



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

www.stvincent.herts.sch.uk

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Dear parents and carers

Well done everyone!

After another busy half term, we have reached that point when we can stop and reflect on all that we have achieved before we begin planning an exciting final half term of the academic year. How is that possible?! Despite all of the challenges, this year seems to have just flown by. Embracing all of the challenges and hurdles it has been an incredibly successful year too, with all members of our community rising to the challenge of living the 'new normal'. As we begin to think about September and a new academic year, we all hope and pray that things slowly get back on track so that we can all enjoy some of the normal things that we will all perhaps take less for granted in the future.

May devotions

Traditionally, the Church devotes May to Our Lady and although we have not been able to have our usual May procession where the whole community gathers in prayer, song and devotion, we have, nonetheless, not allowed the restrictions to dampen our devotions. Thank you for bringing flowers and pot plants to leave at the Marian Shrine which has become more colourful as the week has progressed. Each class has visited the shrine this week and Mary has been a particular focus throughout the school. You may enjoy watching the film of our May devotions (including some beautiful words from Father Nigel) which we have released on our YouTube Channel today. You can link to it via our Twitter feed or from here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=STJbr4b4rTI>.



Social media: a window on school life

I encourage all parents and carers to engage with our Twitter feed (@svdp_school) where you can gain a valuable insight into what is happening across the school. If you do not have a Twitter account, do not worry, it can be accessed directly through the school website at the following link: <http://www.stvincent.herts.sch.uk/pi-twitter.html>



This is an active platform. This week at my last count there were 58 posts and today alone I counted 17 posts by the end of the day! Following feedback from some families, we are also currently experimenting with Instagram – you can link to our Instagram feed by searching for @stvdep. We'd be really interested in hearing your feedback about our social media postings. All social media postings are transferred into the Pupil Post each week too. An archive of previous Pupil Posts is available on the school website: <http://www.stvincent.herts.sch.uk/pi-news-letters-2.html>

Eat them to defeat them!

When we return after half term our catering providers will be focusing on this national campaign to encourage our children to consume more vegetables. Each day there will be a focus on a different vegetable and children will be encouraged to 'eat them to defeat them'! You may well see a TV advertising campaign on some of the major channels as part of this initiative. Further details are available at <https://eatthemtodefearthem.com/>

CAFOD – thank you

Your Lenten fundraising efforts using the CAFOD penny boxes have raised an amazing £476.46. This is a remarkable effort and will be of benefit to brothers and sisters across the world in need of our support. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Nepal - Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning (CCGL) programme

Did you know that we are partnered with a school in Nepal as part of a Stevenage wide project? Our partner school is PGA Academy in Pokhara. Mrs Curry visited our link school last year and a reciprocal visit was due to take place this year which had to be postponed because of the Pandemic.



The children were concerned to hear about the impact of Covid19 on Nepal and wanted to do something about it. A number of children wrote to our MP, Mr McPartland, asking for support for those nations who were struggling, and younger children made Nepalese prayer flags. Pictures of these moments were sent to our friends in Nepal and today Mrs Curry received the following message:

*"Dear friends in Stevenage
So nice to see. Thank you for your support for us, because of our well wishers' support, the coronavirus and its problems are slowly decreasing...yes we are safe til now. We're having our exams in online mode....our final exam is running since yesterday. Here we are also having rainfall. Thank you all for your prayers for us. It is a big support for us in this pandemic....really grateful to the whole school."*

It is wonderful that your children are keen to have an impact on the wider world. They understand the importance of social justice and are committed to ensuring that the common good is at the heart of their lives. The future of our world is in safe hands thanks to them!



Working for the environment

Focusing on our impact on the environment is a key strand of our work at St Vincent de Paul School, ensuring that our children understand their important roles as 'Stewards of Creation.' Last weekend in an important pastoral message from His Eminence Cardinal Vincent Nichols, we heard:

"The Holy Spirit is God's power, sustaining the created world in being. It's the Holy Spirit that transformed what we call the 'chaos' into the 'cosmos' - the ordered world. What better time than now for us to be thinking about how we cooperate with the work of the Holy Spirit in protecting, enhancing our natural environment - the world - because it is our human environment. In caring for the world, we care for each other. In caring for each other, we care for the Creator and show Him our respect, our deference, our service."

Our children are very keen to support a 'Laudate Si' message and love learning outside; this will be a key element of our School Development Plan next year. Our very own Spring watch in school reports:

"Having completed the Plant Life Cowslip survey, Year 5 found a healthy balance between S Morph & L morph (male & female) which shows there is no decline in numbers, and a huge crop with more than 20 plants in a one metre squared area. Next a wildflower survey will take place. The children have already found germander speedwell, red clover, meadow and creeping buttercup and are hoping to find self heal, white clover, creeping & birds-foot-trefoil. The logs from recently cut trees have already become habitats to common toads - the logs have been placed in the wildlife area and three common toads were spotted under different logs. Our Mini-best survey found hawthorn and dock shieldbugs, beetles, grasshopper and cricket nymphs, plenty of woodlice, ants and some butterfly chrysalis' in the nettles."



Covid reporting continues

Thank you for continuing to be vigilant in relation to reporting children with symptoms and getting them tested and isolating whilst waiting for the result. Please note that if your child is symptomatic, they must be tested using a PCR (lab processed) test; Lateral Flow Tests are not permitted for this use as they only detect a high viral load. Please send all notifications and test results to absence@stvincent.herts.sch.uk. The only exception to this is if you receive a positive result out of hours, in which case it should be sent to head@stvincent.herts.sch.uk, copying in the absence email address as well. **Please do not use any other email addresses.**

If your child develops symptoms during the holiday period, or receives a positive result during this period, please email head@stvincent.herts.sch.uk as this is the only email address that will be regularly monitored throughout the half term break. School notifications during this period are important as the school has responsibility for informing any other pupils of their need to isolate based upon previous contact during the infectious period.

A message from Hertfordshire County Council in relation to the Hertfordshire Covid strategy accompanies this letter.



Use of the Church car park

I have received a number of complaints this week about the use of the Church car park at drop off and collection times. Even with staggered start times, the Church car park is becoming increasingly busy. Please do not linger in the car park once you have dropped off as others may need the space. Some parents continue to misuse it, parking on the grass or on the turning circle. Please only park in designated spaces and drive at a cautious speed always. Please be patient and if there is not a space, leave and park elsewhere. Please ensure that your behaviour when using any of the parking facilities near the school is always courteous and is respectful of other users and our neighbours. Continued misuse of the car park could lead the Church to remove the privilege. There are often spaces available at the Noah's Ark car park near the playground. Please use this facility and then walk the short distance to school. It is a great way to start each day if you are able to walk and talk!

Uniform reminders

Uniform can now be purchased from **Smarty School Wear** at Park Place Plaza, Stevenage. Uniform can be purchased directly from the shop or from their website:

<https://www.smartyschoolwear.co.uk/primary-schools-c1/st-vincent-de-paul-catholic-school-c560>

The only compulsory item that must be purchased from here is the green sweatshirt / cardigan with school logo. Other quality items are also available at reasonable prices.

Ear-rings, watches and jewellery

The Senior Leadership Team have recently reviewed our policies in relation to jewellery and have made the following changes after feedback from the wider parent body. Although earrings are discouraged, pupils may now wear **a small simple stud** (no more than one in each ear). Pupils will be required to take care of these themselves and they should be removed independently or not worn on days when PE is on the timetable. If they cannot be removed, they must be covered with micropore tape on PE days. In the interests of developing personal independence and an awareness of time, pupils from Year 2 upwards may wear **a non-expensive wristwatch**. This must not be connected to any other digital device and must not be capable of receiving **or** sending messages. Pupils must remain responsible for these items and must be able to independently remove them for PE sessions or other activities. No other jewellery is permitted.

Relationships and Sex Education

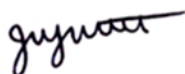
Our consultation period has now closed, and Governors have responded with a new policy and responses to your individual comments. All information in relation to this is available on our website at the following link: <http://www.stvincent.herts.sch.uk/pi-relationships-sex-education.html>. There is also a link here to Ten Ten's Parent Portal which allows parents access to all of the materials that we will be using.

Wishing all of our families a peaceful or lively half term – whatever you prefer!

It has been a pleasure to watch your children grow in confidence, friendship and compassion during this half term. We all look forward to a wonderful break followed by a busy second half of the Summer term as we plan our transition to new year groups.

We look forward to welcoming everyone back on Monday 7th June 2021.

May God bless you and those most dear to you,



Jon White
Headteacher

