



Headteacher's Newsletter

01 February 2021

Christian Value for this half term:

Courage

COURAGE

'Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.'

Joshua 1.9

The graphic has a dark green background with a subtle pattern. At the top is a white circle containing a green star and a cross. Below this, the word 'COURAGE' is written in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. Underneath is a photograph of a female teacher in a blue jacket and black skirt, holding a red book and reading to a group of children in a classroom. At the bottom, a white speech bubble contains the quote in bold black text, with 'Joshua 1.9' written below it.

Dear parents/carers,

Welcome to the February newsletter.

It has been another period of great uncertainty and challenge. I was re-reading the last newsletter in January, written on the first day

back in school, and reflecting on how different times were even then, with everyone in school. And now here we are, some children in school and the majority at home. We are, as ever, so proud of everything that our children are achieving. They have responded to the sudden shift in how they are taught with courage and positivity (although sometimes it may not seem that way for parents/carers when there is a Mexican stand off going down over a particular piece of work!!).

Teaching staff in school have demonstrated courage in abundance with their shift from teaching all children in one place to teaching on Teams and in class at the same time. They are exhausted. It cannot be underplayed how mentally draining working in this way is. But our teachers are determined to be strong and ensure that everyone has the best possible support.

Staff in school cannot deliver the live teaching without your support and our thanks must go to you. We are a strong school community and together we have been able to not just respond to the changes, but respond to them brilliantly and be the best we all can for our children. Our community is made up of teachers, teaching assistants, cleaners, office staff, site staff, catering, parents, grandparents, carers, Trustees, governors and of course our fabulous children. We learn and shine together.

Best wishes,

Mrs Graham

Headteacher

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Critical Worker places - a plea

Please can we ask that children of critical workers are not in school unless absolutely necessary. This means that if you are working at home your children must also be working at home and accessing school via Teams. We ask that, in order to protect not just the community but the school staff too, you only send in your children when you have no alternative childcare and school is a last resort.

School opening to more pupils

Boris Johnson stated last week that he hoped that schools will open no earlier than 8th March. We will be watching the updates later this month keenly to see what steps the government then takes with opening up education again.

We tend to find these things out at the same time as you do, but please be assured that we will respond swiftly to any announcements. Thankfully, he also has made it clear that schools will be given 2 weeks' notice of them opening to all pupils. This will give us a good chunk of time to get in place any further protective measures the government asks schools to get in place. We will of course be in contact as soon as we know more.

Access to internet from home

We have been battling with the DfE to get access to routers for families who do not have internet access at home. After many weeks, we have been successful at getting hold of a small number of routers which will provide a 'hot spot' for children to get online. We have contacted families who we were aware did not have internet access, but there is a possibility we may have missed others. Please get in contact with the school office if your child cannot access live teaching due to lack of internet access.

Snowy weather

The weather is being tenacious in its frosty grip on Bolton. The weather forecast showing that there is a potential for more snow later in the week. Mr Morris has done a truly brilliant job of keeping the paths clear (he has shovelled a lot of snow to keep the one way system clear—the man has arms of steel now!)

It's worth having a look to check if gloves and hats have names in them and if not, put them in! Children are notorious for not recognising their own belongings and have no concept of how much these things cost!

In the event of very bad weather forcing school to shut we will contact you via text message at the earliest opportunity.

Parents' Consultation Meetings

As reported via email last week, we have postponed parent/carers' consultation meetings for the time being. It would be challenging to say the least for teachers to report on progress and next steps for all children at the moment. The most sensible approach is to delay until the summer term. We cannot put a definite date on when these meetings will take place until we know for definite when all pupils will return to school.

Thank you for your understanding.

Collective Worship

Collective worship is delivered via Teams on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 2.45pm. It is wonderful to see how many children arrive to take part from home. Doors open at 2.35pm. Please be on time—latecomers won't be admitted as it affects the flow of the worship.

If your child hasn't come to any of the worships they can join via the link in Teams on the general chat for their class. It is delivered by Mrs Graham, Mrs English-Mather and Revd Nicola. We are in talks with Andrew Gallimore to deliver some of his worship through singing which will be really well received. We look forward to seeing you there!

What to do when you think your child has coronavirus symptoms

If you think your child has coronavirus symptoms:

- Your child mustn't attend school
- Your child should get a test
- Your whole household must self-isolate while waiting for the test result
- You must inform school immediately about your test result—positive or negative

Your child must not return to school until they have a test result.

If you are unable to access a home test kit for your child and cannot get to a drive in centre please contact school. It may be that we can provide your child with one of our allocated home test kits.

Please note that we can only provide test kits for pupils and this is only when they are showing symptoms.

Out of school hours: please contact us on admin@st-catherines.bolton.sch.uk

Forthcoming events

5 + 6 Feb	Bikeability for Year 6 pupils
9 Feb	Safer Internet Day
12 Feb	Break for half term
22 Feb	School reopens for second half of spring term
1 Mar	School nurse in school—puberty
2 Mar	Chemlab science assembly
1 Apr	Break for Easter

