

Slindon Church of England Primary School

November 2020



Dear Parents/ Carers

Welcome back to the second half of the Autumn Term. I hope you were able to enjoy some quality time during the holidays before we somewhat unexpectedly went into a National lockdown last week. I know that I speak on behalf of all of the staff here, when I say how pleased we are that schools are remaining open and at how many of the children are continuing to attend school.

You will see from the dates section on the last page of the newsletter that this term looks very different to previous years, in the sense that it is much quieter. Whilst our school remains open for all children, the world is in a different place, we are in a second national lockdown and so of course things will inevitably be different this term.

There is information on page 2 relating to our updated procedures since going into a national lockdown. There are also a few reminders of our existing procedures, all of which are continually updated in response to the ongoing government guidance and advice from the local authority.

I write about entitlement to Free School Meals on page 3. Coronavirus has had an impact on many of us, whether that be on our wellbeing or finances. We really do want to support all of our school community as much as we can, so if you are struggling in any way, please let us know how we can help or how we may direct you to other agencies who can help you.

Lastly, who is putting their Christmas tree up a little early this year? We would like to spread the Christmas cheer a bit earlier than usual, so if anyone can help us source a real Christmas Tree, we would be very grateful!

Lucy Cooper

(Headteacher)

Since the beginning of the Coronavirus pandemic, schools have had to manage the overwhelming amount of guidance from the Department for Education, Public Health and the Local Education Authority, as well as the need to continually update risk assessments and other associated documents. I feel proud of how we continue to manage this to ensure that we are keeping our community as safe as we can.

Since lockdown, we have adapted or changed some of our practice and procedures. Along with many other primary schools, we have encouraged staff to wear face coverings where and if they feel more comfortable in doing so. You will know that we also cancelled our after school clubs, in line with the government guidance for schools published on the 5th November.

While we have continued to minimise items coming to and from school, you will see that bookbags are now needed. We need to be able to teach the children appropriately and provide them with a 'broad and balanced' curriculum. We appreciate your continued efforts to send your child with minimal belongings and in ensuring that all items of clothing are named.

We also appreciate your quick response to my last communication in wearing face coverings when dropping and collecting your children from school. I know our collective efforts are greatly valued by all of us, but in the coming weeks, please don't be offended if I need to be clear with you personally, if I need to remind you of the procedures that have been communicated to keep us all safe.

Lastly, please remember that we need you to communicate clearly and quickly with us if a member of your household develops coronavirus symptoms. In having to keep up-to-date with the ever changing information, I can help direct you or advise on the appropriate procedures. We also have a number of testing kits here at school, should you not be able to access a test quickly. **We ask that you communicate with us quickly and clearly if you suspect a member of your household has developed coronavirus symptoms.**

Are you receiving our communication? It's concerning to hear when parents/carers say that they are unsure of what is going on at school. We work hard to communicate with you and have checked that the communication that has been sent out via email, did successfully arrive in your inboxes. Please do take the time to read the contents of our communications, as I said in our last newsletter, the current climate means that now it is more important than ever to read any communication from us.



Please ensure that you check the email that you have given us is correct and if you change your email, please let us know.

We are keen to hear from you if you have a suggestion of how we can make our communication better.



The nationwide lockdown implemented last week reminds us that the current climate is unpredictable. Therefore, after much deliberation, we have chosen not to go ahead with this years EYFS/ Key Stage 1 (Catkin Class) performance in the Coronation Hall as we normally would. We have done this for the following reasons;

- 1) We want to keep this term as stable as possible and avoid any last minute disappointment.
- 2) We cannot be sure that the national lockdown will be over on the 2nd December 2020.
- 3) There is a great deal of guidance around singing and performances and the associated risk of spreading Coronavirus. This would restrict what we would be able to do.
- 4) After considering filming the performance, permissions do not enable us to film all of the children and therefore we could not allow parents/ carers to have a copy of the filming and /or put on the website without excluding some of our children.

Instead of a live performance in Coronation Hall, staff in Catkin Class will continue to give the children the experience of the planned Nativity and we will ensure that we take many photographs and film your child for you, where permissions allow.

For all of the children at school, we will ensure that we dedicate time celebrating Christmas with games and activities throughout the last weeks of the term. Much of this will be built around our learning in Religious Education. Again we will ensure that we share these experiences with you in as many ways as possible.

And whilst 'Christmas Shopping Day' will not go ahead this year, it will be replaced with an exciting array of crafts activities that if you are very lucky, you may find under your Christmas Tree on Christmas Day!

You will be aware that recently the Government has indicated that they will continue to support families who qualify for Free School Meals over the school holiday periods going forward, including the Christmas holiday coming up. The County Council provides schools with a form for parents and carers to complete and return to school confidentially. We then forward these to the County's team, who check entitlement. Next week we will send home this form for you to consider if your personal circumstances suggest that you might qualify; the qualifying detail is explained in the form.

Our school benefits from additional funding for each pupil whose parents or carers qualify for Free School Meals. This funding is called the Pupil Premium Grant and it allows the school to enrich the education for children entitled to the Pupil Premium Grant. This fund is particularly important for smaller schools.

The completion of this form, should your child qualify, is therefore helpful for the school, even where your child does not wish to eat a school meal and/or where your child is already entitled to Universal Infant Free School Meals because they are in Catkin Class. Without the form being completed and the application being made there is no possibility of the additional funding being awarded to the school.

I would ask that if you believe that your personal circumstances may have changed or in any case you feel you might qualify then please do complete the form and return it to the school office in a sealed envelope marked confidential.



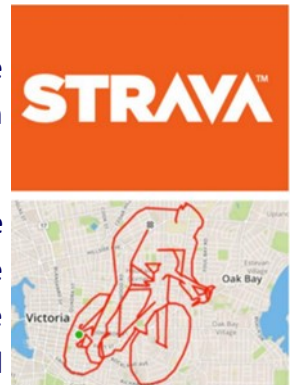
Mr Coyle's PE update

It has been an amazing first half term for me and I am very thankful for the lovely welcome everyone at Slindon Primary has given me. With regards to PE this first half of the Autumn term ,myself and Catkin Class children have had to get our dancing shoes on and build on our key fundamental movement skills which has been a lot of fun. After missing out on summer sports last year, Acorn Class begun this year making vast improvements in their striking and fielding skills; taking part in different cricket and rounders games. Chestnut Cass have also had a fantastic start to this academic year in tag rugby where we focused on passing and receiving as well as the different rules associated with the game. I can't fault the children's attitude to their learning this half term across the school, from the reception children's first lessons right through to our wonderful Year 6 children, and I am hoping this can continue. This next half term we will be out of the rain and cold with all three classes being over in the Coronation Hall doing cheerleading, gymnastics and street dance.

Strava

With most clubs and sports having been put on hold for the time being, we recognise that there are now more limited opportunities to get outside and take part in certain sports and activities.

As a school, we are always looking for new and innovative ways to help increase physical activity. So I am pleased to announce that we have launched our own private club on the app **Strava**. **Strava** is a free app that helps to log activity from the simplest of walks to longer distance runs and cycles. You simply have to download the app on to your phone and every time you take part in some form of activity (even a walk to the shops!) press record. If you search under clubs for Slindon Church of England Primary School, you should be able to find us. Request to join and we will happily accept you.



Important Dates to Remember for the Autumn Term 2

Remember you can keep an eye on the calendar on our school website by just googling it from your mobile phone– you don't need to log in to do this. Texts are sometimes sent out as a helpful reminder.

- Friday 13th November– Children in Need Day
- Monday 30th November– Flu vaccinations for children in Years R to 6 (for those children with permission given)
- Friday 11th December– Save the Children Christmas Jumper Day (wear a Christmas Jumper and bring a donation for Save the Children)
- Friday 18th December– Last Day of the Autumn Term
- Monday 4th January 2021– First day of the Spring Term

We expect to have a number of Christmas themed events in the run up to Christmas, for the children. We hope to be able to hold the Christmas film 'afternoon', but all such events we will keep within normal school hours, and children and staff will remain within their own bubble.

We will keep to our practice of not having extra/ unnecessary items coming to and from school (so no pillows and blankets) but we will let you know when and if these events will go ahead, nearer the time.

Not sure what's going on at school?

Keep an eye on our school website, including the school calendar where you can find all the information you need.

www.slindonprimary.co.uk



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Slindon Church of England Primary School Facebook Page



We are using the facebook page this year to give parents/carers another way of seeing what's happening in school. The page won't be used to answer questions or communicate events so please continue to look at the newsletters, our calendar on the school website or call the school office if you have any queries.

