

St Mary's RC Primary

Newsletter 5

January 2021



Welcome back to the new term and best wishes for 2021. Although a very different festive period, we hope that you had an enjoyable Christmas and that you and your loved ones are safe and well.

Sadly we have had to enter another period of lockdown with the accompanying restrictions for re-opening of schools. We would like to reassure you that the St Mary's team are committed to keeping your children safe, and are working hard to stay in touch with families and provide high quality learning experiences for all of our learners. We are in a very different position this time as all pupils have been using google classroom or seesaw in class so they should be more equipped to use it during this period of lockdown. Additionally, our school is open for a very small number of pupils, supported by a team of our own school staff.

In addition to the earlier letter from our executive director, Fiona Robertson which you can find on the website, I hope that you find the following information useful in the days ahead.

As always, thank you for your continued support at this challenging time.

Mrs Liz Laird – Head Teacher

REMOTE LEARNING ARRANGEMENTS

Remote learning will commence on **Monday 11th January**. Following current Scottish Government guidance, most of our pupils will complete this learning at home. Please note that should your child be one of the small number attending school, in person, they will complete the same remote learning tasks as if they were learning at home.

Google Classroom is the main platform used to deliver remote learning to our P1-7 pupils. Nursery, P1 and P2 will also use SeeSaw. Your child will require their GLOW password to access their Google Classroom. Your child should have a copy of their digital passport with their log in details. Please email our school office if you have trouble accessing this stmarys_ps@midlothian.gov.uk

The Athena Homepage – search athena.mgfl.net - has some helpful tutorials for using GLOW and Google Classroom. These can be accessed by clicking on the purple Parent Information box at the top of the Athena main page.

We are aware that remote learning can be challenging for families, as parents and carers often have to combine this with the demands of working from home themselves, as well as other responsibilities. Many of our staff are parents themselves, and all have tried to be mindful in planning tasks and activities which can be fitted around family life, and that do not require significant resources or additional materials. There is no expectation for parents and carers to print off learning materials, although you are welcome to do so, if this makes life easier. General advice is to try and have some sort of daily routine, which allows for periods of learning, along with time for breaks and other activities that your child enjoys. Some families prefer to complete home learning in the morning and give their child free time in the afternoon. Others prefer to complete a couple of tasks in the morning, have a longer break, and then complete a further couple of tasks in the afternoon. We would encourage every family to do what works best for them.

<p>Teachers will provide a timetable for the week at the start of the week so that you can plan how best to complete remote learning with your child. This will include daily literacy and numeracy lessons alongside other activities. We will also post links to educational websites, eg online lessons provided by BBC Bitesize, PE with Joe Wicks etc Where possible try to encourage your child to complete tasks during the school day and at the very least their core literacy and numeracy tasks.</p>	
<p>Class teachers will arrange a google meet with the class each week as a check in and a chance for the children to catch up with each other.</p>	<p>We will post videos of lessons and tips on key strategies but we will not be streaming live lessons.</p>
<p>Teachers will correct work and provide feedback on a regular basis – this may not be on the same day as work is submitted, as some of our teachers are also part of the core team working in school.</p>	<p>Should you and your child start to find remote learning particularly challenging, we would encourage that you make contact with school, either through the Google Classroom, or via the main school office, and we will do our very best to offer appropriate support.</p>
<p>We will again make regular phone calls to you to keep in touch. Teachers will post up the times that they will be doing this in Google Classroom.</p>	<p>We are keen to receive your feedback on the above arrangements so that we can continually improve what we are doing. We look forward to speaking to you week beginning 18th January.</p>

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Pupils in P4 are due to begin their preparation for First Holy Communion, and P7 pupils, preparation to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. The school will provide packs of information, workbooks and key lessons that will be accompanied by videos from school to support this preparation at home. I will update families as soon as we have agreed dates with Father Allan if restrictions allow.

Current guidance from Scottish Government advises that no one should attend our school building without prior arrangement. Should parents and carers require to make contact with staff, we ask that they contact the school office, in the first instance, either by phone on 0131 271 4690 or by email at: stmarys_ps@midlothian.gov.uk

Please note that should it be considered necessary for you to enter the school grounds, then Midlothian policy is that a face covering should be worn at all times (unless exempt) and that a strict 2m distance from adults/children, not in your own household, is maintained. For those attending school parents should drop off at the playground gate and not enter the playground – Mrs Macaulay or I will be in the playground to supervise.

THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU

CHRISTMAS RAFFLE – Thank you to everyone who donated items for the class hampers and congratulations to our many winners. Thanks to your efforts over £1000 was raised to support activities in school.

SCIAF – we encouraged children and staff to make a donation to SCIAF this year rather than sending Christmas Cards. Thanks to the staffroom raffle we were able to raise nearly £70 which will buy two water filters to provide clean water in villages in Africa.

FOOD BANK – we were able to send over 6 boxes of food to the foodbank – many thanks.

Thank you to all our families who sent in cards and gifts at the end of term. Your support and kind gestures are very much appreciated. On behalf of Mrs MacKerron thank you too for your condolences following the death of her mother before Christmas. We hope your child also enjoyed their Christmas parties and gift – courtesy of our Parent Council. We would like to thank them again for their generosity.