



Head-lines

I always find this Spring 1 half term a bit of a challenge - Christmas is over, the decorations are down, and what was a wintery picture perfect frozen landscape now just feels cold, dark and miserable! So it's always a bit of a relief when January is over - already the mornings and nights seem a bit lighter and I have daffodils on my kitchen worktop. So Spring is definitely poking it's head around the corner! Even in these dark days, as always, the children of St Joseph's remain our shining light. This term it has been fantastic to see all of the amazing learning taking place and, as ever, their spirit, attitude and manners and politeness make me so proud. I hope you all have a lovely half term break. Mr Turner

Attendance and Punctuality

I am sorry that attendance is our front page article this half term, but unfortunately, I do have to keep it front and centre as we are still not hitting our target. We are absolutely aware that Covid has had an impact and where children have the main symptoms, or have tested positive, then it is right to keep them off school and this is recorded on the register with a specific code. However, looking at figures with these codes taken out, we are still below our target of overall attendance of at least 96%.

Another huge concern we have at the moment is the number of children with attendance of less than 90%. The Government define this as 'Persistent Absence' and is the threshold at which schools need to inform the LA, who in turn may well seek to fine or prosecute.

Punctuality also needs a big push, as too many children are arriving long after the start of the day, and missing whole chunks of a lesson, making it hard to catch up with their peers.

Our philosophy as a school, is that we are all on the same team - we all have the same ultimate goal, which is that of giving our children the best start, the best opportunities and the best experiences. The saying goes 'we can't teach an empty chair' and every day really does count. The question is, fast forward 20 years, and will the children be grateful for all the time away from school? Or will they ask why they had to miss out on so many opportunities, friendships, playtimes, parties and learning?

Last term we ran an attendance survey, and one parent made a good suggestion of facilitating a way to share with each other the ways in which you have overcome any barriers - so the tips and tricks you have to ensure the children are up and ready to be in school each day and on time. We will set up and share out a Google link for you to submit any strategies you have that you have found effective, and we can then compile these into a shared resource we will publish.

Thank you for working with us on this - as I say, we do believe that we have a shared goal - we just need the children here with us, on time, to be able to achieve it.





Hello...

We welcome Chloe who has joined us this half term in Early Years. I hope you have settled in well, Chloe and made lots of new friends.



Goodbye...

This term, we say goodbye to Mrs McDermott. Mrs McDermott has worked at St Joseph's for over 20 years, and has supported countless children over these years. For a large chunk of time, Mrs McDermott worked in Early Years, and was there for the children as they started their journey in school. Lately, she has been working in Key Stage Two, supporting the children as they move to juniors. From EY to Year 6, Mrs McDermott has been there, offering help, support and care for the children. On behalf of each and every one of them, I would like to say a huge thank you to her for all her years of service. From all of the St Joseph's staff and team, we would like to say thank you to Mrs McDermott and wish her the very best for the future.

Reading

We believe passionately about the power of reading and books to take us away to far away magical places, to enable us to discover new and exciting things, to reflect on the best that has been thought and said.

Mrs Burley is our Reading Lead and works hard to ensure that St Joseph's is a '**Reading School**'. She has a team of Reading Ambassadors who meet weekly to share ideas, audit our resources and deliver key messages back to their classes. An exciting role in the making is 'Editor in Chief' - this role and the team will produce a regular

reading magazine containing book reviews, updates and much more. Watch this space! You can also get lots of information about our approach to reading from the Reading page of our website -

<http://www.stjosephscatholicprimarybirkenhead.co.uk/reading>



Mrs Burley has also been busy with her reading team, making lots of plans for Book Week. World Book Day is **Thursday 3rd March**, and the children are invited to come in dressed as their favourite book/character, but we want to make the whole week a fun and exciting week, with lots of different activities. The theme they have come up with is '**Once Upon a Tune**' and will link some well known pieces of classical music to the stories that sit behind them. This will be a voyage of discovery, magic and excitement! We can't wait!

Head Boy and Head Girl

Congratulations to Luke and Julia who were elected by their year to be our Head Boy and Head Girl. Please visit our home page

<http://www.stjosephscatholicprimarybirkenhead.co.uk>

to read their articles about themselves (if viewing on a phone, you might need to flip to landscape to enable full functionality of the website).

Congratulations also to Declan and Lexie, our Deputy Head Boy and Girl. Thank you to them, and all our Prefects and Play Leaders who give their own free time to support the running of the school and younger children. Your help is very much appreciated .

Prayer and Liturgy.... This half term, the children of Year 3 were enrolled on their journey towards the Sacrament of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. Please keep the children of Year 3 in your thoughts and prayers.

