



Our Lady & St Thomas Primary School



You are unique, talented and loved by God

Head teacher: Mrs R. Veitch

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Newsletter - 18th September 2020

Dear Parents,

It has been lovely to see you all as you bring your children to school. I am enjoying the sense of some normality and it is a privilege to have them back. I see them smiling and skipping in and we are all delighted with how well they have settled into class life in bubbles. School continues to be a happy, safe and vibrant place of learning, friendship and fun.

Bishop Hogarth Academy Consultation

By now you should have had time to look at the school website to view the Diocesan information on our school joining the Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust. The consultation period ends on the **9th October 2020**.

I communicated this to our parents at various intervals last year as this has been on the Diocesan agenda for a number of years. Bishop Robert has taken the step to issue a directive that all Catholic Schools will convert to being part of one of the four Multi-Academy Trusts established in our Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.

Our Governing Body will be meeting after the consultation to share your views and responses. School is working closely with the Trust and the Local Authority through all the issues.

North East Lockdowns

The news is full of worrying statistics about the rate of infection and problems with Testing and Track and Trace not being effective. School is doing everything it can to mitigate risk. We are also entering into a North East lockdown from tonight.



Schools are a priority for our Government. We continue to be open to all pupils and we have organised our school into class bubbles which are separate for all aspects of the school day.

We are sending a useful **'What if?'** leaflet to help you as parents know what to do if your child or someone in your household has symptoms. Staffing levels will be risk assessed. In the event a staff member becomes ill, we will be able to move smoothly into the use of Google Classroom both in and out of school. A class bubble will only shut if there is a positive test result. We will then work with Public Health in identifying all those in close contact and informing families. Our strict school organisation should mean that the rest of the school remains unaffected. If your child is self isolating, either having Coronavirus symptoms themselves or because someone in the household has symptoms, we will supply work at home until a test result is obtained.

Our morning routine is working extremely well with the calm, staggered starts to the school day. Please remember at home time, to try and be on time and not to gather outside of the school gates. The gates will be open at 2.50pm so you can come in and stand on the yellow markers and alleviate a crowd at the gate. We aim to bring them out promptly! Please leave the premises and clear the gates as soon as you have picked up your child, as other parents will be arriving for the next pickups.

We have tweaked the end of school routine to try and make this as smooth as possible.

Where and when can I bring / collect my child?

	Drop Off	Pick Up	Drop Off / Pick up point
Breakfast Club	7.45 - 8.00		Main Reception Door - staff will meet and sign your child in
Class 1 -	9.05 - 9.15	2.50 - 3.00	Through Main School Gate - Drop off / Pick up at Class 1 door
Class 2	9.05 - 9.15	3.05 - 3.15	AM - School Entrance - (Office) Door PM - Enter Through Main School Gate. Please adhere to Social Distancing markings on the floor and follow the one-way system.
Class 3	8.50 - 9.00	3.20 - 3.30	Main School Gate - see Class 2 above for details.
Class 4	8.50 - 9.00	3.20 - 3.30	Through main Church entrance
Class 5	8.30 - 8.45	2.50 - 3.00	Small side gate by main gate
Family Groups, Nurseries & Childminders	8.30 - 8.45	2.50 - 3.00	Main School Gate (Please note new pick up times)

Class 2 - Change of Entrance and Exit from Monday 21st September

We are mindful of the weather changing and the mud in the garden so wish to trial our younger pupils - **Class 2 only** entering through the **Main School Office Entrance** rather than the Church from **Monday 21st September**.

Remote Learning

National lockdown has been mentioned in the last few days once again. Our Lady and St Thomas have a robust contingency plan should that be the case and schools are closed once more.

This week all of Key Stage 2 have had their login details to Google Classroom sent home. Please keep this safe and have a go at logging in. We must plan for all eventualities – a bubble or class closure or a full school closure.

Key Stage 1 will receive their details later this week. This will allow all our children and families to access their Google Classroom and work. It all works through email and Key Stage 2 used this very successfully.

We will be setting some homework this way so as to develop the children's expertise in the use of Google Classroom as well as using it in school so all children across the school will be familiar should it be needed.

Mrs Pearson has kindly offered to host two parental tutorials via Google Meet next week in preparation for whatever is to come. She is offering two times to accommodate working parents and we highly advise that an adult attends virtually.

- **You will be able to access session on Thursday 24th September at either 4.30pm or 5.30pm**
- **Mrs Pearson will send out invites on Tuesday 22nd to the email addresses you have supplied and also post the links on your child's Google Classroom Account.**
- **Please let us know if you do not receive your invite.**
- **Mrs Pearson requests any questions you may have within the session to be typed in the Google Chat Facility that you will see on screen and she will answer all questions.**

Parking

Thank you so much for making a concerted effort to keep Cumberland Terrace free from cars. We really do appreciate it, as do the residents. Many of you are parking elsewhere and walking up whilst getting your daily steps in! Turning around in this narrow street is problematic and causes a bottle-neck. Father Murphy requests that parents do not use the church car park at all.

This is also an entrance and exit point for children so is not safe. Some staff cars are there with permits displayed as we have given up half our car park to accommodate an area for our oldest pupils to play safely in their own play space. We have noticed the number of cars increasing over the last week and we would really appreciate your continued support in this area.

Packed Lunches

We have had a number of queries around school lunches, with some parents concerned that their child has been hungry. This has been addressed with Taylor Shaw. For Key Stage 2 pupils, lunches are eaten in the classroom and the children have adapted really well to this routine. If your child is bringing a packed lunch from home, we are now happy for you to use hard plastic Tupperware type containers that can be wiped down at school and washed/sanitized each day at home. However please make sure any Tupperware is clearly labelled and brought to school in a paper or plastic bag as you have been doing so efficiently. We love the messages some children receive on the paper bags and some children are jazzing them up with their own artwork! Please note, we dispose of all rubbish, recycling where possible,

Be aware packed lunches are stored within the class bubble. Only special dietary requirements can be refrigerated.

Class 1 has lunch in the hall and they have their lunch on plates which is much easier for our youngest.

Snacks

The Free Fruit Scheme is now up and running again, so all children in EYFS/Key Stage 1 (Class 1 and 2) get a free piece of fruit provided every break time. Free milk is available until they are five or to purchase via [CoolMilk.com](https://www.coolmilk.com) once over five.

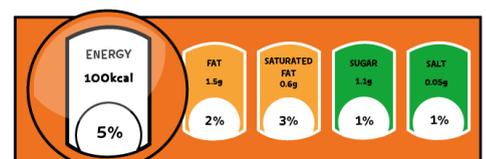
From Monday, pupils will be permitted to bring a healthy snack that can be easily stored in their coat pockets in class and then eaten break time. I do not intend to dictate a list of permitted snacks. Parents are to use their discretion as to what is healthy to take to school. Suggestions can be found on the Change4Life NHS page which is really useful. Snack bars low in sugar, a piece of fruit, raisins etc. Some advice is below. We would ask that no nuts (or products containing nuts) are brought in as we have children in school with nut allergies.

Snack smart! Change4life:

Half the sugar children are having comes from snacks and sugary drinks. Too much sugar can lead to harmful fat building up inside and serious health problems, including painful tooth decay. Fruit and veg snacks are always the best choice for kids' snacks – but if they are having packaged snacks, just remember to aim for 2 a day max.

Why food labels matter

You'll find traffic light labels on most food and drink, usually on the front of the pack. These labels use red, amber and green colour coding to help us understand what's inside our food so we can make healthier choices when shopping. Food labels, also called nutrition labels, show how much **sugar**, **sat fat** and **salt** are inside what we're buying. When it comes to reading food labels, a good rule of thumb is to go for more greens and ambers, and cut down on reds.



Website

Parents will receive an email 'Welcome' letter to the new academic year. These will also be on the Class pages of our website. We hope these will be useful in the absence of our usual Meet the Teacher Evenings.

We have created a new tab on our school website Key Info 2020-21. This is to help parents navigate to the latest information about our Curriculum. We have uploaded information on how we will be approaching the teaching of reading this year, how awards and celebration will work and an overview of our new Relationships and Sex Education Programme. This is to prepare you as parents for some of the content and language that is used. We have adopted the Diocesan Policy on how we teach this and the resource they recommend 'Life to the Full'.

New Reception Class of 2020-21

Arthur, Eli, Elizabeth, George, Isla, Jack, Lilly, Mairead, Mia, Niamh, Rosie-May

Our wonderful new starters will be joining us full-time from Monday 21st September. They have completed their induction period and have settled so well into the Class 1 bubble. They have enjoyed meeting all their new classmates and teaching staff and even had a little visit from a baby froglet and caterpillar this week! We extend a warm welcome to all our new families.



Congratulations



to the families of Bailey & Mason, Blakee, Jake and Layton who have all had babies recently.

We know they will make fantastic big brother role models. We have three baby girls and one baby boy as new extended additions to the OLST Family.

Thank you for your continued support in all matters.

Ruth Veitch,
Head Teacher.