dear Parents/carers,

Here we are and it is almost the end of January already, it is amazing how quickly time flies when you're having fun! Once again, we have had a busy start to the term and the children continue to make us all proud, by the way they have engaged and worked so hard, following the excitement of Christmas.

### **Attendance**

As you all know, school is currently focusing in on attendance. If your child is not in school, they cannot learn. It is normal to expect all children to have an average attendance of at least 96%. Whilst I am aware of measles, chicken pox and S&D some children are regularly absent or late. This may take different forms:

- Daily Late – School starts at 8:45am and your child should be in school ready to learn by then. The school gates open at 8:30am to support you in this. Any pupils who are persistently late will start having phone calls to parents from Jan Gurkin the attendance office from Clennell. Persistent Lateness is disruptive to the class and upsetting for your child.
- Authorised absence – When a parent rings up or emails to say their child is off sick. We are having a number of children who are regularly off sick at least once a fortnight, this will have a negative impact on their education. Those parents will have received warning letters from school, but now Jan Gurkin will start contacting you with the view that parental contracts may need to be given out. If your child is regularly absent with illness, we may ask you for medical evidence or ask to refer your child to the school Nurse for support.
- Unauthorised absence – This is an absence which is not agreed to. For example, when you keep your child off school and do not inform school or you do inform but it is for a holiday etc. These absences will be followed up by Jan Gurkin.

If you have issues with your child not being able to attend school then please contact us as we are here to help. We need your children in school all day everyday to ensure they have the best chance to progress their learning. We of course understand when children need to be absent, some of the illnesses currently in school are outlined below. A copy of the updated Attendance Policy is available on the school website. If you would like a paper copy please contact the school office.

### **Sickness and diarrhoea**

There are a number of really horrible sickness bugs going around our school community currently. We ask that you keep your child at home for 48hours after the symptoms stop. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/diarrhoea-and-vomiting/>



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### **Chicken Pox**

There have been a number of families affected by this and it is awful for the children. Please do not send them back to school until the blister have scabbed up and are dry. It is highly contagious and the adults can get shingles which is a really painful condition. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/chickenpox/>

### **Measles**

You will have all heard in the news about the rapid rise in cases of measles nationally. The NHS is encouraging all families to make an appointment with their GP to get their child vaccinated.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles/> Please keep your child off until 4 days after the rash has finished developing and only if they then are well enough.

### **Uniform Policy**

Please remember we have a uniform policy in place (A copy of which is on the school website) to support all children and parents. We have actively sought to poverty proof the uniform. I have seen a large number of children coming into school with expensive designer trainers. Please do not send your child in with these, inexpensive black shoes are required. Hair styles are starting to move away from the uniform policy. Please do not send your child in with tracks cut into the hair, also beads and hair accessories should all follow the uniform policy of dark blue or black. Hair bands and bobbles can be red. I would appreciate your support and help in this matter.

### **Year 6 Booster Sessions**

Our staff are supporting Year 6 intervention and booster sessions twice a week from now until May 2024, after school two nights a week. This is a great opportunity for children to be given small group and bespoke intervention as so many staff have volunteered to support the children in this. A huge thank you goes out to all the staff for their dedication.

### **Lunchtime Sports Clubs**

This is a new set of clubs we have set up to support our Y1-Y6 children at lunchtime. Every year group accesses a club once a week at lunchtime, run by specialist PE coaches. It has certainly been embraced by the pupils and they are reporting that it is great fun!

### **NSPCC Numbers Day**

On **Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2024**, all children are encouraged to come in wearing their own clothes. If they can have anything related to numbers and mathematics that would be fabulous. All day every class will be involved in activities to celebrate Mathematics, we know how inventive our children can be, so please do not feel you need to go out and buy anything new, see what they can create out of their current clothes.

### **Story Telling Week**

Next week from 30<sup>th</sup> Jan until the 6<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024, it is story telling week. In school we will be celebrating this event with literacy activities in every class. It would be wonderful if you could also help us by talking to your children about what is their favourite book and why. I'd love to welcome children designing some new book covers to bring in and show me, whilst they talk about their favourite stories.

### **Reconciliation for Y4**

The First Holy Communion Programme is moving on and our children are partaking in it with thoughtfulness and compassion. This is a reminder that Y4 Mr Bonnar's class will go to church at 2pm on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb and Y4 Mr Peacock's class will go at 2pm on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> Feb.

### **Reception Creative Kitchen**

On 5<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024, the parents of our Reception children are invited in to enjoy some cooking sessions with their children in school. Please sign up via the sheets in Reception, you can speak to Miss Rice or Mrs Duffy.

### **Safer Internet Day**

On Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024 it is Safer Internet Day, all of your children will be working at an age appropriate level on ways to keep themselves safe online, using a wide variety of devices and Apps. Please remember to talk to your children about staying safe online. There is a great deal of useful information and weblinks on our school website. [https://www.stjohnvianneynewcastle.org/web/e-safety\\_/307677](https://www.stjohnvianneynewcastle.org/web/e-safety_/307677)

### Dog Trust Visit

As part of our drive to teach children to keep themselves safe, you will be aware of the recent rise in dog attacks. As such Miss Dean brought her dog into Year 1 this week, to teach the children about how to look after a dog and to encourage children to act safely around dogs. The children loved this experience, a huge thank you to Miss Dean and her dog!

The Dog Society are also coming into school on Wed 7<sup>th</sup> Feb to talk to children about how to be safe around dogs and what behaviours they should be aware of.

### Ash Wednesday

The 14<sup>th</sup> February will be Ash Wednesday this year, it is really early, however we will of course celebrate the start of Lent with our children by having a Lenten liturgy and ashes in school.

### Inset Day

Friday 16<sup>th</sup> Feb is an Inset training day for staff, so school will be closed to all pupils.

### Medication in school

Please remember that school should only be asked to administer medication such as antibiotics in school if your child has been prescribed at least 4 doses a day. If they have 3 doses a day, then that can be given before and after school and then the third in the evening. All medication **MUST** be signed into the office and a parental consent form completed.

### Collecting children after school

Several issues are presenting themselves to staff.

1. Please could parents/carers/ grandparents NOT crowd the pathway in front of the green gate. It would be much better if you all lined up and waited in an orderly fashion. A child will be dismissed one at a time. Everyone did this in COVID and it worked really well, and despite asking people not to, they are now pushing and shoving.
2. Parents/careers are crowding the gate and calling their children to them. Every child **MUST** be dismissed by a school staff member from an orderly line. Please do not encourage your child to simply run up to you, one day you might not be there and they will run out and possibly could get lost. It is not safe to call your child to leave the line behind the staff members back. Please also pass on this message to grandparents as staff have been shouted at a number of times over the last few weeks, especially staff of the younger children.
3. You cannot just decide to take a child from another family, if their parents aren't here simply to be 'helpful'. We have safeguarding rules which mean that children can only be dismissed to the person the parents have given permission for. If children are going to friends houses after school, then if you ring school to tell us then of course your child can go home with that family.
4. Outside school at collection is not the time to come and verbally challenge staff. If you want to have a private conversation with a staff member then please contact the school office and the staff member can ring you or you will be invited in for a meeting. There is never an appropriate reason to shout at staff.
5. There are a group of parents who are persistently late in collecting their children after school. Staff have a great deal of allocated work to get through after school, including staff meetings, training, planning, marking, writing SEN plans, creating resources to support children's learning etc They are unable to provide free childcare for your child. We of course understand when there has been an incident and a parent is late as a one off and your child will always be safe at school. This is about the same parent's being persistently late, sometimes not collecting their children until 4:30pm. It is unfair on the staff who then cannot then complete their own work, however ultimately it is most unfair for your children, who are left questioning why they have not been collected.

### Parking

Once again, it has been brought to my attention that families are parking in unsafe ways both in West Denton Carpark and outside the houses of our neighbours. It is so sad to constantly have phone calls from our neighbours reporting abusive parents from our school who have sworn and shouted in front of their child in a St John Vianney Uniform, despite blocking their driveways and houses. In West Denton Carpark this week, a child was almost knocked down by another car reversing, and when the grandparent tapped the car to stop it, the

parent made a rude gesture with their hand. I have had phone calls this week from staff at West Denton Primary, reporting that our parents are parking on pavements and shouting at their parents to move out of the way. I am simply shocked and disappointed by this level of behaviour from some, not all, of our parents/carers. In school, we encourage our children on a daily basis to be safe and respectful. Every member of staff tries to install a level of respectful behaviour by encouraging children to take responsibility for their own behaviour choices; this is difficult if children then go out and see and hear family members swearing, shouting and being abusive. Both myself and the Deputy Head at West Denton have told families to report the incidents to the police. It is a sad point to ask parents to report each other to the police, but I am constantly fearful of one of our children getting knocked over by a car.

### **WOW – Walk Once a Week**

We are launching a walk to school rewards system for your children to encourage them to feel a bit healthier at the start and finish of each day. To qualify as a 'Walk' the children will be told that they have to walk to and from school from at least, St John Vianney Church Carpark, Sainsbury's carpark or the Fire station drop off. We are aware that some of our families walk from further afield than that, which is brilliant. We hope that if they can do this at least once per week for at least four weeks at a time, they will find they actually enjoy it and do it more often. We will reward them with a WOW badge if they can do it and keep it up every four weeks! We are looking forward to giving out hundreds of badges!

### **Toniebox**

A huge thankyou goes out to some of our Reception parents who unbeknownst to school have so generously clubbed together and purchased a Toniebox for one of the Reception classes. It really is wonderful to know that our parents are so generous and thoughtful, so thankyou so much for your support and generosity.

Please remember, we operate an open-door policy for all of our parent's. If you need to speak to a teacher then please call the office and the teacher will ring you either that day or the next when they are not teaching. We are all here to work together for the benefit of all of our children.

### **Afterschool Clubs**

These have started again and children are all enjoying taking part in a variety of activities. Please remember that this is not free childcare, you need to collect your child promptly at the end of the session.

### **Focus weeks on well-being**

Over the next three weeks each class is going to have a dedicated day given over to supporting their well-being, exploring positive learning strategies and engaging in wider and curriculum enrichment.

### **Golden Book Assembly**

This continues to be a wonderful way to celebrate all of your children's achievements both in and out of school. Please remember to encourage your child to bring in certificates and trophies from any outside activities they have taken part in. It is always a real pleasure to celebrate and publicly acknowledge the wonderful things your children are achieving.

Our school community will continue to keep all of school and parish families in our prayers.

Kind regards,

*A D Thorpe*

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Head teacher