

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

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11th December 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

With only one more week to go until we finish for the Christmas holidays, the children and staff have all been amazing, they have altered all the plans and preparations we would normally make to fit in with the restrictions around COVID-19. I am eternally grateful for all the dedication and hard work staff continue to show towards making your children lives as special as possible, particularly at this time of year.

Updated information about school closure

Following the government guidance issued on the 8th December, I wrote to all parents/carers on 9th December informing you that school will be closed to all pupils on Friday 18th December. This is to help with the very difficult process of Test and Trace, requesting bubble closures and 14-day isolation for any classes with a positive case, where symptoms started anytime up to and including Saturday 19th December.

Cars outside school

Could I please ask that wherever possible, if you are waiting for your child outside of school in your car, you turn the engine off so the fumes do not blow out into the path of the children as they walk home? This can be of particular concern to our pupils/parents who are asthmatic. It has also been drawn to my attention that parents could be fined for leaving cars running idly unnecessarily.

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.

Christmas Gifts and Cards from staff

Staff have chosen to send a small token of Christmas appreciation home to your children, next week, as a way of acknowledging this joyous time of year. All gifts and the children's homemade Christmas Cards have been quarantined in School, this week, so that they can be sent out next week. I have been asked by lots of parents and children if they can bring a small token in for their teacher, I have said that they can, but children need to know that teachers will place all gifts in a box to quarantine them, please do not feel obliged to buy staff presents, as we totally appreciate how difficult times are at the moment.



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Love in a Box – Christmas Appeal

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, to donate some Christmas boxes to each of the four primary schools, within the area. They have asked parishioners to donate £10 to sponsor a Christmas box for a child, so far, they have raised over £2000. Unfortunately, there will not be enough boxes for every single child to receive one, so the parish has targeted this generous gift to the children who receive Free School Meals, if there are any extra they will be donated to families, who during the pandemic have accessed our 'Feeding Families Food Boxes.'

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

Today, every year group filmed their contribution to the beautiful spiritual dances and each class performed and recorded them. This is our new and unique way of celebrating Christmas together, and your children were amazing!! The films will be uploaded to both the school website and hopefully the school Facebook page next week by the IT technicians. I will let you know the link you can use to view your children. I am sure you will be as proud as we are of your children.

A huge thank you is extended to Councillor Joyce Charlton, she has made a generous grant 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.

Year 6 Christmas book recommendation - Roisin and Kelsey

Michael Morpurgo – The best Christmas Present in the world. The has come highly recommended by the girls as an emotional yet fantastic read! On Wednesday, two Year 6 girls came to my office to praise an amazing book which they had read in class that morning. They said it was so moving and emotional with a brilliant message that they wanted to recommend it to the whole School, this Christmas.



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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

North East Joint Transport Committee

Digital Allies has been supporting the newly formed North East Joint Transport Committee, firstly with a website build and secondly with an exciting initiative to engage with the public in the Big Transport Conversation. <https://www.transportnortheast.gov.uk/>

With the restrictions that Covid-19 has brought to our region the Big Transport Conversation has moved on line and is taking part 'virtually' as members of the public of all ages are being asked to record their views on any aspect of regional transport that is important to them on video and submit them to us via our website. It's important that we get views from as wide a cross section of the region's population as possible including children and so I would be grateful if you could share the attached PDF containing the background to the Big Transport Conversation and instructions as to how to get involved with it across your network of schools. There is a free prize draw for those that take part but the most important thing is to capture as many views from the region's public on the current transport system as possible. Your support in this matter is very much appreciated.

Free School Meals

For all pupils who are registered as being in receipt of Free School Meals, Mrs Pinkerton has started to sort out the online codes you will need to access your vouchers over the Christmas holidays, following an update from the Government.

KS1 (Year 2) Phonics Screening

Further to a change in the government guidance about assessments, over the last few weeks the Year 2 pupils have taken part in their new phonics screening test. The score is used as a national measure of children's phonological awareness and understanding. For those pupils who achieved the national 'pass mark' this is fantastic news despite the fact that they have missed so much time in school due to COVID-19. For those who have not quite made it this time, please do not worry, they will have lots more booster session over the rest of this academic year and be



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tested again in the summer of 2021. The current set of results letters will be sent home next Wednesday 16th December, after they have been printed and quarantined in school.

Pact House

If you want to nominate a child for a Christmas gift from PACT House, please contact 07720650533 with a name, age and gender of the child by 18th December and they will try to help.

Holiday Dates

A list of the annual [school holiday dates](#) is available on the school website for (2020-2021) and (2021-2022).

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.

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

