



ST KATHARINE'S CE  
SCHOOL

**Friendship, Effort, Respect, & Honesty**

Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020

NEWSLETTER No. 19

Our Value This Term Is... *Thankfulness*



**Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June**

*Dear Parents,*

I hope this finds you all well and managing life to the best of your ability. The picture for everyone seems to be continually changing; never before has it seemed so important to take one day or week at a time. Life in school leaves us with mixed feelings. Whilst we are delighted to have the Reception, Year 1, Year 6 and Key Worker children back with us, it is difficult to fully enjoy this with the knowledge that so many of our children are still at home. It is with this in mind that I write this letter, knowing that our sense of community is increasingly stretched as the week's pass and that life, more than ever, is very different from household to household. I would ask that you do read communications from school carefully at this time so that we can ensure that you are as up to date with the changing picture as it is possible for you to be.

**Government Announcement Last Week; other year groups returning**

You will all be aware that government plans to return larger numbers of children to school changed last week. The original stated intention that all year groups would return before the end of the summer term became impossible to implement with the 2m distancing rule still in place and the requirement to keep class sizes to a maximum of 15. I feel it is important to make clear that up until now, like all other schools nationally, we have followed the guidelines and directives set out by government by bringing reception, Year 1 and Year 6 back to school. All of our decisions are led by that guidance and the detailed measures that need to be in place to keep everyone as safe as possible.

In order to provide school places for these children and the children of key workers we are using every available teaching space and all members of available staff. There are a huge number of logistical factors and new procedures that we have needed to become familiar with; whilst still the school we know and love, St Katharine's is having to operate quite differently to normal.

For those of you with a child or children still at home it can of course seem that the playing field is no longer as level as it once was. I know from the communication that I have had with some of you that things are becoming increasingly challenging; children are less easy to motivate and very importantly, missing the social interaction and stimulation that school provides. We are working really hard behind the scenes to find inventive ways to lessen the impact of the coming weeks on those children in Ys 2,3,4 and 5. The sports club offer from In2Sport is one example of how we are trying to offer opportunities to bring the children in to school and be with their peers.

We will continue to communicate with you when and if we are able to offer more. We are certainly not complacent about the situation and the offer to the year groups currently unable to attend school.

Neither do we underestimate the importance of this for the children at home.

I know that after so many weeks of school closure patience is in short supply. Unfortunately, I need to ask you for yours and also ask you to trust that we are doing the very best we can under such unique and difficult circumstances.

Please also be mindful that whilst you may hear of schools who are operating differently to St Katharine's and perhaps offering school places to children in Ys 2-5, this will be because all schools have very unique circumstances, staffing ratios and building capacities. Whilst this might be difficult to understand, we ask that you try to avoid comparison with other settings in the knowledge that we are doing everything we

can, whilst protecting staff and pupil well-being and safety. We hope to be in a position to communicate our plans for returning other year groups early next week.

### **Phone Calls Home**

This week we have been calling all families with children still at home and will continue to do so over the coming fortnight. Please use this opportunity to make teachers aware of any particular difficulties that you might be encountering. We will not necessarily be in a position to solve all problems but may be able to help in some way. If you have a child in school and one or more children at home, we will try to make sure that we give you the opportunity to talk on the school gate. Please do request to have a conversation with your child's teacher at pick up or drop off if this is a matter of urgency – we will do our best to facilitate this.

### **Home Learning Updates**

We continue to upload home learning grids for all children every Monday morning. You will now be very familiar with the format and how to access materials either in SeeSaw or for older learners via Office 365. We have been able to offer a regular Teams meeting for Chestnut Class, the first of which happened on Monday this week. It was lovely to see the children and hear stories of new pets, fears overcome and skills learnt. We are also adding a well-being catch up for year 5 in addition to their regular meetings with Mr Sandall.

It is always lovely to see the work that the children have been doing uploaded to SeeSaw and I know that our teachers really enjoy seeing the outcomes of the work that they have set the children. For those of you who are finding that they need to add something to the mix please to explore the teaching videos on the Oak National Academy. These are particularly useful if you are concerned about how to explain something to your child.

Please follow this link: <https://www.thenational.academy/>

### **Virtual Gallery**

Please keep the children's work coming in. We are looking to create a space on our school website where we can celebrate some of the children's achievements during this period of school closure. Please send work to the admin@ email address with the subject something for the virtual gallery. It would be lovely to have a piece of work from everyone. I will let you know when the virtual gallery is up and running so that you can go and take a virtual tour! *\*Please be reminded that by sending in the work you are in turn giving consent for us to share it in this way.*

### **Changing Circumstances**

We know that for many families there may have been a change of circumstances in recent weeks and we know that job and therefore financial security may have been compromised. If you find yourself in a situation where you are now needing to make a claim for universal credit or another benefit and think your child may be entitled to a free school meal, please get in touch. We are able to access free school meal vouchers for those families with children at home or in school. You will be aware that the government have recently committed to the funding of free school meals throughout the summer holidays so if you meet the criteria for this support please do get in touch so that we can help. Even if you are not eligible for any government benefit but feel that you need support at this time please also get in touch with us as there may be organisations or resources that we can investigate on your behalf.

### **Healthy Snacks at Playtime**

The free fruit and veg scheme, that means all of our KS1 children (YR – Y2) get a piece of fruit every day for snack is currently not operating so if your child is in school please send them with a healthy snack to eat at playtime.

### **This from the PCC...**

Dear Parishioner / Member of St Katharine's congregation,  
Just to let you know that St Katharine's Church is now open daily for private prayer.  
Please respect the requests on the new church notices to keep yourself and others safe.  
Rosemary (Davies)

With kind regards

*Niki Jones*

Principal