



Diocese of Portsmouth

ST EDMUND'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

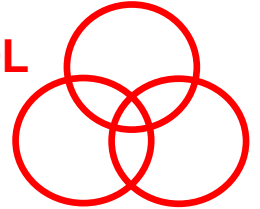
Radley Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 3PP

Tel: 01235 521558 Fax: 01235 532778

e-mail: office.3856@st-edmunds-rc.oxon.sch.uk

www.st-edmunds-rc.oxon.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mrs M Delany-White



15th May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

As you know from my letter to you all earlier in the week, and from the recent news updates, the Government is hoping that children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 will return to school after the half term holiday. This return will depend on the infection rates and will only happen if the Government and their scientific advisors consider it safe to do so. We have now started to plan for this happening but it would greatly help if you could return the questionnaire I sent out earlier in the week, if you haven't done so already; but only if you have a child/ren in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 or Year 6. This will give us an indication of how many children may be returning to school after the holiday. As I said previously, this is entirely your decision as parents, we will not be pressurising you to do anything you are not comfortable with and you will not be fined for your child's non-attendance.

We are also planning for the current group of children of key workers and vulnerable children to continue to attend school, as now. We have, however decided to close to all pupils over the May half term and school will be closed on Monday 1st June for the planned INSET day. We will now use that day to prepare the classrooms and staff ready for an increase in attendance in those year groups from June 2nd, if the government and scientific advice deems it safe to do so.

I will send further details of drop off, pick up times and an outline of our plans to parents of Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 parents as soon as they are finalised. Please be aware that we will need parents to stick rigidly to the times and procedures we will be putting in place to help minimise the risk of infection and no parents will be allowed on site, all children will be dropped off and collected by staff from the school gate and walked directly into the classroom they will be using (which may not be their usual classroom) as classes will need to be split into at least two groups to help with distancing.

Thank you very much for continuing to engage so well with our home learning provision. There continues to be a high level of response in all year groups, which is certainly keeping the teachers busy! Can I politely ask some of you to consider the teachers' workload and family circumstances - many are juggling their own children's learning at home as well as trying to respond to and support all of the differing needs of children and parents from the class and taking their turn in teaching the children currently in school on a rota basis. Do remember they need evenings and weekends for down time too. We recognise the challenges that home learning brings to family life in difficult circumstances. Please be kind to yourselves and accept the limitations that you are working under in your household. I





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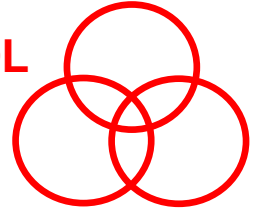
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hope that you are managing to get into the outdoors as much as possible and I urge you to continue to make the most of this extra family time if you can, before normal life returns once more.

Online Safety

Please be vigilant to on-line dangers at this time. The Thames Valley Police have issued the following advice.

Key message for children:

- *Don't be afraid of coming forward and speaking to a parent, carer, guardian, teacher or other trusted adult.*
- *The Police are here to help and support you – you will not be in trouble.*
- *Know who you are talking to on-line. If something doesn't feel right – tell someone.*

Key messages for parents:

- *Trust your instinct for signs, you know your child better than anyone*
- *Have your children suddenly become very secretive?*
- *Are they sad or withdrawn but won't say why?*
- *Do they seem distracted*
- *Do they have sudden mood swings?*
- *Are they unable to switch off from their phone or social media?*
- *Have open conversations with children about their internet usage.*
- *Use parental controls and seek guidance from the available free resource.*

TVP is strongly advocating the use of the NCA CEOP website www.thinkuknow.co.uk for information on staying safe – this contains links to advice for children at different age groups, parents/carers and professionals including teachers. We also have many useful links on our school website online safety page: <https://st-edmunds-rc.oxon.sch.uk/information/e-safety/>

Please do contact myself or Mrs Demarchi if you have any worries or concerns regarding your child or your family situation; or contact Mrs Attridge for online safety and support.

Staffing update

We are thrilled to tell you that Mrs Moloney is now fit and well and will be able to return to school soon. This is such a relief to all of us and I am sure you will all welcome Mrs Moloney back when you next see her. Sadly, this means that Mrs Bignell has now left us. We appointed Mrs Bignell on a temporary contract to cover Mrs Moloney's absence, but we are





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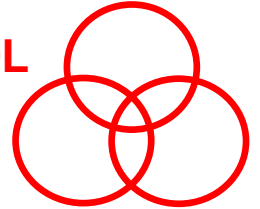
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very sorry to see her go. As children and parents in Year 5 will testify, Mrs Bignell brought great enthusiasm and many talents to the Year 5 team. I am sure you will join me in thanking her for all her hard work and wishing her well. Also, children and parents in Year 5 will be aware that Mrs Graham is slowly recovering from Coronavirus. Unlike the other members of staff who have had the virus, Mrs Graham is taking much longer to get back up to full strength so we will continue our prayers and well wishes for her recovery for a little while longer.

Sadly, we will also be saying goodbye to Mrs Pratt in the summer. Mrs Pratt has been a key figure at St Edmund's for seventeen years but has now decided it is time to leave. As you all know, Mrs Pratt does a tremendous job and her knowledge of St Edmund's is infinite, so I am anticipating it being very difficult to replace her. I am sure you will all join me in thanking Mrs Pratt for everything she does for us all and wishing her and her family well for the future.

MONTH OF MAY:

Pope Francis reminds us that this is a time when the People of God express with particular intensity their love and devotion for the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is traditional in the month of May to pray the Rosary at home within the family - especially during these days when we cannot do so in church. Pope Francis points out that by praying the Rosary, we may become even more united as a spiritual family and will help us overcome this time of trial. His letter on this subject and the accompanying two prayers he asks us to pray, can be downloaded from the 'News' or 'Parish Blog' pages on Our Lady and St Edmund's church website. Jesus said that: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." If you would like to join in praying the Rosary with other parishioners, please email: contact@ourladyandstedmund.org.uk and they will send you information on how you can do this.

FOODBANKS:

The Foodbank at Northcourt Road is open on Tuesday and Friday Mornings. Donations can be brought there between 9.30 and 1.00 pm, and parcels can be collected between 11.00 and 1.00 pm. On Wednesday the South Abingdon Foodbank is open between 1.00 and 2.30 at Preston Road Community Centre.

The Foodbank is particularly short of long life milk, tinned meat and tinned vegetables including potatoes, tinned spaghetti hoops, small bags of sugar and bottles of fruit squash but any of the items shown on the 'News' page of their website are also welcome. You can either drop donations off at Northcourt Road **or** contact us to pick them up from your doorstep by emailing: contact@ourladyandstedmund.org.uk

Thank you as always for all your kindness and support. I hope to see you all again soon,

Mrs Delany-White

Headteacher

