



# St Mary's CE VC First School

Charminster  
Dorchester  
Dorset  
DT2 9RD

Head Teacher: Suzanne Garner BA (HONS) QTS

Telephone: 01305 263880  
E-Mail: [office@charminster.dorset.sch.uk](mailto:office@charminster.dorset.sch.uk)

Newsletter 7 - 2021/22

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Dear Parents and Carers,

The arrival of our beautiful Christmas tree and the sound of the children singing Christmas songs has kept us all going in school this week. The children have been wonderful and continue to be positive, cheerful and helpful despite their concerns surrounding Covid-19 and friends being unwell and absent from school. Thank you to Mole Valley Country Stores in Dorchester for donating our fabulous tree this year and to Stacey, our School Association Chair Person, for organising it!

It has been a challenging few weeks in school for us all with Covid cases amongst our children rising daily. Thank you for supporting us in following advice and guidance by taking your child for PCR tests and for carrying out daily LFD tests if requested. This week has been especially difficult in responding to a steady rise in cases and I am grateful for kind words of support for myself and staff as we work hard to ensure that the correct information is sent out and that all in our community are kept informed. Please remember that we are doing our very best in a situation which is completely new to us. We endeavour to answer the phone and respond to your emails in a cheerful and helpful way and to be respectful and sensitive to your concerns and worries. Let's all try to be kind and supportive of each other as we work through this period in school. I am in touch with consultants from the Dorset Public health team daily and work alongside our team to put into place their suggestions for minimising risks and protecting our children, staff and families.

The staff and I felt very sad this afternoon as we decided that we will be unable to perform a traditional Charminster whole-school Christmas Play this year. Attendance is at its lowest than it has been for a long time due to Covid and other winter illnesses and we have an especially large number of absences amongst the older children who lead the acting and singing. Instead of the play, each class will record themselves doing something Christmassy and we will add these to our Youtube channel for you to watch and enjoy during the Christmas break. Class teachers will let you know further information regarding any changes to costume requests early next week. The play, 'It's a Census, Get me Out of Here!', will be carried over to next year and we hope that we will be able to begin class assemblies, performances and invite parents into school again in the new year.

Our Christian values of ; 'love, hope and community' really shine through in these tough times and help to keep us all going as we look forward to this Christmastime and spending time with family and friends. Below follows further information.

Yours sincerely

*Suzanne Garner*



### **School Association News - Christmas Tree Decoration Competition**

Remember that your child can make a Christmas decoration for our tree. It is £1.00 payable on our School Gateway per decoration and prizes will be awarded on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> December in 3 categories: Reception, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Please encourage your child to participate and we look forward to a beautifully decorated tree by the end of term! Our tree will be donated to St Mary's Church on 17<sup>th</sup> December for all of our community to enjoy! The children will be able to bring their decorations home to adorn their own family trees during the festive period. A separate newsletter from our School Association will be sent home today.

### **St Osmund's Mini Pyramid Basketball Competition**

A few weeks ago we were all proud to send off our Year 4 Basketball squad to a tournament alongside other Dorchester schools. Thank you to those children who took part with such enthusiasm! Mr Kent was really proud to see you all representing our school!

### **Local Food Links Christmas Lunch**

There is still time to order a traditional Christmas lunch for Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> December. Christmas lunch is free for all Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 children and should be ordered by Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> December.

### **Booster Vaccinations**

All adults are now able to book their Covid Booster vaccinations by visiting the website below. It is a good way of protecting yourself and your loved ones as we move into winter.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/>

### **Eco Christmas**

Our Eco Bud Committee have challenged each class to think about creating 'eco decorations' for our classrooms this year. I have already seen everyday objects, recycled and natural materials used to make a whole range of Christmas decorations. This has been a super way of linking to our 'Drastic Plastic' topic across the school at this time of year.

### **Last week of term**

Further details of how we will run events planned for the last week of term, such as the children's party day, will follow next week as we update our risk assessments depending on our situation at that stage.

