

St Chad's Catholic Primary School

NEWSPAPER



First Half Autumn Term 2020



Dear Parents/Carers,

A very warm welcome back and thank you for your patience and support

It's my great pleasure to be able to warmly welcome you back to our school. For many of you it's been a very long time since you were at the school and I am genuinely delighted to have the whole school community back together.

I'd like to say a huge and special thank you to all of our parents and carers for the support you have shown in adapting to the new measures, in particular the staggered starts and finishes. We really do understand that the government directed arrangements inevitably cause inconvenience to families and we are sorry that you have to put up with this. At the same time, limiting the number of people around the school at any one time is for a genuine reason so we all have to be patient and adapt for the time being. We want you to know we appreciate the patience you've shown and we are grateful for the way you've supported us. It means a lot – thank you.

COVID Reminder

Please do not send children to school if they or any member of your household are displaying COVID symptoms - a high temperature, new continuous cough or a change in or loss of taste and smell – stay at home and book a test online or call NHS119.



Our Catholic School's Pupil Profile Values this half term are **CURIOUS AND ACTIVE**

Together with all of the schools in the Archdiocese, we are focusing on the values of being **curious and active** this half term. The children will be discussing these values regularly in class.



CURIOUS: Being fascinated by the work of the Lord – the beauty of creation, the unconditional love Jesus has for us and wanting to always find out more about Jesus' example and teachings.



ACTIVE: Being a true follower of Christ in today's modern world, understanding how we can be like Jesus and actively do things to help other people, being kind and caring in all we do. Using our words and actions to spread the love of Jesus in a practical way.



The God Who Speaks: This half terms focus piece of scripture

Again along with the whole Archdiocese we are focusing on this piece of scripture as part of the worldwide focus of engaging with the word of the Lord:

John 1:1

**“ In the beginning the Word already existed.
The Word was with God,
and the Word was God. ”**

This focus piece of scripture that we are learning about matches entirely with the new term RE topic of God's Creation.



Staffing Changes

At the end of summer term, we said goodbye to Mrs Wooldridge in the school office and also to our deputy headteacher, Mrs Clews. Both Mrs Wooldridge and Mrs Clews had worked at St Chad's for many years and helped thousands of families. Mrs Wooldridge has retired and Mrs Clews has moved on after many years of dedicated service at St Chad's. We thank them sincerely for their time at St Chad's. Mrs Bowen (SENDCO) and Mrs Benson (SEN Assistant) also left our Multi Academy at the end of term to take up new roles and we are very grateful for their time with us too.

School Leadership for Autumn Term

Mr Hinton continues to be Executive Headteacher of both primary schools but is predominantly based here at St Chad's to support the school improvement process.

Mrs Chapman is the Acting Executive Head of School, supporting Mr Hinton with the strategic direction of St Chad's and St Joseph's. She is predominantly based at St Joseph's.

Over the coming weeks you will see Mrs Chapman in school and she is looking forward to serving you alongside Mr Hinton. Mrs Chapman has been Deputy Headteacher and more recently Head of School at St Joseph's for many years. Like Mr Hinton, she will now share the role of leading the two schools. She will be in full contact with children and parents across both schools just like Mr Hinton is.

Mrs Bentley is the senior teacher at St Chad's who is also available to help you with any matter you need our help with.

There is always at least one member of the senior team at the school during school hours.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCO)

Miss Oakley is our new SENDCO and will be contacting parents of children with SEN or disabilities in due course. She'll also be working closely with the children. If your child has or you think they may have any additional needs or a disability – please get in touch with Miss Oakley – you can contact her via the office and she would be delighted to talk!

Office Staff

Mrs Lemm is now the office manager at both of our primary schools, sharing her time between St Chad's and St Joseph's. We welcome **Mrs Cox** as our new full-time receptionist. Both of our office staff are here to help you – they are committed to providing the best customer care possible and you must never hesitate to contact them.



Sedgley Kids Club @ St Chads



Telephone: 07989984940
Email: sedgleykidsclub@aol.com
Website: www.sedgleykidsclub.co.uk

Before and After School Provision is now available

Sedgley Kids Club are able to provide before and after school provision following timetable changes that they have had to make to enable the club to be cleaned between sessions to comply with COVID protocols.

If you need before or after school care please contact Sedgley Kids Club direct on 01384 887830 or use the contact information above.

Start of year information forms – please send them back as soon as possible!

Please can we ask for your help in completing and returning all of the start of year information forms. It takes a bit of time but it's vital we have all of the correct contact details, medical information and permission forms. Thanks ever so much in advance as the school has invested in a new management information system.



Class Newsletters

Next week we will be sending out details of what your child is learning this term and other information about the class. We have adapted our curriculum to make sure we cover key objectives that were missed out last year due to lockdown. We are also assessing all of the children to find gaps in their learning and will address these in our plans this term. Your child's teacher will be happy to discuss this with you if you would like to know more.

School Meals

Our kitchen is currently providing grab bag (sandwich) lunch only throughout September. Grab bags are provided free of charge for all children in reception, Year 1 and Year 2 and we offer cheese, tuna, ham, chicken or jam as the sandwich choice. Children eligible for free school meals in **any class** can also receive a free grab bag every day. Children from any class can purchase a grab bag at a cost of £2.40. In October we plan to provide hot food in addition to grab bag options for children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 as well as free school meals children. Children in other year groups can continue to purchase grab bags.

After half term we plan to provide hot food for everyone as well as grab bag options. It may be the case that we are able to start our full kitchen provision sooner than this and we will let you know. When the new school app for payments is up and running lunches can be paid for online.



New and improved communication system - text messaging and online payments

The school has switched to a new communication and payment system. You should have received the information you need to follow to download the app in the envelope sent home recently with the start of the year information forms. Once downloaded we will not only be able to send you all of the whole school letters, but we'll be able to send you personalised messages and communications. The new system also includes an online payment tool for school meals and other activities like trips and clubs. If you need any help please give the office a call. Alternatively if you search School Gateway Support there is an easy to follow online guide and video.



- Search for “School Gateway” in the Apple App Store/Google Play or on your phone goto www.schoolgateway.com/apple (Apple) or www.schoolgateway.com/android (Android)
- Install the app and if you are asked then say yes to “Allow Push Notifications”
- When you launch School Gateway for the first time, please select ‘New User’ and enter the email address and mobile telephone number you have registered with school.
- The system will send a PIN code to your phone; please enter this PIN code and the app will be activated for you.



School phone number

A reminder that we recently changed our phone number to **01384 889423**. Please save this number in your phone.

Email contact – temporary disruption

Please accept our apologies if your email has not been responded to. This is because there has been a huge system and email upgrade across our Multi Academy Company of 5 schools. There has been disruption to the service and unfortunately some emails have not been received. **The system is now working.**



As part of our commitment to being approachable and ready to serve you, we promise to respond to emails as quickly as we possibly can. If you haven't received a reply – it is always best to phone us as there is always a chance the email may not have reached us. **Please be assured we would never knowingly ignore an email and would always want to respond quickly. Please just give us a call if you don't get a reply – we want to be in touch with you and we want to help you quickly.**

School uniform, jewellery, nail varnish and hair styles

All of the children are looking so smart in their school uniforms and we really thank you for all of the effort you have made to buy their school uniform at a time when shopping is still very difficult. (And I speak as a Dad myself who had to queue for some time outside my local uniform shop – so I understand, I really do!)

Please remember that we don't allow trainers, nail varnish, jewellery of any kind (including earrings) and hairstyles must be smart with long hair tied back for safety. We don't allow any hair engravings or extreme shavings and children's hair must not be dyed or highlighted.

The school is renowned for its high standard of uniform and we really appreciate the support you give us to uphold this. Thank you for all the efforts you continue to make – we appreciate it!

Girls can wear grey trousers, as well as kilts and dresses

With immediate effect and at any time of the year, girls have the additional option to wear grey school trousers. They can still wear the 'iconic' St Chad's kilt and summer dress, but we feel it's only right that girls have the option to wear trousers if you prefer. You can choose to send girls in grey trousers at all times of the year.

A wider consultation on school uniform

In the parent's survey undertaken soon after I came to St Chad's lots of you said you liked the uniform and the smart appearance of the children. Lots of you also said that you found aspects of the uniform difficult and sometimes expensive. I'd like to find out more to see if we can make things a little easier, without losing the 'iconic' and traditional St Chad's uniform that is a hallmark of the school.

A little later in the term we'll send out a questionnaire. **No changes will be made to the uniform this academic year – so please don't worry about buying new uniform.** In any case – if any changes end up being made – there would be a 'transition' year so that nobody had to waste any uniform they had purchased. Please don't worry about this – **we would never make any changes that caused expense and upheaval.**

I'd also like to say from the outset that the basic uniform concept – the colours and of course the much-loved kilt – will NOT be changing as these are traditions of the school. We just need to see if there are flexibilities or subtle changes that could make life easier and less expensive for you as families.

We'll be in touch later in the term/year.



Ongoing Improvements at St Chad's

We are committed to modernising and improving the accommodation at St Chad's. Since the school closed for lockdown we have:

Reconfigured the school office to make it far more welcoming and user friendly.

Modernised the school foyer to be a welcoming and bright space for parents, children and visitors.

Invested in a modern signing in system to keep track of visitors and school users.

Repainted and recarpeted all corridors.

Provided lockers for Years 5 and 6.

Repainted, carpeted and modernised Reception, Year 3, 4, 5 and 6 and the Sunshine and Welcome Rooms.

Modernised the Executive Head and Executive Head of School offices to make them welcoming, modern spaces in which to meet parents, children and visitors.

Installed bright, modern, energy efficient lighting in offices and corridors – dramatically improving the working environment for everyone.





Ongoing Improvements at St Chad's

Currently the following works are taking place:

Installation of an electric security gate at the front entrance of the school so that we can more closely control access to the school and provide a valuable extra layer of protection.

Installation of higher security fencing around Reception playground and the entire perimeter of the school alongside Catholic Lane – again providing better security and safety for everyone.

Reusing the lower level fencing to fence off areas of the school that are not safe to use until they are redeveloped – for example the 'diamond den' is no longer in use and will be safely fenced off.

Reception class playground has been smoothly resurfaced.

Reception class is being refurbished with new furniture and new learning and play equipment indoors and outdoors.

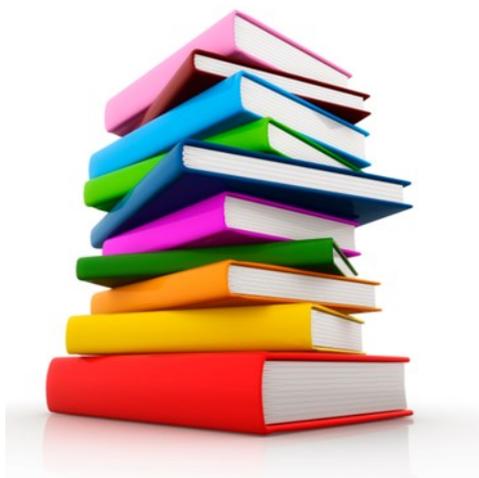
We are working hard to develop the learning environment of the school to the highest standard possible and these works go a long way towards this.

As well as improving the accommodation at the school, we have also invested heavily in better resources for the children, including:

Brand new reading books and guided reading books throughout the school.

Brand new classroom resources and equipment.

A whole new phonics scheme to help us improve the way we teach children to read and spell.





School fund

Over many years, parents and families at St Chad's have donated generously to the school fund. This generosity over decades in some cases is helping us now to provide much needed extras for the children. Every penny you have donated now and hopefully in the future is being spent on better things for the children.

School fund – we still need your help

St Chad's still desperately needs your school fund donations – in fact now more than ever. Hopefully you can already see how your donations are being put to good use to buy new things for the children.

**Donating to school fund is entirely voluntary –
it's much appreciated if you can donate but you must not feel pressured**

We will **not** be putting the school fund onto your online account as a 'charge' because donating is **entirely voluntary**. We genuinely need your donations but we do not want you to feel under any pressure.

In the past many of you have donated £20.00. This is **extremely generous** and **very much appreciated**. If you are able to donate £20.00 again to our school fund – I can't tell you how precious this donation is. At the same time, I want you to know that it is **optional** and for that reason it will **not** appear as a charge. If you can continue to afford to donate this amount – **please do**. If you can only afford to donate a lower amount – **please give whatever you can**. If you cannot afford to donate any money to school fund – **please don't feel under any pressure to do so**.

Similarly, if you are able and would like to make a **larger donation** – **please consider doing so**. There's a lot still to improve and modernise at St Chad's and as a small school our budget is tighter than most schools – **whatever you can give** to help us continue improving the school is **appreciated and is precious to us** – but **you must never, ever feel under pressure to donate and we will never place the expectation upon you.**

Thank you for your support.





Collective Worship – Masses and Assemblies

Sadly, COVID safety procedures mean that we can't gather as a whole school for assembly and Mass. Equally sadly, we can't invite parents and families into school for any assemblies, however small the gatherings may be. We are pleased, however, to let you know that Masses, Assemblies and acts of Collective Worship are going ahead.

There is a class assembly or act of collective worship every single day as follows:

Mondays: Gospel Assembly celebrating and learning about Sunday's Gospel.

Tuesdays: Online Bible Tale assembly.

Wednesdays: Wednesday Word – learning about next week's Gospel.

Thursdays: A guided meditation, reflection or Bible Story and prayer time.

Fridays: Weekly merit assembly.

Merit awards and celebrations from home will continue to be celebrated.

Please **don't** send in any certificates or awards – but please **DO** tell us about them by phone, letter, email (info@st-chads.dudley.sch.uk) or have a chat with the staff on the playground when you come into school.

In addition to this Mr Hinton will celebrate assembly with one class in the hall every Monday (Gospel) and Friday (Merit) in the hall on a rota basis meaning all children regularly still get to come into the hall for a traditional assembly with the headteacher.

Holy Mass will also be celebrated on a weekly basis in the hall for one class at a time. Every class will attend Mass at least once this term in the hall, again on a rota basis.

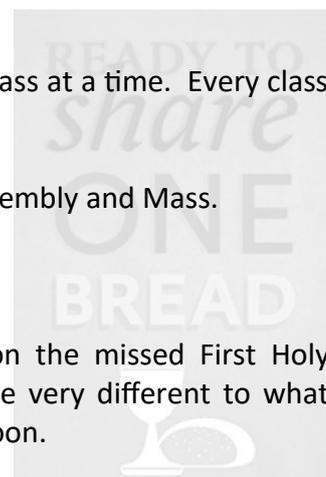
We look forward and pray for the time you'll all be able to join us for Assembly and Mass.

First Holy Communion – Year 4 children

Details are being sent out soon about arrangements to 'catch up' on the missed First Holy Communion due to lockdown. As you would expect – it's going to be very different to what would have originally happened. Details coming out to Year 4 parents soon.

Confirmation – Year 6

A separate letter will be with Year 6 families shortly with details of the Confirmation programme and Sacramental Mass – again – Confirmation will be very different to usual this year.





We are here to serve you and we want you and your child to be happy

It's vital you contact the school if you have any concerns. The happiness, safety and educational success of your child/ren is the reason we are here. Things can and do go wrong – what's important is that you know we are here to listen and try to sort things out quickly. No issue is too small and we are always very keen to help you.

Please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher, Mr Hinton, Mrs Chapman or Mrs Bentley. Mr Hinton and Mrs Chapman will always try to see / speak with you immediately and if we can't we will call you straight back. For class teachers – please give us a call and we will make sure the teacher calls you straight back. You can also speak to staff in the morning or after school at the doors.

Never hesitate to get in touch.

Every kind wish and I'm looking forward to serving you this term.

Yours sincerely,

Mr M Hinton
Executive Principal

THANK YOU