



Our Lady Catholic Primary School

Woodhall Lane, Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire AL7 3TF
Tel: (01707 324408)

Email: admin@ourladys527.herts.sch.uk
Website: www.ourladys527.herts.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mr. R. Curry
Deputy Headteacher: Mr. D. Abrahams

Friday 19th March, 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

THANK YOU:



It has been a week of great joy as all of the children were welcomed back to our school. It has been lovely to hear and see the children enjoying themselves during play and learning and engaging so well with all that is offered to them. Thank you for helping your children to return with such a positive mindset – they are all a great credit to you.

Thank you also for your partnership during the time of lockdown and in this period of time where we bridge a pathway to new learning. This partnership is the key to success for each child.

BRIDGING A NEW PATHWAY TO LEARNING:

Whilst we continue with a full curriculum, our focus as your children return remains on the following priorities:

- A continued prioritisation of WELLBEING;
- Reaffirmation of SAFETY & ROUTINES;
- An affirmation of our CORE VALUES;
- A continued engagement with GOSPEL VALUES;
- A focus on RELATONSHIPS and an awareness of change in relation to these;
- Acknowledgement of LOSS, CHANGE & BEREAVEMENT where necessary;
- A continued focus on the promotion of positive learning powers and developing resilience.
- Then....academic recovery!



Although there has been much talk in the press about 'catch up', we will be turning this deficit model on its head and will instead talk of 'bridging work' and building new pathways. Our aim through this is to create a supported pathway between previous learning, lockdown learning and new learning. We will build upon the work that has occurred in school and at home during this period. We aim to build upon the learning behaviours that have been developed in different learning situations and create a new exciting path of learning from this.

Where possible we have stuck to the curriculum we normally would have delivered since January and children at home and at school have been given similar opportunities. As such, contrary to the media's view, learning has not been 'lost' it has just been 'different'.

Our aim, as we work towards Easter and beyond, is clear - to sustain an irresistible curriculum that inspires, motivates and supports every child, wherever they are on their learning journey. We hope to provide an opportunity in the summer term to meet with you virtually to discuss your child's unique learning journey and we look forward to this opportunity.

SYMPTOMS, TESTING AND SELF-ISOLATION:



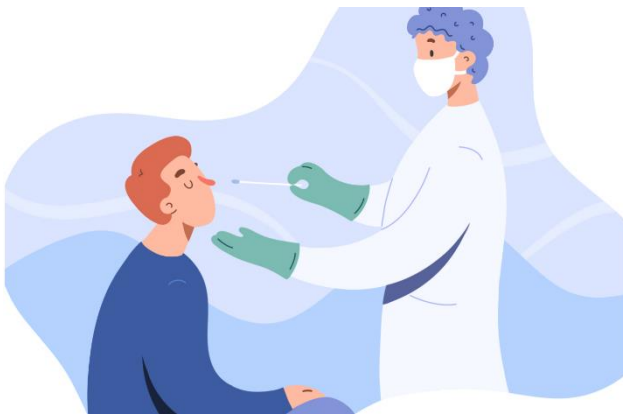
Remaining vigilant and aware of Covid 19 symptoms is a key priority for everyone. The official symptoms remain the same:

- A persistent new cough;
- A high temperature (37.8 degrees plus); and/or
- A loss or change to your sense of smell or taste.

There are no changes to the rules in relation to self-isolation. Therefore, if anyone in the household or bubble displays any of the symptoms, everyone in the household/support/childcare bubble must self-isolate for at least **ten days** or until the symptomatic individual receives a negative test result.

If anyone in the household tests positive, you must inform the school immediately and isolate as a family for at least ten days. Please email admin@ourladys527.herts.sch.uk with any Covid-related absence details. Thank you for continuing to cooperate with us to keep our school as safe as it possibly can be.

ACCESS TO RAPID LATERAL FLOW HOME TESTING:



Access to twice weekly Lateral Flow Device (LFD) home testing is now available to all non-symptomatic adults in a household where a primary school aged pupil is attending school. This testing is for the adults and not the children. The guidance in relation to this is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rapid-lateral-flow-testing-for-households-and-bubbles-of-schoolpupils-and-staff>.

This testing cannot be used to confirm whether a symptomatic individual has Covid; in this case a lab base PCR test must be used. The drive-through testing centre at Tesco Headquarters in Shire Park in Welwyn Garden City is open every day from 8am to 8pm. It has been carrying out an average of 210 tests every day. Here, people can test themselves with the swabs provided or have a swab test carried out by a trained professional. The test involves taking a swab of the nose and the back of the throat.

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES ON REMOTE LEARNING OFFER:



As you are aware, in order to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of our home school learning offer throughout the national lockdown in the spring term, we recently sent out an online questionnaire to all of our families. The purpose of the questionnaire was to ascertain what we had done well throughout lockdown and what we could improve on, as we strive to make things even better with regards to home learning. The feedback we received was overwhelmingly positive and I share the headlines with you below (which is based on 50 responses):

In comparison to our previous lockdown remote learning, how did you find this one?

Better than previous lockdown	84%
About the same as previous lockdown	14%
Not as good as previous lockdown	2%

What worked well in this current remote learning provision?

A sample of responses included:

- Help and support from teachers;
- Daily communication with teachers and classmates;
- Mixture of live and recorded lessons worked well;
- Easy to follow instructions clearly presented in daily videos made by the class teacher;
- Work was marked and feedback provided;
- Use of Google Classroom instead of uploading onto the school website;
- 1:1 sessions with targeted children.

In this remote learning offer, we used Google Classroom. Did you find this accessible?

Yes	86%
No	2%
Somewhat	12%

Please provide reasons for your answer above:

A sample of responses included:

- Better organisation and clear structure;
- Teacher's videos helped the children to understand the objective of the lesson;
- Not everyone had access to devices, which was a challenge;
- Children enjoyed the daily interactions with teachers and classmates;
- The work was very easy to access;
- A clear timetable was set out which helped parents to plan their child's learning in advance;
- Ability for children to submit their work online.

If remote teaching was to be required in the future, what could we do to improve our provision?

A sample of responses included:

- The school could not have done any more!
- Ensuring that EYFS also use Google Classroom instead of Tapestry;
- More 'live' lessons for different subjects;
- Constructive comments in feedback that recognise children's effort.
- Setting the work the night before so that parents can print off any resources that are needed;
- Increased communication from school staff to parents;

We appreciate the time that all of the families who responded put into this and will use all of this feedback to refine and adapt our offer so that it can be the very best it can be in any future periods of isolation. Thank you for your support in our evaluation process.

PUPIL VOICE:

And now we would like to present the views of our children. We are incredibly grateful to Lyla and Sean (our Deputy Head Boy and Girl) who have written about their experiences of both the home learning offer and the first week back to school after the closures.



Lyla: "I thought home learning was an amazing experience because by 6am everything was set up. We had to watch videos for both Maths and English, as we were not in the classroom. Every Tuesday we had a live lesson for our wellbeing, which lasted around half an hour. I especially liked the live lessons and meetings because we could speak to our friends and teachers. The teachers also set up a calendar for us every day. Finally, we had reading groups so we could practise our reading. Overall, I am really happy about how school was during lockdown."



Sean: "On the 8th of March, we finally came back to school! During the morning, we had a wellbeing session to see how we all felt. I thought the first week back was amazing, the teachers were super nice and friendly. We all got to see our friends and we could play and chat with them. Our first art lesson of the week was also really fun. We designed some spoons that we would make into dolls later on - as part of our work for World Book Day. In English, we were focusing on Alma, a story about a young curious girl who gets sucked into a doll that looks exactly like her (our art lesson was also inspired by this). In Maths, we were working on formal long division. A lot of us found this really tricky. In Science, we created a circuit to make a bulb light up. After, we did the same but with a buzzer and a motor. Some people were allowed to use Duracell batteries so their current would be stronger. In RE, we have been given the twelfth station to focus on as part of a Lenten project with other schools in our deanery. All the other Catholic primary and secondary schools in the local area have been given other stations. Overall, I thought the first week back was amazing."

BIRTHDAYS IN MARCH & APRIL:



We are delighted to share with you the names of the children and staff who will be celebrating their birthdays in March and April (including throughout the Easter holidays). We hope you all enjoy your special day with friends and family.

Nursery	Marley
Reception	Teddy & Cara
Year 1	
Year 2	Amelia, Victor & Niamh
Year 3	Niamh
Year 4	Edie, Louie & Niall
Year 5	Layla
Year 6	Nina & Thomas
Staff	Mrs Lee

LENTEN PREPARATIONS:



Lenten preparations are well underway for pupils and staff throughout the school. Usually, the whole school would engage in a whole school 'Stations of the Cross' in our Jubilee Garden with Fr. Norbert. However, this year, we are doing things a little differently.

Lenten Reflections:

At the start of Lent, the school launched our programme of online Lenten reflections, which have been well received by the children and teachers in our collective worship sessions in class. We have also been sharing our reflections with our parent community, via our social media platforms and school website, so that families are able to set aside some valuable time to pray as a family in this period of preparation. These reflections can be found on the school website by clicking on the following link: <https://www.ourladys527.herts.sch.uk/catholic-life-of-the-school/>

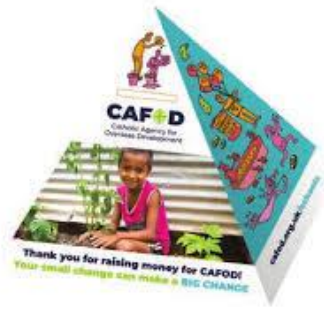
Lenten Project with our Family of Schools:

As part of our ongoing Lenten preparations, we are also working in collaboration with our family of schools within the deanery (both primary and secondary) to create a series of reflections based on the Stations of the Cross. Each school in the deanery has been allocated one of the fourteen stations and has been asked to produce a short reflection, which will then be shared on the school's YouTube channel for all schools and parishes to access as they wish during Lent. Our Year 6 children have been busy creating their reflection on the twelfth station: Jesus Dies on the Cross. This will be uploaded next week by the John Henry Newman school and we will send the link once this has been done.

Online Lenten reflections with Fr. Norbert:

Next Thursday, Fr Norbert will be leading a series of reflections for each class, which will also be based on the Stations of the Cross. Each class will be focusing on one of the stations and children will be relating what is happening in the station to their own lives (especially in relation to the recent challenges that all families have been experiencing). This will be a very powerful way for the children to reflect on what has happened in their lives over the past few months and how their faith in God, our Father, can help to provide them with strength to keep going.

CAFOD 'PENNIES BOX':



In addition to this, next week each child will bring home a CAFOD (Catholic Agency for Overseas Development) pennies box to make use of. Perhaps your child could do some jobs at home and be paid for their efforts in pennies? These pennies can be saved in the CAFOD box and returned to school after Easter. CAFOD coordinates amazing work internationally and supports individuals in communities to help themselves with sustainable projects. Please do help if you can. Your small change can make a BIG difference!

WILD SEEDS FOR EASTER:

As part of our ongoing preparations for Easter, your child will also be bringing home a packet of wild seeds to plant on the final day of term. This action of giving back to the earth links to the following verse that we have used earlier today in our Awards Assembly when exploring the Stations of the Cross:

If you leave seeds in a packet,
They remain just what they are – seeds.
If you bury them in the ground,
They turn into grain and grass and flowers.
Jesus said his death would be like planting a seed.
Today the life of Jesus is everywhere.
(H.J. Richards)



We look forward to seeing life in full bloom with photos of your beautiful wild flowers once they have grown! Easter is all about new life!

As ever, we thank you for your ongoing support. May God bless you and those most dear to you. Let's enjoy our final week of the term together!

Richard Curry