



## Diocese of Portsmouth

# ST EDMUND'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

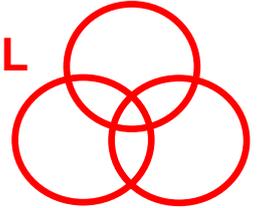
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Headteacher: Mrs M Delany-White



28<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

We have all had to adapt to different ways of working again, so I wanted to start by taking the opportunity to tell you again what an amazing job you are doing supporting your child's wellbeing and learning during the last few weeks. It continues to be a stressful and challenging time, so it's ok if you and your child feel wobbly and worried at the moment. Remember, if you have any concerns about helping your child learn, or you need any other support from school, please let us know by emailing the class teacher or talking to them via the 1:1 learning clinics- they are keen to help and support you and your child. Alternatively, send an email to the school office for the attention of Mrs Demarchi (SENCO) or myself. Even if you just need to hear a friendly voice and a little reassurance we are here and we want to help.

We are delighted by the uptake of children accessing the group and individual learning clinic sessions on Microsoft Teams. The teachers tell me the group sessions are the highlight of their week as they are really missing seeing all the children everyday. Please encourage your child to join their session every week to see their friends and their teacher. Please also use the individual learning clinics as often as you or your child needs to. These clinics are a way for the teachers to explain things to you or your child or to have motivational chats with your child and set them small achievable goals to keep them engaged in their learning. In school it has been very quiet without the usual bustle of a full school. We have no idea how long this situation may last but hope all the children can be back in school as soon as is safely possible.

I would particularly like to celebrate the way everyone has risen to the challenges of learning at home again. It has been great to hear from our teachers that nearly every pupil in school has responded by looking at the learning prepared by our staff, sending work into school, logging onto Purple Mash or posting observations on Tapestry and joining Teams sessions. I am so proud of all that you are achieving right now. This does not mean our message of looking after your well-being first has changed - if you or your child are finding it difficult, please remember it is okay to just do some of the work set or to get siblings to do some things together. The teachers are setting work to cover all abilities and to match the Department of Education's remote learning expectations. If this is too much at times that's okay, keep things manageable and achievable for you and your family, whilst managing your work commitments as well. Overall please keep hearing your children read and enjoy stories together. As long as children learn to read they can access the rest of the curriculum. We can focus on filling in any gaps when the children return to school. Remember, you are there to give your child love and care, which is difficult to do well if you are too stressed yourself so remember to look after yourself too.

Thanks to the generosity of several kind people within our community we now may be able to help if you are having difficulties with accessing computers or devices for your child. We





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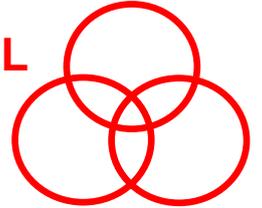
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have already offered devices to a few families but please get in touch if you need to. Some mobile phone network providers are helping with data, so check with yours, and you can access BBC Bitesize without it eating your data. More information is here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-55616959> Alternatively, many families are collecting packs of work from the school office each week, just ask the class teacher if you would like a work pack prepared for your child each week. Conversely, if you, your employer or any family members have any working old laptops/tablets/ iPads that they would like to donate to the school to help another child learn please get in touch.

One question I am asked so often is when will we be fully open again? I wish I knew, but I hope it will not be too far away! We have taken a step towards that this week as all primary schools have now been supplied with Lateral Flow Devices to be used by staff twice a week to test for asymptomatic Covid-19. Hopefully, the regular testing of all school staff will help reduce the transmission within our community even further. There are, of course, consequences to our testing; if a member of staff tests positive (despite showing no symptoms), all their close contacts will need to isolate while they take a PCR test. This will mean children in their bubble will have to remain at home until we have the result of the PCR test. If the PCR test is positive the bubble will remain closed while all children and staff who have had contact isolate for 10 days. If the PCR test is negative, children and staff will be able to return to school. Although we would like to give parents as much notice as we can, it could be that I have to contact you the evening before, so if your child is currently in school please be aware that most staff are testing on Sunday and Wednesday evenings starting this week. I apologise now for any inconvenience this will cause but the purpose of the tests and isolating is to help reduce the spread of Covid-19 so that we can return to as much of our normal lives as possible.

Thank you for all your support for the staff and your children. Please keep safe and well and keep following all of the government's advice around hands-face-space. At least it's only two more weeks to half term and there'll be no home learning set for the half term week (15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> February.) Hopefully schools will be able to fully reopen again soon after that.

I hope to see you all again soon.

Yours sincerely,

*Mrs Delany-White*

Headteacher

