

Newsletter

February 2021



Learning and caring for each other

Dear Parents/Guardian.

January was a very trying time for everyone. The winter weather and long dark nights are always difficult but this time it has been especially hard with the circumstances we are in. Thank you so much for all your hard work and efforts in encouraging your child in their home learning. We know this is in addition to your own jobs and the everyday tasks that do not go away! The cooking, cleaning, washing etc doesn't stop! Please just do your best and be confident that your best really is good enough. The most important thing you can do at the moment is be there for your family and reassure your children with cuddles in your own home bubble.

Daily Class Check-In time... it has been lovely to see almost every child joining the daily class check-ins. They are a very important time for keeping us all in touch and to see so many smiling faces lifts everyone's spirits so - THANK YOU for making this happen. It has been a pleasure to see so much learning shared, to hear so much news including about baby siblings, birthday celebrations, movie nights, walks down The Vale. We know it may be tricky to attend every day and we have tried to vary the start times for each class to accommodate work/home life commitments as well as school - as we said, just do what you can, we do understand how hard it is.

Exciting baby news... Mrs Eeckelaers and Mrs O'Mahony-Leach are both expecting babies later this year. This is very exciting news for us all at school and it gives us some happy news to look forward to. If this is leaving you wondering about staffing, there will be no changes for quite a while yet and please be assured that when Mrs Eeckelaers and Mrs O'Mahony-Leach do start their respective maternity leave, their roles will be covered by experienced teachers, who are already known to Orange and Yellow classes as well as all our St Mary's school family. This will ensure continuity and familiarity for everyone, especially our children.

This week is Children's Mental Health Week... The theme is 'Express Yourself'. Now more than ever it is important that we do everything we can to help more children and young people get the help and support they need. Some of the support available can be accessed on our Stockport [SEND Local Offer](#) website.

Children's Mental Health Week cont...our Google Class remote learning will also be reflecting support for our children during this week and in addition, as the national lockdown continues, [SHAPES](#) have designed a home challenge. If you or your child(ren) are interested in completing an active, fun challenge please click on the SHAPES link for more information. The challenge is all about balancing:

- ✓ You will need a beanbag or a rolled pair of socks & a timer.
- ✓ You can work by yourself or with a family member.
- ✓ The challenge is to balance your beanbag or socks on your foot, knee, elbow, shoulder, back, chest.

Shapes aims to 'Face the Daily Challenge' with a positive mindset, and have active fun. If you achieve the daily challenge set, celebrate and think... what else can you balance on parts of your body? Can you walk/run/wheel whilst balancing items on body parts? Challenge yourselves! Also, you could check out their videos on [@StockportSHAPES](#) on twitter/insta!

School meal vouchers... if you are eligible for free school meals, by now your voucher should have arrived. If you have not seen it yet, please check your junk mail or contact school. The Government will not be providing school meal vouchers for the February half term break. However, Stockport Council know how difficult it is and once again they are planning on issuing vouchers for the February half term (15-19th February) when school will be closed to all children. The Stockport voucher will be issued electronically and will be for £20. The additional £5 is to help towards the increased costs you have, such as household fuel and heating, as a result of being at home more during the current national lockdown. Your voucher can be used towards food, fuel and other winter essential costs. If your circumstances have changed or you think you may be eligible, please click on the link below:

<https://www.stockport.gov.uk/free-school-meals/apply-school-grants-free-school-meals>

As always, please do not hesitate to contact your child's class teacher or myself if you would like to discuss anything, if you have any questions and if you have any ideas or suggestions to help us provide a better learning experience, whether remotely or in school each day.

Sending love and virtual hugs,
Mrs E. Irvin and all the staff at St Mary's