



St. Richard's RC Primary School Newsletter 2020

Thursday 9th April 2020

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Today is Maundy Thursday, the day when Jesus shared a Passover meal with his friends for the last time before his arrest, trial and crucifixion. Usually, millions of people around the world would attend the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper after 6pm today in order to remember and reflect upon the final events of Holy Week. Sadly, this is not an option at the moment. Instead, we offer the community of St Richard's the following prayers and reflections in the hope that they will bring comfort and a sense of communion, despite our physical separation. The following words are taken from 'Prayers for Schools' by Raymond Friel – a book that we use frequently in school with staff as well as with children:

'On the night before he died, Jesus had a last supper with his friends and showed them how to remember forever what his mission was all about, what they were supposed to do. He got a basin of water and got down on his knees to wash their feet, one at a time. This was just not done. There were servants in those days to wash the dusty feet of guests. Peter spoke up, unhappy about this but Jesus told him that this was the way: serve each other in humility, serve the poor. This is what he meant when he gave us his body.'

Let us Pray: Lord, help us to grow in the ministry of service, to understand that the purpose of life is not to gain power, possessions and prestige, but simply to serve.

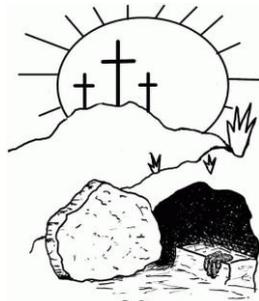
GOOD FRIDAY

Tomorrow, Friday 10th April, we commemorate Good Friday. This is the day on which Jesus Christ died for us all and, through this ultimate sacrifice, showed us how much God loves us. Good Friday is a day of fasting and abstinence.

HAPPY EASTER EVERYONE!

On Sunday 12th April this year we celebrate the single most important day of the Christian calendar – Easter Sunday:

Christ is Risen! His light spreads over the whole earth! He has forgiven the sins of every one of us and he shows us the path to God. Glory to God! Sing Alleluia! Praise the Lord!



SCHOOL REMAINS CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

As you are all very aware, St Richard's closed on Friday 20th March 2020. 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

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) regularly for updates on the coronavirus situation as it impacts on our school community. We will also use ParentMail texts as well as this weekly newsletter in order to communicate important information while we are closed. The weekly newsletter will be available every Thursday afternoon at: www.st-richards.manchester.sch.uk/key-information/letters-reports/ Please feel free to email 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 closure period, some families will also receive phone calls from school staff to have a chat about how things are going.

FURTHER ADVICE

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

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL (MCC) WELFARE SCHEME

For families who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals and who are in need of additional financial support, please continue to visit:

https://secure.manchester.gov.uk/info/200008/benefits_and_support/6302/apply_for_a_cash_grant_if_you_are_in_financial_crisis

This is a temporary local authority-run scheme. MCC has asked us to pass on the message that their benefits team are working hard to process all the applications for the welfare fund as quickly as possible. There has been a massive spike with initial applications and the team are hoping to have payments to families within the next 7 days. Funding will be backdated to Monday 23rd March.

For parents of pupils at St Richard's, this MCC scheme will continue until **Friday 17th April**. From **Monday 20th April**, we will have transferred to the national voucher scheme (see below). From this date, the MCC Scheme will not be available to parents and carers of children who are normally entitled to benefits-related free school meals. After Monday 20th April the MCC scheme will still be available but only to families who are **not** currently eligible for FSM but who are experiencing hardship as a result of COVID-19.

VOUCHERS FOR PARENTS OF PUPILS ELIGIBLE FOR BENEFITS-RELATED FREE SCHOOL MEALS

The MCC Welfare Provision Scheme was designed to be temporary until a national scheme could be put in place. The Department for Education (DfE) has now developed a national voucher scheme to support schools to provide parents of pupils eligible for benefits-related free school meals with supermarket vouchers in term time whilst school is closed to them. Vouchers will be made available only to the adult with main caring responsibility for that child.

From Monday 20th April, St Richard's will be able to provide eligible families with a weekly supermarket shopping voucher worth £15 per child, while schools are closed due to coronavirus. We will be providing vouchers electronically (which can then be redeemed online via a code). We can only do this if we have up to date and useable email addresses. If an email address is not available, parents will have to come to school to pick up a paper voucher.

To easily check your free school meal eligibility online, all you need is your personal details and your National Insurance Number/National Asylum Seekers number. Go to: <https://www.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/sims/>

UPDATED HOME LEARNING ON THE SCHOOL WEBSITE

We appreciate the challenges faced by parents and carers as a result of the enforced and prolonged national school closure. We are very keen to assist the children of St Richard's in continuing to learn from home. At a distance, this presents challenges in itself. We are also very keen that parents do not incur additional costs (eg – printer ink and paper) at a time when lots of our families are experiencing financially challenging circumstances. With all the above in mind, we have updated the Home Learning pages of our school website with new activities for children in every year group. This content should be used until Friday 17th April. It will then be updated again for Monday 20th April with a further two weeks' worth of work ... and so on, whilst it is required.

With every best wish,

Mr J Murray
Headteacher

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