



St. Richard's RC Primary Advent Newsletter 2020



Thursday 10th December 2020

WEEKLY COVID 19 UPDATE FROM SCHOOL

Many thanks for your support and understanding over the unavoidably very short-notice decision to not open school to pupils on Monday 7th December. This was due to us being unable to serve lunches to the 311 pupils who needed one.

We have addressed this issue and we fully expect to be open every day as normal until the day we break up for Christmas, which is on Friday 18th December.

Between now and Christmas, our lunchtime routines will remain the same as previously but there will only be a hot food option for pupils who eat in the hall (EYFS/KS1) and only a grab bag option for the KS2 pupils who eat in Olympic Building until Friday 18th December.

We have had no further class bubble closures at St Richard's this week.

PLEASE DO NOT GO INTO EACH OTHER'S HOUSES

Manchester went into the new and tougher tier three ('very high') band of COVID-19 related restrictions last week. Amongst many other restrictions, in Tier 3:

you must not meet socially indoors or in most outdoor places with anybody you do not live with, or who is not in your support bubble. This includes in any private garden or at most outdoor venues.

Please do not go into anyone else's house and do not allow anyone into yours (unless they are in your support bubble). By following the rules of Tier 3 we will help to suppress the spread of the virus – something we all want.

THE THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT

The third week of Advent begins on Sunday 13th December. This is called 'Gaudete' or Joyful Sunday: Rejoice! This third week of Advent focuses our intention on joy. Joy is a very real and deep happiness that is rooted in faith and trust. In this third week of Advent, we should all try to pause and reflect on the first half of the season, as well as look ahead to the last weeks. The joy that we have and will experience during this season magnifies as we continue to prepare for the coming of Christ, who is full of joy.

'We always think of Jesus when He preaches, when He heals, when He travels, walks along the street, even during the Last Supper. But we aren't used to thinking about Jesus smiling, joyful. Jesus was full of joy, full of joy. It is His internal joy, the interior joy that He gives to us.' (Pope Francis)

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES

Please visit <https://st-richards-manchester.sch.uk/about-us/st-richards-parish-church/> for a full list of mass times at St Richard's Longsight and St Mary's Levenshulme (the parish of St Robert of Newminster) over Christmas as well as to read an important message from Father Dever. **At present there is no obligation to attend Mass even on Christmas Day.** Bishop John has asked that we celebrate Christmas in a different way this year by returning to the ancient tradition of observing the Christmas Octave.

During the Christmas Octave both churches will have 'Family Benches' so families will be free to celebrate Christmas together on any one of the days during the time between Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

NO CHRISTMAS CARDS OR GIFTS IN SCHOOL THIS YEAR

As reported last week, we have taken the sad decision to not allow pupils to bring in and distribute Christmas cards or gifts in school this year. Whilst this is unfortunate I am sure that you understand our reasons – COVID-19 survives on surfaces for varying lengths of time and we are trying to reduce the spread of the virus in as many ways as possible. Many thanks for your understanding and cooperation.

DIOCESE DECARBONISATION STRATEGY

The Diocese of Salford has started work with academic partners on a 'decarbonisation strategy'. This will involve understanding the diocese's carbon footprint and ways to reduce it over the next two years. The team would welcome anyone with expertise in this area in our parish communities to get in touch at decarbonisation@salford.org.uk so that the diocese can become more aware of those that might want to get involved.

APPLYING FOR A PLACE IN RECEPTION FOR SEPTEMBER 2021

The application round for Reception 2021 opened on 17th August 2020. The closing date for Reception 2021 school applications is **5pm on Friday 15th January 2021**. The application portal is at: https://lealive.manchester.gov.uk/CitizenPortal_LIVE/en. You can change your application up to the closing date, but not after. You must apply on time to be considered for your preferred schools.

A CHRISTMAS VISIT FROM OUR LOCAL MP

Yesterday we were honoured with an amazing visit from our local MP (who is also the shadow deputy leader of the House of Commons) Mr Afzal Khan. Afzal was here to announce the winner of his Constituency Christmas Card Competition – which was won by one of our very own pupils. Well done to Rehan (C13) who was both surprised and delighted to be announced as the winner. Afzal Khan will be using Rehan's design on every card that he sends out this Christmas season (including one to Boris Johnson). This is both a huge honour and a tremendous acknowledgement of Rehan's artistic abilities (and how well he has been taught to use watercolours this term).

SCHOOL CHRISTMAS LUNCH DAY

Christmas lunch day at St Richard's will be on Tuesday 15th December. This will be a non-uniform day and Christmas jumpers may be worn on this day. The decorated packed lunch box competition will take place on this day too.

WEDNESDAY WORD ONLINE

The Wednesday Word team continues to support families with free online editions of the Wednesday Word. These are available every Wednesday (including over school holidays) by visiting www.wednesdayword.org, clicking "Schools please enter here for the Primary School version" and then following the link. This Wednesday's Word is **JOY**. The Wednesday Word is now in its holiday format (a longer booklet) which will provide readings, prayers and activities until Wednesday 6th January 2021 (the day school re-opens after the Christmas holidays).

CLASS 1 FRESHWATER WORKSHOP

Class 1 enjoyed their Freshwater Theatre workshop in the hall last Thursday. Collectively, they write, 'C1 really enjoyed meeting our new friend 'Earth Explorer' last Thursday. We had so much fun learning about the 4 seasons, and the different types of weather around our wonderful world. We played games and did lots of acting together. It was great!'

ARE YOU IN NEED OF SOME EXTRA HELP?

If you are a family with no recourse to public funds but would like to apply for temporary free school meals, then please contact our school office on 0161 224 5552 **in complete confidence** and we will provide you with an application form which you will then be able to send back to us.

HUMANSMCR Foodbank have been in touch with us to say that they would welcome referrals to their service. If you are in need or experiencing food poverty, then please contact school and Mrs Kelly will refer you on. You will need to be happy for **HUMANSMCR** to contact you but your referral will otherwise be strictly confidential.

With many thanks for your continuing support,
Mr J Murray

Headteacher
St Richard's RC Primary School