



St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Bulletin Number 4: Friday 25 September 2020

<http://www.st-marys-marplebridge.stockport.sch.uk/>

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

Special Friends 2020 is now officially launched! We held an al fresco Special Friends assembly in two halves, one at each end of the day, so that we could gather 15 Reception and 15 Y6 children together and have a gathering of no more than 30 parents at the same time. This adjustment seemed to work really well – and meant that our all-important Special Friend system could begin for the year. The Y6 pupils had prepared pledges and prayers which were shared: we will publish these so that families can read back over these powerful words – especially as the windy weather made it difficult to hear everything!

We have a photographer who is coming into school to take photos of the Special Friend pairs next week: These will be available to purchase at a reasonable price at a later date (but there will be no obligation to do so).

Our Special Friend system should typify all that we are about. Relationships are at the heart of what makes our school family tick, as well as what makes us human – relationships at all levels: with ourselves, with others and with God. When we see the nurturing approach our Y6s show to their 4 year olds, this will remind us all that every person deserves to be treated with the same care and dignity. While The Y6 and Reception children feel that Special Friend 2020-21 is all about them, we are reminded that it is all about all of us!

The latest **Wednesday Word** is now available through this: please follow and enjoy this resource with your children at home. <https://www.paperturn-view.com/uk/wednesday-word/change?pid=MTA101634&v=4.4>

Fr Daniel was thrilled to receive 60 welcome cards and 30 letters from the children, telling him all about our happy school family. As our new resident priest living at the presbytery in Marple Bridge, he will become part of our faith community and, over time, feature in our worship celebrations. We retain a special link with Fr Bill from Holy Spirit also, who has been a great support to us. Lucky us, to have two caring members of the clergy involved!

Family Fast Day falls on Friday 9 October. We would like to ask for donations for the Wellspring in Stockport, showing our support for those with little at this time of Harvest. We will let you know if there are specific items which we are requesting this year.

CLASS COVER DURING COVID

On occasion, class teachers are not available to be with their classes. This may be because they have a meeting, are attending a course or some training, are ill themselves or caring for someone who is isolating – or a host of other reasons, either for short or a more sustained period. We would not routinely report to parents about this: timetabling staff is a management responsibility in any case. As we are in new times, with the Covid restrictions, our options for covering classes is somewhat reduced – or at least needs to be further considered: supply teachers are less available, as well as there being a limit to non-essential visitors; costs could rocket, if we needed supply teachers very regularly, and our budget does not extend that far; we cannot move our own staff around as freely, as we are trying to maintain our bubble system. However, since we have a team of highly experienced and well trained teaching assistants, who already co-educate the children alongside our teachers, we plan to (continue to) use these familiar colleagues for short bursts of class cover. Rest assured that all lessons would remain appropriate, relevant and purposeful, operating under the guidance of the class teacher/s.



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St Ralph
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BUBBLE/CLASS CLOSURE

Should we ever need to close a bubble/ class, or ask a number of children to self-isolate at home, due to a positive Covid test (as other schools have had to do already), this is likely to be at short notice. It would be a good idea for all families to have a contingency plan, with some ideas about how you would manage such a situation.

One of our Trust schools had to do this recently: one of the high schools in Derby had two positive cases last week, following which they contacted PHE for advice. Because the school was able to provide clear seating plans for the pupils, and could track where they had been in the preceding days, only 38 pupils were asked to isolate and the rest of the school continued as usual.

FILMING ON MONDAY

Miss Poole and some of our Y2 cohort, along with a couple of our Y6 pupils, will feature on Granada Reports on ITV one day soon... We are the recipients of a Runner Up prize for the Daily Mile (Smile for a Mile) schools' initiative (school of the Year award), where we are topping up our physical exercise regime by regularly running a mile around our race track on the field. Watch out for them! If we know in advance when it is to be aired, we will send out a text.

FRIENDS OF MARPLE MEMORIAL PARK PAVILION COMMUNITY ART PROJECT

We have signed up to be involved in this lovely community action effort, where designs should reflect the response to this request: **Show us what you love most about your park and what it means to you.** There are 10 circular spaces available for our school community to contribute to a community mural which will be installed on the wall of the former bowling pavilion in Marple Memorial Park: the template is attached with this week's bulletin. Entries need to be received by 5 October, so get creative and let's see some amazing artwork! You can send your entries directly into pavilionart@marplememorialpark.org.uk – but don't forget to fill in your name, age and school on the form. If anyone has an issue with the technical aspect of downloading/ printing/ sending entries, let us know as we do not wish there to be barriers for anyone.

FIRST AID NOTIFICATIONS

Please be aware that from Monday next week we will reinstate our system of sending slips home (rather than emails) should your child have received first aid during the day. We will, of course, contact parents if the injury is serious or it relates to a head bump. Please remember to check your child's school bag for slips every day.

SCHOOL BAGS

Our suppliers send their apologies: the next delivery of school bags will not be until mid-October.

REMINDERS

- **Watches:** If your child wishes to wear a wrist watch, please ensure it is plain, flat and simple. Smart watches (or similar) are not appropriate for school; we also wish to avoid bulky watches, since they could present a hazard.
- **Gates/ outside the school site:** Please remember to move away from the site when you have collected your child; I know we are all a sociable bunch, but –for now – avoid congregating at the gates, or beyond, as we need to be extra careful to keep social distancing rules. In this way you will not only be setting a great example to the children but also reducing the anxieties of others around you. Thank you.
- **Emails to school:** During the Covid period, we shared our teachers' professional email addresses with parents as a way of keeping in touch at a time when it was a challenge to do so. Over time, we will reduce the need for this by touching base with parents in other ways, returning to a pattern of parent/ teacher meetings (virtually, no doubt!) and making phone calls, as needed. I would now recommend that parents reduce email communication directly with teachers: if there are matters to be addressed (questions, queries, issues), they are better coming through the office and my headteacher account, in the hope that we can follow up for you and liaise with the teachers.

WOODWIND

Mr Collins has been continuing with his woodwind lessons over the last couple of weeks with our Y4-6 musicians. Are there any **Y3 children** who, under normal circumstances, would eventually like to take up the flute, clarinet or saxophone? Now is not the time to begin a wind instrument. BUT, Mr Collins is offering to take small groups to have **recorder lessons** over the Advent term, with a view to moving them onto a woodwind instrument of choice in term 2 or 3, all being well. Please let Mrs Biggs know by email if you would like to put your child's name down for these lessons: the cost would be £25 per term and we would begin just as soon as we have enough takers. Children could bring their own recorder, or we could lend them one from school (for a small deposit).

MCMILLAN COFFEE MORNING

The staffroom has been an all-day (all week...) cakery! In aid of Macmillan, we have held a raffle and bake sale to raise funds for this important and close-to-our-hearts charity. We are sorry that we have been unable to hold a wider coffee morning – which we have done so often with our parents: we can however pass on any donations with our own, should anyone wish to contribute.

Dates

Date	Event	Details
w/c 28/09/2020	PTA Scarecrow Festival	Design and make your own scarecrow for planting on the school lawns in time for our Harvest Celebrations. Email ptastmarysmarplebridge@gmail.com for entry instructions. £5 entry fee. Closing date: Friday 2 October 2020. Judging date TBC.
Tuesday 29/09/20	Year 6 and Reception Special Friends' Photos	Sara Lewin Photography will come into school to photograph the newly paired special friends playing together. Digital photography will be available for parents to purchase. See previous note.
Thursday 15 and Friday 16/10/20	INSET DAYS x2	DON'T FORGET: We have two training days for staff in the middle of October. This is not the same week that we break up for half term. Children will not be in school on these days.
Wednesday 21/10/2020 (TBC)	PTA Don't Stop Moving outdoor disco	Each class will enjoy an outdoor disco (with a DJ) on the bottom playground during the school day. Children to collect sponsorship for each minute that they keep moving continuously during the disco. Certificates for all. More details to follow.
Saturday 28/11/2020	PTA Santa's Grotto	Father Christmas will be visiting the St Mary's outdoor classroom for timed visits. Booking details to follow.
2-3/07/21	St Mary's Family Camp	Every year (sadly we were unable to in 2020), many St Mary's families go camping on a field at a farm in Castleton. This is always the first weekend of July.

A THOUGHT TO LEAVE YOU WITH....

Wishing everyone a happy and fulfilling weekend!
Fionuala Boucher

