



SCHOOL UPDATES & REMINDERS

IMPORTANT – PROTOCOLS FOR REPORTING POTENTIAL AND CONFIRMED CASES OF COVID-19:

Thursday 17th, Friday 18th and Saturday 19th December

If your child displays COVID symptoms on any of these dates, it is vital that you:

- **Keep your child and any siblings/household members at home** and isolated;
- **Book a test.** Tests can be booked online <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or by ringing 119 if you have problems using the online service;
- **Notify school immediately** by emailing wsmcovid@gatedu.org.

You are strongly encouraged to book a test at a testing centre – rather than a postal test – to avoid the delay of critical information to contacts.

School need to know if your child develops symptoms on any of these dates and of the outcome of the test – whenever this may be – as the result could impact on other families who may also have to isolate if your child's test returns positive.

We appreciate that the thought of children having to isolate over the Christmas break is difficult, but it's vitally important that children who have been in close contact and are potentially infected are not circulating in the community.

Monday 21st December up to, and including, Sunday 3rd January

If your child displays any COVID symptoms on the dates above, it is still really important that you:

- Keep your child and any siblings and members of your household at home;
- Book a test;
- Notify school;
- Notify school once you have received the test result.

From the end of term, we have taken the decision to inform families if a potential case of COVID is identified in their child's class in advance of a test outcome, so that families may make sensible and informed decisions about their movements over the Christmas season.

We would politely request that our new dedicated email address is only used in the instance that a child in school develops COVID symptoms, so that we may identify new cases quickly and act decisively to fulfil our contact tracing duty. The inbox will be checked twice daily until Wednesday 23rd December.

END OF TERM:

A huge thank you on behalf of all the staff for your efforts this term. It has been, in spite of the obvious anxieties and challenges, a thoroughly rewarding and uplifting time in school, made all-the-more calm and purposeful in no small part thanks to your unwavering co-operation and support.

By way of a thank you, and because of the very unfortunate absence of our families from the school's Christmas festivities this year, each class has recorded a special video which we have uploaded to a password protected webpage for you to share with friends and family. You can access the videos at www.whickhamstmarys.org.uk/christmas-2020 with the password *stmarys*. Please only share this password with friends of the school. Teachers will also be sending a photo of the children in their Christmas regalia via your child's eschools account, which can be downloaded and retained for posterity.

We wish you all the most merry of Christmases, in spite of the obvious limits and restrictions facing us all this season, and we look forward to seeing you all back in school on Monday 4th January 2021.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS IN THE PARISH OF OUR LADY AND ST PHILIP NERI:

You can find information about the re-opening of churches in our parish and plans for Christmas – including a number of charitable appeals – on the parish newsletter which can be found each week on the parish website (www.theparish.org.uk).

UPDATE - ADVENT APPEAL

If you have yet to donate to our Advent appeal to support the Diocesan Refugee Project, please do so via SIMS Pay (<https://www.simsagora.co.uk/Home>). So far, we have raised around £300.

Given the difficult year that many have had, there is of course no expectation of a donation, and of course, we have not charged for any of the events we have held in school.

However, just £10 per family would mean that we would surpass our (*potentially ambitious*) target of £1000 which would be an amazing gift this Christmas for members of our community living with next to nothing. Thank you.

CHANGE TO KS2 PE DAYS:

From the start of the Spring Term, KS2 days for PE will be as follows:

Monday – Y5

Tuesday – Y4

Wednesday – Y3

Friday – Y6

EYFS and KS1 days will remain the same.

SOME EXCITING NEWS:

Mrs Eden will be returning to school after Christmas following maternity leave. Mrs Eden will be working predominantly in KS2, fulfilling in-class support duties and delivering PPA cover in a number of classes. We look forward to seeing her back in school.

SOME EXCITING NEWS PART II:

Miss Millican is expecting the birth of her first child in the Spring. We wish her and her partner all the luck in the world as they embark upon this special journey together.