



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

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Dear parents and carers

It is wonderful to be writing to you as the sun shines this morning – hopefully this milder weather and sunshine will extend into the half term holidays for everyone and will enable us all to enjoy some outdoor fun with our families.

Covid Update

I am pleased to report that cases in school have been decreasing over the past few days and, as such, I am hopeful that we may be over the worst. Wouldn't it be wonderful to get back to normal? You will have seen that I have shared a ParentMail with you from Herts County Council recently which urges us all to still be cautious in order that we can protect education in the second half of this term. Staff will continue to lateral flow test over the holidays in preparation for their return after half term: please could I ask that all children over 5 years complete a lateral flow test before their return too. We understand that rules and regulations may well change as we return and we await an update from the DfE in relation to this.

May I take this opportunity to thank all families for their support of our measures throughout this half term which have enabled us to protect staffing and education for all children. I am very grateful for your support.

May I also take this opportunity to thank our brilliant staff team who have shown great resilience, determination and flexibility in coping with cover issues and in relation to the additional workload issues by the need to adapt planning each day to upload work to the Google Classroom. This has meant that current work has been available to all children from day 1 of isolation. This has been a herculean effort and I have thanked the teachers on behalf of our parents for this.

Free School Meals

Hertfordshire County Council have generously agreed to continue to support families in receipt of Free School Meals over the half term break and the Easter Holidays. As such, if you are entitled, you will have receive an email from 'Edenred' today with a £15 digital voucher to cover February half term's allowance. If you do not receive this or there are difficulties with it, please email head@stvincent.herts.sch.uk and I will endeavour to resolve the issue.

PSA – thank you!

Thank you to everyone who was able to attend Tuesday's virtual AGM for the PSA. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing committee and to welcome the new committee. We are hoping that we will soon be able to hold more in-school events which I know will be very much welcomed. It is amazing that despite all the restrictions over the past two years the outgoing committee managed to raise an amazing £10,000 for the school.

In terms of what this funding has enabled, I can confirm that the following purchases have been made (or are already committed to):

- ✓ A 2nd Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) has been purchased meaning that there is now one in each building, thus cutting down the precious time it would take to get a device to an individual should it be needed in school time or at a PSA event (£800)
- ✓ Every class was given a budget of £200 each to update stock in their classroom libraries (£3000). This was then double match funded by the school so that in class reading materials are enticing and inviting.

- ✓ A large 'grit bin' has been purchased for each year group to contain their outdoor play equipment (£1400)
- ✓ On Tuesday and Friday of this week our school parliament met to discuss each year group's £200 budget to spend on equipment to fill their playtime bins with. The children have been busy consulting with their peers about what they want and will then be responsible for looking after it (£3000)

Thank you to all who have contributed precious funds and time – it is very much appreciated.

As a new committee takes over, we will be looking to raise funds towards a new Reading Scheme across EYFS and KS1. We will also be hoping to fundraise towards the furnishing and resourcing of our St Joseph's Workshop (the cedar clad building on the edge of the KS1 playground) I know that the PSA will play a huge role in the bringing together of community on site again at various events. This act of rebuilding community and re-inviting parents will be as important, if not more, than the actual fundraising efforts. I look forward to working with the new committee to achieve these key aims.

Lenten efforts

The second week after we return marks the start of Lent, the Church's great season of preparation for Easter. This will be marked in school in a variety of ways. One way will include 'Food Bank Friday' where we will be asking pupils to bring in items that will support those in need locally. More details will follow when we return.

Staffing: farewells and welcomes

Today we have said farewell and good luck to Miss Deschamps who leaves her role as 1:1 teaching assistant after a number of years at the school. We thank Miss Deschamps for her support for individual pupils and the school community. Miss Deschamps will still be a familiar face on site as she will continue her current role with the Cool After School Club.

This term we have welcomed a significant number of new staff to the team. They have been warmly welcomed by all and have enriched the skillset of our team.

New to the EYFS Team:

Mrs Batkitar as an EYFS Teaching Assistant
Mrs Alecu and Miss Davey as 1:1 Teaching assistants

New to the KS1 Team:

Mrs Peters as Year 1 teacher
Miss Marshall and Mrs Manyo-Plange as 1:1 Teaching Assistants
Mrs Rayyaba as a teaching assistant

New to the KS2 Team:

Mrs Worthington as Teaching Assistant

Admin Team:

Mrs Butler is offering admin assistance in the school office

After Easter we look forward to welcoming Mrs Whitty to the team as our newly appointed Deputy headteacher.

Communication

Effective communication is key to the success of our school community. Please do remember that we would rather resolve an issue early than let it fester. Your first point of contact is usually the class teacher. If the matter can't be resolved, the issue is usually passed on to the Assistant Headteacher (Mrs Hargrave in EYFS and KS1 and Mrs White in KS2), and then on to myself as Headteacher if need be.

As we say regularly to the children:

'There is nothing so awful (or so small) that we can't talk about it with someone'

Please do contact us if you need to. Staff may be available at drop off or collection for a quick chat; but longer appointments may require an appointment. Teachers can be contacted via their email addresses or through the school office. Please note, however, that to ensure a good work life balance staff are not expected to respond to emails after 4.30pm or before 8.30am (or at weekends) and have a full time teaching commitment throughout the day.

Relationships and Sex Education

When we return from half term, staff across the school will begin to teach Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) as per the topics prescribed in our Catholic Ten:Ten scheme. This was the scheme that we adopted last year following consultation with parents and fully meets the requirements of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and the catholic Education Service. You are able to find out more about our approach to this key area of the curriculum on our website: [SRE information on website](#) Here you will also find a link to the [Ten:Ten Parent Portal](#) where you will be able to access the materials that we plan to use. The username and passwords for this portal have been included in the ParentMail with this letter. I do hope that you find it useful. These lessons work best when we are working in partnership to deliver the same message. Please do make contact if you want to discuss any aspects of the curriculum for RSE.

INSET day

Monday 21st February is an INSET day for staff only where we will be undertaking the second part of our Hertfordshire STEPS Behaviour training in the morning and working on Curriculum development in the afternoon. The children return to school after the half term break on Tuesday 22nd February 2022.



May God bless you and those most dear to you.

Wishing everyone a peaceful half term.

Yours sincerely

Jon White
Headteacher