



Friday 20 November 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

During this challenging period, I recognise that so many families will have been negatively affected by changes in circumstances; this letter aims to offer some ideas and solutions to those who may require or could offer some help.

If you feel that your children may now qualify for Free School Meals (FSM), please get in touch, as this may well be a good source of support for you. Here is a useful link: <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/start/free-school-meals-application-form>

As well as providing a meal on school days, FSM status would ensure that, should your child need to isolate (due to a bubble closure at school, for example), you would be entitled to continue receiving support, perhaps in the form of supermarket vouchers; more recently, there has been high profile support for providing meals or vouchers during school holiday periods. During the previous lockdown period, FSM families received £15 per week in vouchers. School also receives a budget per head for pupils in receipt of FSM, so that other forms of support can be offered.

We are aware that many families may find that they do not qualify for FSM, yet have been hit unexpectedly with hardship due to the pandemic. I do not want any of our families to be suffering in isolation, so I want to extend our support to you, if this is possible. Both the Trust and Stockport LA are keen to understand how many families may require additional support as Christmas approaches. If you feel that your family needs help with food or other essentials, please make contact with me – in confidence. We could, any of us, find ourselves in need at some stage in life: I would want to know that others would be there for me, so I would want our school to be a source of solace for those who need us outside of our educational links.

At the same time, we have families who may find that they are unexpectedly all-the-more comfortable at the moment, due to having secure jobs and lower expenditure. Should you fall into this category, and wish to offer support, please get in touch: I have had a couple of people asking 'what can we do to help?' recently, so we may well be able to subtly support with food parcels and Christmas gifts.

If you would like to benefit from or offer support, please get in touch with me directly, in confidence. I would not need to know many personal details – but understanding a little of what you need or could offer would be most helpful.

COVID 19 has challenged us all this year and I urge you to reach out if you require support and do not suffer in silence. In spite of these exceptional circumstances, we at St Mary's feel that all families deserve to have a good Christmas.

With all good wishes,

*Fionuala Boucher*

Fionuala Boucher

Executive Headteacher

