



## St Joseph's Catholic Academy

*Member of the Newman Catholic Collegiate*

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Acting Executive Principal- Mrs D Farmer

Acting Head of School – Mrs R Wilson

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Dear children, parents and families of St. Joseph's,

As you know, last week we re-opened our school doors to children in Pre-school, Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. We had a lovely first week back- it was so special to see our children's smiley faces, who were so happy to see their friends and school staff again. The children have really settled back into the routines of school and although some things are very different from when they left in March, they have readjusted very well to the 'new normal'. We began with our virtual Gospel assembly on Monday morning, which was a very strange and funny experience indeed! We also celebrated our Success Assembly together via Microsoft Teams on Friday. Singing 'Happy Birthday' in sync was a bit of a challenge but it made us all giggle! Currently, due to small numbers, we are only awarding the 'Wow' award, so our Wow award winners for this week are:

Nursery- **Ellie** and **Aurora**, for playing together so beautifully all week

Reception- **Harper-Lilly**, for settling back into school life so well and accessing lots of activities

Year 1- **Oliver**, who only started with us on Monday! He has settled into school life really well and it feels like he has always been a part of St Joseph's!

Year 6- **Sienna**, who has been with us lots throughout our school closure and never once complained! She has also been so kind to the staff, making us all thank you gifts. Thank you Sienna!

Well done to all of our Wow winners this week and to every single child and member of staff, who have all worked so hard to adapt to these very strange times.

We also welcome two new groups of children back to our school today in Year 1 and Year 6. Part of the conditions of re-opening are that we keep class sizes below 15 to allow for social distancing. We now have more than 15 children returning in these year groups so have had to increase capacity. This has had a significant impact upon our staffing, and the vast majority of teaching and support staff are now either teaching a group or supervising the key worker children as they continue to complete home learning at school whilst their parents go to their essential work. If you are a parent of a child in Early Years, Year 1 or Year 6 and wish for your child to return to school, please remember that you must give us at least one week's notice for your child to start back with us on a Monday. This is to ensure we have adequate staffing levels and enable staff to plan for the staggered return of children. If your child is in the key worker group, please notify us as soon as possible of the days and times that your child needs to attend.

We have not forgotten all of our wonderful children who are not back with us yet, including those in Year 2 to 5 who are unable to return. I know class teachers spoke to the vast majority of children not in school last week; however, some families have been difficult to contact. If your child's class teacher was unable to contact you last week, we would really appreciate it if you could telephone us at the



school office to let us know that you are safe and well. I do appreciate that your child may not always want to talk to their teacher; however, we have a duty of care to safeguard our families and it is important to us to know that you are okay. If you would like your class teacher to call your child back, let the office know of a convenient time to call and I will try to arrange that discussion. However, please do understand that your child's class teacher will now most likely be teaching a group of children full-time in the year groups that have returned. I am asking a lot of these members of staff, as they are continuing to set home learning and write weekly letters for their own class, whilst teaching somebody else's year group, so I do ask that you are mindful of this please.

To this end, I would like to share a quote from Pope Francis, who captured the essence of service to others and working together as a team really well: "Rivers do not drink their own water; trees do not eat their own fruit; the sun does not shine on itself and flowers do not spread fragrance for themselves. Living for others is a rule of nature. We are all born to help each other. No matter how difficult it is. Life is good when you are happy; but much better when others are happy because of you." I would like to thank everyone who has worked to make our school community a happy place to be this week: all of our teaching staff and support staff, Mrs Philps and Mrs Williams in the office, Mr Colclough, our site manager, Mrs Reynolds and Mrs Parfitt in the school kitchen, all of our lunchtime supervisors who have been in completing additional cleaning duties, and our school cleaners. Each one of these members of St Joseph's has played a huge part in trying to normalise life for our returning children and I am very grateful to every one of them. I would also like to thank our parents, for your patience, understanding and support, and most importantly, our brilliant children, who have shown remarkable resilience not just this week, but throughout.

Please remember that if you need us for anything at all, do get in touch via phone or email. I will continue to keep you all in my thoughts and prayers. God bless you all.

Mrs R Wilson,  
Acting Head of School.