

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School



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Dear Parents/Carers,

They did it! Our first three weeks of school. Well done everyone for a super start to the school year - a whole class of superstars full of character! It has certainly been a strange start to the school year but despite all the crazy things going on in the world right now, our children have done themselves and everyone at St. Joseph's proud! It is lovely to see how the children literally bounce into the classroom each day!

Going to the bathroom independently and hand washing is becoming second nature to the children and they are great at washing their hands thoroughly to keep themselves and others safe. We have had a very hectic couple of weeks settling into the new routines of our Reception class, getting to know each other and making new friends. The children know we are all special and we are all friends together in our Reception class family. We have been incredibly busy getting to know our new setting and how to use our resources carefully and safely to help us learn. We are learning to work together as a team when it comes to tidy up time!

We have started learning our **Golden Rules** and will continue to follow them.

We are honest, we don't cover up the truth.

We are gentle, we don't hurt others.

We are kind and helpful, we don't hurt anybody's feelings.

We listen, we don't interrupt.

We work hard, we don't waste time.

We look after our resources, we don't damage things.

These are rules that will help us not only in Reception but throughout our school lives and hopefully beyond.

Traffic Lights System

The children are all very keen to get onto the silver star, gold star or to the "top of the door"- something you may have heard them talk about which is our behaviour traffic lights system. Every child starts each day on green and it's always good to be green! We try hard to make good choices as we want to avoid getting on the amber or red light. A red light results in a very disappointed Mrs Quiney, a phone call home and time to reflect on our choices. We all try and use kind words, have kind hands and hearts and are always truthful. We have also introduced a class marble jar as an incentive to work collaboratively. Once the marble jar is full, we will be rewarded as a class with a treat. We have already started the marble collection journey.

Carpet Time

We have worked really hard on good carpet sitting and listening - "Carpet Time is Quiet Time" - we are learning to cross our legs on the carpet, have hands on knees (we always give them a squeeze and a smile please!), eyes on the speaker, lips closed, ears listening- we don't interrupt and brain boxes on first time! We are also learning to raise a quiet hand and waiting for a turn if we have something to contribute. You may have heard our little mantra, "My turn, your turn, never together!"

Snippy Snappy Fingers

We have been strengthening our finger muscles by "popping" pictures, using chopsticks to pick up pasta, cheerios, feathers and all sorts of items found in our trays! We will soon be introducing Dough Disco into class every day. Warming up those important muscles in our hands, arms and shoulders in preparation for ultimately supporting children's handwriting skills.

Autumn Magic

We have been talking about the seasonal changes and what we have noticed out and about. The children have been working very hard using their gross motor skills and strong muscles to move the leaves from the yard, such a great way of showing communication and teamwork skills. We have been looking for the magic of autumn on our nature walks and will continue these around school. We will be spending time counting conkers, apples, berries and leaves that have been collected and we will be comparing shapes, sizes and textures. We will also use our autumn finds to create some imaginative collages.

You may decide to go on some autumn walks and discuss with your children why the leaves have fallen, discover things together and encourage them to share their finds with us verbally.

Class Prayers

We have started learning our class prayers and I am so impressed by their eagerness to join in.

Morning snack Cool Milk

In Reception, children receive a piece of fruit every morning- this is a national fruit scheme which is free to all our children in early years. Lots of children are requesting milk at snack time. Unfortunately we are unable to provide it unless you have registered at www.coolmilk.co.uk It is very straightforward to register and it is currently provided free of charge to all children under 5. All children have been given it this week but if you wish for this continue and haven't yet done so, please can you register?

School Packed Lunches

We have been really pleased with how willing the children are to try new food in class. We have learnt that it is always good to try either something new or something we think we don't like, at least five times before giving up and usually the children realise their brains may have just been tricking them! It is amazing how they will give food a go when all their friends are doing the same!

Water Bottles

Your children are encouraged to access their water bottles throughout the day to stay hydrated. Please can you support us by only sending in water and not fruit juice/ flavoured water in line with school policy. Thank you.

Staffing

You may have mentioned a new name in conversation recently. We are very lucky to have Miss Searle supporting in class, joining our Reception class team which is made up of myself, Mrs Scott and Miss Gill.

Teaching and Learning

Some parents are very keen to find out when we will start "proper teaching and learning". We have been doing this from the moment your child walks through the school gates! Getting to know each other, ensuring they feel safe and happy in their new environment, being independent, are all skills of vital importance. The Reception class curriculum uniquely highlights the importance of all those skills that children need in order to access the learning that takes place later on. The "prime" areas of learning underpin all other teaching in the reception class setting.

Wows

Let us know what you have been up to at home and share achievements. You know your child best and their interests matter! We normally send a batch of "Wow" slips for you to fill in throughout the term but for now you can send these in by email to the school office address FAO Mrs Quiney- Wow Moments will be forwarded to me and we can share these achievements with the rest of the class. It is a great way to build confidence and promote speaking and listening in the classroom.

Clothing Plea

Please can you help us by labelling as many of your child's clothing as they are virtually impossible to reunite with their owner without a name! It will help make our lives easier when it comes to reuniting items with the correct child (especially once we start changing for PE).

Suncream

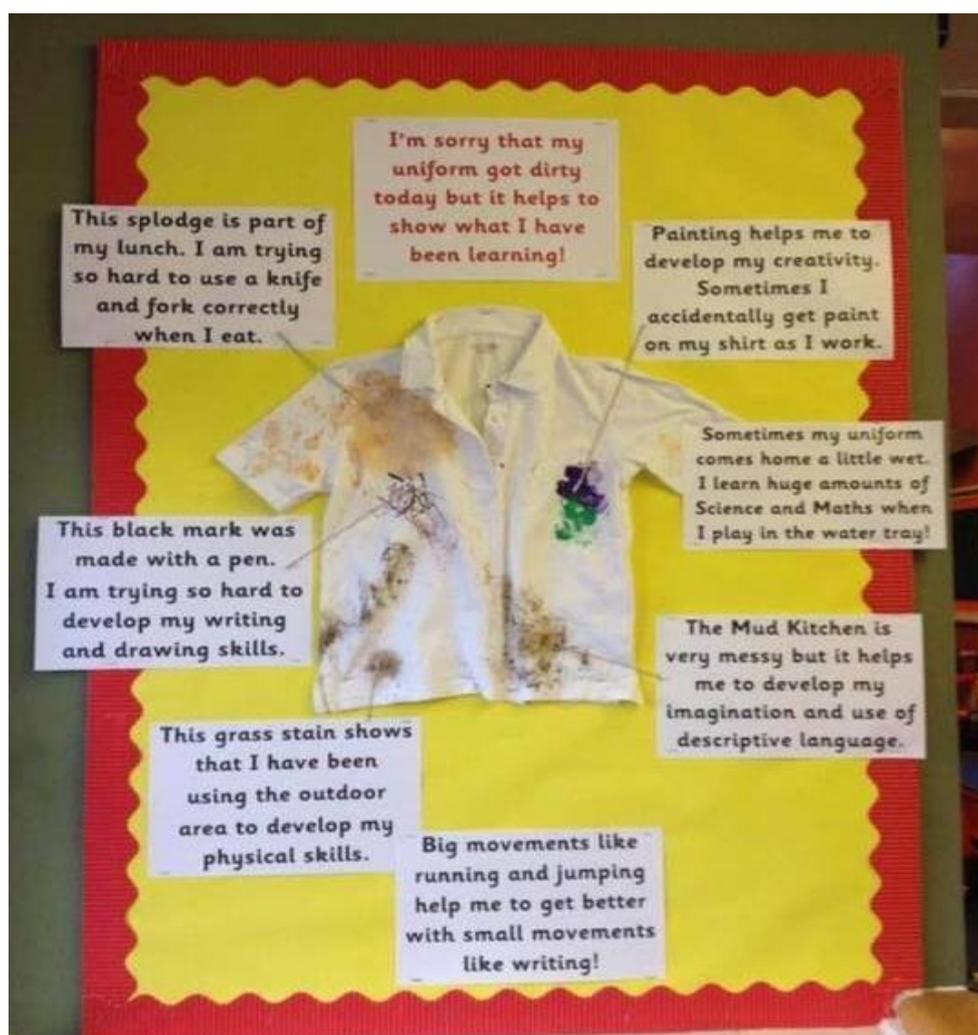
Although we are heading into cooler days, we have been having some very warm autumnal days. Please can you apply an "all day" suncream at home before school on those days? Thank you.

Wellies

Please (another plea!) can you send in a pair of labelled wellies into school? We will be spending more time outdoors as the year progresses.

School uniform

The children are coming in looking so smart in their uniforms but please don't be too disturbed if they come out covered in stains. The post below sums it up nicely!



Phonics and Reading

The teaching of reading and writing will begin after we have settled the children in and assessed their starting points (not formal tests- the children won't even know they're being assessed!) It will be several months before we will start sending reading books home. When children are comfortable with a number of sounds, we will begin to teach them to blend the sounds together to read words. Some words cannot be 'sounded out' and will be introduced to children as 'tricky words'. Only when we are confident that your child has sufficient confidence with sounds and tricky words to enjoy reading, will we begin to send home reading books. Books can still be enjoyed at home!

It's not a race so please don't compare! The children are not robots and will learn at their own pace and we will support them accordingly.

Maths Ten Town and Power Maths

Throughout the course of the year the children will access both Ten Town and Power Maths. Ten Town is a unique early years maths scheme designed to improve number recognition and formation. Characters bring numbers alive in exciting animations, games and activities. Power Maths is a whole-class mastery programme designed to spark curiosity and excitement and build confident mathematicians.

We are always on the lookout for items which we can use to enhance the children's learning. We always need pans and utensils, phones, cash tills, old (even broken) typewriters, offcuts of wallpaper- we will make use of it all so please do think of us whenever you are having a clear-out!

And finally, these are our priorities for our children in Reception this half term...

MY CHECK LIST FOR EVERY CLASS THIS YEAR

1. Keep them safe
2. Lower their anxiety
about the current situation
3. Make them laugh
4. Make them feel loved
5. Teach them something

All in that order



Kindest regards,
Mrs Quiney

