

Dear Children, Parent and Carers,

Happy Easter. All the staff of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School hope you all had a restful and peaceful time.

This week, I have included some important updates coming from the Department for Education (DfE), so you are kept up to date with what is happening nationally to support you at home while school is closed to most pupils.

Spiritual Communion:

Pope Francis and Archbishop Bernard are encouraging us to enter into spiritual communion during these difficult times. Our world is certainly in need of prayers and healing. Here are some links that families might consider using in the coming days and weeks.

With the obligation to attend Sunday mass temporarily suspended, technology does allow us to participate in this 'Spiritual Communion' from our homes. The following website facilitates the live streaming of Mass. St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham, Our Lady of Lourdes, Yardley Wood, Our Lady and St Brigid, Northfield, St Ambrose Barlow, Hall Green and St Edwards, Selly Park are some local churches where Mass can be viewed at various times.

<https://www.stchadscathedral.org.uk/>

<https://www.mcnmedia.tv/>

Some resources that are available for you to use as a family have been provided by the Archdiocese of Birmingham and some groups they work with, below is a list of these that you may want to look at:

- Weekly Worship and Song: Week 4 is now on YouTube and can be accessed here <https://youtu.be/H6nKkS4GwKs> or from the DES website page <https://www.bdes.org.uk/resources-for-prayer-and-learning.html>
- The Lay Chaplain at St. Thomas Aquinas Secondary School, Birmingham is sharing daily Collective Worship and this is being uploaded at the start of every week <https://www.bdes.org.uk/shared-resources-from-diocesan-schools.html>
- Ten Ten Theatre Company are also providing free resources for:
Sunday Liturgies for Families at: <https://www.tentenresources.co.uk/primary-subscription/prayers-for-home/sunday-liturgy-for-families/>
Daily Prayer for Home at: <https://www.tentenresources.co.uk/primary-subscription/prayers-for-home/daily-prayers-for-home/>
15 Prayers During School Closure at: <https://www.tentenresources.co.uk/primary-subscription/prayers-for-home/15-prayers/>

As a family community, we pray:

Merciful God,
we entrust to your tender care those who are ill or in pain,
knowing that whenever danger threatens your everlasting arms are there to hold them safe.
Comfort and heal them,
And restore them to health and strength;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

Dear God,

We pray for our homes and families, our schools and young people and all in any kind of distress.

Lord hear us,

Lord graciously hear us.

The opening of schools:

On Sunday 19th April, the government made it very clear in their press conference that, **schools are not reopening** and that they **cannot give a date when they will be**. There has been a lot of specification in the media about schools reopening in the last week or two, but currently they will remain closed to the majority of pupils for the foreseeable future.

Key/Critical Workers and Vulnerable Children:

Currently, St Joseph's Catholic School is open to a few of our children who are the children of key/critical workers or are classed as vulnerable children. If, at any point over the coming weeks, your situation changes, so for example you become classed as a key/critical worker and you have no one to look after your child/ren during the school day, you may be eligible for them to come into school. Please do get in touch with the school to discuss your situation, if it changes, and we can talk about your needs. The school office is open from 08.45-3.00pm Monday to Friday.

Online resources:

On Monday 20th April, two new online resources have begun, which are supported by the DfE.

[BBC Bitesize](#) online lessons for both secondary and primary pupils.

The [Oak National academy](#) has online lessons for each year group up to Y10.

Both of these services feature online lessons which will be updated on a weekly basis from now on. In both cases, there are weekly plans of lessons that children can access. These resources are available for you to use with your children, but please do check the resources beforehand to make sure you are happy with the content of them.

Continuing education:

On the 19th April, the DfE released guidance on helping primary school children continue their education during coronavirus.

This gives advice to parents about structuring the day, using digital resources and recommended activities for different age groups.

The guidance states: No one expects parents to act as teachers, or to provide the activities and feedback that a school would. Your school who will be planning work for your child to do. Parents and carers should do their best to help children and support their learning.

In terms of **structuring the day** the guidance says: 'do not worry about trying to maintain a full routine for your child like they had at school.'

It recommends:

- get up and go to bed at the same time each day;
- have regular meal times;
- have regular breaks;
- make time to be active - children are used to regular play at lunch and break times.

In terms of **using digital devices**, it recommends that parents 'set appropriate parental controls on any devices your child is using and supervise their use of websites and apps'. However, it goes on to recommend reducing screen time:

- use books and other printed materials that school has provided or that you have at home;
- write by hand – try asking them to complete work by hand, write a diary, a summary of things they have learned or done each day or 'to do' lists;
- be active and get away from the screen regularly – see a selection of physical activity resources for primary school children;
- stop using digital devices at least an hour before bed.

The guidance goes through appropriate ways to work with **Reception, Y1 and Y2** and it encourages:

- sitting with them while they work and breaking down activities;
- talking and explaining new words;
- reading together and techniques for this;
- phonics;
- writing;
- numbers.

[There is more detail here](#)

The guidance goes through appropriate ways to work with **Y3-6** and it encourages:

- encouraging independent work, including active and practical things;
- talking about what they have learned;
- reading and asking questions about what they have read;
- writing.
- There is some specific advice for Y6 parents about English heritage, science, geography, BBC Bitesize and [TATE Kids](#).

[There is more detail here](#)

Home Learning Packs:

As a school we will still be issuing our home learning resources, every Monday. Teachers will continue to add learning resources and activities onto our new 'Home Learning' page on our website. On our home page there is a link to the page, so you can find your child's year group activities easily.

Helping children with SEND continue education:

On the 19th April, DfE released advice for parents and carers looking after children with special educational needs and disabilities.

The guidance give parents access to:

- a list of [online education resources for children with SEND](#);
- [coronavirus educational resources](#) from The Sensory Projects;
- [SEND-specific resources for learning from home](#) from Tech Ability;
- [advice on supporting children with a learning disability or autistic spectrum disorder \(ASD\)](#) from the Council for Disabled Children;

- [recommendations on special educational needs](#) from the Education Endowment Foundation.

Please hover over the writing in blue and then press control and click you will be able to access these resources.

Mental Health and Well-being:

To support children's mental health and well-being across Birmingham, a new service has been set up called Kooth. **Kooth** is being provided now as a free, safe and anonymous service to support young people's emotional and mental health in Birmingham. Because young people have suddenly had exams cancelled, transition arrangements thrown up in the air and are dealing with the impact of COVID-19 on their loved ones this is important. The new service was successfully launched on Monday 13th April for young people from year 6, aged 11 up to 25. The full offer, including online self-referral can be accessed at www.kooth.com.

Kooth is linked into the wider mental health support from Forward Thinking Birmingham and offers:

- Online **mental health counselling** and **chat** services from midday to 10pm during the week, and 6pm to 10pm at weekends
- **Peer to peer support** through moderated discussion forums
- **Self-care tools and resources** to build resilience
- **Early response to and identification** of emotional wellbeing and mental health problems
- And there are **no waiting lists**, referrals or thresholds to access the service

Free School Meals:

From Monday 20th April, if your child is in receipt of Free Schools Meals (this does not include infant free school meals), the DfE have starting issuing food vouchers to the value of £15 per child per week, until the children return to school. Unfortunately, this has not been a smooth process and some families have been struggling to locate their email with the code on or to change their code into their voucher. I fully understand how frustrating this is for parents, but this is out of the school's control. Please understand that there are thousands of schools across the country accessing the same website to issue out the codes and then the website have to send all the emails out to parents. After this, thousands of parents and carers are then trying to access the same website to change their code into a voucher, so parents and carers are being presented with lengthy wait times to get their voucher. I do apologise for the inconvenience this is causing parents and carers, but unfortunately, we as a school, have no control over this.

If you are experiencing problems, please do get in touch with school and we will try and help you. The school office is open from 08.45-3.00pm Monday to Friday.

Staying Safe Online:

We know that children will be online more as we all stay in our homes. It is really important that we ensure our children are safe online too. Here are some resources which are particularly helpful. Please check out the parental control section which gives advice to help parents put parental controls on any devices their children are using at home.

Keeping up to date with the latest apps

NSPCC's Net Aware provides simple guides for parents to the most popular social networks, app and games. Simply type in the app you wish to review in the search bar and the website will provide you with some useful information to help parents make an informed decision.

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/>

Parental Controls

Internet Matters.org has produced excellent resources on setting up parental controls in a step by step format. Simply click on the links below to explore ways in which parents can set up parental controls on digital devices and popular social media apps. Each circular icon that is loaded represents a guide and can be accessed by simply clicking on the icon.

Parental controls on; **Smartphones and other devices**

<https://www.internetmatters.org/blog/parental-controls/smartphones-and-other-devices/>

Parental controls on; **Entertainment and search engines**

<https://www.internetmatters.org/blog/parental-controls/entertainment-search-engines/>

Parental controls on; **Broadband and mobile networks**

<https://www.internetmatters.org/blog/parental-controls/broadband-mobile/>

Parental controls on; **Social media**

<https://www.internetmatters.org/blog/parental-controls/social-media/>

Parental controls on; **Gaming console**

<https://www.internetmatters.org/blog/parental-controls/gaming-consoles/>

General Information

There is also a good attachment from CEOP – this link is appropriate for primary aged pupils

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/globalassets/thinkuknow/documents/thinkuknow/parents/pdf/thinkuknow-parents-helpsheet-primary.pdf>

Support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online

Internet matters –

https://www.internetmatters.org/?gclid=EAlaIqObChMIktuA5LWK2wIVRYXVCh2afg2aEAYASAAEgIJ5vD_BwE

Net-aware – support for parents and carers from the NSPCC - <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/>

Parent info - <https://parentinfo.org/>

Thinkuknow – for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online -

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

UK Safer Internet Centre - <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers>

Childline – support for children -

[https://www.childline.org.uk/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=UK_GO_S_B_BND_Grant_Childline_Information&utm_term=role_of_childline&gclid=EAlaIqObChMIIfLRh-ez6AIVRrDtCh1N9QR2EAAYASAAEgIc-vD_BwE&gclid=aw.ds](https://www.childline.org.uk/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=UK_GO_S_B_BND_Grant_Childline_Information&utm_term=role_of_childline&gclid=EAlaIqObChMIIfLRh-ez6AIVRrDtCh1N9QR2EAAYASAAEgIc-vD_BwE&gclid=aw.ds&gclid=aw.ds)

UK Safer Internet Centre – reporting harmful content - <https://reportharmfulcontent.com/>

CEOP – advice on making a report about online abuse - <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>

Useful Contacts

NSPCC – 0800 800 5000

Childline – 0800 1111

Samaritans – 116 123

Mind – 0300 123 3393

From Monday 20th April we will be using BBC Bitesize as a key learning tool.

The BBC and education experts from around the UK have worked together to make sure everyone who needs it can access learning resources during this uncertain time.

New Maths and English lessons will be available every day for all ages. These will be created with resources from Bitesize, other parts of the BBC and other education providers.

The content of these lessons will be backed up by new videos, practice tests, educational games and articles.

Regular lessons on other core subjects, including science, will also be available. Mums and dads can get advice on how to teach anyone who is home-schooling and the Bitesize website will also have guides for pupils with SEN (special educational needs).

Here are the links for families.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/dailylessons>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/tags/zjpqqp3/year-1-lessons/1>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/tags/z7s22sg/year-2-lessons/1>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/tags/zmyxyc/year-3-lessons/1>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/tags/z63tt39/year-4-lessons/1>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/tags/zhgppg8/year-5-lessons/1>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/tags/zncsscw/year-6-lessons/1>

You can also access daily lessons on the TV via BBC i-player