



## Aston St. Mary's Newsletter

Our value this half term is Happiness

[www.astonmarys.herts.sch.uk](http://www.astonmarys.herts.sch.uk)

15th January 2021

**STAY HOME. PROTECT THE NHS. SAFE LIVES.**

Dear parents and carers,

Firstly, we hope that you all had a good Christmas despite the celebrations being much quieter this year. We are now just over two weeks into 2021 and we just have to hope that there are better times ahead. As you know, we had worked hard to prepare for school to re-open last Tuesday whilst also offering to support learning at home for the children of those who wished to keep their children safely at home. We, like you, only learnt at 8pm last Monday evening that parents would be asked to keep their children at home with schools shifting to remote learning once again.

By Tuesday morning, remote learning was in place for all classes and we have been absolutely delighted with the level of engagement from children across the school from the very first day. All we can say is that you are simply amazing! We know that supporting your children at home, whilst often also juggling working from home, is a very tough challenge. Thank you for everything you are doing to keep your children and others safe as well as doing a superb job in supporting their learning. All of the teachers are working incredibly hard to prepare the lessons as well as providing feedback – often several times a day - for each child. One of our biggest challenges has been how to accommodate a significantly larger number of requests for key worker provision in school than we had during the previous lockdown. You will have received a letter from the local authority about this earlier in the week as many schools are experiencing similar difficulties – not just in Hertfordshire, but nationally. You will be aware that the government have had to discuss this problem this week as many schools, like us, simply can not cope with the numbers attending and keep everyone safe. We are in lockdown because our hospitals, including our own, The Lister, are becoming overwhelmed with the increasing number of patients and the number of people dying in our country is rising significantly; it is everyone's duty to do all that they possibly can to keep their children at home. Even if one parent is a key worker, it will often be that there is another parent who is at home and therefore could be keeping their children safe and reducing the spread of the virus. Many, many parents are working from home whilst also juggling home learning with their children. They are doing the right thing; we all want the R number to reduce and restrictions to ease as soon as possible. If we all play our part, this will happen sooner so thank you to so many of you.

It has been wonderful to receive such overwhelmingly positive feedback about our remote learning during the previous lockdown and so far this term. Thank you. Government expectations about what schools should offer has changed significantly in the past week. The new expectations are outlined on the next page of this letter and further details will be published on the school website shortly.

Please remember, that we are still here for you and your children; we want to support you in any way that we can. We have included some ways that we might be able to do this on the next page of this letter but if there is anything more we can do, or even if you just need to talk something through, please do get in touch. Times are tough but, if we work together, we can do this and better times do lie ahead.

Please take care, follow the government guidance and remember:

**STAY HOME. PROTECT THE NHS. SAFE LIVES.**

Should you need to contact us, for whatever reason, please use the temporary email address:

**closed@astonmarys.herts.sch.uk**

### Supporting your child with Home Learning

I would like to support you and your child in any way that we can. Please let us know if you would like us to provide any of the following and we will do our best to help.

- **Exercise books:** working on screen is not always ideal. If you would like any handwriting books or other exercise books (plain, lined or squared), we can provide these.
- **Paper Learning Packs:** on request, we are happy to provide worksheet-based packs of home learning activities.
- **Reading books:** see below
- **Devices:** should any family need to borrow a laptop or ipad, please get in touch with Mrs Winwood as we may be able to arrange this.

Most importantly, please let us know if we can support you through the challenges of home learning in any other way at all!

**[closed@astonmarys.herts.sch.uk](mailto:closed@astonmarys.herts.sch.uk)**

### A thought from Reverend Jenny

Hear the special words God says to Jesus at his baptism... ‘

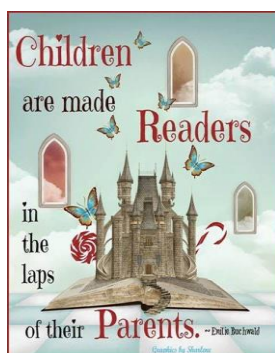
*You are my Son, the Beloved. With you I am well pleased’...*

words God says to each of US many times in the bible... ‘

*You are my beloved. With you I am well pleased’...*

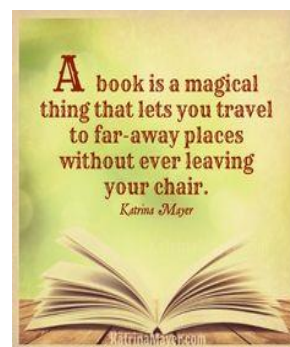
loving words to remember and treasure.

Whatever other people think of us, whatever we have done or not done, whatever challenges we face, we are precious to God, even more than our children, grandchildren or godchildren are precious to us.



### Reading Books

We are delighted that many families have already been able to collect reading books for their children. Maintaining a regular reading habit is essential for children's progress across the curriculum as well as being a wonderful way to relax and forget the worries of the world!



Please email [mrsbranagan@astonmarys.herts.sch.uk](mailto:mrsbranagan@astonmarys.herts.sch.uk) should you wish to collect books for your child. These can then be collected on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from the table outside the main entrance. There is also a box to return books.

### Government Home Learning Expectations

The government have recently issued guidance in relation to remote learning. We will be sending out more details next week. The remote education provided should be equivalent in length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school and will include both recorded direct teaching time, plus time for pupils to complete tasks and assignments independently. In Key stages 1 and 2, this teaching will be via Seesaw and Tapestry in reception class.

From Year 1 upwards, the amount of remote education provided should be, as a minimum:

- Key Stage 1: 3 hours a day
- Key Stage 2: 4 hours a day

Please be aware that all lessons will be part of learning sequence, so children will need to complete their work every day. If children are in school or at home, they will be completing the same learning. Teachers will be providing verbal and written feedback which will continue to support individual children's progress.

Hello Orchard class!  
We hope you all had a lovely Christmas break (that feels like a very long time ago now, doesn't it!). It is indeed a very strange time at the moment with home learning, and we are missing you all so much, but it has been wonderful to see the learning you have been doing on Seesaw!  
Our new topic for this half term is Rainforests, and you will have had your first lesson for this on Seesaw today! It is such an exciting topic to learn about and we hope that you will enjoy finding out all about rainforests!  
Lots of you have also been enjoying our current English book 'The Tunnel' by Anthony Browne. It has been wonderful to see all of the work you have creating in your lessons for this!  
Keep up all the super learning, we really do love seeing what you have been up to.

From,  
Mrs Merry, Miss Branagan and Mrs Davies

Happy New Year to all the children, parents and families in Haffydown!

Whilst it isn't quite the start to term we expected, I have been so impressed with all your hard work on Seesaw over these past two weeks. What a lot of wonderful learning you have done! In geography, we will be exploring the country of sunny Spain. During our science lessons, Year Three will be digging deep into the world of rocks and soils whilst Year Four investigate different states of matter. Our English unit is well under way, with many of us already feeling heartbroken for poor baby Paco and in maths I have seen some fabulous fraction work. We have lots more to look forward to as we explore the curriculum together through our online learning. I know it can be tricky at times but please keep up your wonderful work. As ever, I am so proud of all of you.

Miss Keen

Hi Danes,  
Happy new year to you all. We hope that you and your families had a lovely Christmas break.  
What an amazing start you have made to your remote learning this term! We are so very proud of all your hard work and dedication; we just love receiving all your posts via Seesaw. It is wonderful that, by working together with us, you are continuing to make great progress.

Hopefully, you will have noticed how many links you can make between your learning in different areas of the curriculum. In Geography, we have started our topic called 'Everyone's Earth'; you will be learning all about the Earth's resources and trade between different countries around the world. In, Science we are learning about The Earth and Space – this is a really exciting topic and I hope you have already begun your 'moon watching' each evening! It was great to hear your recordings of your lovely singing of the Planet Song for music and your pronunciation of the planet names in French.

We really hope that you are enjoying 'Boy in the Tower' which we are studying in English; it is wonderful to see the quality of mystery and suspense writing that you are producing. In maths, you are proving to be becoming expert statisticians!  
Danes, please remember that we are still here for you despite you not being in school. We miss you all very much.

Mrs Branagan, Miss Pear and the Danes team!

Hello Peartree

Welcome back to the start of the new spring term.

I know we are not all together at the moment but I have loved listening to your messages, watching your videos and looking at all the wonderful work that is turning up on Seesaw.

In History we will be looking at the lives of Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth I and in science we are learning all about different materials and their properties. I will put up the full list on Seesaw.

Keep safe

Mrs Baker and Mrs Goodfellow

Hi Shackadell class,

It feels like we haven't seen you for such a long time! We are both really missing each and every one of you and are so proud of all the hard work you've been doing at home. We are already really enjoying our new topic this half term "superheroes" and are looking forward to doing lots more exciting things over the coming weeks.

Keep safe and keep smiling.

Sending you all lots of hugs,

Mrs Lale and Mrs Holmes x