

Friday 24th February 2023**Dear Parents and Carers,**

I hope that you all had a restful half term break. We have had a great week back to school with the children settling back to school life. On Monday, we had a very productive non-pupil day where we all worked together on updating our school's behaviour policy which recognises and rewards improvements and excellent behaviour. I am happy to share more information with you when it is ready.

Handwriting

At St Joseph's, we are working hard to improve our presentation and raise our expectations of children's work. Part of this improvement is launching a new handwriting program. Each class from year 2 upwards are expected to use a joined writing style across the curriculum. Classes will now be teaching explicit handwriting formation twice a week. The program we are using is called 'Teach Handwriting'. Useful resources can be found on the following site: <https://teachhandwriting.co.uk/parents.html>

Proposed Teacher Strike – 2nd March

As you may recall, confirmation has been received from the NEU that they have voted for strike action on 2nd March. We are working on how this proposed action will affect our school and the impact on children and parents whilst recognising the rights of individuals to take industrial action following National guidance and Employment law. We are waiting for more information before we can make an informed decision as to the likelihood of any potential partial or full closure. I will provide you with a further update as soon as I am able.

World Book Day

As World Book Day falls on a planned strike day we have decided to hold our celebrations on Friday 3rd March 2023. This year we are really keen to focus on favourite books and authors. If your child would like to dress up in a book related way and you are able to do this, please do. If your child does not want to dress up, school uniform can be worn.

Primary Education:

Primary Sports and Education will be starting with us next Tuesday and we are all really excited to be working with Nathan. Can you ensure that your child/ren wear the correct PE kits on their PE days - green t-shirt with school logo, black shorts, black or navy jogging bottoms and trainers. We sent out a link to Primary Sports who will also be offering an after school club on Tuesdays on a first come first serve basis of up to 30 pupils. This half term, the club will be dodge ball for children in KS2 and after Easter they will be offering two after school clubs on both Tuesday and Thursday which will include children across EYFS and KS1. I will give you more information about the clubs nearer the time. We have decided to fund these after school clubs so there will be no extra cost to you and we are looking at continuing this until the end of the summer term.

Ash Wednesday

This Wednesday, marked Ash Wednesday which is the start of Lent. We had a Whole School Liturgy led by our G.I.F.T Team. They worked with Miss Rowe to produce this and they had some wonderful ideas and their enthusiasm to share and be leaders of our faith was truly amazing. Miss Rowe is really impressed with them and the impact they are having within the school to support our Catholic Faith.

Lent is a time for change. As part of our Ash Wednesday Liturgy, we were encouraged to think about what we could do to make a positive impact on our environment. We reflected on the words of Joel, (2:12-13), Joel says "Let your hearts be broken, not your garments torn." In other words, let your heart be opened; it's not about how you look on the outside, it's all about what your heart is doing inside. God is full of love and wants us to have hearts filled with love because we have experienced his mercy. This Lent, we are encouraged to think about how we can open our hearts. Our world is a precious GIFT from God so we are encouraged to reflect on the following question, *I wonder how we can show appreciation for it?* This week, every child will make a Lentern promise. We are going to display these outside the hall, in our prayer area. Throughout Lent, we will keep reminding ourselves of our promises as we journey to make a positive change. You may like to make your own Lentern promise as a family. For example: We will try to recycle at least 6 items a week or we will only watch the television for half an hour a day to try to save on electricity. We would love to hear about your family Lentern promises so please tell us by emailing them to admin for the attention of Miss Rowe. You may even like to include a photo.

Next week's Gospel Value – Courage

Courage is the ability to try to do something that we find hard. Courage is about having that strength to give things a try. Jesus showed great courage at many times in his life but particularly on the days leading up to his death. This week, we have set ourselves goals which encourage us to be courageous. Please ask your child to share something they have done this week where they showed courage.

Have a wonderful weekend!

Mrs Stephens

Diary dates:

2nd March: Potential Teacher Strike Day

3rd March: World Book Day for St Joseph's

10th March: Years 2 and 4 to visit the Eden Project

15th & 16th March: Potential two day strike of all schools in England and Wales.

29th March: Reports out

Headteacher Awards: Oak Class –Halle, Art, Rowan Class - Jamie

Silver Awards: Rowan Class – Archie, Jaime, Sycamore Class – William, Noah, Jack, Jude, Carly

Bronze Awards: Sycamore Class – Liam, Lincoln, Maple Class - Ethan

Stars of the week: Oak Class – Teddy, Rowan Class – Emily, Sycamore Class – Jude, Cherry Class – Theo, Maple Class – Sukie, Beech Class – Harry K