



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

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16<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Dear parents and carers

### **Thanks to Team StVdeP**

As we edge towards a well-deserved half term holiday, I have spent some time reflecting on what has been one of the most extraordinary periods in education that I can remember. For staff and governors, this half term has been marked by a continual re-inventing of the 'ordinary' and a full implementation of our extensive Autumn Term Recovery Plan. This has included balancing a concentrated focus on the emotional wellbeing of our pupils with the need to cover any key learning that may have been lost last term, without causing anxiety or stress. The staff team have been amazing at this and have managed to maintain rigour alongside wellbeing in such a carefully controlled and calm manner. Thank you to the full staff team for their efforts in achieving this so well. We are blessed in the expertise and commitment of our team!



For the children, their successes have been many and varied and I have been so impressed with their positive attitudes, their happy presence and their resilience in coping with change. They are such a credit to you and I am proud of each and every one of them. Thank you for guiding them to be so positive about their return to school. They have coped with so many changes so admirably and teach us all a thing or two about resilience and determination!

### **Homework**

Teachers met this week to discuss how homework could be best used to meet the key priorities of our Autumn Term Recovery Plan. This will result in some changes after half term. This will still involve the limiting of materials that are sent home and then returned to school to minimise the risk of cross contamination and may involve more use of our Purple Mash platform. In the meantime, there are many links on the class pages of the school website which will help you to find other relevant activities where you wish to supplement what we have provided.



## Delicious and nutritious: a full HCL Menu!

I have particularly enjoyed lunchtimes over the past fortnight. It has been great to see our young people enjoying a more comprehensive menu and seeing our junior children, in particular, coping with the new routines of their 'pop up servery'. Thank you to Mrs Pickard and her kitchen team who are serving an average of 240 hot meals per day again from two locations.



I know that we had some problems last Friday with ordered choices but we have learnt from this mistake (sorry!) and have adapted procedures – thank you for your patience. The children all enjoyed their ordered Friday choice today! The return to a wider hot menu has been so successful that from after half term we will be offering the full HCL Extra Plus Menu. This allows for a hot meat option, a hot vegetarian option, a baked potato option and a cold packed lunch option (which can be combined with hot vegetables, potato or pasta etc) each day. The new menu will be available on the school website next week. Please contact the school office if you would like to move to a nutritious and delicious school meal.

## Harvest

Whilst we are currently unable to have our usual harvest assembly in school, we still want to ensure that our children have an opportunity to support those most in need in our local community and to thank God for all that we have. During the last week of term from Monday to Wednesday, we encourage all children to bring one item into school that can be distributed to those most in need in our local community and leave it in the Chatterbox on the edge of the KS1 Playground. Please encourage your child to bring in:

- a sealed packaged food item (cereal, pasta, tins, custards, squash etc);
- a useful toiletry item (toothpaste, toothbrush, soap, shower gel, deodorant); or
- an item to keep someone warm (socks, hats, gloves)

These items will be distributed to local charities (Feed Up Warm Up, Food Shed, Stevenage Food Bank and the Haven) during half term.

Our virtual assembly on Wednesday of this week will focus on the Harvest and will enable the children to reflect on all that they have achieved in supporting the dignity of the individuals in their local community who need support. During this assembly, I also hope to share a video that our children have made about the charisma of St Vincent de Paul. This will be uploaded to our website following the assembly.

On the final day of this term for pupils - **Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> October** - we will hold a **NON UNIFORM DAY**, asking children to donate a minimum fee of £1 to wear their own clothes. Funds from this will be donated



to **CAFOD** for their overseas 'harvest' projects. Thank you in anticipation for your customary generous response.

## **NOVEMBER – Remembrance**

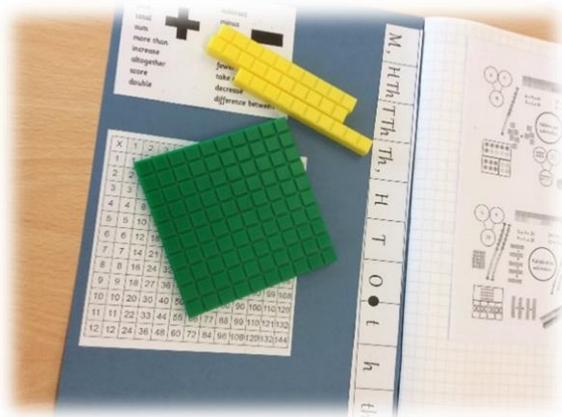
Returning after half term, we have some very special plans for our marking of the armistice this year. We look forward to sharing our plans with you. Over half term you may wish to spend some time making a waterproof poppy or a painted remembrance stone that could be placed in our field of remembrance when we return. Further details to follow ... watch this space!

## **Return to school after a Covid related absence**

It is important that if your child is absent from school for any Covid related reason that a return date to school is confirmed with the school prior to return. As such, if you or your child has received a negative test result, please forward this information to **absence@stvincent.herts.sch.uk**. This email address is monitored during school hours only and will be responded to, confirming our acceptance of a return date as soon as possible during the working day. If your child is returning after a period of isolation for the family and there are no test results to report, please ring the school office the day before their return to confirm the current situation. This enables school staff to keep a very precise record of those children who should / should not be in school currently and protects the integrity of our year group bubbles.

## **Isolation Work Packs**

For any children who need to isolate, but are well enough to work, there are instructions in relation to work set for pupils in Reception to Year 6 on the class pages of the school website which can be accessed from <http://stvincent.herts.sch.uk/os-classes.html>. This work is intended to be useful and relevant at any point during the term; please do not use the work packs for any other reason just in case your child needs them in the future! If a whole class or year group was required to isolate, Purple Mash and other digital means would be used to teach the curriculum remotely. This will not, however, include live lessons but there would be daily contact. Should this be necessary, you would be kept in the loop in relation to schedules and expectations. We will be launching a digital survey over the next few weeks which will help us to understand how we can realise a broad curriculum from a distance should we need to. Please do complete the survey that you will be sent. Without your response, we cannot respond to individual needs.



## **Nursery Applications for 2021/2022**

Applications for St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School Nursery for Children born between 1st September 2017 and 31st August 2018 are currently open. Due to Covid restrictions, tours are not available in person but a virtual version is available here: <https://youtu.be/F4Wkb57bZVU>

The school welcomes applications from all who are willing to support our ethos and help promote an inclusive environment. Although we prioritise Catholic families, in the past four years, there have been enough places to admitted non catholic children in our nursery class.

You must complete the school's Supplementary Information Form (SIF) together with submission of



other supporting documents to have a complete application. All documents are available on our website at <http://stvincent.herts.sch.uk/os-admissions-nursery-applications.html>

**Applications for nursery close** on Friday 27th November 2020

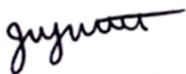
**Applications for the reception class (main school) open on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020.**

Wishing you and your children a fruitful last week of the first half term.

The Light of God - surround us.  
The Love of God - enfold us.  
The Power of God - protect us.  
The Presence of God - watch over us.  
The Mind of God - guide us.  
The Law of God - direct us.  
Wherever we are - God,  
be our strength and harbor.

May God bless you and those most dear to you.

Yours sincerely



**Jon White**  
**Headteacher**

**Dates for your diary**

Mon 19 <sup>th</sup> – Wed 21 <sup>st</sup> Oct:	Harvest donations in the Chatterbox
Thurs 22 <sup>nd</sup> Oct:	Non Uniform Day (£1 for CAFOD) Break for half term at usual time
Fri 23 <sup>rd</sup> Oct:	INSET Day – no school for pupils
Mon 26 <sup>th</sup> – Fri 30 <sup>th</sup> Oct:	Half Term Holiday
Mon 2 <sup>nd</sup> Nov:	All pupils return to school
Fri 18 <sup>th</sup> Dec:	Break for Christmas
Mon 21 <sup>st</sup> Dec – Fri 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan:	Christmas Holiday
Mon 4 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2021	All pupils return to school

