

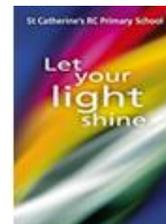
# St Catherine's RC Primary School

8 April 2020 - Newsletter 7/19-20

[www.stcatherines.newcastle.sch.uk](http://www.stcatherines.newcastle.sch.uk)

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*I try to keep going when things are difficult.*



Dear Parents, Guardians, Friends and Governors,

Welcome to our latest newsletter. I hope that you and your family are safe and well.

I don't think we've ever released a school newsletter during a school "holiday" but there are lots of things happening these days which have never happened before. The purpose of this newsletter is to keep you up to date with various pieces of school-related information.

## Free School Meal Vouchers Scheme-

### An explanation

As you may be aware, the government announced on Tuesday 31 March a Free School Meals Voucher scheme to ensure that those entitled to the benefit will continue to receive that benefit during this school shutdown. Schools received instructions on how to administer this on Thursday 2 April. Due to so many schools trying to access the website many were unable to process applications. Our data was uploaded on Friday 3 April and requests for vouchers were made.

On Saturday 4 April at the 5pm daily government conference, there was an announcement that this scheme would now include the Easter holiday.

At the time of writing this, vouchers have been ordered for every family we know is entitled to the Free School meals benefit. The vouchers are administered by an organisation called Edenred and they are slowly working through the massive logjam of requests to get vouchers e-mailed out to every family in the country entitled to a voucher, which has a value of £15 per child.

These vouchers will be sent direct to parents via e-mails from Edenred, not from the school. Please check e-mails regularly. Thank you for your patience if you are awaiting a voucher.

## Reception Offers

April 16 is still intended to be National Offer Day for Reception Class places for September 2020.

Look out for e-mails or letters offering places on or after that day. If you have not had an offer, or you wish to discuss your offer please contact the admissions team at Newcastle.gov.uk in the first instance and also let us at school know. Parents have 2 weeks from 15 April to accept or reject the school place offered.

## Nursery Applications

We continue to accept applications for September 2020. Please contact the office for an application form. Nursery operates Monday-Wednesday with an additional top-up available on a Wednesday afternoon. We can accommodate parents whose children are entitled to 30 hours provision too-ask at the office for guidance about that.



### **The School Website**

I know many parents and pupils have been accessing the school website (address in the info bar at top of newsletter) during the shutdown. If you have yet to discover what's there, go to your child's class page, click on the Home Learning tab and you will find a lot of activities and resources to use at home during the school shutdown.

Last week we broadcast a Collective Worship for our Message of the Week on Facebook Live. Thank you for the feedback we had for that. The video of this can be found on the school website. It is our intention to repeat this during w/b 20 April.

### **Facebook**

We have been posting daily messages on the school's Facebook page. This can be directly accessed via the school website home page. The page is a great way of staying connected with each other and it has been lovely to see so many of our families sharing what you have been up to.

Every Mon-Thurs at 7.15pm there is a bedtime story broadcast on Facebook Live. You can message on the Facebook page for that day to get a "shout-out". All the bedtime stories can be found under the Resources/Videos tab on the school website. Live Bedtime stories will resume on Mon 20 April.

### **Holy Week/Easter**

This week is Holy Week and we've placed a fantastic resource from the diocese on the school website which can help as a guide to what we might be teaching in school, including Stations of the Cross. I hope you find this useful.

### **Coronavirus Guides for Children**

This can be a very worrying time for children and it can sometimes be difficult to find the right answers to questions your child may have. We have placed 3 guides to the coronavirus on the school website, under the Home Learning Resources page that may be of some help to you. There is also a document from West Sussex Psychology Service called Tips for Families, which also may be useful.

### **Year 5/Year 6 residential visits**

Parents of Y5 children will be aware that the planned residential visit to Ford Castle was affected by the school shutdown. Although communications have been much more difficult than would normally be the case, we are currently speaking with Ford Castle and the council about how to go about claiming a refund for the cancelled trip. Advice around cancelled residential visits is a national issue and further advice is currently awaited from the Dept for Education.

As schools remain in shutdown it is uncertain at this point whether the Y6 residential will be able to proceed or not and the above advice also applies.

### **And Finally....**

May I take this opportunity to wish you a happy and safe Easter, filled with appreciation for those at the front-line in this crisis, with hope and with prayer that we shall gather as a school community again before too long.

God bless you all.

Best wishes

M Ewing

Headteacher