



# Our Lady Catholic Primary School

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

Email: [admin@ourladys527.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@ourladys527.herts.sch.uk)

Website: [www.ourladys527.herts.sch.uk](http://www.ourladys527.herts.sch.uk)

*Headteacher: Mr. R. Curry*

*Deputy Headteacher: Mr. D. Abrahams*

6<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,



My first letter of 2021 comes with my very best wishes for a positive new year for all of you – even though the new school term has not begun as we had intended. Despite the extreme challenges that we all face, I do trust that you have all had a chance to at least relax and reflect over the holiday period, even though it many have been very different to any other Christmas you have celebrated! On behalf of all the team at Our Lady Catholic Primary school, I would like to thank you for your generosity over Christmas – it was truly appreciated by all

of us. It is great to have such a supportive and appreciate body of parents behind us! Thank you very much!

As you know, following on from the Government announcement on 4<sup>th</sup> January, I am delighted to launch our Remote Learning offer (via Google Classroom) to our families as we enter another national lockdown. This means that the only children who will receive in-school provision this half term will be those deemed as vulnerable and the children of Critical Workers who have no other option for children. For the remainder of the half term, all other children will be able to access our remote learning offer via Google Classroom. Based on parental feedback from our home learning offer in the previous lockdown, we have listened to your views and worked hard to include more recorded/live sessions from class teachers and we have also been focusing on the quality and frequency of our feedback to the children, in order to support them throughout this process.

In addition, each class will be delivering a weekly 'live' pupil wellbeing session, which will provide the opportunity for the children to catch up with each other and to have a chat about their thoughts, feelings and achievements throughout the week.

## **Google Classroom:**



All teachers will be teaching remotely until at least the end of this half term (whereupon it will be reviewed by the Government). In order to support our home learning offer, we have put together a Remote Learning protocol for children, staff and parents so that everyone is clear about how this educational offer will operate. This is included in the email and I would ask that you read the information presented very carefully. Also included in the email is a Parent Guide to using Google Classroom, which I hope you will find of use.

After an initial 'online registration' at the start of the day (which all children will be expected to attend), lessons will be available for you to access throughout the day to fit in with any sibling's school work or work you may have to do from home. There will also be a live 'Reflection Time' from 2.30pm-3.00pm at the end of the day to reflect on the day's learning, have a chat with the class teacher and end the day with a story/reflection/prayer. Please refer to the Remote Learning protocol for more details about this.

All children are expected to engage with remote learning and teachers will monitor this closely. Non-attendance will be followed up by a phone call from the school office. We must work together to ensure our children receive the very best remote education possible and we would really value your support with this. We are all in this together, so please do call the school if you have any questions or queries and we will do all that we can to help you.

Once we have all 'found our feet' with Google Classroom over the next three days, individual class timetables will be posted on both the Google Classroom page and the class pages on the school website at the end of the day on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January. This timetable will be followed each week and will outline the lesson planned for the week. All of the supporting resources will be posted onto Google Classroom and this will be the main place of contact for the duration of home learning.

### **Exercise books:**



We are happy to provide exercise books (one lined, one squared and one handwriting book) for all children to complete their remote learning in. These will be available to collect from the window at the school office from 1.00pm this afternoon and throughout the day on Thursday and Friday (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> January). We hope this helps with the organisation of your child's home-learning as it reflects what takes place in the classroom. If you have your own books, please

also feel free to use them.

### **Twitter:**



If you would like to share any of your children's work on our Twitter feed, please feel free to email these into the school office and we will do our best to share as many as possible with the wider school community. This will help us to keep our community together as one in these challenging times and show that, although we may currently be apart, we are still as unified as ever as we work together to get through this latest setback. Twitter has also been an excellent source of shared resources recently – so please do follow the school account (@OurLadySchWGC) as we often re-tweet learning opportunities as they arise.

### **Here are some further pointers to help prepare your child for home learning:**

- Have a quiet, tidy area for your child to work in;
- Ensure your child has access to Google Classroom – laptops/desktops or tablets/iPads are ideal. If you are experiencing difficulty accessing the online learning, due to lack of equipment or online provision, we are currently working on a strategy to support you with this. We will be in touch shortly with more details.

- Saving passwords and usernames or having them written down next to the device being used is advisable;
- Headphones can provide better sound quality (though they are not necessary as the laptops/iPads will have speakers);
- Check login details and if there are any problems, please do let the school know;
- Have basic equipment (paper, pencil, rubber, sharpener, colouring pencils/crayons, scissors, glue stick) available so that your child can complete the activities;
- Help your child to upload their learning onto the Google Classroom page;
- Encourage your child to try their best!



**A few words of support:**

- You do not need to recreate the classroom at home;
- Playing is learning;
- Screens and TV can be used to support learning as well as giving you a break!

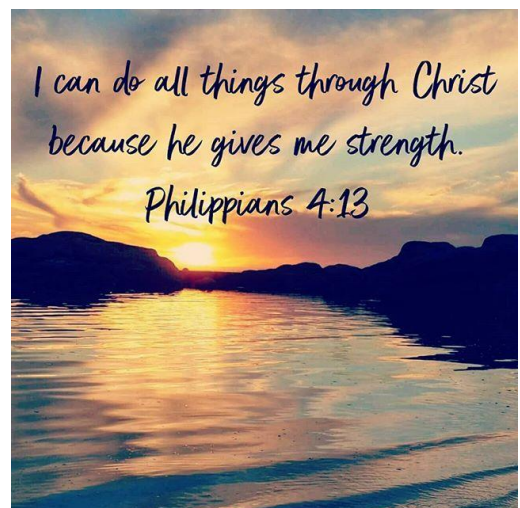


I sincerely hope the move to remote learning is for as short a period as possible as we combat this deadly pandemic, so that we can, once again, gather as our school community in a safe and secure environment. With vaccines now being administered, there is certainly a glimmer of light at the end of a very long tunnel, but we must continue to work together until this comes. Just like you, we are all new to Google Classroom, so please bear with us as we may experience some initial teething problems in the first couple of days. But once we have set the wheels in motion, we are very confident that our home learning offer will be much improved from the first lockdown. We hope you also find this to be the case – but, as previously mentioned, please rest assured that we will support you with any difficulties that you may experience along the way. Please just give us a call or send us an email and we can work through anything that crops up together.

As always, I thank you for your patience and support at this incredibly difficult time.

Keep safe and God bless.

Richard Curry



## FURTHER IDEAS TO HELP....

In Nursery and Reception (EYFS), your children should be spending the majority of their time playing and actively exploring the world around them, being creative and thinking independently. Share and enjoy stories, songs and rhymes with them – cook, mark-make, dig and play. You may want to spend some time on Phonics Play ([www.phonicsplay.co.uk](http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk)) supporting early reading skills. A little time each day practising letter formation with simple words would also be useful as would some simple maths. There is a daily maths task on the White Rose Website (<https://whiterosemaths.com/homelearning/>) which might help to get the focus right.

In Key Stage 1 (Years 1 & 2) being creative, artistic, musical and explorative remain important skills. Our learning in Years 1 and 2 is not completely desk based and still encourages a beautiful exploration of the living, cultural and natural world around them. Colouring, building and cutting activities will still be key as they improve hand control for handwriting and letter formation. Reading stories together and talking about them will be of great benefit each day. Again there are appropriate daily maths tasks on the White Rose Website (<https://whiterosemaths.com/homelearning/>) and this allows for practise of key skills. A little writing each day of sentences to do with things that interest them would be useful in order to keep skills sharp. Most children love to make posters, booklets, leaflets, lists, letters & quizzes – any opportunity to write will be a positive one if you encourage it!

In Key Stage 2, sustaining reading habits and talking about what they have read will be important each day. We also suggest that if you are able to, make use of the daily White Rose Maths tasks (<https://whiterosemaths.com/homelearning/>) with their useful videos, practice tasks and explanations. Maybe your child could engage with a longer written task or use their reading and writing to research something that really interests them. Remember, writing isn't just about stories – children love to explore instructions, biography, historical reports, explanations, song writing and poems – use ANY opportunity that you can to get them writing!