



*"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

### **Welcome back!**

It has been lovely to see the children throughout the school back into the routines of daily school life, working hard and enjoying both their learning and relationships. The children at St Vincent de Paul School are so enthusiastic in their response to school and it is a privilege to spend time with them. They are a credit to you – thank you for working with us to make their school experience so fruitful.



### **Welcome to those new to our school**

It has been wonderful to welcome everyone back to school especially those children new to the school in our nursery and reception classes and to other classes throughout the school. We hope and pray that you all feel very welcome. We are a friendly community and it is always good to welcome new members! This September we have also welcomed a number of new members to the staff team. Mr Crump is teaching in Year 6 Tolkein and Mrs McCarthy has joined us for the first term in Y5 Teresa. We also welcome Mr Richardson and Mrs Tothill, covering for Mrs Glover and Mrs McGuire whilst they recuperate from recent operations. We all wish Mrs Glover and Mrs McGuire a speedy recovery and look forward to welcoming them back to school very soon!

### **Curriculum and new class routines**

By the start of next week, you will have received a letter from your child's class teacher explaining the curriculum for the term and any class expectations. This will also explain the reward systems that have been designed to motivate your children. The letter will also direct you to a renewed 'Curriculum Map', published on our website which will show you the learning that is covered each term. I know that parents have been keen to get more notice about topics covered in school so that you are able to make the most of museum visits and other trips with your families that support learning in school too. I hope that access to this will help you. This year we have moved away from the 'International Primary Curriculum' and



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developed our own curriculum that covers the skills and knowledge of the National Curriculum but allows us the flexibility to adapt topics to the needs of classes and the skills of teachers. Over the course of this first term we hope to launch our new website which I hope will also direct parents towards other online curriculum support materials. We look forward to your feedback on these items.

### **School Improvement Planning: thank you for your ideas**

It was wonderful to receive so many ideas via post-it notes, emails and conversations during the last half of the Summer Term. The Senior Leadership Team are now in the final stages of drafting a 'Three-Year School Improvement Plan' based upon so many of your ideas, along with those of staff and governors. As soon as this plan has been approved by the Governing Body, I will be able to share it with you. Lots of exciting initiatives are planned – it will be a busy few years!!

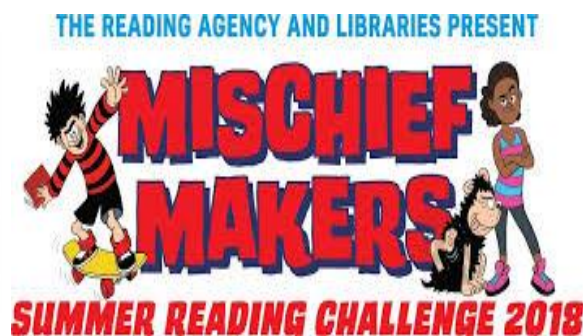


### **No problem is ever too big or too small!**

This is a mantra that we use with the children regularly. All of the adults are always ready to listen and act. Please do ensure that your children are encouraged to make use of the adults around them either in person or via a note in the classroom communication boxes which are checked regularly. Equally, should you have a concern or worry related to a school matter, please do come in to discuss it before it becomes a bigger concern. Staff are always willing to talk, although an appointment may need to be made as school is a busy place! In the first instance a word with the class teacher will usually suffice. However, if the issue is more significant or continues, you may wish to speak to the Key Stage Lead (EYFS & KS1: Mrs Hargrave; KS2: Mrs Blythe) or to Mrs Sherry or myself. Please do not let an issue rumble – often things can be easily sorted providing we know about them!

### **Reading Challenge**

It has been wonderful to see so many children bringing in their Reading Challenge certificates: congratulations to all who have taken part! Staff are currently compiling lists so that I will be able to shop for prizes soon. Thank you for supporting your children to make use of the local library – it's a great resource!



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## Behaviour – finding the roots and bearing fruits!

We are currently introducing the 'Hertfordshire Steps Approach' to behaviour which supports a therapeutic ethos, early intervention and professional responses to behaviours. It encourages an 'educative response' to behaviours that enable children the opportunity to learn the right thing to do. As such, you may have noticed that our practice has removed the use of yellow and red card systems and time out as these do not fit with a therapeutic approach. This has also involved a review of our Behaviour Policy which will soon be available to share. As part of our new approach, we have developed three universal school rules which each class has spent time exploring and these are:

- Be ready
- Be respectful
- Be safe

A 'roots and fruits' approach aims to unpick behaviours so that we fully understand the root of the problem in order that we can modify responses and enable, through careful planning, response and teaching, the growth of positive behaviours (the 'fruits'). Thank you to Mrs Curry and Mrs Blythe who are taking a lead on this project. I know that they are keen to find ways to share our approach further with parents ... watch this space!



## Attendance & Punctuality

Thank you for all that you do to get your children to school on time each day. Punctuality has improved significantly over the course of last year. Being a few minutes late each day soon adds up (as the table below demonstrates).

If in a school year, your child is late each day for ...	Your child will have missed approximately ..
5 minutes	3 days of school
10 minutes	6 days of school
15 minutes	9 days of school
20 minutes	12 days of school
30 minutes	18 days of school

For a small group of children in school, attendance is not as good as it could be. For these children, making good and sustained progress at school can be more problematic and does get in the way of learning. I urge you to ensure that your child has an excellent attendance record. Over the course of this coming year I will be looking at ways to ensure that you have early information in relation to your child's attendance in order that you are kept fully in the picture. As a rule of thumb, good attendance is considered to be at 95% plus; Attendance between 90 – 95% raises some questions; and below 90% is often a concern. Of course, children can't avoid being sick and as such some authorised time off for



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sickness is inevitable. I also understand that some children have ongoing health issues which make sustaining a high level of attendance problematic. Please do keep us informed of any issues that impact on your child's attendance – this is another area that we can work closely with you to improve if necessary. I must reiterate that I am unable to authorise holidays during term time or extended leave to visit families overseas. All such visits should be arranged during the holiday period. All absences are monitored closely by Hertfordshire County Council Attendance Officers whom I meet with regularly. **Please note that term dates for the Year 2018/19 are published on the school website. Please direct any family members towards them who might be booking a holiday on your behalf!** Governors will be setting the term dates for 2019/20 this term.

### School Calendar

The school calendar has now been finalised and will be published on Monday. Throughout the year there are occasions when dates have to change. We will always aim to give you as much notice as possible when this does happen. Parentmail and Twitter are often the easiest ways for us to communicate such changes – please do check them regularly.

### Adoremus: 'Let us Adore'

We are blessed that one of our Governors, Mrs Taylor-Brookes, was able to attend the recent National Eucharistic Congress, Adoremus, in Liverpool. Over the course of this year, we will be looking for ways to enhance our children's understanding of the Holy Eucharist and will aim to develop ways that allow us as a community to experience the beauty of Eucharistic Adoration. We also hope to initiate a Corpus Christi procession during the Summer Term which I hope you will be able to join us for. 'Adoremus' will be an important focus for schools and parishes throughout the year. Please pray with us for its success.

#### Westminster Adoremus Prayer

Jesus, You are truly present in the  
Most Holy Eucharist.  
Help me feel Your presence every time  
I visit you.  
Give me Your strength when I receive  
You in Holy Communion.  
And, receiving Your love,  
help me take that love to others.  
I ask this in Your name.  
Amen



God bless you and those most dear to you,

Mr Jon White  
Headteacher



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