



February Half Term Newsletter 2021

12.02.2021

Welcome to February Half-Term's Newsletter - Week Ending 12.02.2021

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

Welcome to our end of half-term newsletter.

It has been a unique and challenging half-term for school staff, pupils and parents & carers- we are all missing hugs, missing being able to gather together and have discovered that online learning is considerably harder than learning in the classroom! However, I am extremely impressed and proud at how all in our school community have risen to the challenge, showing unwavering resilience and energy when adapting to this new approach to learning. I'd like to personally thank all of St. Mary's school staff for their hard work in providing a high-quality remote education at such short notice; pupils for continuing to be positive and hard-working and parents & carers for your support and help, both for your children and for St. Mary's.

We pray and await the Prime Minister's announcement that it will be safe to re-open to all pupils from 8th March, as is hoped, but in the meantime, stay in touch, stay safe and please pray for all in our community.

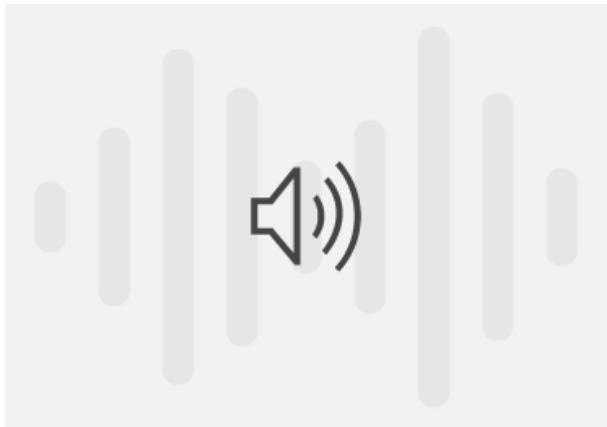
Mrs Borriello

The Headlines for this Newsletter:

- *Gospel Message - Draw me to Your Presence*
- *Safeguarding*
- *COVID-19 Updates- Tests and Trace/Lateral Flow Testing*
- *Parent Governor*
- *Remote Education*
- *Children's Mental Health Awareness Week*
- *Competition*
- *Screen-free afternoon*
- *Words of Pope Francis*
- *Contact School*

[*Gospel Message - Draw me to your Presence*](#)





<https://sway.office.com/BF0X74bDexzFLvAe#content=37rgwIRk2bwOf2>

1 - Press play to listen to the hymn "Turn to Me", by John Foley, as you read the next section of our newsletter.

Next week sees the start of Lent. On Ash Wednesday, the six-week journey of Lent begins, where we are called to a deeper commitment to prayer, fasting and giving. In the Gospel reading for Ash Wednesday, **Jesus teaches us the importance of personal renewal**, rather than acting for the sake of appearance.

Matthew 6: 1 - 6, 16-18 (paraphrased)

Jesus said to his disciples: “Good deeds are great, and God rewards them. But don’t parade around your good deeds so that everyone notices: you’ll lose all your reward then! So when you give to charity, don’t shout about it so everyone admires you for your generosity. People that do that have already had their reward. No, give in secret, so that even your left hand doesn’t know what your right hand is doing! I promise you, God sees all that is done in secret and will reward you in heaven.” “And when you pray, don’t be loud and show off! Go to your room, shut your door and pray to God in secret. Remember, God sees all that is done in secret and will reward you in heaven. “And when you give something up don’t look sad so that people know you’re giving something up! No one needs to know except God who sees all that is done in secret. I tell you again, God sees all that is done in secret and will reward you in heaven.”

Why not take a moment to discuss with your child:

- *How can we give during Lent?*
- *How can we pray more during Lent?*
- *What action can we take during Lent (give something up, or take something up)?*

Prayer

Draw me to your presence, Lord,

Bring me into that Holy place

so I may see Your glory,

the beauty of your face.

Safeguarding



Early Help

An Early Help Assessment is a great way of getting your family some support, whether it be with your child's behaviour, their sleeping pattern or social and emotional wellbeing, or something that effects the whole family, housing and finances, for example.

It involves a meeting with professionals from different agencies (dependent on your family's individual needs) and a plan will be put in place to show the different support you will receive and who is responsible for getting this done.

It is not input from Social Services: it is there as a support tool only, for a variety of different reasons.

If you have any questions, or feel you may benefit from this, please contact Ms Mosley on 01384 985 005, or contact the school office to arrange a virtual appointment to see her.

Safeguarding

Please be aware that we have a duty of care to all children at St. Mary's and this may mean we need to contact Social Services for advice or to report a situation. We understand that this can be distressing for those involved, but please be assured that we **always** have your child's best interests at heart.

COVID-19 Updates: Test and Trace/Lateral Flow Device Testing



During the half-term break, it is important that we still assist with NHS Test and Trace, to ensure we are all kept safe. If any pupil who has been attending school, tests positive, please notify school straight away through the "Contact School" section of the COVID-19 tab, or by following this link: [Contact School- Test and Trace](#). This form can also be used for contacting school in emergencies, whilst there are no staff on site during school holidays.

Lateral Flow Testing: Rapid COVID testing is being sent to Primary schools across the country. Staff will be able to access tests (twice a week) which will indicate whether they have COVID. This is currently only for staff and there are no plans for this to be disseminated down to the children. This will form another layer of protection for the staff in school and reassurance hopefully for parents with children in school.

Parent Governors



Election of Parent Governors

I am writing to you with an opportunity for you to become further involved in the life of St. Mary's Catholic Primary School by taking part in the election of Parent Governors.

The Articles of Association and Scheme of Delegation requires that the Governing Body must include two Parent Governors who have been elected by the parents of registered pupils of the school and who themselves are parents of registered pupils of the school at the time of their election. However, any parent who is an elected member of the local authority or employed to work at the school for more than 500 hours in any twelve consecutive months is not eligible to be a Parent Governor.

Those elected will not 'represent' parents or their own children. They will be elected to the Governing Body to support the Principal and her team in the organisation of the school.

The Governing Body meets half-termly, about six times per school year (meetings take place in the evening - currently via Zoom, but usually in school), and there may be sub-committee meetings in support of this work. The main role of the Governing Body is to oversee the organisation of the school with particular emphasis on the provision of Catholic education, the maintenance of the Catholic ethos throughout the school and links with the Parish, Church and Parish Priest. The Governing Body will also be involved in the implementation of policies, curriculum plans and the arrangements for teaching and learning. The appointment will be for a four year term. If you believe you are able to support the school in this most important role, please contact the school office for a nomination form. The nomination form should be completed and returned to the school office by Friday 5th March 2021. Nominations after this time will not be considered.

We are seeking to elect two parents of child/ren currently attending the school. Should only two people put their name forward they will automatically be elected to the Governing Body without the need for voting to take place. Should more than two people put their name forward an election will be held with the two people receiving the highest number of votes being elected to the Committee. Further information on voting arrangements will be sent to you at a later date if required.

Please contact Mrs Borriello for more information on the role of Parent Governor.

Remote Education



Registers: Please encourage your child to log into Live Zoom sessions (details on Purple Mash) each morning and at the end of the day and say hello to their teacher. This may create a good routine for your child in which they can prepare themselves for the work online.

Please could all parents/carers remind their child(ren) the importance of keeping themselves muted, until asked to speak, to reduce any disruption.

Technical Issues at Home: For those parents/carers who are having technical issues at home or do not have access to a computer for their children please inform the school to see where we could help. School can provide packs of work for those children who simply cannot access the work online.

If you would like a pack, it is **essential** you notify the school to enable us to print off the required work. Please only seek this help as a last resort as we want to reduce the footfall around school as much as possible. Please be aware that not all work set on Purple Mash can be printed.

We will only create packs on demand - please be aware the work printed off will be the work from the blogs and will cover as many days as the teachers have planned for and will only include work that is able to be printed.

Below you will see lots of different website that cover a range of topics to which may help you alongside the work set on Purple Mash. If your child has finished the work set by your class teacher and you would like them to try something additional to this please visit the sites below.

Educational Resources

- **BBC Bitesize:** Daily lessons <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/dailylessons>
- **Oak National Academy:** Online classroom and research hub for teachers, by teachers <https://www.thenational.academy/>
- **Phonics Play:** Free to use during the COVID-19 period to help children with their phonics <https://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/>
- **Oxford Owl:** Learning at home activities (primary) <https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/>
- **Book Trust:** Book recommendations and quizzes <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/books-and-reading/have-some-fun/quizzes>

Parent/Carer Survey for Remote Education:

Thank you to all those who completed our remote education survey recently. As a result of suggestions from parents/carers, all Purple Mash blogs now contain links to physical exercise activities to help keep children active in their breaks and we always aim to set work that does not need any printing, via programmes such as "2Write" on Purple Mash.

Here are some of parents/carers comments from our recent survey:

"I think the remote learning is being conducted very effectively"

"We enjoy still being part of the class even at home via Zoom. Assembly is always great to see friendly faces too."

"I cannot thank you all enough for all your support and for continuing to teach my children during this difficult time"

"I'd just like to say thank you to all of the staff for everything they are doing and all of the work being provided."

Thank you for your support.

A **HUGE** thank you to many generous parents and parishioners who have donated laptops to the school for pupils who are otherwise unable to access remote education. We still have some of the laptops available. If you are struggling to access remote education due to a lack of devices, please contact the school office via the admin email address.

Thank you to:

Mrs Partridge

Mr Miles

Mr R Bryan

Miss A Bryan

Mrs I Bryan

Mrs Beat

Ms P Bryan and Brendan

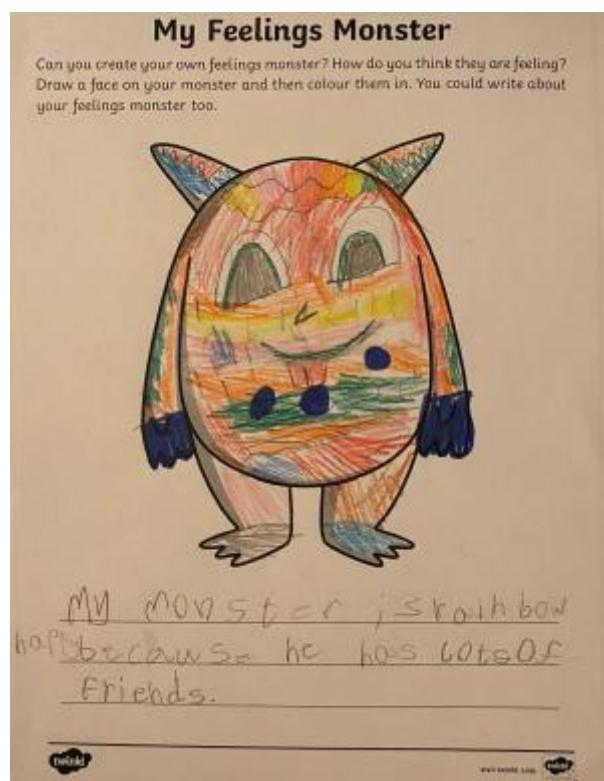
Children's Mental Health Awareness Week

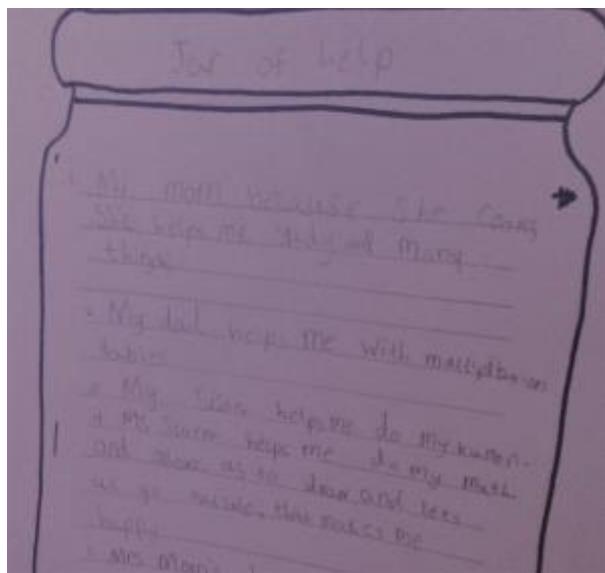


I hope you all managed to look after your Mental and Emotional Wellbeing last week. I challenge you to keep an element of that week going throughout the year - we are certainly looking to encourage more within school. If you missed it last week then please have a look at the Purple Mash blog for your child's year group and try some of the activities.

Mental Health Awareness Week

Just a sample of some of the fantastic work St. Mary's pupils have produced.





Staying Safe Online:

I can not recommend this site highly enough. It has fantastic advice and guidance for parents regarding online safety. It also provides up date information on the latest apps and games your child (ren) may be using. It informs you on how to make them safe and also where to go for advice. Please have a read of the NSPCC Net-aware site:

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/online-safety-lockdown/>

Farmvention (STEM) Competition 2021



As a school we would like you to take part in the National Stem Competition. Winners will present their ideas at a prestigious event at the Houses of Parliament and win £1000 for their school to spend on STEM or Outdoor Learning equipment. Closing date is 31st May.

The competition does say KS1 and KS2 but we know our Reception children are capable of taking part too!

We are always looking to take care of the world that God created for us so I thought it would be a nice idea to take part in the 'Renewable Energy' part of the competition. This way we are making sure that we are doing our part to protect the wonderful world that God has created for us. Here is a link to enter the competition: <https://www.farmvention.com/Inspiration/Hub/RenewableEnergy>

I will send out more details via the School Life App the first week back after half term.

I look forward to seeing your entries,

Miss Slater

Screen-Free afternoons



We are currently spending far more time at a screen than staff and parents/carers would normally encourage. Therefore, we have introduced screen-free afternoons each week, to encourage pupils to move away from the screen at least for this time. We have loved seeing photos and work, which pupils have sent in, of all the things you have been up to in this time!









Words of Pope Francis



Pope Francis on Hope:

'From my point of view, God is the light that illuminates the darkness, even if it does not dissolve it, and a spark of divine light is within each of us'

You can view [Pope Francis' prayer intention for February here](#)

Contact Us



Polite reminder - teachers can be contacted using the class email address or through making a telephone appointment through the Main Office. Teachers will reply as soon as possible, during normal school hours.

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Brierley Hill

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admin@st-mary-bh.dudley.sch.uk

Visit us on the web at [St. Mary's Website](#)