



# St. Richard's RC Primary School Newsletter 2020

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020

## **THE PURPOSE OF THE NEWSLETTER WHILST WE ARE CLOSED**

We are going to carry on uploading the newsletter to the school website every week ([www.st-richards.manchester.sch.uk/key-information/letters-reports/](http://www.st-richards.manchester.sch.uk/key-information/letters-reports/)) for the foreseeable future, in order to keep everyone up to date and informed at a time of uncertainty. We also want to provide our wonderful whole school community – parents, pupils and staff – with a sense of staying connected at a time when we are not all seeing each other every school day.

## **THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION**



Yesterday was the feast of the Annunciation of the Lord. This is when the Angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would be the Mother of God. This week we can contemplate Mary our Mother, the mother of all of us. She is the perfect model of Christian faith and of what it means to give oneself whole heartedly to God's will.

## **SCHOOL REMAINS CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**

As you are all very aware, St Richard's closed on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020. We wish the whole community the very best for the future and we know that everyone's cheerfulness, cooperation and resolution will help overcome the current challenges which we all face.

As part of the country's ongoing response to coronavirus we currently offer reduced provision to only our most vulnerable pupils and the children of key workers in critical sectors. All these pupils have now been identified. Do not bring your child to school if they are not in one of these two categories – they will not be admitted in to school under any circumstances. Many thanks for your complete support, cooperation and understanding.

Every child who can be safely cared for at home should be. There is no requirement – even for parents who are key workers in critical sectors – to send their child(ren) to school if they do not need or want to. A downloadable application form (which must be printed off, filled in, signed and brought back to school) for parents who are key workers in critical sectors is still available at [www.st-richards.manchester.sch.uk](http://www.st-richards.manchester.sch.uk)

## **STAYING IN TOUCH AND INFORMED WHILE WE ARE CLOSED**

Please make a habit of visiting the home page of the school website ([www.st-richards.manchester.sch.uk](http://www.st-richards.manchester.sch.uk)) regularly for updates on the coronavirus situation as it impacts on our school community. We will also use ParentMail texts (and this weekly newsletter) to communicate important information to you while we are closed.

Please feel free to email [comments@st-richards.manchester.sch.uk](mailto:comments@st-richards.manchester.sch.uk) in order to stay in touch with school during the closure period. You are welcome to share any questions or concerns and we will endeavour to respond. During the next few weeks, some families might also receive phone calls from school staff to have a chat about how things are going.

## **MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL WELFARE PROVISION SCHEME**

Until a National Free School Meal scheme can become operational, Manchester City Council has put in place a welfare provision scheme. This is for families who are eligible for Free School Meals as a consequence of being eligible for benefits and who are in need of additional financial support. This scheme replaces the emergency provision which was put in place by school last week. Please visit:

[https://secure.manchester.gov.uk/info/200008/benefits\\_and\\_support/6302/apply\\_for\\_a\\_cash\\_grant\\_if\\_you\\_are\\_in\\_financial\\_crisis](https://secure.manchester.gov.uk/info/200008/benefits_and_support/6302/apply_for_a_cash_grant_if_you_are_in_financial_crisis)

## **TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT CORONAVIRUS**

One Education's Educational Psychology Team have produced the following advice which parents may find helpful:

'The current situation means that more children throughout the world are becoming affected by what is happening. Many families have relatives and friends that are infected, isolated at home or are at risk of losing their jobs. This means that in addition to the danger of the virus infection, many families are experiencing increased worry, anxiety and possible changes to their daily lives.

### **Be honest**

It is important to be truthful: children will be hearing and seeing frightening information all around them. Just because the adults say, "It's alright" will not alleviate their anxiety. Check out what children understand about what is going on around them, especially as they may be frightened by what is happening. They will be experiencing constant 'dangerous' news and possible changes in everyday life, as well as recognising that adults around them are concerned. It is also ok to say you don't know, as there are also things we do not yet understand about Coronavirus at this time. Talk openly to children about the changes they are seeing around them due to Coronavirus. Give them factual, honest and clear information, but adjust the amount of detail to suit the child's age.

### **Take cues from your child**

Ask your child to tell you what they've heard and how they feel. Give time for them to ask questions. This avoids encouraging frightening fantasies.

### **Deal with your own anxiety**

It's only natural that you will be feeling worried at this time. Try to recognise when you're feeling anxious, as that isn't the time to talk to your child. Take some time to calm down before talking to your child.

### **Be reassuring**

Children are very egocentric, so hearing about Coronavirus on the news may be enough to make them seriously worry that they'll catch it. Reassure your child what is being done to prevent the disease from spreading and that children actually seem not to be as at risk as older people.

### **Keeping safe**

Focus on what you're doing to keep safe. Involving your child will empower them to know what they can do to keep themselves safe. Use a favourite song/rhyme to encourage them to wash their hands thoroughly.

### **Stick to routine**

Change of routine and uncertainty can make children feel anxious. This is particularly important if your child's school shuts down. Try to structure days with regular activities. Established mealtimes and bedtimes are important in helping keep your child calm and healthy.

### **Keep talking**

Tell children that you will keep them updated as you learn more and that they can ask you more questions when they think of them. Keep lines of communication open.'

## **FURTHER ADVICE**

One Education are inviting parents or carers who require any further advice or support from an educational psychologist relating to the above to contact the following help line: 0161 276 0115 - Monday to Friday 09:00-12:00

With many thanks for your continuing support  
and with every best wish,

Mr J Murray

Headteacher  
St Richard's RC Primary School