



*We are called to be the hands and face of Jesus as we learn, love and grow together*

**Headteacher: Mr J White BEd (Hons) NPQH**

**St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School**

Bedwell Crescent, Stevenage, Herts., SG1 1NJ

Tel: 01438 729555

Email: [admin@stvincent.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@stvincent.herts.sch.uk)

[www.stvincent.herts.sch.uk](http://www.stvincent.herts.sch.uk)

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Dear parents and carers

After the busiest of half terms, it is good to know that we have reached a point of rest and relaxation, having journeyed through so much together during the past six weeks. For those of you trying to work from home, whilst supporting your children's learning I know that it has been a tricky and pressured time; likewise for those of you in critical worker positions, with increased working hours and all of the pressures of being on the front line of essential services these past weeks will also have taken their toll. I know that many of you have also faced the pressures of family illness and support for members of your extended family. Thank you for all that you have done to support both the education of your children and the safety of our community. Everyone deserves a great half term break!

### **A tricky balancing act**

For the staff in school this has been a half term like no other although I may have said that last term? School life has been challenging as we have tried to cater for the needs of approximately 170 learners (38% of the school population) in school and 280 learners at home. The significant numbers in school mean that staff have not been able to work on rotas and as such have been responsible for both sets of learning and feedback simultaneously. Staff have also tried to keep connected with those at home through regular phone calls and I understand that this has been really appreciated. I am amazed at all that the full staff team (teachers, teaching assistants, admin team & site team) have managed to achieve over these past six weeks and am indebted to their good will as their workload has been huge. I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank each staff member for their superb contribution to the community over these past six weeks, for their continual optimism, dedication, good humour and innovation as our 'remote and in school learning offer' has developed over time.



### **Remote learning offer**

We have reviewed what we are offering against the Government Guidelines, have checked in with pupils about what works for them and have engaged with both our Governors and our Hertfordshire Improvement Partner to evaluate the provisions that we are able to offer. I am pleased to be able to report that we meet (and in most areas go well beyond) the Government's guidance in relation to national expectations of remote provision in a primary school. Today we trialled the use of a Google



Meet in Year 6, based upon feedback from parents and children that they missed being able to see the rest of the children in their class. The Year 6 children spent time today asking each other questions and catching up on their news with each other. It was wonderful to be a part of. Google Meet is an excellent, safe platform that allows us to meet like this and, now that we have trialled it with Year 6, we will be rolling this out to all year groups after half term. Please do watch out for ParentMails which will explain the steps to join your child's class. I hope that we are able to complete the admin in relation to this over half term so that we are ready to use it upon our return. This will give us, I hope, the one missing piece of the 'remote learning' jigsaw. If you have any further constructive feedback in relation to our remote learning offer please email [feedback@stvincent.herts.sch.uk](mailto:feedback@stvincent.herts.sch.uk). We are keen to hear from you! A summary of our remote offer and an evaluation of its implementation is available on our school website.

### The 'road map' ahead

There has been much talk of what will happen to schools in the weeks ahead. We anticipate an announcement about 'the road map' out of lockdown, including the wider opening of schools, in the days ahead. We do know that the very earliest that we will be able to widen the number of pupils in school is 8<sup>th</sup> March and, as such, we wait with anticipation for guidance in relation to next steps. Even if we are all back after 8<sup>th</sup> March, there will be many challenges to encounter and the risks will indeed increase with more pupils in school as social distancing will be less effective. As such, in many ways we expect that we will need to tighten our measures further rather than relaxing.



### Protecting the bubbles

You may have noticed that since January we have not had to close any bubbles in relation to confirmed Covid cases and this is, I'm sure, due to the measures that we have been able to put in place, including capping the number of children in each class, the extra hygiene measures and your cooperation with site rules that keep us all safe. Thank you for helping us to keep school as safe as it can be. This will be even more important when more children return. I would imagine that when this happens, we will see an increase in the number of bubble closures over time making remote learning during isolation periods still a part of the routine for some time. One extra way to protect our schools during this time is to ensure that we are all keeping to the current guidelines in relation to reduced contact, household bubbles and other important measures. At the end of this newsletter you will find a poster from Hertfordshire County Council explaining some important measures in relation to this.

### Lateral Flow Device (LFD) Testing

As an extra layer of protection, since late January, all school staff have now been self-testing twice each week using an LFD test. This aims to pinpoint any asymptomatic carriers of Covid19 among the adults in school in order that they can isolate early and minimise further spread. A positive LFD test will lead to isolation of close contacts within the bubble and then a follow up PCP (lab based) test to confirm the need to isolate.

### Vigilance in relation to symptoms

A focused vigilance in relation to signs and symptoms of Covid19 remains essential. If anyone within your household develops any of the symptoms



- high temperature;
- persistent new cough; or
- a change to their sense of taste / smell

all members of the household must continue to isolate for 10 days or until a negative test result for the individual with symptoms has been received.

If this occurs **during the half term holiday**, please email [head@stvincent.herts.sch.uk](mailto:head@stvincent.herts.sch.uk) as we remain responsible for track and trace in the school community during this period. Please do not email [absence@stvincent.herts.sch.uk](mailto:absence@stvincent.herts.sch.uk) or [admin@stvincent.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@stvincent.herts.sch.uk) with such information over the holiday period as these email addresses are only regularly monitored during term time.

### Wellbeing week

During our learning this week, all classes have been focusing on a theme of 'Express Yourself' as a way to focus on some key elements of wellbeing. Wellbeing is always a priority but never have self-help techniques in relation to it been more important than they are currently with all that we are dealing with. I do hope that your children have shared some ideas of the things that they have been doing in relation to this. The following images may help us all to deal with aspects of stress.


### THE EMOTIONAL CUP

Some ways that children deal with having an empty cup:

- Steal from other people's cups
- Misbehave to get your attention and show that they need a refill
- Seem to have bottomless cups, or need constant 'topping off'
- Can't sit still for refills or actively refuse them
- Bounce off the walls when they approach 'empty'
- Think they have to fight or compete for every refill


What fills a child's cup:

- Play
- Friendship
- One-on-one time
- Love and affection
- Connection
- Succeeding
- Doing what they love




What empties a child's cup:

- Stress and strain
- Rejection by peers
- Loneliness and isolation
- Yelling and punishment
- Failing
- Fatigue
- Doing what they hate



### THE STRESS RELIEF GIRAFFE



OUT OF CONTROL
SCARED OF LOSING CONTROL
NERVOUS
UNSURE
CALM

**WHAT YOUR CHILD CAN DO:**

- Calm breathing exercises
- Use visualisation meditation techniques
- Body tightening exercises (progressive muscle relaxation)
- Sigh to become fully present in the moment
- Practice music therapy
- Change location / surroundings
- Use a stress ball / fidget toy
- Give themselves a 10-second hug to boost their mood
- Colour, draw, write, craft, etc.
- Practice positive self-talk / words of affirmation
- Exercise
- Go outside
- Play
- Hydrate with water

I do hope that during the week ahead, we are all able to spend some time 'refilling the well', taking stock of all that we have achieved and savouring some special times with those who matter most.

I wish you all a wonderful half term holiday. May God bless you and those most dear to you.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Jon White  
Headteacher





# PLAY YOUR PART

We are still in a national lockdown, please follow the current rules to keep you and your family safe

Even if your child is currently attending school for face to face learning or they are learning remotely from home - the same lockdown rules apply

## DO

- ✓ Try to stay at home as much as possible
- ✓ Exercise just with your household, or if alone you can meet just one other person (not household)
- ✓ Remind children they must socially distance when not at home (even if they are currently in a bubble at school)
- ✓ Stay in your local area if you have to go out for essentials
- ✓ Remember 'Hands, Face, Space'

## DON'T

- ✗ Mix with people outside of your household or support bubble
- ✗ Allow older children to meet up with more than one friend for exercise (even if they are currently in a bubble at school)
- ✗ Have play dates with friends
- ✗ Have sleepovers
- ✗ Allow children to touch or hug their friends if you do happen to bump into them
- ✗ Take children to the shops unless you really have to

*Thank you for playing your part to keep our communities safe*

For more information go to  
[www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/coronavirus)

