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Friday 23rd October 2020

St Margaret Mary's Letter:

Dear Children, Parents and Carers,

Contact Over Half-Term: We are being asked, following guidance by Manchester City Council that parents & families maintain contact with school during the half-term with regards to any COVID-19 symptoms & positive cases amongst our pupils & families. This is to ensure that the school can continue to open safely upon our return after the half-term, avoiding any disruption. As such I ask that you please email school to report any COVID-19 related concerns or information via: contact@st-margaretmarys.manchester.sch.uk We will then do our very best to respond to this as soon as we are possibly able to. Thank-you for your support with this important matter.

Free School Meals Half-Term: I am sure you are all aware of the recent debates regarding free school meal provision during the half-term break. Late this afternoon we have received notice from Manchester City Council that they have agreed to provide funding for all children who are eligible for a benefits related free school meal. This does not include the universal scheme that children from Rec-Y2 are eligible for. However, please be aware that if you have a child in these year groups & you as a family are eligible for benefits [see below], you will be able to receive it. I am told that families will receive a cash payment for the week that you need to claim through the attached link below. This will continue to be open until the 13th November, so that it can be claimed retrospectively, if you are unable to claim next week.

https://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/200008/benefits_and_support/6302/apply_for_a_loan_if_you_are_in_financial_crisis

FSM eligibility

Your child may be able to get free school meals if you get any of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Job Seeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part IV of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)



SeeSaw Set-Up: A reminder once again asking all parents to activate the 'Family Link' to your child's Seesaw account. These were all sent home two weeks ago & are really important to supporting not only homework but also remote learning as & when it is required. As I am sure you can appreciate if your child has to stay at home for a period of time, or work from home due to COVID-19 this is crucial. A reminder that the expectation from the DfE & on schools is that if a child or family are self-isolating for any length of time, then school work is set straight away & completed by all children accordingly, unless a child is ill. We have helped a few parents with queries this week But we can see that a number of parents have not activated this so far. Please can you find time to do this & make yourself familiar with this over the half-term break so that your link is activated & can be another form of communication with school, as well as support for your child's learning. We will review this after half-term, but please let us know if you need any further support from school or help in setting it up. I am sure you can appreciate the importance of this.

Using the Family Link, you will be able to receive notifications when work is set & when feedback is given, as well as when your child has submitted their work. You will also be able to communicate with your child's teacher, if needed. You will need the 'Seesaw Family' app and it works in the same way as your child's account (i.e. a QR code or 12 letter code is given to login). A further guide is available on the school website for further, helpful information.

After-School Clubs: Please see the letter emailed to all parents last night, with regards to our after-school clubs in November. As outlined in detail, these will run in a slightly different way, with booking & payments also changing as well. As always please do not hesitate to contact school if you require any further information regarding this. The letter can also be found on the school website, as with all letters.

School Dinners: A reminder that we now have the daily option for all children to have a delicious hot meal, which includes; cook's choice - ranging from roast dinner, curry & rice, fish & chips & pasta-bake with garlic bread etc... to jacket potato with a range of fillings.

If you would like your child to have a school meal please arrange for this via the School Office ahead of the week, with appropriate payments being made.

Lunchtime Organiser Advert: A reminder that our advert for the Lunchtime Organiser is still live until Friday 30th October, Midday. This is an important role in supporting the well-being & pastoral care of all of our children. Please see the website & vacancies tab for further information if you or others you know are interested. If you require any further information about the role please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sacramental Programme: Due to the restrictions since March, we are in the strange situation of finishing the Sacramental Programme that our current Year Four children started last year, as well as preparing for the next journey for our Year Three children. These will start from November 15th when all children, currently in Year Four have made their First Holy Communion. A letter & schedule from Fr Andrew will be emailed to all Year Three parents tonight, with this also going on the website for further reference. If your child is in a year group above Year Three, but you wish for them to start their sacramental programme then please also register your interest & confirmation of this, as outlined.

Extended Provision – Breakfast Club: As mentioned in earlier letters, we are very close to being able to start our extended & wider school provision this next half-term. As I am sure you can appreciate, the circumstances that we find ourselves working in are such that in the first instance it is not how we ultimately want it to be & is being phased-in. The first step will be introducing a before-school provision for a limited number of children. This will hopefully be extended in numbers when embedded & if there is a demand for it. Following this we will then look at our extended after-school provision in the spring term. I will be providing you with more detail after half-term that explains the first phase of before-school provision & how you can access this. Following consultation with you, we know that our provision will possibly suit the needs of some of our families, but not all of them. As such we feel that it will fit well with the care offered by the private, established providers in the area.

A reminder that school closes for the half-term break today & will also be closed on Monday 2nd November for Staff Training.

School will reopen to welcome all children on **Tuesday 3rd November**. A reminder that any holiday leave must be requested via the School Office & will be unauthorised during term-time unless for exceptional circumstances.

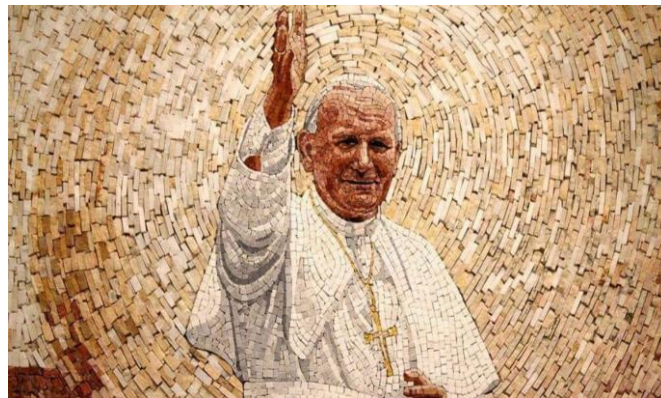
Finally, I am sure that you will agree it has been a very different half-term to the usual one. Nevertheless I am so very proud of all of our children, families & staff & the way in which everybody across the school community has adjusted to the changes that we have had to put in place. There are so many positives that everyone has contributed to & it is important that we recognise this. Once again thank-you for all of your support since September.

I hope that you all have a restful half-term break.

Take care & God Bless!

Mr Sutton
Headteacher

**Yesterday was the Feast Day of St John Paul II
One of our four School House Saints**



“Let us remember the past with **gratitude**, live the present with **enthusiasm**, and look forward to the future with **confidence**.” Pope John Paul II