

Newsletter

"Together, we will give our children...

....the roots to grow and the wings to fly."



St John's C.E.V.A First School Frome

Website: stjohnsfrome.co.uk

Uniform webshop: pmgschoolwear.co.uk

Finance/Lunches: paymentsstjohns@educ.somerset.gov.uk

Issue 15

Friday 8th January 2021

FROM MRS MARSLAND

Welcome back everyone, and yes I do mean everyone! Whether you are coming into school or home learning, we really do remain united. I sincerely hope that, despite the differences, you did all indeed have an enjoyable Christmas and have all kept safe and well.

I extend an extra warm welcome to our new staff: Mr Jackson, Mrs Willis and Mrs Cappell and also to our new children, Henry, Theo and Lyra, who have joined us via home learning.

On behalf of myself and all of my team, thank you for the lovely Christmas cards and presents we received; you are all very kind!

I would like to thank my teachers who have worked extremely hard to produce planning and resources, which has enabled us to provide a blended curriculum, where children in school and children at home are completing the same work.

Children, in school, have been working in year group classes of approximately 15 children with a teacher and one or two teaching assistants. Each class is having their own playtime away from other classes, and lunchtimes are in the hall with two classes socially distanced away from each other. We are currently running five classes. Teachers and teaching assistants have been split into two teams. Team A were teaching children on site this week and Team B were planning the next activities and supporting the home learners. Next week, Team A will be planning and supporting the home learners and Team B will on site teaching children. They will continue to alternate, while we have capacity to maintain this. Working this way means that all children will have contact with their own class teacher over a period of two weeks; it does mean that sometimes the feedback or Zoom session will be provided by the other teacher in the year group, rather than your child's own teacher. Teachers will acknowledge work with a 'like' or with a short response. Please don't feel it is necessary to upload every piece of work, and please be patient with the feedback; each teacher will be managing this differently, depending on their own home circumstances too!

You will have already noticed that the learning provided is very different to what we provided last summer. This is because last summer we were instructed to provide childcare, and as such, even though there were learning opportunities, we really did focus on wellbeing, which was completely appropriate at that time. This year, we have been instructed to provide an education, which again is entirely appropriate, as the children have already missed so much schooling in the last 12 months, and with no knowing how much more disruption they are going to experience into the future, we do need to try to provide more meaningful formal learning.

We fully appreciate that providing home learning is a challenge, especially when there are siblings of different ages, limits to technology and indeed possibly your own employment and needing to continue working from home. The government have indicated that the minimum requirement for primary aged children to be learning at home is 3 hours, and I know that my teachers have ensured that there is that minimum requirement of learning available to you. However, your children's wellbeing and also making home learning manageable for your family are the priorities. There is no right or wrong way of organising your home learning; it is individual to your family's needs. If there is something you don't understand or need support with regarding the home learning do get in touch with us. Children will also benefit from those other great unplanned learning opportunities – cooking, gardening, music, playing games... I know these are anxious times for you all, and that you will all want to get it right, and if last summer is anything to go by, you all will get it right! We know that, by how well children came back into school in September.

We have a very limited number of laptop devices, which we will issue to families next week, and as soon as ordering becomes available for DFE laptops for primary aged children we will do so.

Children working on paper, and not uploading to Seesaw, can bring their work down to school. Mrs Alexander will have a box on her desk to collect it in. She will come to the gate and give you a plastic polypocket to put the work into and allow you to drop it in the box. The work will be quarantined for 72 hours and then teachers will mark the work and provide feedback via a phone call.

During these difficult times, please do email us if your circumstances change or if things are difficult for you, and you would benefit from an additional phone call from us. We wish things were different and could offer on-site provision for all children, but to adhere to current guidelines, and to operate as safely as possible and in a sustainable manner, this is just not an option at this time, but we will provide support to you all as much as we can.

Headteacher Awards will be restarting next Friday! Two children from each year group will be selected by teachers, one learning on site and one learning at home. A TEAMS invitation will be sent to parents of children receiving the award on Thursday evening for a Friday afternoon 2.30pm TEAMS session with Mrs Marsland and the classes in school. If you need help with TEAMS contact us and we will support you with joining; if you can use Zoom, you can use TEAMS; they are very similar! Certificates and stickers will be delivered or posted to children learning at home.

Lastly, thank you for your continued support, patience and understanding! We have received some lovely messages from you, and they really are very much appreciated!

A Child's Voice

(And an important message from the staff team!)

This week, children in Year 2 have been making fact files about 'Superheroes'. They chose their own superhero, drew them, and then wrote about why they had chosen them. Firefighters, police officers, parents, doctors, nurses, carers, supermarket workers, paramedics and guide dogs, to name a few, were all mentioned.

Mrs Marsland was chosen too, more than once, and we thought it might be time for the staff team to take over this part of the newsletter and tell our readers that we all agree!

As we all know, last year presented challenges that nobody could have ever predicted; these challenges have continued into the New Year too. Throughout a constantly changing situation, Mrs Marsland works long hours in school and at home; she has countless online meetings and briefings; she has to deal with many different changes in government policy - especially true this week - and still she continues to steer the St John's ship through these choppy waters with a smile on her face and an indomitable spirit.

Mrs Marsland - **THANK YOU** from everyone on your staff team for everything you have done, and are doing, to look after everyone in our fantastic St John's family!



"Mrs Marsland is a heroine because she looks after the school and takes care of Leo." **Isla**



"Mrs Marsland is a heroine because she helps the school and keeps us all safe." **Ethan**



FairFrome Takeaway Food at Five

Starting 4th January 5pm weekly

Mondays - Mount Community Hut
Wednesdays - Frome Cricket Club
Thursdays - Trinity Church Hall

**Hot, healthy, freshly cooked meals
free to anyone on benefits or low
income, just turn up**

Strict social distancing and hygiene practices will be in place and we kindly ask you help us with this to keep everyone safe

Vegetarian option available
Contact us for more information on 01373 488578 or
fairfromeinfo@gmail.com

NEW ST JOHN'S FAMILIES

Three new children have joined our school this week, and one just before we broke up for Christmas. Although we have been able to welcome them in person, albeit briefly, they won't be able to get to know their new classmates for a little while. Please say a big, friendly hello if you see them on the school facebook page, or on Zoom calls!

Welcome to Fynn in Beech; Henry in Poplar, Theo in Ash and Lyra in Sycamore.

Here are Theo and Lyra getting on with their home learning:



FREE SCHOOL MEALS

Please remember that if your financial circumstances change, you may become eligible for free school meals, even if you weren't previously. Please speak to a member of office staff to collect a form, or for any help you may need, in making an application.

SEND NEWS

From the Somerset SEND Communication Team:

choices.somerset.gov.uk/025/send-news/looking-for-information-and-support-in-somerset/send-news/

Please share your views in our [short questionnaire](#).

From the Somerset Parent Carer Forum:

choices.somerset.gov.uk/025/send-news/send-qa-events-for-parents-and-carers-save-the-dates/send-news/

SEND Q&A events for parents and carers

Monday 18 January (10-11am & 7-8pm)

[SEND WSoA Q&A parent carer event 1 – Mon 18 Jan 10-11am](#)

[SEND WSoA Q&A parent carer event 2 – Mon 18 Jan 7-8pm](#)

Parents/carers unable to make the sessions can submit questions to: getinvolved@somersetparentcarerforum.org.uk

Tuesday 26 January (9.30-11am & 6.30-8pm)

Two sessions to seek views on what needs to change and what's important for parents/carers. [Improving outcomes SPCF parent carer events – Tues 26 Jan at 9.30-11am / 6.30-8pm](#)

ONLINE SAFETY

From Avon and Somerset Constabulary:

choices.somerset.gov.uk/025/send-news/coronavirus-free-police-online-safety-webinar-for-parents-and-carers-2/send-news/

Free police online safety webinar for parents and carers

- [Session 1](#) – Thursday 14 January, 7-8.30pm.
- [Session 2](#) – Monday 8 February, 7-8.30pm.

For further info: CyberProtect@avonandsomerset.police.uk

LEARNING TOGETHER

We would love to see what you are doing at home so that we can include updates each week. Please send stories, photos, drawings, quotes etc. to the school inbox:

stjohnsfrome@educ.somerset.gov.uk

*At St John's CE VA First School the health, safety and wellbeing of every child is our top priority.
We expect all staff, governors, parent/carers and visitors to share this commitment to safeguarding our pupils.*