



St Joseph's Catholic Academy
Member of the Newman Catholic Collegiate

Mobberley Road, Goldenhill, Stoke-on-Trent ST6 5RN
Tel: (01782) 235393 Fax: (01782) 235394
www.stjosephscatholicacademy.co.uk
email: stjoseph@sjnewman.co.uk
Acting Executive Principal- Mrs D Farmer
Acting Head of School – Mrs R Wilson

Monday 30th March 2020

To all of the wonderful children, parents and families of St Joseph's,

I trust that this letter finds everybody well. These are very strange times for us all, and we are all having to get by day-to-day at the moment.

I would first like to speak to the children: Boys and girls, we are really missing you. Although school has been closed to nearly every child, I have been in to school a couple of times; school is very quiet without you and we cannot wait for you to come back to us. All of the staff are thinking of you, and your teachers have been very busy at home preparing letters for you to read each week; the first of which will be available for you to read on Monday. These letters will let you know what you should be trying to do at home to keep you busy and healthy, and you will be able to download a new letter to read each Monday from the 'Home Learning' section of the school website:

<http://stjosephscatholicacademy.co.uk/home-learning>.

Your teachers are also busy working on class pages with lots of opportunities for online learning for you to be getting on with to help keep your minds and bodies active. These pages will be uploaded to the same Home Learning page of the website from Friday 3rd April. There will be lots of fun things for you to do and you will be given activities for different subject areas. In the meantime, the work packs that you were given on the last day of school are available for you on the Curriculum section of our website.

To the parents: I would first like to say thank you most sincerely for your support in keeping your children at home- it is undoubtedly the safest place for them to be at this present time. I can imagine that you are all feeling the pressure at the moment: the pressure of being cooped up, the pressure of dealing with your children 24:7 and the pressure of feeling like you need to educate your children but might not know quite where to start or what to do! Let me offer some words of reassurance: we know that many of you will be struggling to support your children with their learning. We know that you are not educational professionals and may feel that this task is beyond you. Please do not stress. At this point in time, if there are activities that you cannot access or things that you feel you cannot support your children with, spend this time teaching them quality life skills, which will benefit them for the rest of their lives. I have put together some suggested practical activities, which will obviously not all be relevant to all children, but might offer you some guidance on how to best help your child at home:

- Read with and to your child. Reading is the most valuable life skill you can offer them. Encourage older children to be reading daily for pleasure. Nothing takes away the boredom of the day like being immersed in a good book. If you don't have books at home, the online reading resource <https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/> is an excellent substitute



- Get active! Joe Wicks, the body coach, is livestreaming at 9am on Youtube every day: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAxW1XT0iEJo0TYIRfn6rYQ> You can even catch up on any you have missed!
- Play board games and have fun- brilliant for co-operative learning and turn-taking for any age group
- Cook together- get your children making breakfast, dinner and tea. If you have the ingredients in, do some baking together too
- Teach your children how to sew buttons on clothes or basic hem stitching
- Show your children how to operate the washing machine. Get them hanging the washing out, folding it and putting it away
- Practise tying shoe laces and ties, fastening zips and buttons, brushing their own hair, etc.
- Teach your child how to safely make a cup of tea if you feel they are old/ responsible enough
- Plan your 'essential' shopping list together. To include some Maths, set a budget and see if you can stick to it
- Clean the house together, using the correct products
- Talk to your child about the topics they are learning about, and world issues such as pollution, They can make posters, news reports, presentations, etc.
- Get your child to keep a diary of life as a home-schooled child! We are living in a historic period- it would be amazing to look back in 10, 20 or 50 years and remember this significant time
- Remember that we are entering a most holy season. Next week is Holy Week. In choosing to send your child to a Catholic school, they should be educated in the faith. Share with them the stories of Palm Sunday, The Last Supper, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. Talk about what these mean for our Christian faith
- Pray together. Our children are used to praying at least 4 times per day in school and the power of prayer is immense in offering hope and comfort during great difficulties. The following website is an excellent free resource, particularly during this challenging time: <https://www.tentenresources.co.uk/primary-subscription/prayers-for-home/15-prayers/>

Most importantly of all, go easy on yourselves and your children and try to enjoy each others' company. These are unprecedented times for us all and it is important that we do not let boredom and tension take over. Maybe, when we are all out of the other side of this dreadful epidemic, we can all learn some lessons in patience, tolerance and love, and reflect upon what is most important in our lives and the world that we have been given to look after.

If there is anything at all that you need, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us at school. For the time being, our school office remains open on 01782 235393. Alternatively, you can contact us via email: stjoseph@snewman.co.uk. Updates may also be posted to our Twitter page (stjosephgoldenhill) and via our new brand new Facebook page, St Joseph's, Goldenhill- please Like and Follow us! We will of course be in touch via text as soon as we have any updates regarding school reopening, although as yet, we have no indication of how soon this will be.

I wish you the very best of health and happiness until I see you all again. I will be writing to you all weekly, just to keep in touch- don't worry, future letters will not be as long as this one!

Keeping each and every one of you in my prayers. God bless you all.

Mrs R Wilson,

Acting Head of School.