



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

Newsletter 6 - 2021/22

22nd November 2021

Dear Parents

Thank you for supporting 'Children in Need' fundraising last week, we have raised a super £383.00 so far and our fundraising page is still open should you wish to donate! The link is:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/st-mary-s-first-school-charminster1>

As part of our PSHE (Personal, Social, Health Education) curriculum our Life Education programme is happening in school this week. Two staff from Corum Life Education are leading this over the next 2 days. Unfortunately, we are unable to visit the van itself, as such, sessions are taking place in our music room which can be well-ventilated for children and staff. Please talk to your child about their session and read the attached letter to find out more about it.

It has been a good start to November in school and the children have begun preparing for our whole-school Christmas Play, 'It's a Census, Get Me Out of Here!'. Further information regarding costumes will be sent out in due course by class teachers. We are planning to film the performance either in groups or as a whole-school depending on updated Public Health Guidance next month. As a result of PHD guidance and our own risk assessments we will be unable to invite parents and families to watch the Christmas Performance safely in our school hall this year. I am sure that you will support us in this decision to reduce and minimise risks for all in our school community. Participation in our Christmas Play is part of our Christmas tradition here at St Mary's, as such, we are keen to create a play which involves all children across the year groups despite Covid restrictions.

We are looking forward to the arrival of our Christmas tree in school next week which is being donated by Mole Country Stores in Dorchester, our thanks go to them for their kind donation! We would like the children's home creations to decorate it! Our School Association are running a competition with prizes for the best decoration which will be given to children in 3 age categories. It will be £1.00 per entry which can be paid on our School Gateway. Entries can be brought into school from next Wednesday 1st December and should have your child's name and class somewhere. Thank you for supporting your children with this!

There follows more information below including the update from Public Health Dorset.

Yours sincerely



Parent Consultations

Thank you to those of you who were able to meet with your child's class teacher during our recent parent consultations. We had 95% of parents making appointments and speaking with teachers about their child's progress and next steps. Feedback has been positive and I hope that you found this a useful opportunity.

Clubs

Our clubs will finish this week with the exception of the Footie4Dorset Club which has run from 3rd November and finishes next month. It has been lovely to see so many children taking part and developing their interests! We will hope to offer more clubs again in January.

Premier Sport are offering sports clubs during the Christmas break. The link is below if you wish to sign your child up for these sessions from Monday 20th to Thursday 23rd December.

<https://www.premier-education.com/parents/venue/courses/19786-734254/>

If your child is in receipt of Pupil Premium Funding then you will be entitled to free sessions during the holidays. Please click on this link to book:

<https://family.premier-education.com/add-course/734204/>

Allergies

We currently have a pupil in school with a nut allergy. Please ensure that you do not send nuts and nut products into school for snacks or in lunch boxes for safety reasons. Thank you for your support with this matter.

School Association

Thank you to those of you for ordering cards and supporting our Christmas Card project. I hope that you have all received your cards, mugs and wrapping paper as these were distributed last Friday. Please look out for a School Association Newsletter as these will be emailed out by the end of this week.

Public Health Update

As you will be aware, due to a steep rise in case rates throughout October, Public Health Dorset, BCP Council and Dorset Council provided additional guidance for educational settings across the county to reduce transmission of COVID-19 for a 14-day period after half term.

This was a joint approach across the South West region which set out further measures schools could take within the Department for Education's Contingency Framework, including enhanced testing requirements, face coverings in communal areas and limiting large gatherings and mixing between groups.

These measures were reviewed with local and regional partners and all are in agreement that these measures should be extended until the end of November. Public Health Dorset have looked closely at the data and there are a number of epidemiological reasons why the measures will continue:

- Our local case rates remain significantly above the England average, and are now above the South West average
- Although case rates have been declining, they are not coming down quickly, and the decrease is much slower than in other regions



- Case rates remain the highest amongst school-aged children, particularly the 10-14 age group which has a case rate of around 1,500 cases per 100,000 in both local authority areas
- Although the situation is improving, removing measures too early could lead to cases increasing rapidly again.

As a result we have been asked to continue to risk assess our individual situation here at St Mary's and implement any necessary measures within the framework provided. This includes continuing to meet remotely for whole-school collective worship for the next few weeks whilst we await further guidance.

Please continue to support our community by taking your child for a PCR test if they show one of the 3 key symptoms which are:

- A new, continuous cough
- A high temperature
- A loss or change to your taste and/or smell

If your child has a symptom then they should have a PCR test and self-isolate whilst awaiting the result. If your child has a PCR test as a result of being identified as a close contact of a positive Covid case then you should ensure he/she carries out a daily LFD test whilst awaiting the result. In these cases there is no requirement to self-isolate. Please keep us informed and we will do our best to support and advise.

Future Dates

22 & 23 Nov	Life Education Visit
10 Dec	Christmas Jumper Day - Save the Children
13 Dec	Reception- Christmas Experience at church
14 Dec	Children's Christmas Party Day - home clothes