

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School



HEAD TEACHER: MRS. A. D. THORPE

CHAIR OF GOVERNORS: MRS. C. HORSLEY

Front Street, Stanley, Co. Durham. DH9 0NP
E.mail: stanleystjoseph@durhamlearning.net

Tel: 01207 232624
Website: www.stanley-pri.durham.sch.uk

4th December 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

The Christmas trees are up in the hall and main entrance and the children are busy practicing for their spiritual dance to be recorded in front of the twinkling lights.

The children only have two weeks left in school and whilst we know how hard it is to maintain social distancing and follow the rules of no house mixing, it will really help us keep all of the bubbles open until the end of term. Please help us by not having sleep overs, other children for tea or generally mixing outside of school. If a positive case is reported to School, I will have to close the bubble and request that your child isolates at home for 14 days, I pray that this won't be necessary over the next two weeks as I want you all to have a peaceful and socially distanced family Christmas.

Adults in school

Over the last week, several parents and grandparents have followed their children into school, saying that their children want them into school. I hope you all understand that this is not possible during these COVID-19 times as we work so hard to keep all the class bubbles separate.

Please could you help us by reminding anyone who drops off and picks up any of our pupils before and/or after school that the Durham County Schools COVID-19 Risk Assessment, which forms part of our individual COVID-19 school risk assessment, approved by our Governing Body and DCC, does not allow parents/carers/grandparents to come into the school grounds to drop their children off. Please help us to keep every member of school community safe by supporting us with this. If you feel it is essential that your child cannot come into school without you, then please contact school via telephone on a daily basis, and we will ask you to come to the front door at a particular time in between the bubbles coming into school and we will open the front door for your child to come in.

Tier Three – High Alert

Whilst we totally appreciate how hard it is, we please ask you to [read the rules](#) and know what the new and updated changes from the 2nd December mean to you and your family, we pray that we will all see a move down to a lower tier soon.



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Remember – Hands, Face, Space

- hands – wash your hands regularly and for 20 seconds
- face – wear a face covering in indoor settings where social distancing may be difficult, and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet
- space – stay 2 metres apart from people you do not live with where possible, or 1 metre with extra precautions in place (such as wearing face coverings)

Covid-19 Film update from the Dept of Health

The Dept of Health have produced [a video](#) to update families about how COVID-19 can be spread and what precautions you can take to lower your risk or mitigate against the dangers of spreading. It is an excellent resource and we encourage you all to watch it. Please click on the imbedded link, to access it.

Covid-19 Update

Please help us to keep everyone as safe as possible, by informing school stanleystjoseph@durhamlearning.net if your child or anyone in their household develops symptoms or is awaiting a test result, we also appreciate the way parents have been so supportive by communicating the results of tests with school. Thank you so much for working with us to keep everyone as safe as possible during these challenging times.

Christmas Lunches

Next week, the children are going to have a Christmas lunch day, where they are allowed, if they want, to wear a Christmas jumper into school. These will all take place in the hall in their individual socially distanced bubbles.

- Wednesday 9th December 4, 2020 Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2
- Thursday 10th December, 2020 Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6

Advent at St Joseph's

This morning the children celebrated their first virtual 'Advent Liturgy' online with the whole school present, joining from their own classrooms. It was simply wonderful to have the whole school 'together' at this time of Advent and yet all still safe in their respective bubbles; the children have been amazing at sharing their thoughts and prayers with each other. A huge thank you to everyone and we look forward to more of these to come. Watch out for some new Facebook posts of your wonderful children.



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Mission Together

We have also uploaded the [Mission Together Advent Calendar](#), to the school website, for you all to download and use over the coming weeks of Advent, it has some gorgeous ways to share this time of preparing together as a family, whilst also remaining socially distanced.

The Pope's Advent message

The time of Advent is of particular importance this year, the Pope said in his address on the 29th November, the first Sunday of Advent,

"Advent reminds people that God came down to dwell in our midst and that they must always call for his assistance. The first step of faith is to tell God that we need him and to ask that he come close to us once more. God wants to draw close to us, but he will not impose himself; it is up to us to keep saying to him, 'Come!' People must be watchful and focused on what is essential in life, because one great mistake in life is to get absorbed in a thousand things and not to notice God. People must not let themselves be overcome by discouragement, but live in hope. If we are awaited in heaven, why should we be caught up with earthly concerns? Why should we be anxious about money, fame, success, all of which will fade away? Waiting and being watchful are difficult, though, he said, and everyone is vulnerable to dangerous kinds of "drowsiness. There is the slumber of mediocrity, when we forget our first love and grow satisfied with indifference, concerned only for an untroubled existence, this "lukewarm, worldly life slowly eats away at faith, which must not be lukewarm, but a fire that burns, a desire for God, a bold effort to change, the courage to love, constant progress. Faith is not a tranquilizer for people under stress, it is a love story for people in love!"



Pope Francis

Christmas Cards

Unfortunately, due to the restrictions of COVID-19 and having to quarantine items which come into School, this year we have decided to ask the children not to bring in Christmas cards for their friends or teachers. Instead, each class is going to vote and choose a [Christmas gift](#) and we are asking families to donate some money using Parent pay (Option is now open), which they would normally have spent on Christmas cards. School will use these donations, in each class to choose an item and purchase it for those who are less off around the world.

Love in a Box – Christmas Appeal



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Father Dermott and the Parishes of St Joseph's, St Patrick's, St Mary's and Sacred Heart are joining together with the 'Love Christmas' initiative, which pledges to give a million Christmas boxes across the UK. They are aiming, as a group of parishes, to donate some Christmas boxes to each of the four primary schools. They are asking parishioners to donate £10 to sponsor a Christmas box for a child, and hope to raise £600. If any families would like to support this appeal then you are able to forward your donations directly to church - Any donations can be posted through St Joseph's letterbox (it is on the front of the presbytery).

Living Candle Memorial

Would you like to remember a loved one in Church during this Christmas season? St Joseph's church intends to display living candle memorials during Christmas. They will light the sponsored candles throughout every mass and private prayer time in our Churches. It is £5 to sponsor a candle and you can sponsor as many candles as you wish. Please consider supporting your family of parishes and sponsor a candle in memory of a loved one. Each candle will have a memorial card next to it with an individual/family/prayer intention on it, ie. John Smith, The Smith Family or All NHS workers. Order Forms can be left in Church when Church is open or posted through the letterbox at St. Joseph's Church. They have forms for anyone who is interested. If you are unable to get to Church and would like help arranging to sponsor a candle, please contact Christine in the Parish Office stjosephstanley@hotmail.com

Filming for Christmas

Every year group is learning a beautiful spiritual dance to perform and be recorded, celebrating Christmas in a unique and special way. The films will be uploaded to both the school website and the school Facebook page. Whilst there are a number of children who are not allowed to have their pictures on the internet due to parental choice, we are on this unique occasion, going to contact all the families who would not normally be filmed and give them the opportunity to be filmed, just this once. Please be assured that there is no problem either way, as all the children will learn the dance and take part in class, the only difference will be that they are not filmed for the performance. Mrs Kerry has contacted those families and asked what they would like to do, as sadly we cannot have any families in school this Christmas. All pupils, whose parents have given consent already for Facebook and the website, will of course be filmed.



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A huge thank you is extended to Councillor Joyce Charlton, she has made a generous grant donation to school and this has allowed us to buy a new Camcorder, tripod and memory card to improve the quality of the recording, which will be uploaded onto the school website and Facebook page.

Christmas party days

All children can wear party clothes to school on their Christmas party day

Year group		Party Day
Nursery - am	Reception - pm	Monday 14 th December
Year 1 - am	Year 2 - pm	Tuesday 15 th December
Year 3 - am	Year 4 - pm	Wednesday 16 th December
Year 5 - am	Year 6 - pm	Thursday 17 th December

Action against Domestic Violence

Thursday 26th November marked the start of the **16 Days of Action against Domestic Violence campaign** that runs each year nationwide. It's such an important issue and Durham County Council are working with their partners across the county to raise awareness and point families in the direction of help when they need it most. Did you know 685 people came to our Housing Solutions team as a result of Domestic Abuse last year and 70% of all child protection cases in County Durham feature domestic abuse.

Durham County Council have chosen day one of the campaign – [White Ribbon Day](#) – to ask everyone to consider how they can help spread the word about domestic abuse. Take a listen to Cllr Surtees vlog, check out the Durham County Council social media and importantly get help and advice at the [Durham County Council Domestic Abuse webpages](#).

Internet Safety

As always, we want you to be well equipped to keep your children safe online when using electronic devices at home. There are two excellent websites to use to refresh yourself.

<https://www.internetmatters.org/> and <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/>



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Children in Need

The final total raised was an amazing £159.46, a huge thank you to all of you for your support. All of this money has been received through Parent pay so the office will organise a payment to be forwarded to the charity.

Non-Uniform Day

A wonderful £138.00 was raised and this has been allocated to school funds, we so appreciate all of your support with this as every little bit helps us provide for little extra bits in each class. Thank you all for your generosity.

Meet Mrs Fraser 'Online Teams' meetings

Just a quick reminder that there are still spaces left in the Teams meetings to meet Mrs Fraser.

- Tuesday 8th December 2020 at 5pm
- Wednesday 9th December 2020 at 10am
- Thursday 10th December 2020 at 10am
- Thursday 10th December 2020 at 5pm

If you would like to attend a meeting please could you email stanleystjosephs@durhamlearning.net as soon as possible, with the following information: Child's name and year group, an email address you would like the invitation sent to and the preferred date/ time slot. Places will be allocated on a first come first served basis, however more dates can be added if needed.

2021 Reception admissions

Please can you make sure that you have all completed your applications for your children to access a possible place in Reception 2021. All parents, including nursery parents, must apply for a place this way, no child in nursery is guaranteed a place simply by the fact that they attend our nursery.

<http://www.durham.gov.uk/article/2189/Apply-for-a-primary-place-deadline-15-January-2021>

Applications will close on Friday 15 January 2021 via the Durham County website. Please note - a late application, ie after 15 January 2021, greatly reduces your chances of getting into your preferred school. If you are unable to use the online form, if possible, please could you email the above form to schooladmissions@durham.gov.uk.



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Winter weather footwear

As the weather really starts to change, children are encouraged to wear wellington boots into school on wet/snowy days and bring school shoes in a plastic bag into school. They can also bring in a spare pair of sock/tights to be kept in their individual box under their desk.

Fr. Derek Peel RIP

It is with sadness that we inform you that Father Derek Peel, born 14th August 1946, died on Friday 20 November 2020; he was 74 years of age. We ask you to remember him in your prayers and Masses and also to commend him to the people of your parish for their prayers.

After a fruitful ministry in the Church of England Father Derek was received into Full Communion with the Catholic Church on 20 June 1998. He has faithfully served the people of our Diocese in the following parishes:

Curate:

South Shields: St. Oswald's, June 1998 – September 1999

Parish Priest:

Longbenton: Ss. Peter and Paul, September 1999 – November 2001

West Denton: St John Vianney, November 2001 – June 2007

Highfield: St. Joseph's & Chopwell: Our Lady of Lourdes, June 2007 – January 2012

Retired:

Dipton: St Patrick's, January 2012

Bishop Robert will celebrate Fr. Derek's Requiem Mass at 12.00 noon on Thursday 17 December at St. Patrick's, Dipton, which will be followed by his burial. The Mass will be live-streamed on the [parish Facebook page](#). A Memorial Mass will be celebrated for Fr. Derek when restrictions have been further eased. May he rest in peace.

As always, I appreciate all of your patience and support as we move through this pandemic. We continually keep all of our pupils and their families in our thoughts and prayers at this difficult time.

Best wishes,

A D Thorpe

Mrs A. Thorpe
Headteacher

