

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

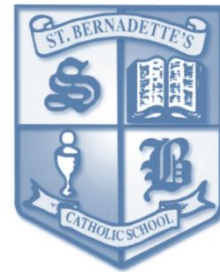
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Newsletter 14
3rd April 2020

At St Bernadette's we are fully committed to safeguarding our children. We expect all staff, parents and visitors to share this commitment.

Dear Parents,

As we come to end of the second week of national school closures, we hope that this newsletter finds our pupils, parents and guardians fit and well and in good spirits. We know that you are probably still adapting to this new but temporary way of life and appreciate that these unprecedented times can bring challenges to all of our homes. However, we hope you are able to make the most of the extra time with each other, without having to deal with some of the added pressures we have during our everyday lives. As a staff, we are missing the children and our roles in their lives dearly and look forward to the day when our school environment will be back to the lively, loving and bustling place we all know and love. Once again this week, a number of our staff have shown their dedication and commitment to the pupils and our school by coming in and caring for our most vulnerable children and for those children of key workers and as we have previously mentioned, this provision will continue throughout the Easter holidays. During this time, the school will continue to open from 8.00am to 3.00pm as it has been each day and will remain open on Good Friday and Easter Monday for those families who need this care. Our staff are also working tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure provision for the children's learning will be able to resume from the start of the Summer term.

Home Learning

The Easter Break begins this Monday 5th April. Please note that if your children are continuing with their home learning, lots of useful web links are available on the school website. Please continue to encourage the children to read daily at home and remember they can access a number of digital books via the following link: <https://readon.myon.co.uk/> Many of these books can be found on the Accelerated Reader scheme and the children can therefore quiz on them from home.

A reminder that parents can now email staff with queries regarding their child's work, on the year band email address set up last week.

If your child attends the nursery you should email nursery@stberns.bham.sch.uk

If you have a child in the Reception class then please email reception@stberns.bham.sch.uk

Teaching staff who cover classes in year 1 can be contacted at

year1@stberns.bham.sch.uk and all other year bands, using the same email address but preceded with the applicable year band.

Staff are currently in the process of preparing daily English and Maths lessons which the children will be able to access online once the Summer term begins on Monday 24th April. Over the next couple of weeks, parents will receive an email giving details of the children's log ins and a prompt sheet will be sent out explaining how to access the lessons and submit work. It is vitally important to us that we continue to make provision for the children's learning throughout the school closures and we would ask for your full cooperation and support in ensuring that the children complete the tasks set and submit them within the allocated times. Just to reiterate, we do appreciate that not all households have an internet device at home, however the vast majority of our families do and therefore this seems to be the most efficient method to use.

Free School Meals

Those families who were entitled to a Free School Meal in January will have been registered in the January census which is completed by all schools across the country. The Department for Education has used this data, to create a list of families who should receive a voucher which can be redeemed in any supermarket. This voucher has been emailed to parents **and is intended for use after the Easter break. The voucher from the DFE will not be valid until 20th April. You will then receive a voucher every week thereafter.**

In addition to this, Birmingham City Council have also used the same data to issue vouchers to families **for use during the Easter holidays**. These vouchers were emailed to parents on Wednesday 1st April and are valid for 3 months. They can be used immediately. This Birmingham city voucher is a one off voucher and will not be repeated. If we know of families who became eligible for a free school meal after January, we have notified the council and we are awaiting vouchers for these families which will be emailed to you as soon as we receive them. **Please do not call school for further information regarding these as we will update you as soon as we receive them.**

PLEASE BE AWARE THAT NOT ALL CHILDREN WHO ARE IN RECEPTION, YEAR 1 AND YEAR 2 WILL RECEIVE A VOUCHER. HISTORICALLY, THROUGH THE GOVERNMENT'S UNIVERSAL INFANT FREE SCHOOL MEAL INITIATIVE, ALL CHILDREN BETWEEN THE AGES OF 5 YEARS AND 7 YEARS HAD A FREE SCHOOL MEAL. ONLY THOSE FAMILIES WHO MEET THE CRITERIA FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS WILL RECEIVE A VOUCHER, for example THOSE IN RECEIPT OF INCOME SUPPORT, CHILD TAX CREDIT, UNIVERSAL CREDIT ETC.

We had made provision for families entitled to a FSM to collect a packed lunch from school each day. The uptake of these meals was very low. Therefore, as the voucher scheme is now in place, we will no longer be making these packed lunches. Those children who are still attending school, will continue to be provided with a meal.

We are aware that there could many parents who are no longer in work and may now be registering for Universal Credit. You may now be entitled to a free school meal for your child, even if you didn't qualify before. If you are a parent or carer and you believe you may now qualify you should apply online at

www.link2ict.org/FSM

Office Closure

Please note that even though school will remain open for our most vulnerable children and for those children of key workers, **the school office will close on Friday 3rd April for Easter**. The office will reopen on Monday 24th April.

School Reports

Following the Easter holidays, it is our intention to email all parents their child's school report, which you would normally receive at the end of the school year. As we don't know when schools will reopen, it seemed sensible to complete the reports now rather than wait until July. Children in Year 2 and Year 6 will not complete their SATs this year, therefore staff will not be commenting on end of year attainment. The report will be based on the curriculum coverage from September to March and therefore will lack some of the detail usually included in the end of year report.

Government Advice

A reminder that the single and most important action we can take in fighting the corona virus is to stay at home, so we can protect the NHS and save lives. When we reduce the day to day contact with other people, we will reduce the spread of the infection. Please remember that you should only leave the house for one of four reasons:

- Shopping for basic necessities
- One form of exercise per day
- Any medical reason
- Travelling to and from work, but only where this cannot be done from home.

Communication

According to guidelines issued by the Birmingham Local Authority schools should endeavor to contact every child by phone every two weeks and more regularly for some of our most vulnerable children. Despite not being in school at the present time, we as staff still have a duty of care to ensure our children and families are safe and well. Therefore, throughout the Easter break, Mr Markham-Jones, Mrs Yakoob, Mrs Bhella and Mrs Heeley, together with senior members of staff will continue to make these calls. As staff are making these calls from home they may come up as a withheld or private number. **It is very important that you answer these calls and where possible allow members of staff the opportunity to have a brief chat with the children.** In a similar way if you need our support, please do not hesitate to contact us either on the school number given below or through the email system previously mentioned. During this time, we need to work together to ensure the safety and welfare of each and every one of our pupils.

We will also continue to send a weekly newsletter to parents to keep you up to date with provision in school.

Please be aware that during the Easter holidays, the school office will be closed. However, if parents need to contact school in an emergency, they can ring school on the following number 0121 783 7232.

Social Media

While social media is in many ways making social distancing and isolating much more bearable at the moment and is indeed vital in helping us to stay in touch with friends and family, please be aware that at these times it can also be misused in many ways. Police have reported that with the increase in usage of social media platforms, this can be a dangerous time for young people as there may be a rise in online grooming. In addition, unsupervised access to social media sites may lead to an increase in cyber bullying. Please ensure that you supervise your child's internet use closely and encourage them to talk to you if they receive any unpleasant and unwanted messages or other material. If this occurs, can we advise that you keep records/screen shots of this material should it need to be reported and delete the contacts from your child's accounts.

McNally Award

Every year, we present *The McNally Award* in memory of our school's former and much-loved head teacher, Mr John McNally. Staff are asked to nominate a child from each year band who they feel make an exceptional effort every day in all areas of school life, in terms of their behaviour and attitude to work.

Congratulations to the following children for achieving the McNally Award for outstanding performance throughout this year:

Nursery	<i>Jake</i>		Year 3	<i>Eva</i>
Reception	<i>Cathal</i>		Year 4	<i>Cheldane</i>
Year 1	<i>Olivia</i>		Year 5	<i>Emmanuel</i>
Year 2	<i>Alaarna</i>		Year 6	<i>Halima</i>

A MESSAGE TO THE CHILDREN

To all of our pupils of St Bernadette's,

We hope that you are keeping fit, well and active during the school closures. We are missing you terribly at school and our classrooms, corridors and playgrounds are very quiet without your happy voices and laughter. We are working hard to make sure that our school is kept very clean and is being prepared for when you return. Your teachers are also getting some lessons ready for you to complete online after Easter. We are sure you must be missing your English and Maths lessons and all the other activities you love to do.

We hope that you are keeping healthy and active at home. We have been doing our P.E. lessons with Joe every morning here to get the day off to a good start. Hopefully you are getting some time outside in the fresh air - maybe in your back gardens or if you are getting out for one hour of exercise with your parents. It is so important now that we are coming into Spring to try to appreciate some of the beauty around us during these precious times. The blossoms are appearing on the trees and nature is starting to bloom around us. Even though you are having to spend a lot of time inside, we hope you are noticing these things too. These are great images to draw, paint or even write about. Try to keep your mind active by continuing to read as this can take your imagination to all sorts of amazing lands and worlds, even though you may be indoors. Why not share some of your favorite books on Twitter for others to read.

This is also a great time to get creative. We know that it is during this time of year, that we would normally have our Easter Bonnet parades and Paint an Egg competition. These are normally such happy and vibrant occasions in our school year. But even though you are not here with us, why not get creative and make these items with your parents at home? Share them on Twitter with us. It would make your teachers so happy to see you getting creative at home.

We hope that you are helping your parents and making life as easy and happy as possible at home by listening to what you are being asked to do and doing it without moaning or complaining. This is a tricky time for parents too, so we hope you are showing them love and respect as you always try to do here, even though it might be hard sometimes. We hope that you still doing the very important jobs we have all been asked to do to continue to help stop the spread of coronavirus by STAYING AT HOME and WASHING YOUR HANDS!

We hope that you have a wonderful Easter with your families. Despite what is happening, this is a very special time of year when we think about new life and the Resurrection of our Lord. We can look forward to new beginnings once this crisis has ended and we are all together again.

Sending lots of love and blessings from all the staff at St Bernadette's.

"Putting the Paschal Mystery at the centre of our lives means feeling compassion towards the wounds of the crucified Christ present in the many innocent victims of wars, in attacks on life, from that of the unborn to that of the elderly, and various forms of violence". This means being personally committed to and involved in "the building of a better world",

Pope Francis



The Year of the Word: Reflection 8

In the final week of Lent we recall the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem and we hear the story of the passion, before we are able to celebrate the joy of the resurrection at Easter. Palm Sunday, the beginning of Holy Week, is about embracing life's challenges without looking for approval. God sees – and that's all that matters. Few people praise the donkey which carried Jesus. The events following Palm Sunday lead us to 'Good Friday,' part of the Easter Triduum and ultimately to Easter Sunday completing the Paschal Mystery – Jesus' Passion, Death, and Resurrection.

Why should we remember the passion of Jesus? Why keep alive the memory of such anguish and pain? Aren't we supposed to forget about past pain and hurts, and let them disappear if they can?

As Christians we are committed to be a people that remembers the passion of Jesus: "Whenever you do this, do it in memory of me." When a community chooses to remember suffering, its memory becomes a protest. Remembrance of pain demands a future that is more than a repetition of the past. That is why the memory of suffering is dangerous: in recalling the suffering of the victim there is a protest that this should not be repeated again. That memory also serves to make us aware of the crosses that are in our midst. The memory of Jesus' passion educates us to pay attention to the suffering of others. The cross demands that attention should be paid. So we pay attention to the suffering of Jesus and the suffering of all who are victims of hate and violence. We all know the unsung heroes and heroines, the uncanonised saints who have transformed the lives of those around them and stood up for what is right and just. Those who "blow their own trumpet" have usually done very little for others.

So as we prepare to remember the passion of Jesus and to enter its mystery, we should remember that we hold holy the love that opposed violence and the love that endured violence, the love that made its way with a cross on its back. We profess our gratitude for that love and to stand in solidarity with all those people whose courageous love makes them victims of violence. The cross of Jesus has not been dismantled; the suffering he experienced has not ceased. The cross stands in the midst of life – not as ritual decoration, but as a reminder that this is the price the world exacts from those who confront its ways with the values of the Gospel.

Could Jesus have avoided the cross? Could he have made a detour around Calvary and continued on his way? Could he not have evaded execution and settled for a quiet existence beside the Sea of Galilee? Did his forgiving love require the cross?

It was not Jesus who looked for the cross; it was the world that looked to the cross as the way to eliminate him. The cross was not the idea of the Father; it was the final solution thought up by a world opposed to Jesus' way. God the Father is not a sadist who planned the destruction of his beloved Son; in letting go of his Son the Father had to be vulnerable to what would happen to his Son at the hands of others. All parents have to take that risk. God the Father, no less, did likewise. As God is always engaged in a "dialogue of salvation with man", despite humanities weaknesses and failings, This desire to save Man "led the Father to burden His Son with the weight of our sins, thus, in the expression of Pope Benedict XVI, 'turning of God against Himself' (Deus caritas est, 12)" in order to experience "the mercy He freely gives us", even if it appears strange to us. For surely, God doesn't forgive as easily as that? Yet mercy is a sheer gift, it does not have to be earned or deserved, it is the largesse of the benefactor to grant as they see fit. Mercy cancels out wrongs and transgressions – not because a sparkling defence has been found or excusing causes have been skilfully argued, but because that is the free response of the person who is grieved. Mercy does not suggest that the guilty are not guilty: it recognises the guilt but does not demand satisfaction for the wrong. In all this, mercy reflects the utter graciousness of the one who has been wronged.

Can we forgive as readily as God or Jesus forgives? Or do we dote on people's wrongdoing, reminding them of past failures, and lighting vigil lamps to their mistakes? Can we forgive and leave it? We spend time wondering whether God can really forgive without hoarding the hurt. God's track record on forgiveness is clear: God's had lots of practice and God is good at it. How about our track record?

Love does not demand the cross, but in the life of Jesus love ends up on the cross. That is what actually happened. That is what continues to happen to self-forgetful love. Love chooses not to avoid the suffering that emerges from its commitment. The avoidance of suffering is not love's governing passion. It cannot be. Jesus could have avoided going to Jerusalem; he could have taken the advice of the disciples who warned him about the fate that would surely befall him there. But instead of avoiding Jerusalem, Jesus enters it publicly and loudly. He does not disguise himself and slip in through a quiet gate; he heads a parade. He decides to confront the power that is set against him. And when he chooses to do that, like all people who confront oppression, he makes suffering visible. "It is part of the mechanism of domination to forbid recognition of the suffering it produces." (Theodor Adorno) Jesus brings suffering to the forefront. For Jesus to have avoided suffering, he would have had to avoid confrontation with the authorities. He would have had to suppress the real suffering of people and settle for the conspiracy of silence. That he refused to do. His love makes itself vulnerable to suffering. He could only have removed himself from suffering by keeping himself untouched by other people's pain, by making himself invulnerable, by removing himself from human relationships. But that was not why he had come. He had not come to be a mobile monument in stone; he was God's love in fragile human flesh and bone. He was God's passion, God's overwhelming love, God's risky adventure.

Easter Sunday brings all God's plans to conclusion. What a culmination! What a reward! Jesus' resurrection from the dead and victory over sin brings us the greatest reason to celebrate. Truly God's mercy is shown to mankind for eternal life is restored to man if only they believe! "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (John 20:29)

So, the Paschal Mystery has two aspects: by his death, Christ liberates us from sin; by his Resurrection, he opens for us the way to a new life. This new life is above all justification that reinstates us to God's grace, 'so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.'" God has sent us a light in the dark to guide us, protect us and strengthen us. Is that really a gift anyone would want to turn away from?



Readings for Reflection from the Gospels

Matthew 21:1–11 Palm Sunday
Matthew 26:24–25 The Last Supper
Matthew 26:36 – 75 The Mount of Olives and after
Matthew 27: 45–56 The Passion



Prayer

"Stay with me and then I shall begin to shine as you shine, so to shine as to be a light to others; The light, O Jesus will be all from you; none of it will be mine; It will be you, shining on others through me."

John Henry Newman

A Time for Everything

There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:
a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
a time to scatter stones and time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.

Blessings

May the Lord mark us this day and all our days with the blessing of his peace.

When we are tired and vulnerable,
may he enliven us with new purpose.
When we are unsure and distrustful,
may he fortify us with new confidence.
When we are depressed and weighed down,
may he raise us to new heights.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

May the love of the Father enfold us,
the passion of the Son embolden us,
the fire of the Spirit enliven us;
and may the blessing of God rest upon us
and abide with us evermore.

Amen.



TOP PARENTING TIPS FOR PARENTS AND CARERS IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

6

Be truthful in answering children's questions.

Find out what they know about the issue before answering. Keep answers simple. Get information from trusted sources (e.g., official government websites) rather than social media.

7

Have a family plan of action.

Involve children in preparing the plan. As situations can change quickly (e.g., new travel restrictions, school closures), update the plan as needed.

8

Help children learn to tolerate more uncertainty.

The COVID-19 crisis creates uncertainty for everyone. Parents need to find a way to accept uncertainty and, through your actions and words show this acceptance to your children. It's OK to say, "I don't know; let's find out what we can." Big changes to children's lives can be hard and are often scary. They can also create opportunities for learning new skills.

9

Take care of yourself the best you can.

Deal with your own distress by taking actions that give you a better sense of personal control. Stress management skills such as mindfulness and/or deep breathing can help reduce stress. Keep healthy and safe (good personal hygiene, exercise daily, eat well, get enough sleep, avoid using alcohol or drugs to lessen stress). Avoid behaviour that might increase your stress. For example, while it is helpful to keep informed about COVID-19, constant checking on your screens can increase stress.

10

Reach out and connect with loved ones.

Make greater use of phones, online communication tools (video conferencing) and social media to keep in touch with family, friends, and neighbours. Help others in need who are going through a tough time and are more vulnerable (e.g., parents/caregivers with disabilities, older people).

Written by Matthew R Sanders and Vanessa E Cobham
Parenting and Family Support Centre | © The University of Queensland



COMMUNICATION AND AUTISM TEAM (CAT)

*COVID-19 & Advice
for Parents / Carers*



Currently the nation is experiencing a situation we have not seen before. It is requiring us all to change our normal routines and may be causing your child with autism to feel concerned and present some challenges for you as a parent and/or carer.

The Communication and Autism Team are here to help you during this difficult time. Our families and children are really important to us and we are here to provide you with support through our telephone helpline service.

You can get advice and support on a range of topics, including the following:

- Strategies to support access to home routines
- Motivating and engaging your child
- Tips for helping your child /young person to manage their school work at home
- Social communication and interaction
- Sleeping, eating and personal hygiene
- Wellbeing
- Structure and routine
- Coping with new routines
- Helping your child to understand what is happening
- Looking after yourself

We would like to assure you that our support remains available to you by telephone throughout this period.

If you would like to access this service please email CATParentEnquiries@birmingham.gov.uk with the following information:

- Your name
- The telephone number you would like to be contacted on
- The name of your child's school
- Times and dates you are not available

We will then arrange for a member of the team to call you back as soon as possible.

"We can do this if we all work together as a family"

Birmingham SEND Youth Forum

Visit www.birmingham.gov.uk/localoffer

Follow us on Twitter: [@A2Education](https://twitter.com/A2Education) [#coronavirushelp](https://twitter.com/coronavirushelp)



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