

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

17th December 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Here we are at the end of term, despite the challenging circumstances everyone is living in! We can all be proud of all the ways in which pupils, parents, carers, families, staff, governors, the parishioners and our clergy have pulled together during these difficult times to support one another. We always keep everyone in our weekly prayers. I hope you all manage to have a Christmas celebration free from the tortures of COVID-19.

COVID-19 update

We want you all to stay safe over the Christmas period, so we hope that this link will help you keep up to date with the [latest government advice](#). As you know, we are all currently living in [Tier Three](#), so please remember the following:

Hands. Face. Space

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)

URGENT - Reporting of COVID-19 symptoms / tests

If your child develops COVID-19 symptoms on Friday 18th or Saturday 19th, **YOU MUST** contact school urgently on stanleystjoseph@durhamlearning.net and let me know. I will be liaising with Public Health England about bubble closures during the first 6 days of the school holidays.

Love in a Box – Christmas Appeal

Father Dermott and the Parishes of St Joseph's, St Patrick's, St Mary's and Sacred Heart have joined together with the national 'Love Christmas' initiative, which pledges to give a million Christmas boxes across the UK. They have donated over 60 Christmas boxes, to each of the four primary schools, within our area. Members of our Year 6 class accepted their very generous offer of gifts on behalf of the whole school community. The gift bags will be distributed out to pupils who access Free School Meals, Pupil Premium children with the remainder being given out to some of our families who accessed the Feeding Families programme during the national Covid-19 Lockdown. We are hugely appreciative of this fantastic donation, thank you so much to all of our generous parishioners.



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Feeding Families

The last remaining food boxes will be given out this week. If you need further help over the Christmas holidays please contact Pact House, which has been doing some amazing things in the Stanley community.

Christmas liturgical dances

Last week, 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 have been uploaded to the secure St Bede's You tube channel by the school's ICT technician's and the links have been shared on Facebook – Your children were all simply amazing!!

Christmas party days

The children have loved celebrating Christmas with their individual bubble parties, full of laughter, music, fun and games – not to mention all of their amazing Christmas outfits! We know they have all experienced some of the Christmas cheer and excitement that should always be part of their lives at this time of year.

Bishop Robert

Bishop Robert came and celebrated mass on Sunday 13th December at St Joseph's, I know parishioners really appreciated his message of hope and love at this time of Advent.

Whole School Advent Liturgy's

Our children are wonderful and once again on Wednesday 16th December the UKS2 children led the whole school in a final Christmas liturgy, using Teams, so all classes could access it, whilst remaining socially distanced in their bubbles. It was beautiful and all of our pupils and staff appreciated being together in spirit.

Advent – The Pope's message of hope



“Being watchful in expectation of His coming means not letting ourselves be overcome by discouragement. *It is to 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? Why should we waste time complaining about the night, when the light of day awaits us?”

Pope Frances



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Christmas Masses

You must book a place if you wish to attend Christmas Mass in our family of parishes by ringing our booking number 07762 354516 which is open 5pm-8pm Monday to Thursday.

Please do not arrive more than 30 minutes before the start of Mass. As the weather gets colder, please remember to wrap up warm for Mass as doors and windows must be kept open to allow ventilation in Church. If you have not booked a place at Mass you may be turned away if the Church is fully booked. Masses will take place on:

- **Christmas Eve**
 - 2pm The Sacred Heart, Byermoor
 - 4pm St Patrick's, Dipton
 - 6pm St Joseph's, Stanley
- **Christmas Day** (Friday 25th December)
 - 10am St Joseph's, Stanley
- **Boxing Day** (Saturday 26th December)
 - 5pm St Patrick's Dipton
- **Sunday 27th December**
 - 11am St Joseph's, Stanley
- **Monday 28th December**
 - 10am Sacred Heart, Byermoor

Retirement

We would like to wish Mrs Davison a happy and restful retirement as she leaves us after many years of hard work and dedicated service to school. Both Governors and staff would like to say a huge thank you for all her patience and tireless efforts in keeping school so clean and tidy for all our children and staff over the years.

Thankyou for Christmas wishes and gifts

All staff, myself included, would like to extend a huge vote of thanks for all of your warm wishes for the Christmas holidays. We have been touched and amazed by the large number of warm wishes which have been sent into school via email, cards and presents. So thankyou again – we keep you all in our prayers.

Winter break online safety resources

The following weblinks are all really useful sources of information, aimed at helping you keep your child safe this Christmas, whilst online.

- [Staying safe this December](#) online – Think you know website
- [4 Top tips online safety](#) – Think you know website



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- [The Children's Society](#) – Online advice and resources
- [Marie Collins Foundation](#) – Online advice and resources
- [CEOP](#) online advice and resources

Parking outside school

Please help us keep all of the local residents, our children and our parents and carers as safe as possible when you come to school to collect your child. Please park in a safe place and walk to the school gates, wherever possible to collect your children. If you wait in your car, please do not keep your engine running idle as it pumps out fumes which is both bad for the environment but also difficult for any children and/or parents who has asthma or other medical conditions aggravated by fumes. We really appreciate all your help and support with this.

Durham County Benevolent fund

The County Durham School Benevolent Fund is an independent registered charity which offers a grant towards shoes and coats for school pupils. A grant of up to £35.00 can be awarded towards a winter coat and up to £35.00 for a pair of shoes for families who are eligible. A full list detailing who is eligible can be found within the application form. From 1 November 2020, CYPs have administered this fund on behalf of schools.

The home page of the Durham County Council website provides additional information and we ask at this time that families requesting support use the County website. Please note that requests for application forms can only be made by contacting the following: benevolentfund@durham.gov.uk

School 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.



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Final message:

As I leave you all to start my new Headship in Newcastle, I would like to thank you all for the most wonderful two and half years; I have been the really proud headteacher of St Joseph's and I know that it will continue to blossom and grow from strength to strength. I wish you all God's blessings for a peaceful and safe Christmas and I am sure you are all looking forward to a wonderful and happy new year. We can all only hope that with the new vaccines, which feels like they may be coming across the horizon, things may soon start to return to some semblance of normality. I will continue to keep all of you in my thoughts and prayers.

I would like to leave you all with the following thought...

"May the blessings of God's special gifts be yours this Christmas and in the New Year. May a Christmas star shine into your heart and burn in your spirit bright and may Jesus' peace bless you and bring true joy to you on Christmas night."

Best wishes,

A D Thorpe

Mrs A. Thorpe
Headteacher

