

St Andrew's Major Church in Wales Primary School

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Dear Parents/Carers,

Friday 23rd October 2020

We have had a busy week to end the half term and the children have continued working hard right to the last day. The junior classes have been carrying out activities related to Black History Month. I have been very impressed with their work – please take a look on Twitter for photos of this and other recent school activities.

Lunches

On our return after half term **w/c Monday 2nd November** it will be the turn of **Rec to Year 3**. From there on, we will alternate every week. To minimise the use of lockers in the juniors, and therefore minimise risk of contact groups crossing, we have purchased trolleys for lunch boxes which remain in/near each class. A handful of children bring their lunch items loose in their rucksack which is not suitable as the trolleys are not large enough to store them. Please ensure your child's lunch is in a suitable container – i.e. lunch box or plastic storage box.

See-saw and Bug Club

During teacher/parent consultations, many of you reported how much you like the new blended learning use of See-saw. This will be the method for learning in the case of a class isolation but we will also continue its use in the future as a homework tool. If you have any issues accessing the See-saw app or website, please do let us know and we may be able to help. Please note, this has not yet been launched in Nursery and Reception but we will be doing so after half term. Some parents have asked about reading books. Please note, we will be introducing reading books (and key rings for phonics where relevant) in N to Y2 after half term. However, please remember to also use Bug Club. In the juniors, we do not issue home readers and only use Bug Club as the books are carefully matched to the reading ability of the child and also includes the very important comprehension questions. Again, if you have any access issues with Bug Club, please let us know.

Nursery and Reception

The phone call meetings will take place the week after half term – Reception on Wednesday 4th and Nursery on Friday 6th November. You will receive a text to book an appointment today or early next week – please contact school on Mon 2nd if you have any issues. As I said above, we will be launching See-saw in Nursery and Reception after half term. As part of their home learning, it would be very useful for you to have a set of Numicon shapes which can stay at home. These are used regularly in numeracy activities in class and the children are used to using them. After half term, we will add £5 to Parentpay if you would like to purchase a set. Please note, we will provide a set free of charge for those children who are entitled to free school meals and those who are on record as 'looked after'.

Intervention and Booster Groups

Letters came home recently from Mrs Bayliss with regards to interventions and booster groups which have now started. We feel strongly that short programmes of intervention can have a very positive impact on a learner's attainment and this has been proven by our intervention results over recent years. Whilst some of these sessions are aimed at supporting those with additional learning needs, many of the groups we run are booster groups which target a variety of pupils of all abilities in order to raise attainment and in effect give their learning a 'boost'. Never has this been more important than now, with children having missed a large chunk of their time in school through the lockdown. These programmes are all run by our own trained Learning Support Assistants (LSA) and at the moment are focused on Literacy and especially reading. We have increased our intervention hours through the use of the Welsh Government's Accelerated Learning Grant and currently have 80 places in these groups. I thank Mrs Bayliss and the LSAs for their hard work in setting up and running the groups.

Christmas presents and cards

It may seem early to discuss Christmas but I know some very organised people may be starting to prepare for the festive season. Having discussed with the staff, I am requesting that parents do not buy presents for the staff this year. We are very aware of the financial strain facing many people at the moment and it also poses risks in terms of cross contamination. Although we managed to quarantine the foodbank donations for 3 days, trying to manage this with gifts would be extremely challenging. We are therefore suggesting we hold a collection of selection boxes or boxes of chocolates – again for the foodbank which the staff would be very happy to support. However, please do not send in until we are ready to receive them. We do know how much the children love sending each other Christmas cards and do not want to spoil this for them. Therefore we will be allowing children to give Christmas cards – **in their class only**. We will set up a box in each class for the cards. These will then be quarantined before being given out. Again, please do not send them in until I give more details. We will obviously be planning a very different Christmas this year as many of our usual activities will not be suitable, but rest assured we will make it a very special time for all.

Social Distancing

Obviously we head into the whole Wales lockdown from 6pm tonight. However, I am very pleased that the Welsh Government decided to allow us in Primary schools to remain open after the half term week and it will be business as usual on Monday 2nd November. In terms of restrictions and guidelines, I do have some on-going concerns around the social distancing of some parents/families in the morning but more noticeably at pick up. I do see some parents who are not in the same household, walking in to the school together or at the least very close. Please take note of the yellow spots which are spaced accurately and should be followed please. Also, as I have said before, only one parent per family should access the school to minimise the numbers of people. A second parent is free to wait on the lay-by. Some schools are starting to insist everyone face coverings which I would prefer not to do. Please keep your distance from each other and we will keep everyone safe. Please note, the government has granted permission to schools to continue the alterations to the school day in terms of start and finish times so we will be continuing our current arrangements.

Breakfast and After School Club

Deb Eynon will have sent details to those using provision after half term. As per the provision's Risk Assessment, please can I highlight the following:

- There will be strictly no access to breakfast club after 8.30. If you come after this time, you will be asked to wait until 8.45 with the other families.

- No adults are to enter the building in the morning or after school. Please ring the bell, step back to the 2m line and give your child their bags etc. A member of the club's staff will come to the door.
- No parking in the layby please – morning or after school please.

Welsh Government links (Repeated message)

I have listed some links to information from Welsh Government which you may find useful.

Test, Trace and Protect

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-10/test-trace-protect-information-for-parents-and-carers.pdf>

What to do if your child needs to self-isolate

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-10/what-to-do-if-your-child-needs-to-self-isolate.pdf>

Symptoms

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-10/dont-send-your-child-to-school-if-they-have-any-covid-19-symptoms.pdf>

General Restrictions – FAQs

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus-regulations-guidance>

Contact through half term

If you have a message (urgent only please) around a positive test etc. next week, please do use the school email address standrewsmajorps@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk as these will be monitored. Please **do not** email teachers over the half term week as I will be insisting they do not look at school emails or see-saw during their well-deserved and needed break.

It has been a fantastic half term and so great to have seen the children getting back into their routines, their learning and their social interactions with friends and teachers. Everyone has worked so hard to make the first half term a real success and I want to congratulate the children for their positive and happy approach to school; and the staff for their continued commitment and hard work at what has been the most challenging period – probably more so than any other time in our careers. A special thank you to you our families for your on-going support and appreciation of what we as a school are trying to do. I wish everyone a restful half term and look forward to seeing you all on Monday 2nd Nov. Stay safe!

Yours faithfully,



Headteacher

Our value this half term is Thankfulness:

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. (Psalms 100:4)