



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

Settling in

It has been a busy few weeks back at school but the children have all adjusted well to their new classes and staff working with them are pleased with how well they have settled into new routines. You will have a chance to catch up with teachers at Parent Consultations which will occur shortly after half-term (dates to follow). Whilst there are active Covid cases in our school community, these will be via the School Cloud online system. We hope that the next parent consultation following this will be face-to-face.



Welcome to our new families

I extend a warm welcome to all our new families in school. It has been lovely getting to know many of you at drop off and pick up time and your children as I visit the classes. Please do remember to ask in relation to anything that you are unsure of. For those new to the school, watch out for the Pupil Post (which is usually delivered via ParentMail over the weekend) and for Twitter updates (@svdp_school) both of which should give you a real flavour of what is going on in school.

St Vincent de Paul Feast Day

Monday is celebrated as the feast of St Vincent de Paul, our school patron. St Vincent de Paul was a French priest who focused his mission on supporting the neediest in his local community. He was renowned for his compassion, humility, and generosity. Our feast day will be one of great celebration and to mark this the children may come in wearing **sensible non uniform on Monday**. If your child has PE on this day, please make sure that what they are wearing is safe for physical activities! Children will be asked to make a **£1+ donation for wearing non-uniform** and this, in the spirit of St Vincent de Paul, will be used to support those in need in the local community. The children will be learning more about St Vincent de Paul's work and legacy on this day. Happy Feast Day!

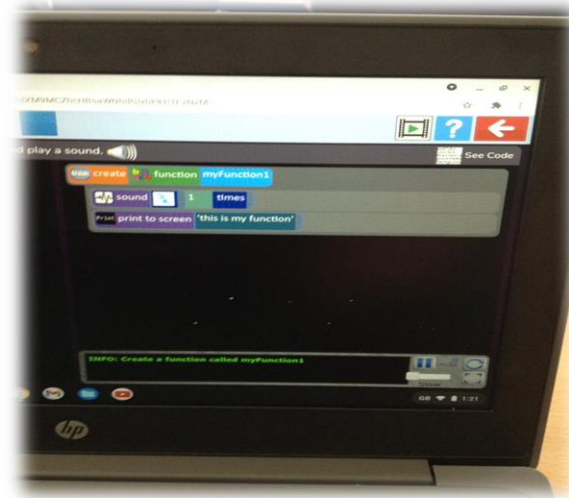


Covid update

You will be aware that we currently have 12 active Covid cases in school. These cases are in four classes: in two of the classes the cases are single, contained and are not connected to any other school case; two classes have cases connected between them. In classes where there are cases, we have reverted to 'bubbling' of pupils and reducing contact outside of the bubble. All staff are now wearing masks inside the building as a precautionary measure. On each occasion when I have spoken to HCC officials from the Covid Response Team, the school has been commended for its pro-active measures. Whilst significant cases are in the local community and whilst the school is impacted, our risk assessment will remain as it is with certain restrictions in place. Please continue to use the one-way system around the site and if you are exiting via the front gate please follow a route to it via the pathway adjacent to the junior field.

Covid protocols

You will be aware that we have strongly urged that if a member of your household tests positive that any children isolate for that period too in case they develop symptoms. I know that this is an inconvenience; however, I would like to illustrate how this has positively impacted on our community very recently. Just over a week ago I received notification that a child in our school had a negative PCR test whilst someone else in the household had received a positive result. The parent agreed to keep the child at home, supported by daily work, in case symptoms developed. This week the child developed symptoms and has now received a positive result. Government guidelines would have allowed the child to be in school until he/she developed symptoms; however, sticking to our protocols has, I believe, prevented an outbreak in the class and has, therefore, prevented further disruption to education and risk to individuals and their families. The staff in school are appreciative of such actions. Thank you! Please continue to use the online reporting form for any covid related information. This is available on the front page of our website or via the following link: <https://forms.office.com/r/uZpmbRWNnE>



Remote working, Google Classroom & Chromebooks

It has been great to be able to make use of our new Chromebooks in school since our return as part of our renewed digital strategy. This means that the children in the juniors will be much more familiar with their Google log in details and the use of Google applications this term. We are keen to increase our Chromebook stock further; if you would be willing to sponsor or partially sponsor an additional device please contact finance@stvincent.herts.sch.uk.

If your child is at home as they are awaiting the results of a PCR test work is available on the class pages of the website to keep them busy if they are well enough. If your child needs to isolate beyond their PCR result, or if your child is in a class where there are current covid cases, the day or week's work will be published to your child's Google Classroom. This can be accessed by logging in to the following link: <https://classroom.google.com/>. User names and passwords remain the same as last year.



If you are unsure, please contact the school office. We also have a number of devices that we can loan should your child not have access to a device during an extended isolation period.

Capital projects & finances

Thank you for continuing to make donations to the School Building Fund. This has allowed us to carry out significant works to the school site over the summer including a remodelling of the admin area offices, refurbishment of the staff room, the creation of a wellbeing woodland walk (soon to be opened), a major upgrade to our Wifi system in both buildings and significant investment in digital devices. It has also enabled us to make a 10% contribution towards the updating of the fire alarm system in both buildings. It is great that the alarm is now connected across both buildings and that heat and smoke detection as well as improved sounders and visual alerts are included. Our next major capital project may involve the replacement of the roof in the infant building and in key sections of the junior building where it is coming to the end of its life span. Our minimum 10% contribution to this project would be in the region of £62K. Currently, through our Governors' prudence and planning and your generosity, we have about £30K ready to contribute to this project. Like many schools with ageing buildings, there is a long list of prioritised works that will be required over the coming years. Our property consultants have estimated that a spend of approximately £2.1m is required to complete all necessary works on site. Raising our 10% towards necessary projects is going to be key for some time!

Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) Funding

You may have read an article in the local Comet newspaper in relation to problems with SEND funding in Stevenage. This relates to funding that is agreed locally for children who are not subject to an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) but who need an element of 1:1 provision. The panel meet locally (with professional representatives sitting on it) and consider cases put forward by schools. There is clearly a finite pot of funds and the need in schools locally currently outweighs the funds available as all children put forward for funding must meet certain stringent criteria. Funds have not been mismanaged for the local pot to be empty; they have simply been depleted by need. Please do ask questions of your local councillor and MP in relation to the current situation if you can. We support a number of children with 1:1 support, some of whom we receive funding for, and others who we receive no extra funding for. Sustaining this level of support is incredibly difficult but so necessary.

Absences

Please remember to either call the school office or email absence@stvincent.herts.sch.uk in relation to any absence from school. Any absences which are not in relation to illness must be authorised before they are taken, and an exceptional absence form must be submitted. I should add, however, that I am not permitted to authorise any holidays during term time, even if a holiday has been moved due to previous covid restrictions.



Curriculum Outline

You will have heard from your child's class teacher via a letter before the return to school to welcome you to the class. These have also been published on the school website. I am hoping that by the end of next week you will have received a curriculum update from each class in relation to the learning

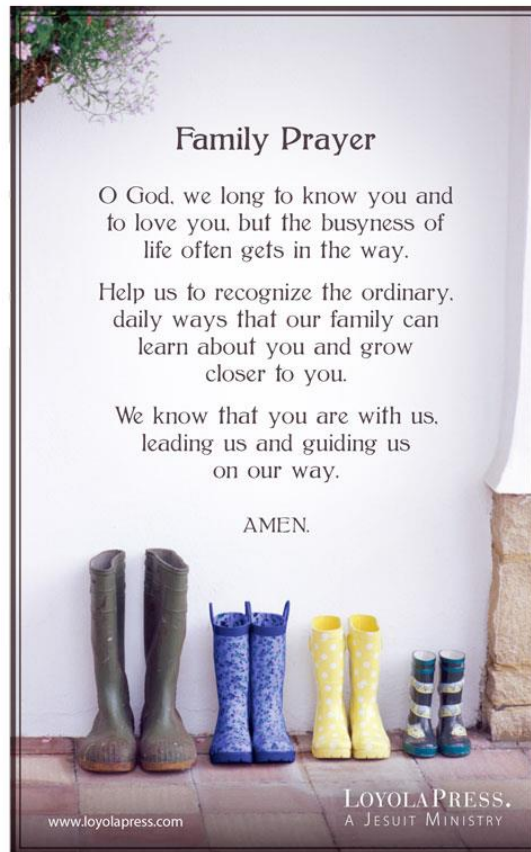


covered this term. There are also useful curriculum links published on the school website. Please do make use of them when you can.

School Calendar

Please check the website for any forthcoming calendar dates. All schools have an additional day's holiday to allocate to this year's calendar as we are on holiday during the extended jubilee bank holiday weekend. I hope to be able to let you know this date, and the dates for next year once Governors have agreed them before half term.

The community joins with you in a prayer for our families:



May God bless you and those most dear to you.

Yours sincerely

Jon White
Headteacher

